

The Minister should consider the matter with a view to overcoming the difficulty. We should not deny these people in the isolated parts of the State the last bit of amusement left to them.

**MR. TRIAT (Mt. Magnet):** I second the motion and strongly support the sentiments expressed by the member for Murchison. In quite a number of outback centres picture-shows are held once or twice a week, but this regulation will definitely bring many of them to an end and inflict great hardship on the people. So far as I know there is no way of overcoming the difficulty if the regulation becomes law. I hope the Minister will give the matter sympathetic consideration.

On motion by the Minister for Works, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 9.37 p.m.*

## Legislative Council.

*Wednesday, 1st September, 1943.*

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

### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

*Ninth Day.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

**HON. J. CORNELL (South) [4.34]:** Before dealing with the Lieut.-Governor's Speech I wish to make a few remarks on a question raised by Mr. Thomson, respecting the possible total abolition of this House. I can best illustrate how I view that possibility by telling a story which, in my view, has much point relatively to the abolition of this Chamber. A very old friend of yours and mine, Mr. President, a Boulder identity who in recent years has been gathered to his fathers, returned to Ireland some 30 years ago, and there renewed acquaintance with a brother of his who in the meantime had become a priest.

Sitting by the fireside at night they discussed Western Australia, and the priest said, "James, Western Australia must be a

wonderful country." The brother replied, "Indeed it is, father." The priest continued, "You must have highly public spirited men there." The brother said, "We have indeed, father. I will give you an instance of one man whom I know. Some two years back he was on the hustings for the Legislative Council"—and, by the way, in those days the Labour Party stood for abolition of the Legislative Council—"and he stated on the hustings that if he was returned and the day after he was returned there was a vote taken on the abolition of the Upper House, he would vote for abolition." The priest meditated for a moment or two, and then said, "Is there any salary attached to the position?" The reply was: "Yes, father; I think £300 or £400 a year." The priest meditated again for a few moments, and then said, "James, tell me, are there any lunatic asylums in Western Australia?" I think that comes down to the final analysis here. A candidate who would vote for the abolition of the Legislative Council would be a fit candidate for the lunatic asylum.

Turning to His Excellency's Speech, the choice and range of subjects to which one could address oneself is practically unlimited. However, I shall deal first with mining. The Speech says—

The agreement with regard to goldmining reached last year between the Prime Minister and the Premier has been strictly observed, with the result that approximately 4,300 men are still employed in this industry. With the exception of about 100 essential key men, these are all military rejects or are married men over 35 years of age. It is anticipated that production for 1943 will be approximately 500,000 fine ozs., worth over £5,000,000. Every endeavour is being made to preserve this great industry, so that after the war it will be able to play the valuable part expected of it in absorbing men and producing wealth.

My comment on this paragraph will be confined chiefly to the South Province. Other members whose constituencies are affected can speak for their own provinces and tell their own stories. The production of gold in Western Australia is now about half of what it was two years ago. Business in towns such as Boulder, Southern Cross, Norseman, Coolgardie and Ravensthorpe and many other small places is less than 50 per cent. of what it was two years ago. In those towns more than half the shops are closed and empty. When my colleague, Mr. Williams, and I said on the floor of this Chamber a little over a year ago that the

men whom it was proposed to leave in the mining industry were of such an age that they could not, and would not, stand up to the bullocking work on the Golden Mile, we uttered a truth which has been doubly proved by the tonnage turned over and many other factors. The tonnage has declined, and it will go on declining.

I venture to predict that unless the special materials necessary for the mining industry, and also the manpower necessary, are kept up, in the very near future more of our big producing mines are bound to close. That calamity or its effects can be known only to men who are conversant with the mining industry—men who knew it two or three years ago and who know it today. Digressing for a moment, and perhaps trespassing on what other members might have to say, I am given to understand that, pathetic though the position may be in the South Province, it is much more so in the Central Province and the North-East Province. If one phase of industrial activity in Western Australia is paying for this war it is the goldmining industry. I want at this stage to make reference to something I saw at Ravensthorpe the other day. The Mines Department has made available the services of two of its best scientific men from the Kalgoorlie School of Mines, and the residents of the district who are still able to work have given voluntary labour for the purpose of establishing a small smelting plant in Ravensthorpe.

