

# Legislative Council.

Wednesday, 15th April, 1942.

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The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 11 a.m., and read prayers.

## MOTION—LICENSING ACT.

*As to Restrictions on Liquor Sales.*

HON. C. F. BAXTER (East) [11.5]: I move—

1, That, in the opinion of this House any further liquor restrictions proposed by the State Government should be confined to areas already prescribed, and that in these areas—

(a) The closing time be 7 p.m. in lieu of 6 p.m.

(b) No liquor in bottles be supplied from any licensed premises after 4 p.m.

(c) No liquor in bottles or other containers advertising such liquors shall be displayed after 4 p.m.

2, And in addition throughout the State—

(a) For sly grog selling there shall be imprisonment for the first and any subsequent offence without the option of a fine.

(b) That it shall be made an offence for any person to bring into or have in his possession any liquor within the precincts of any public hall where any entertainment is being or is about to be held.

(c) And that the provisions of the Licensing Act be rigidly enforced.

The many abuses caused by the excessive drinking of liquor have given great concern to all sections of the community. Naturally, this question has been an extremely vexed one as between the Federal Government and the State Governments. My motion does not oppose anything that may be done by Governments, but is intended to afford the House an opportunity to express its opinion on the subject and thus be in a position to assist our Government to place the control of liquor on a far better basis than that on which it is today. It has been asserted that the police could do far more than they are doing. I consider that in carrying out the provisions of the State Act the police do all they can, but even from that aspect there has been laxity going on for years and years. If the civil police were to step in now and try to control the

many abuses caused by men in uniform, the position would be most dangerous. We know perfectly well that there is a great difference between civil police and military police. During the past 1914-18 war the Army always provided pickets as well as military police to deal with such a situation.

Let me say right here that no one can find fault with our American friends regarding the way in which they control their men in this respect. On the other hand, I see nothing with which to reproach our own police. Nevertheless, the situation has been disgraceful. It is said that 100 military men have been allocated for the purpose of checking the evil. To that I reply that these men have never attempted to do their duty. Had they done so, the situation would be quite different. Many members, like myself, lived through the period of the 1914-18 war, and were in a position to watch events as they occurred. During that period anyone walking along the principal streets of this city would always meet a picket on duty. Candidly, until the last few weeks, after the Country Party had wired the Federal Minister for Defence regarding the state of affairs locally, nothing was done to control the position here.

I have never yet seen pickets on the street, during this war, until after dark; and that has been so only recently. It is time the military authorities woke up to their duty in that respect. The Prime Minister, as we know, took action; but he left the State Governments to devise their own schemes for the better control of liquor during war time. Mr. Curtin conferred very wide powers on the State Premiers who accordingly are empowered, by order published in the relevant State "Government Gazette," to prohibit, restrict, control, or regulate the sale, supply, possession, or use of intoxicating liquor in the State: and they are authorised to do this either throughout the State or in any area of the State. Those powers are very wide indeed. It is natural to suppose that the Prime Minister would not go outside his jurisdiction in respect of liquor control, in view of the State Acts controlling liquor.

Ever since the last war, the various States of Australia have had certain hours operating for the sale of liquor. This State, I am very proud to say, had trading hours from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. That system, under strict control, worked very satisfactorily during the previous war and in the peace

period that followed. I am not going to say that it has worked satisfactorily in recent days. A number of the other States had early closing in the evening, trading finishing at 6 p.m., but all members who have visited the Eastern States know that 6 o'clock closing was not a success in any shape or form, our own Act operating better in that respect. Notwithstanding that, our own Government—I say it advisedly—said, “We will close hotels at 6 o'clock.” That has done a little good but has not succeeded in cleaning up the position to anything like the extent required, hence the motion I am placing before the House.

It is quite apparent that the Prime Minister is not at all satisfied with what has been done, for he has gone a step further and has declared that in addition to the liquor supply being cut by one-third, the trading hours must be restricted to seven per day, thus limiting the State's operations in that regard. I have been wondering what tempted the Government to decide upon 6 o'clock closing. Various parts of the State, of course, have different hours of trading, and 6 o'clock closing does not operate outside the 25 miles prescribed area to which my remarks apply. Most of the people within that area are engaged in different avocations until about 6 p.m. As a result of the Government's decision to close hotels at 6 o'clock, a large proportion of the population is denied the right to any refreshment after its labours.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Except tea and ginger ale.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Tea and ginger ale are all right, but the point is that the vast majority of our people are not drunkards, and if a person likes a glass of whisky or beer after work, as is only natural, why should he not be able to procure it? Why should he be prohibited from obtaining his usual drink when he leaves his place of employment at 6 o'clock? Just because some of our returned men, mostly quite young lads, have lost their sense of proportion! That, of course, is only natural when they have just returned from the war and have undergone a lot of suffering. In such circumstances they are apt to run wild for three or four days following their return. After that they are as law-abiding as any other part of the population. There is a legitimate excuse for their excess, but we need to tighten matters up so that they will not be able again to indulge in such excesses. Why was 6 o'clock closing imposed, apart

from a clamour by different sections of the community for something to be done? Why was not 7 o'clock chosen? That is the amazing part to me.

The motion is divided into two sections. The Government can give effect to one portion by taking power under supplementary regulations to alter existing conditions without the need for passing legislation. The other portion requires the enforcement of the Act to deal with the question of sly grog selling. That part of the motion seems to suggest that an amendment of the Act is necessary but that is not my intention. I have no desire, at a time like this, to have such contentious legislation as amendments to the Licensing Act or the Illicit Sale of Liquor Act brought before Parliament, because that would be wrong. We need unanimity and contentious business likely to cause us to take sides should not be introduced. The recommendation in the motion could be carried out by the Bench, and I think it would be if there were a strong expression of opinion by Parliament.

The question of supplying liquor in bottles is a very vexed one and has caused a lot of trouble. It is quite common to see persons not only with bottled beer but with other liquor. Beer is getting very scarce now and I think the position in that regard will right itself. I do not think the supply of bottled beer will be available for sale, but stronger liquors, more highly fortified, are being bought *ad lib.* now that there is plenty of money to purchase it. A regulation should be issued prohibiting bottled liquor from being purchased within three hours of closing time. I am not particular about the hour of closing. The hours of trade could perhaps be staggered and closing time fixed at 8 p.m. I am not particular about that, so long as persons accustomed to finishing work at 6 o'clock are able to get a drink before closing time. What is important is that, at least three hours before hotels close, bottled liquor should not be supplied to anybody wishing to purchase it. I realise there is a danger involved and the matter will have to be administered with great caution. For example, it would be quite permissible for a person to go to a hotel in Perth before a prohibited hour of purchasing, secure a bottle of liquor and subsequently enter a suburban hotel after the hour set for purchasing that liquor, carrying with him the purchase he has already made. In spite of the difficulty in-

volved, the Government should take steps to ensure that no liquor is sold in containers for outside use some hours prior to the closing time. That is the dangerous period and those who rush in just before hotels close to secure bottles of liquor are the dangerous people.

Hon. J. J. Holmes : I do not think people should be allowed to take away bottled liquor at all. I saw a soldier the other day in Hay-street with four big bottles of beer in his arms.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER : I have seen them with four bottles of whisky ! With regard to paragraph (c) of the first part of the motion, requiring that no liquor in bottles or other containers advertising such liquors shall be displayed after 4 p.m., I must state now, in all fairness, that I realise that a difficult position would be created if this were put into effect. The idea behind the suggestion in the motion was this : If full bottles of liquor are displayed on the shelves and are still visible at 4 p.m., the time when it is suggested that they should not be available for sale, it can well be imagined that a body of young fellows in uniform who had imbibed a little too freely would, on being refused the right to purchase the liquor, take bottles off the shelves themselves. The idea was that the bottles should be put away in order to remove temptation. However, the question arises : How is the hotel keeper to carry on business if all the bottles are taken off the shelves ? There are many bottles involved—for instance, there are 20 different kinds of whisky—and the hotel keeper would have difficulty in finding room to store them and, as I have pointed out, in carrying on his business. So I am afraid that an amendment to the motion will be necessary. That applies to the prescribed areas set out in the regulations. Outside of that and applying to the whole State is Clause 2, subparagraph (a), of the motion reading—

And in addition throughout the State that (a) for sly-grog selling there shall be imprisonment for the first and any subsequent offence without the option of a fine.

I know of no worse feature in the liquor trade than sly-grogging. It has become rampant, and amounts to daylight robbery in the case of the person who wishes to purchase liquor. I know of one place, the proprietor of which was heavily fined, where sly-grogging still prevails. In another instance in the same locality no action has been taken and the evil continues. Because

of the activities of the Army in that district, this form of trading has developed enormously. A body of men has been available for the creation of the lucrative trade of sly-grogging which has grown up. In such places beer is sold at anything from 2s. 6d. to 7s. per bottle, and whisky has been known to fetch as much as £5 a bottle.

Hon. G. W. Miles : In this State ?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER : Yes. I am told that a charge of £2 per bottle for whisky is quite common. A firm hand must be taken in this matter. If the House passed the motion, which provides that there shall be imprisonment for the first and any subsequent offence without the option of a fine, I take it the Bench would regard that as an indication from Parliament that offenders should be punished by imprisonment, and that it would accordingly inflict such punishment. It is strange that both the Licensing Act of 1928, which is contained in the appendix to the bound volume, and the Illicit Sale of Liquor Act of 1913, contain powers to deal with the illicit sale of liquor, namely, sly-grogging. I have used the term "sly-grogging" because it is the one most commonly in use when the illicit sale of liquor is referred to.

Hon. J. Cornell : A "speak-easy" !

Hon. C. F. BAXTER : I should perhaps have spoken of "the illicit sale of liquor." Section 3 of the Illicit Sale of Liquor Act of 1913 is as follows :—

Any person who (a) sells liquor or (b) has liquor for sale in, on, or about any premises, shall be deemed to unlawfully deal in liquor within the meaning of this Act unless such person (i) is a licensee holding a license granted under the Licensing Act, 1911, authorising the sale of such liquor; or (ii) is a servant or agent of such licensee and is lawfully acting for the time being in that capacity; or (iii) is authorised by Section 34 of the Licensing Act, 1911, to sell such liquor without a license. (2) Any person who unlawfully deals in liquor commits an offence.

Penalty for a first offence £50, or imprisonment for three months or both; for any subsequent offence after a previous conviction £200, or imprisonment with hard labour for 12 months or both.

I should like to see a provision for two years' imprisonment.

(3) Upon any conviction under this section the offender shall forfeit all liquor in his possession, with the vessels containing the same.

I have been very careful to avoid referring to the Licensing Act. There is no necessity to do so. I take it that a strong expression

of opinion from both Houses would amount to a direction to those on the Bench who have to administer the law that they should punish offenders by imprisonment rather than by a fine. I therefore request that the Government shall ask the police more rigidly to enforce the law in this respect. There has been laxity in that direction for many years.

Hon. G. W. Miles: The Government should insist upon the police force carrying out the law.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Yes, even if it means appointing additional policemen. The law must be administered, and the sooner that is done the better it will be for all concerned. I ask the Government to take the matter up with the police force with a view to avoiding the laxity that has occurred in the past, possibly through lack of sufficient police, and to make every effort to see that the places to which I have referred are closed and kept closed.

Hon. G. W. Miles: The present position is not fair to licensees generally.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: No. We, as legislators, have to remember that every section of the community is entitled to justice. A large section of the people does not realise that the hotel keeper is deserving of justice. He is put to tremendous expense in maintaining his establishment, has to pay a heavy license fee, and has many obligations to meet. How the publican is to carry on his business under present conditions I do not know, for I do not see how present expenditure can be reduced. We must give consideration to every section of the community, the hotel keeper included. I do not think there is anything in my motion that would drastically interfere with the licensees or anything that would affect them in carrying out the intention of the motion.

There are other important matters in connection with the Licensing Act which are not being policed as they should be. Under the Act a child is a person who is under 18 years of age. Such a child is neither permitted to enter the bar of any hotel nor to be present in the licensed portion of such hotel. The responsibility for the child being on the premises rests with the publican. No matter what evidence the hotel keeper may have as to the age of the child, so far as the Act is concerned if, in the opinion of the Bench that is trying the case, the child is over 18 years of age, it finds against the

hotel keeper on the charge of the child being in the bar. The position is an awkward one.

Then we come to the question of serving a person who is under 21 years of age. The bar lounges that have come into existence represent one of the curses of the present system. Many people have asked why the publicans should not be requested to abolish their lounges. I point out that a number of women, the majority of whom have been in the habit of partaking of a little refreshment, still desire to do so. Surely we have not reached the stage when we have to say to our women folk, "If you want a drink you can go into the bar. On the other hand, if you want any liquid other than tea or coffee or a soft drink you are not entitled to have it in the way that men are able to be supplied." We cannot take up that stand, more especially as so many women are now engaged in vital and responsible war work.

Most of the women who go into the hotel lounges are justified in enjoying a little refreshment. Unfortunately, however, a lot of young people avail themselves of the opportunity to frequent these places and are really the cause of most of the trouble, not those of mature age. The matter is not an easy one either for the police or for the publican. What is the latter to do if he sees a girl entering the lounge? I do not know whether members are able to tell the age of any girl who is between 16 and 24. It is a most difficult proposition.

Hon. J. Cornell: To say whether they are lamb or mutton!

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: If a publican were to ask a young woman, "What is your age?" what an awkward position he would place himself in. Where would he finish if the young woman were accompanied by a man in uniform? We can well imagine what might happen. But now is our opportunity; every person must carry an identification card. As soon as all the cards have been distributed, it would be a simple matter to put on a few more policemen in order that they might thoroughly police these lounges for a time. There is one hotel in Perth that ought to be closed, as it is a disgrace to the community. The average hotel, however, is conducted in a highly efficient manner; nothing can be said against it. The police will shortly have the opportunity to visit lounges and demand production of identification cards.

If a person says, "I am 23 years of age," and it is proved that she is under age, she can be haled before the Court and fined £5 under the Act. The unfortunate publican associated with the offence is, on the other hand, fined £20. That is an anomaly. I cannot understand Parliament providing that the publican shall be fined £20, while the person who wilfully makes a false statement shall be fined merely £5. I repeat, the police now have an excellent opportunity to administer the Act and to deal with sly-grog sellers as well as with children over 18 years, but under 21 years of age. Now that the liquor question is causing so much trouble, the State Government should appoint additional police officers and thoroughly enforce the provisions of the Act.

I move this motion in a spirit of consideration, with the hope of satisfying the Government that we are doing our best to help it to clean up this matter and put it on a proper basis. Surely, we can attend to our own business, part of which is to administer the licensing law. I say advisedly that, should my motion be agreed to, if the Government accepts it and acts on it, we shall find that excessive drinking, and the abuses attendant upon it, will to a large extent be cleaned up, and we shall take more pride in our liquor laws than we do today.

**HON. J. CORNELL** (South) [11.34]: Before the motion is put, I would like to offer a few remarks on the question of excessive drinking. I have long ago come to the conclusion that the civilian population, members of Parliament and the Government are largely responsible for the present debacle. We find that the law in respect to Sunday trading is stretched in some parts of the State; hotels are open from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. in some districts and in others from 10 to 12 a.m. and from 4 to 6 p.m., when they should be closed. That, in my opinion, is largely responsible for the present state of affairs, because the law, as it stands, has not been amended to meet the climatic and other conditions in various portions of the State. In the metropolitan area and in some country districts, it is thought that because a man or woman is entitled to an alcoholic drink, he or she ought to be able to get it at any time. We have built up that kind of psychology. That type of thinking has led not only to this motion, but also to a

lot being said about the degradation following in the wake of excessive drinking.

As far as the soldier is concerned, my observations are that, as happened during the 1914-18 war, not more than 10 per cent. resort to over-indulgence in alcoholic liquors. However, as they are in khaki or in blue, they are the more easily observed. Many of them are young and have not yet got the necessary balance. If any member of this Chamber can bring under my notice one of the older men in khaki who served in the last war and who cannot get home under his load, I will make a donation of one guinea to the Perth Hospital. I have not seen one such yet. I have seen some loaded down to the Plimsoll mark, and even above it, but they have been able to carry their grog with dignity and get home. But the young man in the armed forces today thinks he can drink as much as he likes and carry it; and he is aided and abetted largely by the civilian population. In many cases the drink that these young men do not want is bought for them by civilians.

**Hon. J. J. Holmes**: I tried to remedy that by suggesting a law against shouting.

**Hon. J. CORNELL**: Then there is the half-hearted attitude of those in control of the armed forces.

**Hon. H. L. Roche**: Quite right.

**Hon. J. CORNELL**: As Mr. Roche knows, it is necessary to warn these young people. Quite recently one of Perth's leading medical specialists told me that the members of the medical profession, including American doctors, were fed up to the back teeth with treating week-end drunks in khaki or blue. The old soldiers know well what happened to them during the 1914-18 war if they transgressed in that way; they were put in the clink, where they suffered a recovery, after which they were invariably fined a fortnight's pay. Nowadays, drunken soldiers are put into hospital until they recover, when they repeat their offence.

**Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch**: And their pay goes on.

**Hon. J. CORNELL**: Yes. If those in control of the armed forces would take disciplinary measures against such offenders, there would be much less drunkenness among our soldiers. The best disciplinary force comprises the great majority of the men in uniform. On the previous occasion, a young fellow coming back drunk would go out on his pink ear. There seems to be

an impression abroad that such men should be treated as ordinary citizens. Then we have the spectacle of hospital patients being let out on leave and returning to the hospital drunk. Inquiries should be made as to where they get the drink and who supplies it. The publican generally acts in a decent way; it is the civilians who get drink for the soldiers. When they return to the military hospital they are, in their drunken condition, a nuisance to the nurses and all others concerned. Probably they will receive as punishment a week's C.B., but what is that to a man in hospital? It is absurd.

I repeat, that the remedy for much of this lies in disciplinary action and less consideration for the drunkard. After all, the biggest nuisance that a soldier can encounter is a drunkard, the man who returns drunk every night if he can get the liquor. He is not a soldier. What consideration does he deserve? He did not get much during the 1914-18 war, but he is getting too much this time. I consider the question of hours is neither here nor there; the remedy lies in the reduction imposed by the Federal regulation, which has had a most salutary effect.

I have never been a teetotaler, but I gasp with wonder when I think what the working man will do if he is forced to go without his glass of beer. Suppose the publican has sold out and cannot supply more beer. Have we reached the stage when we are to say that unless there is a sufficient supply of liquor to go all round, our war effort will fail? To adopt that attitude would constitute a manifestation of decadence in our race. Of course that is not the position. The letters appearing in the Press about the poor man being denied his drop of beer when he knocks off have no appeal to me at all. The fact that someone else can get liquor and that the poor man cannot is beside the question. If I were a dictator I would tomorrow do what America and Canada tried to do.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: With even less success.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I would reduce the alcoholic content of liquor to as low a point as possible and make the purchase of hard liquor, such as whisky, illegal unless under permit. In Canada today it is impossible to buy hard liquor unless one holds a permit. If we were to adopt that course, the position would right itself. If a man were to drink excessively of the liquor with

the reduced alcoholic content, he would soon arrive at a certain stage of inflation vastly different from that about which Mr. Seddon talks from time to time. The drinker would develop a feeling similar to that engendered by excessive drinking of water. Those who went through the 1914-18 war are aware that the lack of alcoholic strength in liquor available to the troops was such that the soldiers thought it better to leave it alone rather than bother about drinking it. I spent some time on leave in London in 1918, and rarely did I see a drunken soldier, sailor, or airman belonging to any of the British or Allied services.

Hon. H. L. Roche: The M.P.s. dragged him in if he got drunk.

Hon. J. CORNELL: And he did not get a cup of tea and toast in the morning! I think the explanation of the absence of drunkenness in those days was the low alcoholic content of various liquors. Next, there is the question of shouting. I remember Mr. Holmes endeavouring to secure my support for his anti-shouting proposals to be embodied in a Bill of which Sir Hal Colebatch was in charge. I had to express regret that I could not extend my support to that proposal. Mr. Holmes thought that because I had seen the effects of shouting in operation in the Army, he would have my support; but it was because of that very fact that he did not secure it.

The last three drinks I enjoyed in London were with two men, both of whom have long-since been gathered to their forefathers. I refer to the late A. A. Horan and Mr. Sadlier, who was then the accountant at the Agent General's office. When I shook hands with them before leaving London, one said, "What about a drink? We could go over to the Hole in the Wall." We went across, and I said, "What are you going to have?" The barman promptly said, "No, you cannot do that here." We knew how to get out of it. Each paid for his own drinks, putting down his shilling each time. That is the practical way in which the anti-shouting laws operated, and how they would work out in future. Seeing that the Commonwealth Government has set out to curtail excessive drinking throughout the Commonwealth, I consider there is only one practical method to be adopted. If the Commonwealth Government is not prepared to reduce the consumption of liquor, it should take a firm

stand and say definitely to the brewing trade that they must reduce the alcoholic content of liquor to a certain specified point.

Hon. G. B. Wood: Does that apply to whisky, too?

Hon. J. CORNELL: As for hard liquor, the Commonwealth Government should decree that no man shall be served with whisky or suchlike intoxicants except on production of a doctor's certificate.

Hon. H. V. Piessie: There will be a lot of doctor's certificates.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Will that include herbalists as well?

Hon. J. CORNELL: I was in the Province of Ontario, Canada, in 1925, when it was decreed that 4.4 beer had to be served in bottles and the consumer had to sit at a table and drink it there. The only means by which one could secure hard liquor in that province was by going to a Government dispensary store and producing a doctor's certificate. If that system were adopted here—

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: The doctors would do very well.

Hon. H. Seddon: But they are overworked now!

Hon. J. CORNELL: If we reduce the alcoholic strength of beer to such an extent that it will not provide the "kick" that it formerly did, some men, out of sheer bravado, will turn to whisky and similar lines, which I designate as hard liquors. That is what the Americans today are endeavouring to keep away from the general public.

The Honorary Minister: What about "pink-eye"?

Hon. J. CORNELL: We could encourage the drinking of light wines, but as for "pink-eye," that is a matter for the State Government to deal with.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: But wine contains the highest alcoholic content of all drink.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I know that.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: It has something like 35 per cent. of alcohol. Our whisky carries a higher percentage of alcohol than does that obtainable in the Eastern States.

Hon. J. CORNELL: If we are to allow the indiscriminate sale of hard liquors without keeping a check on the purchasers, we will not solve the problem of drunkenness. While it might take an hour or two for a man to consume enough beer to make him intoxicated, it certainly takes much less time

to achieve the same end if he resorts to whisky. In Perth we have seen soldiers of our own and Allied forces drinking whisky out of the bottle. That sight has been witnessed time and again in the streets. They will get it somehow.

There is another phase I wish to deal with, the supplying of liquor to men under 21 years of age. It is useless to say that a publican shall not serve soldiers who are under age. I know that is what the law provides, but if we are to say to the young man who has enlisted that he has committed an offence under our licensing laws in those circumstances, I claim we shall be travelling along an entirely wrong road. If a man is of an age enabling him to join up with the armed forces to defend our country, we have no right to apply to him the provisions relating to the serving of liquor to men under 21 years of age.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: If we did, would it not be doing a man of that age a good service?

Hon. J. CORNELL: Many would appreciate it more if they were not treated that way. As I see it, the Commonwealth Government last session passed legislation saying that any member of the armed forces who was 18 years of age and upwards should have the right to exercise the franchise. The State Government here introduced similar legislation which was lost, however, in another place owing to the absence of the requisite statutory majority. Now some people advocate that, whereas we accept the enlistment of men under age, and in some instances compel them to render military service, they should not be entitled to a drink.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: I did not advocate that; I pointed out that such was the law.

Hon. J. CORNELL: It is useless to endeavour to discriminate seeing that the law will work out in the way that is obvious.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: It could not be administered if it was attempted.

Hon. J. CORNELL: If we did attempt to administer the law, it might mean that a decent young fellow who wanted one drink merely to quench his thirst might be found on licensed premises and suffer the statutory penalty. On the other hand, another young fellow who made a welter of it might escape punishment altogether. I repeat that I honestly believe that only 10 or 12 per cent. of the community are unable to carry their liquor reasonably decently. If a man can-

not drink without making a beast of himself, then let the Government extend no consideration to him whatever. That should apply to soldier, sailor, airman or civilian. Let such people pay the penalty and do not let us be mealy-mouthed about it. As to indiscriminate drinking with subsequent pampering of men who cannot do their job, what effect will that have? It will be demoralising upon those who are capable of doing their job. I am perfectly satisfied that 90 per cent. of the armed forces will say that the man who disgraced his uniform through drunkenness and got into trouble, deserved it.

The PRESIDENT: The discussion of motions must now be interrupted unless the Council otherwise orders.

[Resolved: That motions be continued.]

**HON. H. S. W. PARKER** (Metropolitan-Suburban) [12.0]: It seems to me that the liquor question has been somewhat mishandled and that members of the general public have been rather short in their memories. I have a vivid recollection of what happened when transports returned after the 1914-18 war. I was a member of a deputation that waited on the then Minister to ask that hotels be closed on the days transports arrived because of the excessive drinking in which soldiers indulged, and I regret to say that in one or two instances fatal accidents occurred as a result of the drinking that was indulged in.

Hon. J. Cornell: You were lucky; the hotels were closed when I got back.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: They were not closed when I returned. I have a vivid recollection of the excessive drinking on those occasions and the way in which the soldiers played up. There was similar behaviour at ports of call en route to Australia. This was attributed to the psychological effect of the war on the soldiers. A man, to be a good soldier, must lose all the veneer he gains in civil life, and when he returns from the war it takes him some time to settle down again. We cannot blame the soldier; our duty is to protect him. To my mind the protection we have given him has been negligible and useless. I blame the authorities. We should have had more police. I do not entirely agree that a policeman in a blue uniform is to a soldier as a red rag to a bull. The men in blue, however, can stop the sly-grogging and police some of the places that do not comply with the licensing laws.

My opinion is that the publicans have played the game to the hilt right through, but they are under disadvantages that the public does not appreciate. On the occasions when excessive drinking was very noticeable, a great deal of sly-grogging was going on. Some of this traffic was indulged in quite openly; people were consuming liquor purchased at excessive prices in various squares and lanes of the city.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Has it stopped?

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: The police are not to blame because the strength of the force should have been increased. In times of war, when people are not normal, it is necessary that the police force be strengthened. The civil police should also keep in touch with the military authorities and ask for military pickets, etc. Unfortunately, so far as I have been able to judge, the military and the police authorities have been poles apart. There should be greater collaboration between them, and this collaboration could be brought about quite easily and to the benefit of both parties. I hope the Minister will get in touch with the powers-that-be and ascertain whether better arrangements cannot be made between the military and the civil police. I am not going to blame one more than the other; I blame both.

It has been said that liquor should not be sold to a soldier who is under the age of 21. I remind members that in boarding schools in England, a jug of beer is placed on the table at the midday meal for each boy irrespective of his age. At the age of 13 I could have had a glass of beer with my midday meal every day. I did not want it then, and I have rather regretted the loss since. Many people do not appreciate that the alcoholic content of the whisky here is much higher than that in the Eastern States. Soldiers passing through take a nip of whisky, believing it to be of the same strength as Eastern States whisky, but it is very much stronger, and that leads to trouble.

Hon. J. Cornell: Fifteen per cent.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: There again the soldiers are not altogether to be blamed. I was away from Australia recently and we called at Colombo. We had on our ship about 4,500 men. They were paid before they went ashore and again while in port, and I saw only one case of drunkenness during that time. He was a young soldier who had got hold of some native liquor.



There we had no pickets and the men behaved themselves. It is when they return to their own country and while they are not normal that they require protection.

I do not think there is any occasion to ask that bottles be removed from hotel shelves, but I consider that Section 118 of the Act needs amending. The section contains the following provision :—

Any holder of a publican's general license, an hotel license, or a wayside house license, or an Australian wine and beer license, who, without reasonable cause, refuses to receive any person as a guest into his house, or to supply any person with food, liquor, refreshment or lodging . . . commits an offence against this Act.

The onus lies on the publican. Suppose a man enters a hotel and the publican or barman thinks he is drunk. Assume it is the licensee himself, and he refuses to serve that man. The person becomes indignant and declares that he is not drunk. Perhaps he is not. The licensee must serve him ; he has no right to refuse. Similarly, a man might enter a hotel fully aware that beer is rationed at the present time. Assume that a publican gets his month's supply of beer on the 1st of the month. The man sees all that liquor taken in and asks for a dozen bottles. Is it reasonable for the publican to say the man may not have it when the liquor is there ? One magistrate will say it is quite unreasonable ; another will say it is reasonable. The publican has to take the risk. Actually, publicans do not want to sell beer by the bottle ; to do so is against their interests. They prefer to sell beer by the glass over the bar.

Hon. C. F. Baxter : Why not amend that section of the Act ?

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER : It ought to be amended. The publican has no protection. I may enter a hotel and say I want a bottle of beer. Perhaps the publican has not sufficient left to supply his ordinary customers till the end of the month. He refuses to supply me. It is open to me to say, "I know why you will not supply me ; you are getting more profit by selling beer by the glass. I will test the matter in the court." The same applies to whisky. It is on the bar shelves and the publican should have the right to refuse to supply. But he has not that right. The regulation should provide that a licensee has the right to refuse to supply liquor in any quantity to any person at any time. At present I can demand practically any liquor that a

publican has, and he has to supply it so long as I am not drunk. A publican might know that a certain man is made drunk by one beer, and might not want to serve him. Yet he has to serve him. Therefore I say the publican has not the protection to which he is entitled.

In my opinion a regulation should be framed providing that the alcoholic content of spirits be reduced and that the licensee shall, if he so desires, have the right at all times to refuse to supply any person.