The only part of the plant that has been taken to Ravensthorpe, apart from the assaying side, is the smelter itself. All other material has been scrounged from old abandoned mines in the district and the whole plant has been erected by voluntary labour. If members want to see the last thing in improvisation, let them go to Ravensthorpe. I am given to understand that on the metallurgical side, the results of research and trials are beyond the most sanguine expectations, and that experiments have reached a stage that was not anticipated. An effort is now being made to treat tailings previously dealt with as gold bearing ore with copper and reduce the full product down to a bullion basis and therefore do away with transport from this State to the Eastern States for the final phase of copper reduction. If the process comes up to expectations, Western Australian copper will be

put on the map so far as treatment is concerned. Everything depends on the available manpower. Practically all such manpower has gone from the district. It is to be hoped that even if sufficient manpower is not available fully to work the plant, the research being conducted will come fully up to the expectations of the man conducting it.

Turing to agricultural activities, I am sorry to say that there is very little left in the South Province. Most of the farmers formerly there have gone, and the few who are left may very soon go. The Speech says—

Ministers have continued to work in close co-operation with the Commonwealth Government for the production and marketing of our primary products.

We will agree on that. The Speech continues—

Through the activities of District War Agricultural Committees farmers are enabled to play a greater part than ever before in the planning and organisation of production in their own districts. These committees may well become a permanent feature of our agricultural organisation.

Favourable seasonal conditions are offset by manpower difficulties and by serious scarcity of commodities needed for production.

It reads well, but what is the actual position? Take the two first paragraphs I have quoted. Only from an academic viewpoint have they any substance. In actuality they possess no substance; they are mere verbiage. If one were to add to the last paragraph regarding favourable seasonal conditions being offset by manpower difficulties these words—

Dearth of artificial and animal manures plus lack of other essentials necessary to primary production—

we would reasonably be stating the present-day difficulties of men engaged in primary production. Of what value will these district committees be? I have yet to learn that farmers sitting in solemn conclave or conference are going to devise anything practical. Given necessary requisites, individual effort is what is required today—not sitting in solemn conclave. That is what is required by the primary producing section. I will refer to one suggestion made to the primary producers today by experts regarding superphosphate. They say that 40 lbs. of superphosphate per acre is adequate for the growing of wheat.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: That is theoretical; they want some practice!

Hon. J. CORNELL: That statement is made irrespective of the fact that the productive value of superphosphate is 10 to 12 per cent. less than it was two years ago, at which time the experts were saying: "Do not give the land less than 60 lbs. per acre. Use 80 lbs and up to 100 lbs. if you can afford it. Beyond that the application of superphosphate has no material effect on the growing properties of the plant." I think that you, Sir, and others have attended field days on experimental farms and have heard Dr. Sutton repeat exactly what I have said. Yet farmers are now told that 40 lbs. of superphosphate to the acre is satisfactory and are expected to carry on with that amount! Would it not be infinitely better further to reduce the acreage rather than have men endeavouring to grow crops when they have no chance of doing so? Anyone in Western Australia with knowledge of the subject will know that only an infinitesimal part will stand up even to grazing unless the ground is cultivated and there is a generous application of superphosphate.

Hon. G. W. Miles: That applies equally to grazing country.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Yet the experts tell us that 40 lbs. to the acre is sufficient for growing wheat. Is it any wonder that farmers grow? Turning to education, the Speech says—

It is proposed to initiate legislation to enable the school leaving age to be raised to 15 years at a convenient time.

It also states that a Bill will be introduced to amend the University Act and that the extension of technical education and the further improvement of schools in rural areas will be undertaken as soon as circumstances permit. I favour the raising of the school leaving age to 15 or even to 16 years of age; but I notice the Government proposes to do this only at a convenient time. If the present time were convenient the scheme could be put into operation only in the metropolitan area and perhaps in one or two of the larger towns of Western Australia. What is essential today is not to provide more education for those so fortunately situated geographically as to be able to take full advantage of what is offering, but I claim that reasonable educational facilities should be given to that section of the community far remote from the metropolitan area—in the farming areas of the back-blocks.