Hon. C. F. Baxter : That could be done under the National Security Act.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER : Yes. I do not agree with the proposal for the 6 o'clock closing of hotels, which I consider is absurd. Still, I believe there should be an absolute prohibition on the sale of bottled liquor after the hour of noon, not after 4 p.m. No drunk is likely to carry a bottle around all the afternoon while he can go in and buy a glass of beer, but often a drunk decides that he must get beer to consume after 6 o'clock and so he buys it by the bottle. The ordinary man who wants beer at home will buy his bottles before noon or arrange to have it supplied by a grocer holding a gallon license. If we are going to restrict the hours of hotel trading, the closing hour should be 8 o'clock. Then a man who desired to have his evening meal in town would have an opportunity to get a drink with his meal. Such a provision is desirable, more especially in summer than in winter.

I am not a believer in prohibition because I appreciate the many risks it involves. I should not like to see absolute prohibition against the sale of bottled liquor because that would make the present position worse. I heard a good story a few days ago. A man who could not get liquor entered a grocer's store and asked for a bottle of methylated spirits, adding, "Can you give me one off the ice?" If we approach any nearer to prohibition, that is the stage people are likely to reach. I should like to see everyone get a reasonable supply of liquor, but it is essential to prevent soldiers, when they are not normal, from overstepping the mark and probably doing things for which they are extremely sorry afterwards.

HON. H. L. ROCHE (South-East) [12.15] : I am supporting Mr. Baxter's motion, although, in my opinion, it does not go as far as it should to correct the position that has

arisen in the metropolitan area. We have to accept a share of responsibility for that position, which I believe was brought about, to a considerable extent, by the Government's delay in taking any action whatever. Thus there developed a position requiring a drastic remedy. Like Mr. Parker, I do not believe in either 6 o'clock closing or in prohibition; but the position has got so much out of hand that I do not think the Government would have succeeded in effecting any correction had they made the closing hour later than 6 o'clock. There has been a considerable improvement during the last week or two; but prior to that stage in this State, and probably in other States as well, the Governments deserved the reproach administered to them by the Prime Minister for their failure to attempt to control the position, and especially so as with large bodies of men in the services, an abuse of this kind has a snowball effect. Any ex-service man will agree that in large bodies of service men there are a number who resort to abuses of one kind or another, and that if the abuse is not checked, it assumes large proportions. I understand that in some camps not so far from Perth, it was quite the recognised thing for lads when getting their leave to see who could come home most distinctly the worse for liquor.

So that though I appreciate that the delay in bringing into operation some corrective forced the Government to resort to so drastic a remedy, it does seem to me that there are several effectual correctives which could and should be applied. One is in the nature of what is termed staggering of hours, trading being permitted between the hours of 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. and between, say, 4 and 7 p.m. Those hours could be varied, of course. However, I do hold that a break in the middle of the afternoon would be of the greatest advantage, enabling bars to be cleared and thus disposing of the man who is just boozing for the sake of boozing. Further, it is a corrective of a position which I saw arise in Perth about three weeks ago. When some of our Western Australian A.I.F. men were here, there was also a battalion of Eastern States troops in Perth. They had 36 hours' leave. There was nowhere to go; no friends to visit; all that those Eastern States men could do was to walk round the streets. On the other hand, if there had been a two-hour break in the middle of the afternoon, many of those men would have got out of the streets and taken

a look around outside the town itself. Certainly they would not be able to play the only pastime open to them, that of crawling from one pub to another all the afternoon.

The suggestion that no bottled liquor should be sold after certain hours in the afternoon I heartily agree with, although Mr. Baxter's suggestion fixes an hour that is too early in the day. However, I do not believe any member would cavil at the Government's action if it decreed the proposed staggering of hours, and something of this nature for the bottle trade. I believe all members agree with what has been said as to drastic action to control sly-grog selling. There has always been a certain amount of it going on; but lately, I understand, quite a trade has been developed. People who have an opportunity to buy bottled liquor make a point of picking up our own service men, or Allied service men, apparently possessed of considerable funds, and retailing liquor to them at exorbitant prices. I have heard of as much as £5 being paid for a bottle of whisky. That price shows a good profit, and sellers can stand heavy fines. If sly-grog selling were made a matter of gaol without the option of a fine, it would be possible for the police to keep the evil in check.

The serving of men under the influence of liquor, especially service men, at bars represents a problem to the licensee. Most of the licensees have my sympathy regarding the position in which they have been placed lately. It is difficult to say to a service man in a bar full of similar customers, "You are too drunk to have another drink." In one case where that was attempted, the man, becoming indignant, picked up an empty pot on the counter and threw it at a shelf carrying a large number of bottles of whisky. The problem is one of policing the regulation which creates the difficulty in which hotel keepers find themselves. If I remember rightly, all over England during the 1914-18 war at hotels in which considerable drinking was done by service men, one or two military policemen were always stationed. When the licensee had difficulties with service men, he had only to invoke the aid of the military police. Similarly, a licensee having difficulties with a civilian could invoke the assistance of the civil police. The relevant section of our Licensing Act is extremely difficult for the licensee himself to enforce.

As regards service men, the real solution of the problem, or perhaps I should say one of the vital factors in solving it, consists in greater activity by army authorities in controlling their own men. They have military police in the streets in the morning. While in Perth on Parliamentary business I see a great deal of that sort of thing, and I rarely see a military policeman after dark. Pickets were on duty, but I never saw them marching down the street until a fortnight ago. They used to go through town in a motor truck at 10 or 15 miles an hour; but I never saw the trucks stop, and I never saw a man under restraint by either pickets or a military policeman. There are now pickets in the streets at night, but those pickets are composed of only 12 or 14 men. If there is a big body of soldiers in town, a picket of that strength would not be of much assistance in preventing any serious infringement of the law, or in controlling the behaviour of service men when it calls for restraint. There is a distinct lack of discipline. I say that although I never took kindly to discipline when I was in the army. In those days, however, we knew that we could go just so far, and no further. If a man went further, he paid the penalty.

The breaking-down of the alcoholic content of liquor, both beer and spirits, would represent a considerable help. I am surprised that the Federal Government resorted to the one-third reduction before trying this other expedient, unless that course was vital to the saving of a great deal of labour for other phases of the war effort. Beer was broken down in the Old Country during the previous war, and so was whisky. If, in the latter years of the first world war, a man wanted a whisky in England, he asked for a "double" whisky, and he did not add water, on the assumption that the added water was already there. That is an expedient which the Government might well resort to in wartime. Then people can have the drink they desire, within reasonable limits. The Government derives revenue from the excise on spirits, and we do not have to confess our inability, as Parliaments, to control our people, which is largely the position when we enter upon prohibitions of this order.

I have great sympathy and respect for the civilian police. The manner in which they have conducted themselves while endeavouring to maintain law and order during the last six weeks or two months in the streets

of Perth is greatly to their credit. We could not have complained if our civilian police had reached a stage of becoming a little tired of accepting abuse and attempted assaults from men in uniform whom our own military authorities were making no effort to control. I agree with Mr. Parker that there does not seem to be the needed collaboration between the civil and the military police. I was discussing this matter with a military policeman the other evening, and I referred to the lack of ability of military policemen to control drunken men. He replied that if he or any of his mates arrested a drunken soldier, they would be sure to have trouble with civilians, who would try to get the drunken soldier away from the military police. I think that is a case in point regarding the need for collaboration between civil and military police. The civil police could deal with civilians, and the military police with men in uniform.

There is only one other point I wish to stress, and it brings up another difficult problem for the hotel keeper. I refer to the serving of people under 21 years of age, and particularly young women in lounges. The matter is one that should receive attention speedily. I fear that it can be dealt with only by the appointment of a number of women police, who would be aided by our civil police. When the national registration or identification cards are issued, it should be fairly simple to check up on people's ages. To leave the checking to the hotel keepers is to impose too great a responsibility on them, and I consider that some check by our police authorities and the imposition of a fine or two by the police magistrate would have a very salutary effect.

From my observations I do not think this trouble is confined to the men returning from the war. They have not been the worst offenders, but rather the men who have not been oversea. Whether it is because they are not sufficiently hardened to the trials and tribulations of a soldier's life or have had more opportunity to carry drinking to excess, I do not know.

Hon. G. B. Wood: They have not had so much money before. That is the trouble.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: I question the statement that the position is the result of the upset of men returning from the war and the excitement of getting back to their own country. When their behaviour is com-

pared with that of some of the militia lads, I think it can be said that the conduct of the men of the A.I.F. passing through the State has been exemplary and of a much higher standard than that of many of the youths in camps around the metropolitan area, who do not seem to be sufficiently controlled by the military authorities and have very little sense of responsibility.

**HON. G. B. WOOD (East) [12.32]:** This matter could be argued for months and it would be hard to find unanimity amongst any body of men as to the most desirable hour for the closing of hotels. I am in favour of the motion except that part which deals with the display of liquor on the shelves. It might be desirable to remove liquor from shelves, so that its presence would not be an inducement to drunken men to try to obtain it when denied the opportunity to purchase it, but I think that would impose too much of a hardship on the publican. If it is decided that the sale of liquor should be prohibited after a certain hour, it should be possible to provide some form of protection round the bottles such as can be seen in some shops. I refer to a wire netting barrier to separate such bottles from those that are in use.

My opinion is that 6 o'clock is the worst possible hour the Government could have chosen at which to close hotels. There are two or three reasons for my objection. The man who knocks off work in the factory or shop and wants to have a drink should be able to get one. He is not the one against whom we should legislate, but rather the man who hangs around the pubs all day and makes a pig of himself. Another argument against 6 o'clock closing is that at that hour the streets are dark and there is a greater congestion of traffic then than at any other time during the day. That is the time that has been chosen for emptying the hotels of their crowds! There are more people in the streets then than at any other hour. I do not favour 8 o'clock as a closing time. I do not think that hour is desirable just because a man who has dinner in a hotel wants something to drink with it. Generally speaking, dinner starts before 7 o'clock and a man who requires liquor with his dinner should have it served to him before then. I have not much sympathy with the man who

wants to drink with his dinner, if the granting of his desire means that the closing time is to be delayed for a further hour. Round about 8 o'clock people are struggling along the darkened streets to get to the pictures and to have the hotels close at that hour would be most undesirable.

I favour 7 o'clock closing because that is the quietest hour of the evening. Most people have returned home from their places of employment and people going out for the evening have not made their appearance. I do not think we are likely to reach agreement as to the most suitable hour, but I regard 7 o'clock as the most desirable time. Most of the debate has hinged around what the soldiers are doing. I have an idea that soldiers going to or returning from the Middle East who are strangers in this State are not sufficiently well looked after. I believe we cannot do enough for them. We should feed them and do everything we possibly can rather than have them walking from one hotel to another.

**Hon. J. M. Macfarlane:** There are ca-teens all over the place.

**Hon. G. B. WOOD:** They do not seem to be attractive enough.

**Hon. J. Cornell:** The returning men constitute only a passing phase.

**Hon. G. B. WOOD:** As the matter of returning men had been mentioned, I thought I would give my views on the subject. Mr. Roche attributed the trouble to men passing through who had no homes. The places they go to must be attractive enough to hold them. I have seen a lot of this during the last few months. There is only one thing for these unfortunate men to do. There is no one to take them in hand. We need not be too drastic with them, and I do not think it should be necessary to close hotels. Let us give them a fair go and that may get over the difficulty. The military authorities are not doing enough in this matter. In the 1914-18 war, pickets, 50 strong, marched around the streets cleaning up and putting drunken men in the "clink." In the early days of this war a body of pickets marched regularly through the streets of Northam.

**Hon. C. F. Baxter:** They are never to be found here.

**Hon. G. B. WOOD:** No. The military authorities have fallen down on their job in regard to the metropolitan area. They have not done what they should do. Things at Northam were pretty hot for a time but

the situation was cleaned up by instituting wet canteens and imposing certain restrictions. Consequently Northam is not a bad place today, in spite of the fact that there are many troops there. The Country Party observed what was taking place and I think Mr. Baxter mentioned that a telegram was sent to Mr. Forde. I understand that a picket car appeared in the streets immediately afterwards, though whether as a result of our wire or not, I do not know.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: Travelling at 15 miles an hour.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: It is only a camouflage and is not doing the job.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Things have been cleaned up at night time.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: I do not think the situation is as bad as it was and I consider it can be entirely cleaned up. The publican is entitled to a living. He has been amongst us for many years and has been a desirable person. We all like going to hotels. If the military authorities did their job, there would not be need for much alteration and if we can do something to clean up this menace—because it is a menace—I think this short sitting will have accomplished some definite good for the community.

HON. H. V. PIESSE (South-East) [12.40]: Listening to this debate one is struck by the fact that we have a lot of experts in Parliament who can give good advice. Observation is a very good thing. The Government appears to have been stampeded into altering the law to provide for the closing of hotels at 6 o'clock. The first thing it should have done was to call a conference of people like the hotel proprietors and the military authorities and taken evidence or received advice from them. As a matter of fact, that may have been done for all I know, but I have not heard of it. If that conference had been held, the Government must have received very good advice from the hotel keepers and others associated with the problem.

During the last war I happened to be in charge of a military reinforcements camp, and invariably two or three nights a week we were ordered to send out pickets of 30 or 40 men. On one or two occasions we had to take out 200 men and have them stationed in Perth in case of riots or other trouble with the soldiers. It was not the military police pickets that did the work, but

the soldiers themselves who were looking after the honour of their company. When one branch of the service acts as a picketing body, the soldiers know that those pickets are out for their protection, should they be under the influence of liquor. On the other hand, there is no doubt that the appearance of the civil police is like holding up a red rag before a bull. Furthermore, the civil police did not always have the same good effect on the soldiers as did the ordinary picket from the Army.

We have heard today about the content of liquor and I would like to give one experience I had when quite a youth. I was trained in wine making. Some of my friends may say that I was trained in the other direction also, that of testing! The law states that water may not be put in wine when it is being fermented. Nevertheless, in 1900 at the Paris Exhibition my firm won the gold medal for Australia for a claret which was made purely out of the husks of the grapes with water fermented with them. That is against the law, but it is the type of claret that is used in France and other countries today where light claret is sold, and if we could alter our laws to permit of the making of lighter wines, it would be a very big advantage. In going through the streets only the night before last, I saw six perfectly good soldiers who were quite sober, but they had a few large bottles each of port wine in their pockets and they were going to drink the liquor in a cafe. One glass of port wine is twice as strong in alcoholic content as one glass of whisky, so it can be understood that the drinking of much port wine or sweet or fortified wine must have a detrimental effect on the drinker if taken in excess.

It is not my intention to lecture the Government. We are out to support it in seeing that some method is devised whereby this excessive drinking may be avoided. That is why the party of which I am a member has brought forward this motion in both Houses. No doubt the motion will be amended before it is finally carried. It is in effect a pious resolution and an advice to the Government concerning what is going on. The debate provides evidence which may be used to put a stop to excessive drinking. I support the motion.

HON. L. B. BOLTON (Metropolitan) [12.46]: My remarks on this motion will be brief, but I feel it my duty to speak to it. I have always argued, and still hold the

opinion, that this State had by far the most satisfactory liquor laws within the Commonwealth. I was led to believe that largely by what I have seen in my travels in other States. The thing that struck me as being the most iniquitous phase concerning the liquor laws in other parts of Australia was the 6 o'clock closing. I have stayed at most of the leading hotels in Australia in each of the States, with the exception of Tasmania. Where the 6 o'clock closing has applied, I have been staggered by the sights I have seen, and by the mad rush that has occurred of people desirous of getting into hotels or clubs and consuming as much liquor as possible before the premises closed. For this reason I am opposed to 6 o'clock closing.

We should adopt the method in vogue in England. That would be the best system to work by, particularly during the war period, though I should like to see it in force for all time. I refer to the staggering of hours. In England, hotels are open from 10.30 a.m. to 2 p.m., giving  $3\frac{1}{2}$  hours for trading. They are closed then until 4 o'clock, when they re-open until 7.30 p.m., thus giving another  $3\frac{1}{2}$  hours' trading. When hotels are allowed to remain open until 7.30 p.m., persons resident in licensed houses, hotels, boarding houses and the like, are given a reasonable opportunity to have drink with their meals, if they so desire. During the war period I also support the idea of breaking down the alcoholic content of both beer and spirits. Many of us are light drinkers. I prefer a light ale or light wine; I like plenty of water in my whisky. If the breaking down method were adopted during the war, a definite advantage would accrue. Mr. Baxter, in his motion, asks that hotels be closed at 7 o'clock in lieu of 6 o'clock. I support the motion in the hope that that portion of it will be amended. Paragraph (b) states—

No liquor in bottles be supplied from any licensed premises after 4 p.m.

I support that idea, and would even prefer the time to be altered to 3 p.m. In my opinion, some of the disgraceful scenes we have witnessed in the city and some of the large towns are due not to the actual hotel traffic but to the fact that, unfortunately, soldiers and others buy bottles of beer and take it to any place convenient to them, and drink it at all hours.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: What about wines and spirits?

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: I am coming to them. How is this going to affect the sale of wine? If no bottled liquor may be taken from licensed premises, does that not mean that no wine can be supplied after the hours stipulated?

Hon. G. B. Wood: Or from grocers' shops either.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: If I had my way all gallon licenses would be cancelled. I support Mr. Baxter's view that no bottled beer should be supplied after the hours fixed. There is reference in the motion to no liquor in bottles or other containers advertising such liquors being displayed after 4 p.m. That is quite unnecessary and, I think, should be deleted. At present no harm is being done by such displays being made. Another paragraph in the motion says—

That it shall be an offence for any person to bring into or have in his possession any liquor within the precincts of any public hall where any entertainment is being or about to be held.

That has my strongest support. This point does not apply to the excessive drinking that is going on in the army, but to something that has caused me many hours of worry. I have no daughters, but I feel very sad when I pass some place of entertainment, particularly dance halls, and see the excessive drinking that goes on there. At some of these entertainments we find the flower of our youth, but those who take part frequently indulge in spirituous liquors, beer, and so on, which means ruination to their lives. Probably many girls have had liquor for the first time under such conditions. Shame upon the authorities that this sort of thing has been allowed to continue for so long!

Another reason why I support that part of the motion is that in these instances it would be possible for parties going to such entertainments to secure their liquor beforehand. The average person who wants drink later in the evening and fails to get it before the hotels close, ceases to worry about it. In the instances to which I have referred, the liquor that is required is generally secured by some member or members of the party several days ahead. Whatever may be the outcome of the Premier's visit to the Eastern States or of this motion, I think some action should be taken in the direction I have indicated. I support the motion, which will convey to the Premier the opinion of this House.

On motion by the Chief Secretary, debate adjourned.

## MOTION—INDUSTRIES ASSISTANCE ACT.

### *To Disallow Regulation.*

HON. G. B. WOOD (East) [12.54]: I move—

That Regulation 8 made under the Industries Assistance Act, 1915-1940, as published in the "Government Gazette" on the 13th day of February, 1942, and laid on the Table of the House on the 9th day of April, 1942, be and is hereby disallowed.

It is not my intention to speak at great length on this motion. Only last November Mr. Thomson moved that a similar regulation be disallowed, and that was done. He set out at length fully the undesirableness of the regulation in question, and members fully debated it. I believe they will recall the subject matter of the discussion, in which case a good deal of time will be saved today. The regulation in which I am interested deals with an amount of £570,000 which was loaned to the Government for the relief of drought-stricken farmers. We contend, from utterances in the Federal Parliament, as well as by the Premier in Parliament here, that this money was loaned to the State Government, and that the easy conditions of the loan should definitely be passed on to our farmers. The Legislative Council agreed with that contention. Many conditions were attached to the advance. When they borrowed the money, farmers certainly thought such concessions would be passed on to them. I wish to refer to what Mr. Anthony said when the matter was being debated in the Federal Parliament. He said—

Members will see outlined in the Bill an arrangement by which the Commonwealth will meet a portion of the interest which would normally be due by the States on the principal of the moneys loaned to them. This interest contribution, the administrative costs of raising the Commonwealth loan, and a straight-out grant to drought affected wheat-growers, which is the subject of a further Bill, may be regarded as the Commonwealth Government's contribution to drought relief in Australia. Hon. members will note that the States are being allowed a period of four years in which to make their first repayments of principal. In fairness to the States, they must be given an opportunity to recover some of the moneys which they, in turn, will lend to the drought-stricken farmers. It will be appreciated by hon. members that when a farmer has suffered a year of severe drought, at least three or four years must elapse before he will be in

the position to repay money advanced to him during or following the drought to enable him to carry on.

The matter was debated in another place in connection with an amendment to the Industries Assistance Act, and the Premier then said—

We propose to make a short amendment to Section 14 of the Industries Assistance Act to provide that any future advances made under the Act shall be subject to such terms and conditions as to the rate of interest, the repayment of principal and other matters as may be prescribed by regulation. Regulations will then be passed providing that, in connection with the amount of £570,000 to be issued this year as drought relief, no interest will be charged to the farmer for the first year and only half interest will be charged for the next six years. Appropriate regulations will also be made concerning repayment of the advances. We do not intend to make any alterations to the existing conditions of ordinary I.A.B. advances.

*Sitting suspended from 1.0 to 2.15 p.m.*

Hon. G. B. WOOD: Before lunch, I read portions of the debates in the Commonwealth Parliament and in our State Parliament upon this matter. These I believe prove conclusively what was the intention with respect to the lending of this money to the farmers. Then the Government brought down the regulation of November last which I contend was a definite breach of faith in face of the undertaking given by the Commonwealth and the State Parliaments as to the repayment of the money. This matter was debated very fully last December and I do not propose to cover all the ground that was traversed then. I shall content myself with reading portion of the regulation appearing in the "Government Gazette" of the 21st November, 1941, as follows:—

Where the Commissioners are of the opinion that the proceeds derived by the borrower from the sale of his crops or wool or other sources of income arising out of the agricultural farming, grazing, or other operations carried on by him during the 1941-1942 season on any land, his estate and interest wherein is, by virtue of Section 15 of the Act, charged with repayment of the said advances or moneys aforesaid, are sufficient to repay in full the advances or moneys aforesaid and still leave a balance sufficient to enable the borrower to carry on all or any of the said operations during the 1942-43 season, the Commissioners may require the borrower to repay to the Commissioners in full the advances or moneys aforesaid out of the said proceeds, and the borrower shall be liable to make such repayment forthwith upon the Commissioners making demand for the same.

I contend, as Mr. Thomson pointed out last year, that there has been a definite breach of faith. The regulation is extremely lengthy and I certainly shall not read it all. It was disallowed by the Legislative Council last November, and it has been reintroduced altered only in one small clause. The alteration is so slight that it makes but little difference to the regulation; in fact, I think the alteration makes it worse. The Government has flouted the wishes of the Legislative Council in promulgating this new regulation. I go even further and say the Government has committed an illegal act. I may be wrong in saying so, but it is my opinion. If the arguments adduced by Mr. Thomson and other members against the regulation of November last were sound, they are ten times sounder on this occasion. What is the use of the Council's disallowing a regulation when the Government can introduce another one in practically the same terms? The regulation disallowed occupies a full page of the "Government Gazette." I intend now to deal with the clause which has been altered. It is as follows:—

When for the purposes of paragraph (3) of this regulation the Commissioners are considering whether or not, after repayment in full of the advances or moneys owing by the borrower, the balance of the proceeds derived by the borrower from his operation aforesaid are sufficient to enable him to carry on his said operation during the ensuing season, creditors' claims respecting goods supplied or to be supplied for services rendered, or on any other account, not deemed by the Commissioners to be essential to the carrying on of the borrower's farming operations, shall not be taken into account by the Commissioners as being expenses incidental to the carrying on of his said operations by the borrower.

The words that have been deleted are "interest owing to creditors of borrower in respect of machinery," etc. I shall not read the whole paragraph, but merely the following portion:—

... interest owing to creditors of the borrower other than the Commissioners, and payments in respect of machinery or plant owing by the borrower to persons other than the Commissioners, shall not be taken into account ...

As I said, I maintain that the present regulation is worse than the one disallowed by this Chamber. I must leave the matter now in the hands of members, and, in view of the great dissatisfaction that exists not only among the farmers but amongst the business people with regard to it, I ask members to

vote for the disallowance of the regulation, as I consider that what the Government has done in the matter is illegal, or, at all events improper,

On motion by the Chief Secretary, debate adjourned.

## MOTION—PRINTING MINISTERIAL STATEMENT.

*As to State's War Effort.*

Debate resumed from the previous day on the following motion by the Chief Secretary:—

That the Ministerial Statement be printed.

**HON. H. S. W. PARKER** (Metropolitan-Suburban) [2.24]: I am very pleased the Government has called Parliament together, because, in my opinion, there are many things the public wants to know and many matters about which members would like to express their views. I regret extremely that we have not a National Government for the Commonwealth and also for the State. Whether such a Government be formed of the same individuals who are now Ministers is beside the question. In the extreme emergency with which the Empire is now faced, it seems to me wrong that the Government does not consist of persons drawn from all sections of the community. Members of Parliament could then criticise the Government's actions constructively, without being branded as persons trying to put forth party views or ideas. Parliament would be more independent, and that would be better.

I fear that one of the reasons why democracy has failed so much is because we have gone to the extreme in party politics. Far from being a National Government and putting the nation first, the Government is still putting party first. Whether I am right or wrong in that statement possibly does not matter much. I feel, however, that party ideas have been given effect to in the promulgation of various regulations that have been made. I also fear that many so-called national security measures are first regarded from the party point of view rather than from the national interest; in other words, there is an attempt at vote-catching, or a desire not to lose votes. One such matter would divide not only any party but also the country, and that is the liquor question. I feel sure that the recent



regulations governing the liquor traffic would not have left the same feeling in the mind of the public if the Government had been drawn from all sections of political thought. We would then have the most capable men in Australia filling Ministerial positions. I trust that in the near future we shall be able to bring that change about.

I desire to touch upon the civil defence regulations. I feel quite sure those regulations were drawn up in a hurry and it is quite obvious that they were not given sufficient consideration. To walk through the city today is most depressing. There is not a shop window to brighten the streets; nothing but jarrah, or, what is even worse, three-ply, and these enormously increase the fire risk. Apart from war purposes, the ordinary fire risk has increased, I should say, by at least 50 to 100 per cent. For what purpose? Certainly not for defence. It is no defence measure in any shape or form. It certainly will not prevent fires and it certainly is not for the comfort of the people. Surely, in these times we ought to make things a little more pleasant rather than unpleasant. We ought not to damp the spirits of the people and lower their morale. These regulations, in my opinion, do no more than increase the gloom of the people and reduce their morale, besides increasing the risk of fire.

We know that all glass must be removed from the ground floor and basement of buildings. If that is necessary, it is infinitely more necessary to remove the glass from the higher storeys, and if it is not done, there is the danger that bombs will smash it and thus cause splinters to injure the people who may be in the vicinity. The self-same bomb that would bring down a window in the ground floor would also bring down the windows in the higher storeys. Everyone knows that the blast from the explosion of a bomb strikes upwards, not downwards. That means that the explosion of a bomb will damage the windows in the higher storeys and precipitate the glass on to the people below. In fact, there is likely to be far more damage done to glass above the ground floors than to that in windows in basements and ground floors. The authorities are not worrying at all about the glass in the higher windows.

Then again the Commonwealth Government has not done anything regarding the windows of its buildings apart from putting a few strips of paper across the panes. I do

not blame the authorities at all. On the other hand, if it is necessary for the general public to be put to expense in dealing with their windows, surely it should also be necessary for the Government to act similarly. More people visit the G.P.O. daily than are to be found in any other building in the city, but the Commonwealth Government does not worry about the glass there. Another point is that the business people who have been forced to board up their windows are not allowed to put advertisements on the wooden fronts indicating the nature of their business. Presumably it would not make the city gloomy enough if they were permitted to do that. The authorities go further still and say that the business people must cover up their doorways so that people outside cannot see what goods are displayed in the premises. If it is possible to see the goods inside then the owner of the premises has committed an offence. A man came to me the other day and said that an inspector had instructed him to put a screen across the entrance to his premises because a person outside could see the pianos in his shop. That is certainly not the height of absurdity, because a much worse instance is available.

All this merely tends to increase the gloom. The object cannot be to keep people out of the streets or even out of the city. If that is the object, it is in direct opposition to what the Postmaster General holds, because, according to a report in the "West Australian," he stated that there had been a conference between the Australian Broadcasting Commission, the representatives of the commercial broadcasting stations and himself or his representatives and it had been agreed to broadcast racing for the safety of the people who could go to the S.P. shops to hear the broadcasting of the races instead of congregating on the racecourses. Therefore the Postmaster General is satisfied that no danger attaches to people congregating in S.P. betting shops.

The Chief Secretary: Are you quoting the Minister correctly?

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: Yes, according to what appeared in the newspaper.

The Chief Secretary: In what paper did that statement appear?

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: In the "West Australian." Perhaps it appeared in the

"Daily News" as well, but the statement appeared twice.

The Chief Secretary: In the form you quoted it?

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: Yes, to the best of my recollection. I think the Postmaster General said that there were three reasons why it had been agreed that the broadcasting of racing results should be continued, and these were that to prohibit such broadcasts would deprive so many people, such as the inmates of hospitals, of a certain amount of pleasure; that it would prevent the congregation of people on racecourses and the people would be able to do their betting in the city; and, thirdly, it would save the consumption of petrol that is necessary to convey people to the racecourses. Evidently the Postmaster General did not see any reason why people should not be in the city—and neither do I. Evidently, therefore, the object of the regulation is not to keep people out of the city.

I have already mentioned that business people are not allowed to have painted advertisements on their boarded-up windows to indicate what goods are sold in the shops. On the other hand, in London, which is only a few minutes' flight away from enemy aerodromes, tradespeople, as soon as their windows are blasted to pieces, are able to display notices setting out that they are carrying on their particular businesses as usual and that their prices are such and such. They can advertise as much as they like in London. What I have been dwelling upon is calculated to achieve exactly the effect that the enemy desires. He wants the people to be driven away from the city; he wants the people to be scattered and disorganised, trade to be disorganised, and the morale of the people reduced as much as possible. It seems to me that we are doing all that we possibly can in those directions.

Look at the position with the arcades. Let any member walk along an arcade and he will realise that it is like walking down a large packing case. If he wants to buy anything he is just as likely to walk into the wrong shop. Some of them are now displaying the names of their businesses, and that is an improvement. Look at what we are doing to ourselves and how stupid we are! We have an enormous number of American soldiers in our midst with any quantity of money to spend. When they walk down the city streets they cannot see any goods displayed for sale, and so they

go to the hotels where they know what they can get. Just imagine not being able to display any perishable goods! If the enemy came along and asked us to do something for him, we could not do anything better. All this is apparently necessary when the nearest enemy aerodrome is about 2,000 miles distant! True, an aircraft carrier may be dispatched to our coast, but I have a certain amount of confidence in our Navy and in our radio detectors. We shall get ample warning of the approach of aeroplanes.

Has it ever occurred to the Civil Defence Council that should an aircraft carrier be sent to our shores, the planes dispatched from it could carry merely small bomb loads and their area of operations would be limited? The enemy will not waste his time in bombing non-military objectives when there is Fremantle Harbour as well as other places that will certainly be preferred for bombing as military objectives. Of what earthly value are Perth and the suburbs from the standpoint of military objectives? However, the Civil Defence Council thinks that these precautions should be continued. Planes, so I understand, which are dispatched from aircraft carriers, must take off in daylight, the risk being too great in taking off or landing in the dark. In those circumstances common sense suggests that we may expect raids in daylight, which is the course adopted by Japan elsewhere. True, a daylight raid would find the people mostly in the city, but we would certainly receive warning of the approach of the planes. We are told that in the event of a raid the safest course is to lie flat in the gutter rather than to seek shelter in buildings. Yet we are informed that people must not stay in the streets and we block every means of keeping them there. The whole position is absurd.

Then again, the blackout provisions have been carried to a ridiculous extreme. Already a number of deaths from motor accidents have occurred as the result of the black-out. With the nearest enemy aerodrome nearly 2,000 miles away, we must receive a warning of the approach of planes. If they come from the nearest aerodrome, which would be in Timor, they would have to fly right down Western Australia and we must receive warning from centres en route. Nevertheless, the complete black-out is insisted upon, which is in direct contradiction of the expressed opinion of a

Federal Minister. In this morning's "West Australian" I was pleased to see the report of a statement by the Minister for Home Security (Mr. Lazzarini). The report read—

Replying to members of the New South Wales Parliament, who had criticised the brown-out, the Minister for Home Security (Mr. Lazzarini) said today that there was no evidence that crime had increased since the brown-out had been imposed. Nevertheless the military chiefs held that it was necessary to prevent sky-glow being visible far out to sea.

The brown-out is all right for Sydney, but it is useless for suburbs here such as Cottesloe, Mosmans, North Fremantle, South Fremantle, and so on. In those districts there has to be a complete black-out—and the Fremantle Harbour is lit up brightly, and has to be so lit. The very place that the planes would make for is brightly lit up because work in the harbour must be carried on during the night. Then there are the navigation lights, the lights on the bridges and in the lighthouses.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: The same position arises at Geraldton.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: Although these lights are brightly burning, there must be a complete black-out in the suburbs. Surely, we must take into consideration human psychology. When a person is required to provide a complete black-out and night after night nothing happens, he tends to get careless. Should the occasion arise when a complete black-out is essential, he considers his premises are completely blacked out, whereas they are not. Now we are told that the police are to take a hand in the matter and in the "West Australian" this morning we found a wonderful statement from the Commissioner of Police, the inference to be drawn from which is that the regulation applies to brown-out, which is required for the City of Perth, whereas along the coast it is the black-out that is essential. The Commissioner quoted the regulation which commenced as follows:—

Subject to any subsisting order providing for a total black-out, the following lighting restrictions shall be observed.

People will take it that the paragraph in the "West Australian" this morning probably refers to them, and I feel sure that tonight we shall find along the coast a brown-out, which I think is quite enough. If they want a black-out, it should be specifically indicated in the statement.

Hon. J. Cornell: The only black-out at Kalgoorlie applies to motor cars.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: We can deal with Kalgoorlie later; it is not the worst instance. On the 30th March General Blamey, on his return to Melbourne—and I remind members that there is not much difference in the distances from Perth and Melbourne to the nearest enemy base—was reported to have made the following remarks:—

He had noticed the enforcement of a brown-out in Australia and these precautionary measures had increased since his last visit. They were more pronounced than those operating in many other places nearer the scene of battle.

General Blamey could not have said much more, and he was speaking of a brown-out, which he seemed to think was rather unnecessary. When I wrote to the newspaper recently on this subject the Minister for Civil Defence was reported to have replied as follows:—

Mr. Pantou said he would like to mention that, concerning the black-out, this had been ordered by the General Officer Commanding in Western Australia (Major General E. C. P. Plant), and he would like to ask Mr. Parker whether as an old soldier of high rank he would suggest that he (Mr. Pantou) as a civilian and an old soldier of lowly rank should ignore Major General Plant's order or request.

I say definitely that, whether of high or low rank, if one has a civil job to do, one should do it. Doubtless it is necessary to work in with the Army, but obviously the Army would have the whole place blacked out. If the Army authorities were asked, "What about the civilian point of view?" they would reply, "We are not concerned about that." The Army does not care how many civilians are killed; all the Army wants to do is to make things as easy as possible from its own point of view. As in life generally, a man in a particular walk judges things from his own point of view, not from the point of view of others.

I do not suggest that General Plant would not have worked in with the civil authorities, but I can understand why a black-out was insisted on. Presumably General Plant asked "What about a black-out?" and this person of lowly rank replied, "Certainly." One may not have an ordinary hand torch anywhere in Western Australia without having the light dimmed to such an extent that it is almost useless. I do not suggest that the Army is behind that order. The Civil Defence Council should not do what the Army tells it to do; the Army should do its own work.

Hon. J. Cornell: Dressed in a little brief authority.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: No, I would not say that. Perhaps the matter was not fully discussed with General Plant. What I complain of is that the Civil Defence Council did not use its own discretion. Why have a Civil Defence Council if it is going to do exactly as the Army asks? Let the Army do those things on its own and do not let the Civil Defence Council hide behind the Army.

The dangers from the black-out are tremendous. One goes along a street and cannot see anything ahead. There are many streets in the suburbs without foot-paths, and unfortunately a great many people still think that the responsibility is on the motorists to get out of the way. I had an experience last Saturday night. I drove for about a mile along the main road and then turned off, and people crossing the road entirely ignored the fact that a motor was approaching. I had to comply with the regulations by having these absurdly dim headlights. Although the Army exacts all these requirements of civilians, Army vehicles have their lights full on. Go along the roads at Fremantle and we find Army vehicles with their lights full on. The other night a man who could hardly see his way with his regulation lights was passed by an Army truck with lights full on, and he said to himself, "This is a good thing; I will follow behind him." But he could not keep up with the Army truck.

Why have all this black-out in the suburbs when the place that an enemy would be certain to bomb has all its lights on? Fremantle is lighted up and necessarily has to be. No bomb has been dropped within 1,200 miles of Perth. At Port Hedland, where the people apparently have infinitely more courage than we have, they still hold their open-air pictures, although that town is 1,000 miles nearer to the base of enemy operations than we are.

I trust that steps will be taken to alter the personnel of the Civil Defence Council. Let us have practical business men on it. A civil servant is a very good man as a civil servant, but he is not always the best man to have on a board. I should like to see the Civil Defence Council constituted apart from civil servants. I do not wish my remarks to be taken as derogatory to any member of the council, but civil servants have not the necessary experience to enable

them to carry on the work. They are not sufficiently independent to do it. I should like the Government to appoint a council consisting of people who are entirely independent of the Civil Service and also of the Minister.

I was pleased to see the statement of the Premier that he disagreed with unification and also his expression of willingness to do everything for the defence of this country. The Civil Defence Council, however, has not done one thing for the defence of the country. It has not helped defence at all. It has done a considerable amount of work to avoid the loss and damage that would result after an enemy had landed in Western Australia, but it has done nothing at all to assist in the task of preventing an enemy from landing. I thought seriously of moving to have some of the regulations disallowed, but the regulations in themselves are not so bad. It is the orders made under the regulations to which I take exception. For instance, a man is not allowed to use a hand torch in any part of Western Australia unless the glass is so covered that the lighting is reduced to one candle-power.

Hon. J. Cornell: It must have three sheets of paper over the glass.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: One might as well do without it and use a match.

Hon. J. Cornell: You might as well put black-out material over it.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: Yes. After the Premier's remarks about unification I was rather surprised to read in this morning's paper a paragraph as follows:—

Canberra, April 14th.—Provision is made for postponement of local government elections in a National Security amendment gazetted today. It is set out that a State Premier, if satisfied that it is in the interests of defence to do so, may provide for the postponement of the election of any city, municipal, district or shire council, or of any other local governing body in his State.

I think it would be a great stretch of imagination to suggest that the postponement of the road board elections would be in the interests of defence. However that may be, I entirely agree with the notice sent out by the Minister stating that there would be no elections for road boards, though I think the matter should be done in a proper way by taking upon ourselves in this Parliament the duty of passing legislation providing that there shall be no elections this year, next year, or for whatever period is deemed fit. Why ask the Commonwealth

Government to do something which it is obviously within our province to do and which we ought to do. Although the Premier says he does not believe in unification, he is throwing it out in bucketfuls all the time. Why does not the Premier introduce a short Bill to provide that there shall be no elections for local governing bodies this year, next year, or as Parliament may decide?

Regarding the shortage of labour, one class of labour specially mentioned was the shearers. My recollection of the 1914-18 war was that in England the soldiers of the then Home Guard were allowed to go away and assist in the gathering of the harvest and so forth. I should imagine that the Army would be only too pleased to allow the shearers to go away in a body, and I think it would be useful to send them in Army lorries. Allow the soldier shearers to go with their arms and equipment. They would be on the stations in the back-blocks, and 20 or 30 such men would be quite a useful force in the event of parachutists being landed. While on the stations they should be allowed to do the shearing as shearers in the ordinary way and should not be interfered with. They should be released while they are shearing. I feel sure that every one of those men would be delighted to carry on his occupation of shearing and at the same time fulfil his obligation to his country by keeping his arms with him and being available to use them if required. Or he might be called upon to go to some other part.

If men were shearing on a station outside Broome and there was a landing at that centre, they would be only too ready to hop in and take their part. I think this is quite a feasible proposition both for the Army and the nation. We could get the shearing done by making men available for it, and they could carry on their work as soldiers when required and be paid as shearers. Let the stations provide the rations; let the soldiers have their uniform and equipment ready for use should the occasion arise. Then we would have an army in the back-blocks ready for action. I support the motion.

**HON. L. B. BOLTON** (Metropolitan) [2.59]: I wish to say how much I approve of Parliament's being called together. The Government is responsible to the people through Parliament, and Parliament, in

my opinion, should be kept as fully informed as possible of events in connection with the war effort, because in their turn the people will look to their Parliamentary representatives to watch the general interests. The public have been clamouring for members of Parliament to be called together. Whilst I appreciate that very little, if any, legislation can be brought forward at this time, I consider that in justice to the people, Parliament should know what it is good for Parliament to know; and I am quite sure that that is all we shall know.

I wish to commend the Chief Secretary for his clear and concise statement of the State's position. Probably, as he has said, there are many other points on which he could have spoken. Certainly there were many other points on which we would have liked information. However, the Minister gave us a very clear exposition of the situation from the Government angle. Many of the points alluded to have been touched on by previous speakers, and I have no desire to repeat what has been uttered. I shall deal merely with two or three points.

I was deeply interested in the Chief Secretary's remarks regarding reserve food stocks. In my opinion, this will prove another opportunity for Western Australia to supply many commodities which we have never before attempted to produce. I would go so far as to say that the canning of fruit, vegetables, and fish should have been promoted by our Government many years ago. There is an abundance of fruit, vegetables, and fish in this State; and this will be an opportunity to prove what Western Australia can achieve in those directions. The Chief Secretary suggested that the interruption in traffic between this State and eastern Australia was one cause of the shortage of food supplies. I suggest that this shortage may eventually prove a blessing in disguise, because once Western Australia proves what it can do in the production and manufacture of commodities and articles which we have not before produced and made, we shall secure markets that will be of inestimable value to us after the war.

The agricultural position was likewise fully dealt with by the Minister. I was rather struck when I realised that whilst a year or two ago, or even more lately, we were always afraid of over-producing, of not finding markets for most of our products, here today we are told that we shall be very hard pushed to produce even the food

requirements of ourselves and those of the people who we hope will be coming to our shores in the near future. The one exception may be wheat, but I am still hopeful that something better than the present outlook of the wheat position will be forthcoming to the farmers. I do not so much fear the suggested restriction affecting the farming community as some members do. I am fearful that with the available labour Western Australia will be very fortunate if it is able to sow and reap two-thirds of last year's acreage. Many small one-man farmers have unfortunately been compelled to leave their holdings; many others have enlisted to serve their country. I admit that Western Australia will be fortunate if it reaches its two-thirds allowance under the wheat scheme.

Another item to be considered is the rationing of super. If I may be pardoned for saying so, I have a little knowledge of the super. position; and I advise hon. members to tell their friends in the farming community that they will be doing the wisest thing possible if they secure and utilise every ton of super. available to them during this season. With the occupation, firstly, of Nauru Island, and then of Christmas Island and Ocean Island, the super. position may become highly serious for Western Australia during the coming season.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: You are asking that super. should be hoarded!

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: No. I suggest that the farmers should use every possible ton. I suggest that farmers hitherto using ten tons for topdressing should use 20 tons, or put in another 50 acres this season. Many farmers will be unable to take the quantity of super. with which they are being rationed. I advise those farmers to make sure of securing their full ration of super. during this season. While on the question of agriculture and wheat, I wish to make one comment. I entirely disagree with the hoarding or storing of the immense quantity of wheat at Bassendean. I am advised that low-lying, swampy ground is one of the worst possible spots for the breeding of weevil. It would have been hardly possible to pick a worse spot for storing the whole of a season's production under practically one roof.

Hon. L. Craig: There are just as big bins elsewhere.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: I contend that storage of wheat in the city, close to big

factories and super. works, is quite wrong. I will add that by far the wiser course would have been to spread the stacking even more than has been done.

Air raid precautions have received attention from every speaker so far, and therefore my remarks on that subject will be brief. I have to disagree with my friend, Mr. Parker—who has left the Chamber—regarding police control. Personally, I think we shall never get the results of 100 per cent. that we should have in the carrying-out of the regulations, until such time as the police have power to take action against offenders. Some of the regulations are hard to understand. Without unduly hurting anyone's feelings, I would go so far as to say that in my opinion and, from remarks I have heard, in the opinion of others, the public is much more satisfied with the position since the reorganisation of the Civil Defence Council. One thing I will say is that restrictions found necessary must be obeyed 100 per cent., and not overlooked in high places by the Government. I have no wish to criticise unduly, but I can relate glaring instances—glaring in two senses—of what is happening in the city every night. Until such time as those things are amended, it would be most unfair to prosecute private offenders.

I would suggest to the City Council that every possible consideration be given to industries, and that there should be as little interference as possible with industries essential to war work. As to evacuation, there, too, we have had much comment, and rightly so. I know of many instances of utter absurdity in some instructions that have been given to various members of the public, but I refrain from doing so except in one case. That is the case of a householder who was instructed to be ready to evacuate at a minute's notice. He was told that he would have to take all belongings required by his wife and himself, and place them in an 18 inch attache case, as well as sufficient food for two days, together with the blankets required. The citizen suggested that as he had his own car, when he received the order to evacuate he would take his wife with him, and he also offered to take two elderly ladies living quite close by. He was sternly informed that he would not be permitted to do this, but would be required to go, with many others, to transport provided by the City Council. That is only one of many instances which strike

me as utterly ridiculous. Such regulations make a farce of the whole scheme. We know it will be almost impossible to provide transport for the orderly removal of persons who would need to be evacuated in case of a raid. It would be just as easy to permit that man and his wife, and the two elderly ladies, to be evacuated in the man's car, as to send all four of them to the assemblage of transport furnished by the City Council. I trust that such ludicrous measures will be eliminated.

As representing the industrial section of the community, I feel justified in placing before the House the considered view of those employed in the manufacture of war and other requirements. Many employers are still restive owing to continued delays in the delivery of plant and equipment as well as ordered materials. This State's war effort could, and should, have been double what it is had we been able to overcome those disabilities. I do not wish to be understood as blaming the Government. I am not blaming the State Government in any way for this. In my opinion, the Premier and his colleagues have done everything in their power to assist industry in this direction. I have personal knowledge of that fact, and I am in close touch with the industrial world, which speaks in high praise of the attention the Premier, especially, has given to the subject whenever he has been approached regarding it.

This is purely a Federal matter but it is an injustice to the State. I would instance the loss of a contract to this State amounting to between £10,000 and £12,000. This matter has just been brought under my notice and the loss to the State was due entirely to the delay in securing necessary material. That was probably through the lack of shipping space. The firm concerned has now been instructed to return to the Eastern States all the parts either made, partly made or not commenced, and all the material in order that the contract may be completed in the East. That is due entirely to the delay in forwarding material. Part of that material had to be supplied by one of the Defence Departments in Sydney, and through the delay this State has lost at least £10,000 worth of work because very little had been done on the contract.

When addressing the House Mr. Wood asked what had become of Welshpool. The inference was, I think, "Why has production not been commenced at Welsh-

pool?" Speaking before we adjourned at Christmas the Chief Secretary said he was hopeful that the Welshpool works would commence production early in the new year. Here again, due to the continued delays in the delivery of plant and equipment, no start has yet been made. I think that the mistake the Chief Secretary made was that he did not suggest in which new year the work would be started, whether this or next. Another matter to which I desire to refer is that of wartime industrial legislation. Industry generally, it will be admitted, has risen to the occasion and proved its willingness to co-operate with the Government in its war effort, but it must be made to feel that it is at least receiving some consideration when regulation after regulation is promulgated completely changing the position of both employer and worker. Everyone recognises the necessity for emergency measures being applied to every branch of activity within the State during the war, and people generally have given full evidence of their desire to co-operate with the Federal Government. Because of their general acceptance of the broad principle of sacrifice, this is neither the time nor the place for recrimination or for pointing the finger of scorn at those few remaining sections of our community that persistently refuse to recognise the gravity of the situation. Government by regulation has become the generally accepted principle in our wartime existence.

Under the National Security Act the Federal Government has promulgated numerous regulations for the control of industry. In many instances these cut right across the principles of arbitration and have altered the whole basis of constituted authority. Without entering upon invidious comparison, all those familiar with the arbitration system must recognise not only its virtues but its faults and, of the latter, unseemly delay in the Federal Court has been a prolific source of complaint. Control of industry by regulation has entirely displaced all those complaints and has done much to obviate defects that would otherwise have arisen in many of the changes brought about by the demands of the national war plan; much in fact that could not have been done under the old system. Regimentation of industry and labour, the control of free movement of manpower, the pegging of wages, the employment of women in industries where hitherto such employment was unknown,

the careful distribution of manpower as between the armed forces and industry, the control of prices and, in conjunction with taxation measures, the strict control of profits, are all objectives at which the Federal Government has aimed in the formulation of its regulations.

One of the most remarkable features of the present situation is the almost entire absence of political criticism relating to government by regulation. This is prime evidence of the determination of the people so to arrange their lives as to give fullest support to the National Government whatever be its nature or party. It should, therefore, be the earnest determination of the Governments of Australia, both Federal and State, that nothing shall be done or permitted that may in any way retard the safe working of the defence plan, but that everything shall be done by individuals—whether employers or workers—and by unions and employers' organisations to bring about the highest peak of production and personal effort. This can only be achieved if the full confidence of all sections of the community is retained by the Government of the day. It cannot be achieved if confidence is lacking and if it becomes the real belief of the community that the system of government from the Cabinet room is being used to further the interests of some particular section or political party.

My belief, therefore, is that the Federal Government and the State Government should realise that today they hold in sacred trust the whole-hearted desire on the part of the people to face their responsibilities in this war without thought of petty personal or party profit and that that confidence will be maintained until such time as its foundations are shaken by overt acts aimed at establishing that most pernicious of all influences—a class distinction in the Commonwealth.

**HON. J. CORNELL** (South) [3.23]: I do not intend to take up the time of the House at any length. Like other members who have preceded me, I add my tribute of praise and commendation to the Government for calling Parliament together. Not that I think much good will come out of it, but it will be more or less a manifestation that we are doing some little portion of the job which we were returned to this Parliament to do. As was the position two years ago, so is

it today. How are we going to emerge? Are we going to emerge triumphant from this gigantic struggle, are we going to make a draw, or shall we go down? I think it can be generally conceded, if we look at the situation fairly and squarely, that instead of going forward we have gone backward, and I am no pessimist. I am not one of those stupid enough to believe that we have not a capable Army and Navy, but one of the worst features of the situation is the effect that certain journalists and radio commentators have created in endeavouring to tell the general public of our State about the inferiority of our enemies. The reverse has proved to be the case.

I recognise that the responsibility for the future conduct of the war, including the ordering of our daily doings, is one entirely for the Federal authorities and the fewer that handle that situation and make the determinations and dispositions the better. I might say, as I have said right through the piece, that so far as our present Prime Minister is concerned, I have the utmost confidence in him. If left to himself to make major decisions in collaboration with the leaders of our armed forces, I think his conclusions would be right ones. But I heard him say at a function tendered to him here, which was more or less exclusive, that he finds himself in a job that he never looked for and further that he finds himself, so to speak, under our present system of government, in the position of the captain of a football team. Whilst the captain makes the dispositions, the result of the game is more or less in the hands of the whole team. Those were practically his own words. If he can push aside a lot of that—because there are many pseudo-generals amongst his Ministers—listen to the considered opinion of his military, naval, and air advisers and be free to make a decision, I think Australia will play a full part in the gigantic struggle that faces us. But if the policy is going to be one of battledore and shuttlecock, contributed to by a lot of individuals who are not in a position to exercise proper judgment, our effort is not going to be what we would like it to be.

While I have dealt with the broad national phase more or less in generalities, there is an aspect that comes to our very doors, and which, in my considered opinion, is one for attention by ourselves. In the event of an air raid what shall we do?



Should an invasion occur, what will be done will not be determined by city bumbles and others, but will be a matter for the military advisers. We are saying to the civilian population, through the Civil Defence Council, what they shall do and what shall be done, first of all to hide ourselves from the raiders. The only object of the brown-out or the black-out is to provide us with means to hide ourselves. Mr. Parker said that Koepang is the nearest aerodrome outside Australia occupied by our foe. In my wildest moments I do not expect a raid on Perth from Koepang. The raiders have to get back wherever they come from, and in that instance will have to travel about 5,000 miles. What they could drop in such circumstances would not do much more harm than would a Mills bomb.

It looks very much as if the Japanese are likely to have control in the Indian Ocean through their naval forces. If that were so they would be in a position to bomb Perth from aircraft carriers. To endeavour to hide ourselves in such circumstances would be more or less futile. We shall have to sit down and take whatever comes. We are told that the only answer to such a position would be that we should fight the raiders, that our Air Force should go out and meet them and deal with them before they get here. Can it be imagined that the Japanese do not know all about the geographical position of Perth and Fremantle? Of course they do! Let me give one illustration. When the first lot of wheat boats came to Esperance to lift the harvest, Captain Douglas was acting as pilot and had to bring a ship in. When he woke one morning he found that a Japanese boat was tied up at the jetty. That boat had come in without a pilot, although it had never visited the port before.

We know that one of the greatest whaling fleets in the world came to Fremantle periodically for stores and so on and found its own way in and out again. We also know from the tactics of our enemy that he rarely indulges in long-range raiding. If we ever experience a raid, no doubt the enemy will choose conditions that are most satisfactory to him and most unsatisfactory to us. He may choose for the occasion a moonlight night on which our brown-out and black-out conditions would be of no avail. He would pick up the Swan River and the rest would follow. If the enemy has control over the Indian Ocean he will

have control from the air, and the black-out will not be of the slightest value to us. In the last war I happened to be in London during the last four nights when it was raided from the air. German raiders invariably came over England with enough moon to take them there and home again. They picked up the Thames near Dover and followed the river up to London. I am as certain as I stand here that our foes know everything they desire to know about Perth. The Japanese will determine what is the most advantageous hour for them to come here and what atmospheric conditions suit them best.

I sometimes reflect upon what is being done by well-intentioned people who have been dressed in a little brief authority. Many of those persons got in early and ought to be put out, but they are still attempting to run the show. I am fortified in my views by a conversation I remember that occurred some 16 years ago at a hotel in Vancouver. What was stated then has been borne out during this war in its entirety. The conversation at that time turned to the last war. The late Lord Haig then said, "I venture to say that no army ever went forth better equipped or better trained than did the first 100,000 men who went to France, the Old Contemptibles. What did we discover? Immediately we got into action to do the job we thought we knew how to do, we found that 65 per cent. of our arrangements had to be scrapped." That was what I prophesy will happen if we are raided, namely, that only 35 per cent. of our arrangements will prove effective.

We know that a lot of money has been spent in some areas in providing air-raid protection, and at a later date every one in that area has been evacuated to some other part. I am not so much concerned about that sort of thing occurring occasionally, but I object to the unnecessary expenditure of money when a little foresight, common sense, and practicability could have avoided it. I live in a black-out area which begins in the highest point in Nedlands and runs to the river. A few nights ago my wife and I were coming home through the black-out area, and I drew her attention to two-storey houses on the opposite side of the street which constituted a series of light-houses. The humble civilian is asked to black-out his ventilators but at the same time the top storey of the Highway Hotel is allowed to remain a blaze of light. That reduces the whole thing to an absurdity.

People have got it into their heads that if raiders are going over Perth they are going to be suspended in the air for ever and ever and are going to continue dropping bombs for all time. If the raiders come from Timor they must come in and get out quickly. If they come from an air carrier it means they have command of the Indian Ocean and can come in and go out when they like.

We are asked to turn our city and suburbs into a state of mourning or half-mourning. If a raid occurred the first place the raiders would go to would be the Perth Railway Station. They all know where it is, and we all know from what Mr. Dimmitt said last night they will have plenty of lights to guide them there. If a black-out is necessary at Nedlands and Fremantle why is only a brown-out necessary in the case of Perth? Do members imagine for a moment that, if it is a question of lights from above serving as a guide, the enemy will get Perth and miss other parts of the metropolitan area? There is another factor, as to which I am endeavouring to follow up Sir Hal Colebatch, who touched upon it yesterday. Qualified men, who know the result of recent bombings, have told us that if Perth is raided something will happen from which many people considered themselves secure. I myself have some knowledge of explosives. The shop windows in Perth have been boarded up. What would be the result if even a small bomb were dropped near them? The boarding will be a deterrent to the explosion proceeding outward. That has been pointed out by innumerable authorities and it is also borne out by an actual happening, the bombing affair at Boulder, where 14 people lost their lives. It can be explained in this way; the closed doors and the asbestos walls all went outward, but there was no damage to the fly windows and fly doors. Members may ask why that was so. It is because they offered no resistance.

Hon. H. V. Piesse: That bomb was dropped inside the house.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Yes.

Hon. H. V. Piesse: I take it enemy bombs will be dropped outside houses.

Hon. J. CORNELL: If that were so, the boarded windows would be blown inwards. Anyone acquainted with the use of explosives knows that where there is resistance, the effect of the explosion is the greater.

Then we had an extraordinary spectacle in our city. With the best of motives Moore & Co. erected a bund, which was considered by competent men from Singapore to be the best means of coping with the situation that may arise. A few men, dressed in a little brief authority and with no knowledge of the subject, said that the bund would have to come down because it encroached upon the footpath. In due course it was taken down. I am aware it is exceedingly difficult to escape from these irritations, but my biggest grievance is that those who flagrantly commit breaches of the regulations escape, whereas some unsophisticated citizen, who is endeavouring to do his best, gets told off.

I desire to deal with two other phases, one of which concerns the gold mining industry. The position in that industry is very like what I referred to, namely, a possible raid. We think it might happen; we pray to the Almighty that it will not happen. Certain proposals were put before the employers and the miners. They have been repudiated, but they had the effect of destroying the confidence so essential to the continuity and better working of the industry. There is nothing to compel men to work in the mining industry. Many miners have said, "We will get out while the going is good." They went out and are still out. Many of the mines are in such a position, so far as labour is concerned, that the employers, if they wished to adopt a selfish attitude, could say, "In all the circumstances it would be more economical, and it would show better management, if we were to avail ourselves of the exemption provisions of the Mining Act and retain sufficient men for the safety of the mines." They could then say, "When the war is over, if we come out on top we can start again, but if we do not, it does not matter."

However, the managements are trying to carry on the industry. The workers, or many of them, now say, "It does not matter whether we turn up or not, because the job is secure." Members have only to draw their own conclusions in that regard and ask themselves whether it is advisable to continue our gold mining industry. What the gold mining industry means to Western Australia is, in my opinion, incapable of calculation by arithmetic. The Premier has said that the industry contributes £2,000,000 a year to the State.

Ten thousand men are engaged in it. Assuming their average earning to be £7 per week—the average is more than that—that means £70,000 of new money going into circulation every week, apart altogether from stores and other commodities necessary to run the mine. It was the new money that came out of the industry every pay-day that kept this State going during the depression. It accounts for 50 per cent. of our revenue now. Neither the farming industry nor the pastoral industry can be compared with the gold mining industry in that respect. Nature has put the gold in the ground and all we have to do is to dig it out.

Another phase that appeals to me in the conduct of this war is the inequality of sacrifice that some sections of the community are called upon to suffer. I do not intend to go into the question of taxation, as Mr. Seddcm has dealt with it, but I shall cite one or two simple illustrations. It has been said that munition workers and other workers have agreed to work on holidays, but they are paid double time for doing so.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: And double time for not working.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I hold no special brief for breweries or for hotel keepers, but they have been asked to reduce their turnover by a third and their trading hours by three. No consideration is extended to them for doing this; they are asked to do it in the interests of our war effort. We should hold the balance evenly. If the working man is prepared to forgo his holiday, he ought to be prepared to work on that day at the ordinary rate of wages. I suggest it is just as fair to compensate the business people for their sacrifice as it is to pay the worker double rates for working on holidays.

Unfortunately, there seems to be a feeling abroad that our salvation lies with the men who are making munitions. That will not hold water on analysis. Our salvation lies in all of us making an equal sacrifice. I am not a rich man, and, as I said, I do not hold a brief for the business man; but I say that the present state of affairs is altogether one-sided, apart from the question of taxation. We are told that the farmer is to be permitted to crop only two-thirds of the area that he cropped last year. We do not know what compensation he is to receive for the area which he is not permitted to crop. If he is to make some sacrifice, then he should receive considera-

tion equal to that afforded the journeymen at his bench. In the industrial world today we have boards, commissions, and other tribunals set up to consider what munitions and other workers should receive by way of extra consideration, but those who feed the population and engage in the distribution of their requirements get no such consideration. If that condition is to continue, it will be too one-sided altogether. There will come a time when our effort will break down, and I assure the House we are a long way from being out of the wood yet.

Next there is the question of the food shortage. What is the position? Who is being asked to do the work that rightly belongs to the Federal authorities? It is the poor, humble storekeeper. The Federal Government set up an authority to deal with petrol, and so today one cannot secure any petrol supplies unless one has his ration tickets. That being so, why should one be permitted to buy tea without having to produce a ration ticket? Why should the work in connection with the rationing of tea be pushed on to the storekeeper? Why should he be required to employ clerical assistance to cope with the work? I know that some storekeepers are going out of business because they say there is nothing in it these days.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: The merchant has been doing that for years with regard to sales tax.

Hon. J. CORNELL: But the position regarding sales tax is somewhat different. It is simple compared with the task of cutting down a customer's supply of tea from 1 lb. to a couple of ounces. Why should that be made the responsibility of the individual storekeeper? One man put the position to me as this: "My life is a hell. I would like to tell some of my customers where they get off, but I am dealing with my bread and butter. If there is any abuse to be hurled, it should be against those who framed the regulations and not against the storekeeper who has been compelled to give effect to them." The whole procedure is entirely wrong.

I am in favour of Parliament being called together periodically. The expense is not great and the inconvenience to members will have to be borne. I know Ministers are endeavouring to do their best, and we must not hamper their efforts. I have not heard any condemnation of their work during the debate in this Chamber.

The remarks of members have been quite to the contrary, and I am convinced that from the Premier to the lowest ranking Minister, each is endeavouring to do his very best. Periodical meetings of Parliament could work only to the advantage of Ministers themselves. Personally I favour much more committee work being undertaken by members of Parliament themselves. In his circular to members, the Premier said that representatives of mining constituencies should be in their own electorates. The fact is that there is nothing really that we can do there—that is the position so far as I am concerned—but there is quite a lot we could do in Parliament or with Ministers on the spot. Hence I favour occasional short sessions of Parliament, and the formation of committees comprising private members.

When we consider what is done in the Federal arena, we must appreciate the fact that the number of Ministers has been increased to 19, and there are very many committees comprising private members. What I suggest will be to the advantage of the State as a whole. Whatever may be the functions of the Federal Government, it is clear that the direction of affairs of Australia must be from the bridge, but the fact must not be lost sight of that there are six other ships in the national navy, each of which in its humble way is anxious to contribute to the national well-being and the proper management of the affairs of the Commonwealth. I refer to the six State Parliaments.

**HON. H. V. PIESE** (South-East) [4.7]: I congratulate the Government upon its action in calling Parliament together. I assure the Chief Secretary that Country Party members desired that course to be adopted so that we might have an opportunity to gain information we desire. From time to time our constituents ask us for details regarding A.R.P. and other operations, respecting which various statements have appeared in the Press. Until just lately we were not in possession of any special information that we could impart to our electors. That is not altogether the fault of the Minister or those associated with him. They have always been courteous and in many instances when approached, have been able to supply the information required. On the other hand, it is much better for members to meet together as a

Parliament and have the opportunity to secure information such as they were able to derive from the speeches delivered by the Premier and the Chief Secretary. I would also like a semi-secret session of Parliament to be held at which we could be advised more fully regarding the war effort and disabilities encountered by the Administration. Members themselves should act as liaison officers between the Government and their constituents.

During the last fortnight or three weeks, we have received much consideration from the Minister for Mines, who is now in control of the Civil Defence Council. An officer has been appointed to keep in touch with country centres. That officer, Mr. Long, will, I am sure, carry out excellent work, and we have already received much information from him that we have been able to pass on to local bodies in our electorates. I am sorry that my colleague, Mr. Thomson, has had to enter hospital, and that he will probably not be with us this session. He had a number of matters he desired to bring forward for discussion, and I regret that Parliament and the Government will not have the advantage of the advice he had to offer.

Members have been asked to co-operate with Ministers. After listening to the Chief Secretary, I am convinced that there are many directions in which members of this Chamber and of another place will be able to provide that co-operation. The "West Australian," in its leading article this morning, told us of the attitude of the Minister for Lands (Hon. F. J. S. Wise), and gave us information respecting other phases of which we had no opportunity to hear direct from the Minister during his speech last night. The Chief Secretary will perhaps be interested to know that last week I received a letter from the Fishermen's Association of Denmark, which comprises Britishers only, requesting that the inlets along the coast should be thrown open for net fishing. They have been reserved for some time for the convenience of visitors and others, but in this time of shortage of supplies I feel sure that if the fishermen were allowed to net, the shortage of fish would at any rate be alleviated. I am sure that the officials concerned would be prepared to make a recommendation to the Minister accordingly.

In the course of his remarks, Mr. Cornell referred to the stores held by grocers in

country districts. Those with whom I have come in contact have regarded the provision of stores as part of their duty in this time of national crisis, and I admit it has provided them with much extra work. They have been prepared to undertake that responsibility. In my district the merchants have done their utmost to comply with requirements of the Government. In one instance, a large business has closed down in one of the leading towns, and the owner, who was the landlord, desired to carry on, but under the existing regulations it was impossible for him to arrange for the necessary finance through his bank, nor could he get the consent of the Treasury for the carrying on of the business, although it had been founded by his father in 1884. That serves to indicate that at times the regulations operate detrimentally, and I am convinced they should be waived in instances such as I have indicated.

The closing of the bank at Kondinin—one of the Associated Banks—has been a very serious matter for the people there. We have received a wire stating that this was against the policy of the Government, but it does not seem to have made any difference. The fact remains that the bank has been closed and notices have been sent out to that effect to all the clients. This places Kondinin in the position of having no banking facilities whatever. According to the Press of yesterday, the Government is going to insist upon agencies being established in centres from which banking facilities have been withdrawn.

On the subject of farming difficulties, I can speak with a great deal of knowledge of the district in which I reside. I travel long distances and have interests in various farms, and I know that the farmers are suffering very severely indeed. Primary producers do not mind bearing their part of the war effort, but the time is approaching when we shall have to consider whether it will pay to grow foodstuffs for the maintenance of the people. If the present manpower conditions are not altered, I assure members that many farms will go out of production. I have a large property on which three men were permanently employed. On that property we had to let the harvesting stand over while the shearing was done, and the result has been that 400 or 500 acres of crop have been knocked down by the wind and we have harvested only 200 or 300 bags of oats out of a very good crop.

Of course, we shall have the benefit of the sheep feed.

Hon. G. B. Wood: You will not get the benefit.

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: Yes, we will. This brings me to the question of the price fixed for meat. I have on one farm over 1,000 fat wethers and have been keeping them in good condition for the market later on. But there is not much encouragement to forward them if meat is going to remain pegged at the present price. I hope the Government will do its utmost to ensure that the price to the producer is increased. After reading the remarks of the Minister for Lands, as reported in the "West Australian" this morning, I am satisfied that he is fully seized of the seriousness of the position. He also appreciates the fact that the price of potatoes fixed by the Price Fixing Commissioner, I understand from Canberra, is not satisfactory. I do not know whether conferences have been held with our Department of Agriculture before fixing the price, but the fixing of £12 per ton for export and £11 per ton for local sale has been a definite cause of the shortage now being experienced in the metropolitan market.

Farmers have experienced very great difficulty financially practically since 1929-30, and no one can expect them to take £1 a ton less for potatoes eaten by the people in Perth as against those consumed by the people of Adelaide. Yet that is what the Price Fixing Commissioner is insisting on. Through his fixing a lower price for Perth, naturally, supplies are not being forwarded. The Minister for Lands informed me that under the regulations the exporting of food commodities to other States can now be stopped. I hope the Government will get into touch with the Minister for Commerce and prevent any further exportation of potatoes from Western Australia because they are required here for civil and military needs.

Recently, I had the privilege of listening to a lecture by Mr. Baron Hay, who pointed out the need for producing additional vegetables—potatoes and root crops—for the troops now in this State. We have had a letter from the Premier asking us to co-operate in this matter and every member of Parliament from the country will co-operate to his utmost. We have had, travelling the country districts lately, lecturers asking on behalf of the military for producers of the South-West and lower Great Southern

to raise extra potatoes ; 17,000 tons in excess of the quantity grown last year are required and 30,000 tons of vegetables are needed for army purposes. No State can produce vegetables more quickly or of better quality than Western Australia is able to. We have our irrigation areas in the South-West, and the Great Southern can produce vegetables equal to anything grown in Australia.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane : Can you produce them in quantity ?

Hon. H. V. PIESSE : So long as the requisite artificial fertilisers are supplied—and the Commonwealth Government and military authorities have undertaken to make them available—there is no doubt that the quantity needed can be produced. Still, I ask the powers-that-be to realise that it is of no use sending out labour to do this work unless it is trained labour. It is all very well to employ the average foreign element that comes along for work at digging potatoes. We had an experience the other day. After a request had been made to Mr. Stitfold, a statement appeared in the Press that potatoes were being dug and everything was satisfactory, but a few days later I received a letter stating that the men who had been sent down had ruined 25 per cent. of the potatoes by spearing them and that the cost had been 50 per cent. greater than ever before. That is one of the difficulties we are up against.

The Price Fixing Commissioner tells us that by giving growers £10 per ton on the farm they are getting a fair and reasonable price. Of course they would be if the conditions of production were the same as they were two or three years ago. On that basis, £7 per ton would be a reasonable price, but owing to the altered conditions prevailing today, the cost is very much greater. There is serious doubt whether the crop in the South-West will be properly harvested unless efficient labour is provided.

Hon. W. J. Mann : And provided the crops do not get flooded.

Hon. H. V. PIESSE : That is so ; I am glad the hon. member mentioned that point. Two years ago 10,000 to 15,000 tons of potatoes were flooded. I do not think the Price Fixing Commissioner takes into consideration the losses incurred by these farmers. A vegetable crop might be ruined by frost in a night.

Hon. G. B. Wood : He does not know.

Hon. H. V. PIESSE : We are told that the farmer is making a large profit at the fixed price. I say that no primary producer wishes to sell his produce at a lower figure than that which prevails in the Eastern States. There the price of potatoes is £18 a ton, and here it is £12 for export and £11 for local consumption.

The price of pig meat has been fixed at 6d. per lb. because Western Australia is an export country, whereas in New South Wales the price is 8d. and in Victoria 8½d. Pork, I think, is the only meat the price of which is not pegged, and unless some definite undertaking is given that a reasonable price will be paid for pork, it will not be produced. Then we shall find pork being imported from America, as potatoes were the other day, because the American troops must be fed, and if we cannot feed them they will feed themselves.

I am pleased that the potato licensing measure passed last session has been assented to and that the registration of growers began on the 13th of this month. When the growers have been registered, I have it on the authority of the Minister for Lands that he intends to appoint sub-committees, one from the South-West and one from the Great Southern, to act in co-operation with departmental officers as committees of advice. The committees will be directly representative of the producers, and for the first time in Western Australia we will have two licensed growers who will act as liaison officers with the military authorities, the Price Fixing Commissioner, and the Department of Agriculture, and I take it that an office will be set up for dealing with correspondence, inquiries, and so forth. Therefore it should, in the future, prove highly valuable to our tomato growers. The committee is bound to be able to give excellent information to the Commerce Department in Melbourne, and must prove a reliable guide in the fixation of a price for the commodity it represents. I have had a letter from Mr. Cambridge, who is in Melbourne.

A meeting of the committee is to be held in Melbourne tomorrow, but Mr. Burvill and I will not be able to attend it owing to inability to secure transport. We have, however, arranged for Western Australian representation by proxy. Several resolutions will be submitted to the Committee, including those sent forward by the Donnybrook association and published in the Press yesterday morning. I sincerely hope that

when the committee has completed its inquiries, Western Australia will not be treated as an exporting country, and that the same price will be fixed on an all-Australia equity basis, because we have a big job to do. The whole of Australia is asked to unite in providing vegetables for the naval and military forces. Mr. Cambridge's letter informs me that Mr. A. C. Foster has been appointed advisory officer for Australia as regards production. Doubtless we shall have a visit from that gentleman in the near future. He is an exceptionally well trained officer, and has been a practical grower of potatoes in Tasmania. In making the appointment the Federal Government has supplied a long-felt want. I take it, or I hope, that Mr. Foster will not be tied to Tasmania, his appointment being in relation to Australia-wide production.

Some little time ago I attended a meeting of growers at Denmark, when several resolutions were sent on through the Federal member, Mr. Prowse. This is a Federal matter but I feel sure that our State Government is fully seized of its seriousness. In the Denmark district 184 farms have gone out of production. Those 184 farms have gone out of production largely because of the fact that our primary producers are amongst the loyal Australians who have enlisted, and they do not like to ask for exemption. The average farmer abhors applying for exemption, though he wishes to remain on his farm. This matter was taken up very seriously at the Denmark meeting. I fear any action would be too late now, because the great majority of one-man farmers and owners of small properties have already enlisted. Yet many of those men are still occupied in garrison work, or perhaps placed at battle stations in Western Australia. What the State Government has to consider and make a recommendation upon to the Federal Government is that those men should be returned to their farms, whether they like it or not.

The national duty of producing butterfat, for instance, is just as important today as the duty of enlisting. This was pointed out by the Minister for Agriculture last night. The men in question must go back to their homes, for there is no hope of getting other men to take their places. The farms which they have left are now being largely carried on by their wives. The other day a man in my office said to me, "I cannot pay interest. If you wouldn't mind giving me a reference, will you kindly give me wrong initials."

I asked why, and he replied, "The Agricultural Bank would not permit me to go into the army." I did not give him wrong initials, but the man has been in the army ever since that date, and his wife and his 14-year old child have carried on the farm. As a result, and with the assistance of his military pay, he has been able to meet his Agricultural Bank interest. That farmer is an Englishman. When he came out here, he was not too practical; but with true bulldog blood flowing in his veins he persevered. Although his performance on the farm has not been very good, he should be able to hold out, and when his boys come back there will be a holding for one of them to take up.

Before leaving the question of price-fixing, let me say that if a maximum price is fixed for any commodity, a minimum price should be fixed also; because when a maximum price is fixed the tendency is to reduce it. On the other hand, when a minimum price is fixed, it is not fair to ask people to produce for a prospective good market in the future. A price once fixed should continue in force until the crop has been harvested after the end of the war.

Now I come to another Federal matter of the utmost importance to Western Australia. Our Minister for Agriculture is compelled to be continually travelling East for the purpose of conferring with the Department of Commerce in Melbourne. I sincerely hope that Mr. Wise will be able to give close attention to the wheat problem. I heard the hon. gentleman refer to the subject in another place last night, and I know he is seized of some of the particulars. The Federal Minister for Commerce stated in Parkes, New South Wales, that the committee intended to take over all bulk handling in Australia. The Bulk Handling Committee of this State has had a long job at Fremantle, one requiring very close attention. The late Mr. McCallum was on that committee, together with members of this Chamber. When we gave our decision that the scheme should be run by Co-operative Bulk Handling, and the necessary Act of Parliament was passed, the Fremantle bulk handling scheme proved a successful business; and it does belong to the farming community. In 1948 it is to be handed over to the farmers of Western Australia on the basis of the quantity of wheat that each of those farmers has sent in to the co-operative movement. The Federal Minister is using National Emergency

legislation for what might be termed socialisation of the wheat service. I understand that the Eastern States, and particularly New South Wales interests, besides those of Victoria, have forced the position. I sincerely hope, nevertheless, that Mr. Wise will give the scheme a searching examination, and that its acceptance may still be avoided because regulations have not been promulgated or published in the "Government Gazette."

The cost of handling wheat in bulk is 2½d. per bushel throughout Australia. This means that the high-priced bulk handling installations of New South Wales and Victoria are receiving practically the same basic price for wheat as the cheap co-operative scheme of Western Australia, one of the most serviceable of all the installations, especially in view of the war. If a general price is to be paid to the whole of the Australian bulk handling facilities, Western Australia will be a loser. We must be the loser, because of the 2½d. per bushel on our small capital cost. Some people say £135,000; others say that £250,000 has been paid to Bulk Handling Co-operative, Ltd.—which is questionable. Western Australia is in this position, that the flow of wheat over our railways comes from the wheat areas to the ports or storage points, and is there ready to be shipped away. The Australian Wheat Board did make up its mind two years ago to instal large storage bins at eight points in Western Australia, including Picton, Bassendean, and Kataning. Those bins were to be there for war-time storage purposes.

We have had visits from Eastern States experts on the question of weevils. They told us what damage had been done. They said everything was wrong with our scheme, and there was nothing right. Mr. Chris Perry, the secretary of the Wheat Board, came here and said that unless the wheat was turned, it would prove an absolute loss. We had Professor Wilson, of the C.S.I.R., stating something similar. Mr. Cameron, of Dreyfus & Co., who is on the Wheat Board, came here and then went back East and reported that the 4,000,000-bushel bin in Western Australia was practically doomed. I think it only right to make a statement of the results of this bin and of the operations at Fremantle. The Fremantle bin has been cleaned up. It is known as the C.O.R. bin, with a capacity of 4,000,000 bushels. The bin stored 106,936 bushels of wheat for 1939-40, some

of that wheat having been received in July, 1940. Two years after its receipt, and having been left undisturbed over that period, and previous to its arrival at the depot having been stored in the country for seven months, it has now been completely cleaned up by shipping the wheat away. It is calculated that the proportion of wheat exported is 99·7 per cent. of the original quantity placed in the bin. It has been under the very careful scrutiny of the Agricultural Department officers, and only the best exportable f.a.q. wheat has left the country. What do we find? Dust and weevils passed through the screens equal to ·15 per cent. sweepings, of which was sold ·02 per cent. Damaged wheat for sale to the produce trade was approximately ·15 per cent. to ·2 per cent., on which weighing operations are proceeding. The wheat in this shed did not incur any cost whatever for turning. That is the important point. Mr. Perrett said that wheat would have to be turned at least four times, and in New South Wales the bins would have been turned four times at a cost of one-sixth of a penny a bushel, or something like that. We assume that the value of this wheat was 4s. 2d. a bushel and allow all the wheat other than f.a.q. to be a dead loss, which is not the case. The average loss by weevil infestation in this, the first of the big sheds to be cleaned up, is less than one-seventh of one penny per bushel.

That is one point I want to impress on members. This wheat has been stored for two years and has never been turned. It was seven months in the country before being put there, and the loss from that silo is less than one-seventh of one penny per bushel; in other words, the loss is less than would be the cost of one turning operation—one-sixth of a penny. The attack has been mainly on bulk-head bins. We have an instance of a concrete bin being built in Bunbury. I am not one always out to condemn the port of Bunbury. Where facilities have been established and can be used to the advantage of the State, they should be used. It has been found that weevils are very much more in evidence in wheat stored in the Bunbury cement silos than in the tin ones.

Hon. G. B. Wood: There are none at all in the tin ones.

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: I am not going to say there are none.

Hon. W. J. Mann: How long has the wheat been in the cement silos?



Hon. H. V. PIESSE: I cannot say. Mr. Bolton referred to a bin being built next the superphosphate works at Bassendean. I am not sure, but I think it is an all-cement floor bin, and although the storage of wheat is better in the wheat areas—in the cooler areas rather than in the hot centres where the weevil works better and develops more quickly—I feel confident that that bin will experience the same satisfactory results as the Fremantle bin has shown.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: No fear! It is in a very bad place.

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: The cement floor keeps away a lot of damage. Of course, we are not experts. We have to be guided to a great extent by our engineering and departmental experts, and those handling this commodity. That is the reason I ask why should we, in Western Australia, hand over the control to people 2,000 miles away, who have nothing like the same experience we have of handling bulk wheat?

Hon. W. J. Mann: And who do not know local conditions.

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: That is so. It is absurd. I hope the Government will make earnest efforts to avoid having these silos taken over by other interests. We are told that the reason for their being taken over is that bulk handling interests in Western Australia are getting too much money out of storage of wheat. The offer they intend making—this information has not been obtained from the Wheat Board but from my general knowledge, because I happen to be in the milling business—is this: They intend to pay certain rentals per annum to New South Wales, Victoria, and Western Australia for the use of silos for storage. It stands to reason Western Australia will be paid on the same basis *pro rata* as New South Wales, and therefore it is not fair to Western Australia, which looked ahead and put in the system which is so much advantage from the point of view of cheap running and capitalisation. The complaint is that one-sixth of a penny a bushel per week is being paid for storage. Since the war commenced there has been a millers' agreement, which every miller signed—and I do not think I am breaking any confidence when I reveal this fact—for the payment of 1d. per bushel on the maximum quantity of wheat in store during the year, less one month's storage capacity which for each mill is stated in the agreement. That means that the

mills in this country today, for every bushel of wheat they have stored over the monthly quantity they are using, are being paid 1d. a bushel for storage.

What is wrong with Western Australian Co-operative Bulk Handling, Ltd. handling the wheat where necessary and taking all the responsibility? If a mill's maximum quantity was 250,000 bushels and the month's storage capacity was 35,000, it would be paid 1d. per bushel on 250,000 bushels. I claim that if merchants are getting this figure for storage, there must be more merchants than farmers' representatives on the Wheat Board. We must not forget that when bulk handling was introduced in Western Australia, the merchants that were making profits from bagged wheat were sore because they were cut out of the business. They are still sore all over Australia, but today they cannot get the bags, owing to war conditions, and the Western Australian scheme of storing wheat will be followed throughout the length and breadth of Australia.

Mr. A. Wilson, M.H.R., of Victoria, visited this State recently and made an examination of the position in Western Australia. Many people came to the conclusion that Mr. Wilson had made very adverse comments and reports regarding the position here, but that is not so. I understand he is a practical farming man and he made a thorough inspection of the different facilities provided in Western Australia, and the Leader of the Opposition (Hon. C. G. Latham), who was in Melbourne last week, told us that in a short time we may expect to have the further benefit of a copy of Mr. Wilson's report on this State. I do not think the State Government has copies of the report now.

With regard to shearing, Mr. Wood advocated what the Country Party has advocated, that community sheds should be provided at the various centres. If bulk bins can be built so cheaply, it is easy enough to build community shearing sheds. I have two sheds which can each accommodate 12 shearers, and for many years I shored at Katanning by contract—until the union business settled me—from 50,000 to 100,000 sheep per season. For many years, however, I have been shearing with a two-stand plant, because we have not the accommodation to take the big union team of men, and such a procedure was too costly. If community sheds could be introduced, I think they would be of very great benefit. Just imagine a

farmer with 2,000 sheep bringing them in at night and taking them home shorn the next day!

Hon. V. Hamersley: Provided there were no strikes!

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: We are not looking for strikes. No strikes have taken place in Western Australia, and for that I commend the Government. Western Australia is an outstanding example to the rest of the Commonwealth in respect of the manner in which its industrial affairs have been conducted.

Hon. W. J. Mann: Do you mean that the Government is a strike-breaker?

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: I do not know that the Government does that sort of thing, but no strike has taken place, and I have sufficient confidence in the shearers to know that they are seized of the national importance of shearing. We have the big native settlement at Carrolup at Katanning, and I feel sure that natives could be trained there for blade as well as machine shearing. I have four natives working for me. The trouble is that they have to be paid every night.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Do they belong to a union?

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: No, but they get the union rate. The point is that we have to pay them every night because they have to buy food every night. They do not look ahead. The only way to work a native properly is to feed him. I have two natives at Riverdale at the present moment and am feeding them and getting on very much better than before. The difficulty with natives is that they want to go bush after they have collected a few pounds. There is one question I would like the Chief Secretary to put before the Minister in charge of the Department of Native Affairs, and that is as to whether or not a regulation could be framed indenturing the natives to their employers until a job is finished. It is difficult and the Minister shakes his head.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Would the indenture hold?

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: I think so. I have been giving the natives from £2 to £2 5s. or £2 10s., and actually pay them £1 a week. I say that if they stay for three months they will get the other 25s., but if they go away they will not get it. For the most part, the natives have stayed. They might have left when they received their bonuses, but have returned to me on the same conditions. If we can keep them for

three months at a time, we are not doing so badly. We cannot get any other form of labour, and we would not employ these people if we could get other labour. There are many directions in which natives can be used instead of being allowed to roam about.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: Do your remarks apply also to half-castes?

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: Yes. One boy I had working for me left last week without his bonus but, when someone told him if he was not working he would have to go to the war, he returned to me.

I wish to make reference to vegetable canning. Some 12 months ago the Minister for Industrial Development visited Albany, and had a conference with the chairman of the road board, Mr. Burvill, and the representative of the Westralian Farmers. It was suggested that a company be formed for the canning of vegetables in that centre, and the Minister promised to supply information that would be helpful to the industry. No place is more admirably suited for the canning of vegetables than is Albany. Tomatoes can be grown there as well as in Geraldton; in fact, every kind of vegetable can be grown there successfully. One has only to see the Robinson estate to ascertain what a marvellous volume of production goes on there during the summer period. The Minister knows the capabilities of the country and what can be produced there, and is also aware of the number of men who, having made a good livelihood out of vegetables, often grown on small areas, have now been able to retire. We were all very disappointed that the Minister did not give us the information we required. We discovered shortly after his visit that arrangements had been made for the establishment of canning factories in Perth. I hope the Government will, on this occasion, give us an opportunity to establish a canning factory in Albany. The money can be found locally.

The Chief Secretary: Why have not the people found it?

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: The project was put off until the information sought had arrived. Then the war position became worse, and so far a start has not been made with the industry in Albany.

Hon. G. W. Miles: You are not asking the Government to start it?

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: No, but we have asked that the Minister shall furnish us with the necessary information so that

the people concerned may know more about the business. Such information has already been supplied to Plaimar & Co. and other firms. It is not a case of asking the Government for money but of getting information. We also want to be guaranteed that the tinsplate for canning is forthcoming or that the military will take the vegetables without their being canned. So long as tinsplate is available, there will be quite sufficient production in Albany to warrant the development of this important work. I support the motion.

On motion by Hon. E. M. Heenan, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 5.5 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly.

*Wednesday, 15th April, 1942.*

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 11 a.m. and read prayers.

### QUESTION—RAILWAYS.

#### *Standardisation and Duplication.*

Mr. NORTH asked the Premier: 1, Has the urgent problem of standardising and duplicating railways been assigned to Mr. Theodore and the Allied Works Council? 2, Is it within the province of the State Ministry at the present time to influence the early construction of such works, particularly in relation to a through route on standard gauge between Brisbane and Fremantle by the conversion of Broken Hill to Port Pirie, and Kalgoorlie to Fremantle?

The PREMIER replied: 1, The appointment of Mr. Theodore was made by the Commonwealth Government, and the State Government has no detailed information regarding his duties. 2, The State Government has held consultations with a representative of the Allied Works Council and is doing everything in its power to assist the Council in its work.

### QUESTIONS (2)—DEFENCE.

#### *Slit Trenches in School Grounds.*

Mr. NORTH asked the Minister representing the Minister for Education: Is it the intention to provide timber reinforcement to slit trenches in school grounds?

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST replied: No. Timber reinforcement of slit trenches in school grounds is not favoured by the Shelters Committee.

#### *Rifles for V.D.C.*

Mr. STUBBS asked the Minister for Mines: 1, Is he aware that there are thousands of men in this State who devote spare time Saturdays and Sundays to drilling and home defence? 2, Is he aware that not more than 3 per cent. of these men have rifles? 3, Will he urge at the coming Premiers' Conference that the Prime Minister speed up production of rifles and ammunition for units of home defence in Western Australia?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: 1, While I cannot subscribe to statements regarding numbers generally the statement is correct. 2, As armament and military equipment is for security reasons a secret, very few people have accurate information as to the number or percentage of types of equipment.

### QUESTION—MINING.

#### *Lake Campion Alunite Deposit.*

Mr. TRIAT asked the Minister for Mines: 1, When is the Lake Campion alunite deposit expected to start production? 2, Is it the intention of the company to work the deposit for aluminium and potash, or for potash only? 3, What is the title of the company which owns the leases at Lake Campion?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: 1, Production is hoped to commence with first unit within six months. 2, It is intended