Hon. V. Hamersley: Hear, hear!

Hon. J. CORNELL: I venture the assertion that today educational facilities in the rural portions of Western Australia fall far short of what were in vogue a few years ago. They have certainly declined. While we may glibly talk about the necessity to provide more education—and I may be inclined towards that opinion myself—I do not want one section of our young people growing up without any educational facilities at all; yet that is the position of many of our children today. If we have money to spend, let the expenditure be incurred in rural areas where the facilities should be increased for the education of our young people. Until the present facilities in the country areas are vastly improved, it would be better to leave things as they are, despite what professors or the school teachers' organisation may say. Our first duty is to see that the children have reasonable facilities for primary education before we talk about providing secondary education for those more fortunately circumstanced.

The Chief Secretary: In what way do you suggest they are so short?

Hon. J. CORNELL: In many places all that is available is the correspondence course, but even that is not available in many localities today.

The Chief Secretary: Quote one district.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I would mention the Dulyalbin area south of Southern Cross. Then there are the Lake King areas. In fact, there is nothing from Ravensthorpe through to north of Mooring Rock. Children are growing up there, but no schools are provided for them and they have to rely only on the correspondence course when it is available. Today in those parts and elsewhere the children have not the advantage of the facilities they should enjoy, and no effort whatever has been made to provide transport to convey them to some centre where educational facilities could be made available. To extend such facilities in the metropolitan area is a very simple matter, but it is quite different when the remote rural areas are taken into consideration. In those outer parts the children are entitled at least to equal consideration, despite the extra expense involved.

Hon. G. W. Miles: The only way by which we can secure it is decentralisation.

Hon. J. CORNELL: That is so.

The Chief Secretary: I would like you to suggest what method could be adopted in those districts.

Hon. J. CORNELL: At the outset I would increase the salaries of the school teachers so as to make work in the outer parts more attractive and thus induce the proper type of teacher to go there. I would endeavour to improve the condition of schools where they are already provided. In fact, there are a dozen and one suggestions that could be made along the lines desired by the Minister. My point is that we should endeavour to spread the benefits of education. Any system that provides facilities for the more fortunately circumstanced and leaves the position as it is for those less favourably situated will not have my support nor should it have the support of any other member who desires the country children to enjoy what should be their due.

I notice from the Speech that the Government proposes to introduce a Bill to amend the University Act. If that measure is to be altered, I hope it will be framed so as to do away with that old slogan—"Free Education from Kindergarten to University." There was a time when I believed in a free university, but that is not my opinion now. I know boys who went through the Perth Boys' School who ought to have gone to the University. Instead of that, they went to work in order to help maintain the rest of their family. I know boys who went from that school, and from other institutions, to the University, whereas those lads should have gone straight to work, because that was what they were most suited for. Their parents happened to be in a position to afford the cost of sending their children to the University for a higher education. That system is unsound and has nothing to commend itself.

The system I would suggest is that every child in Western Australia who has character and promise should be assisted to a University course by means of bursaries. Otherwise, the parent who considered his child should go on to the University and secure a degree should be made to pay for that privilege. The position today is that the parent who can afford the expense involved can send his child to the University, whereas more brilliant lads are forced to secure employment immediately they pass the Junior standard. In my opinion that is wrong. In Western Australia I want to see the op-

portunity afforded every boy or girl of character who can pass the requisite educational test, to secure higher education through financial assistance rendered by the State. If such young people can win the right to secure that assistance as a result of competitive examinations, they should enjoy the privilege as a right. The child who cannot measure up to that standard can go on to the University for further education at the expense of his parent, not at the expense of the State.

Turning now to the question of the railways, taking them all round it can be said that our locomotives and rollingstock generally were never before in such a bad state of disrepair as they are in today. The facilities for passengers have never been worse. Necessary repairs have been so long delayed that now much of the plant is beyond repair. For this state of affairs the war emergency is blamed. That may be so. Take the Kalgoorlie express and walk from one end to the other. A member will find that he cannot secure a single glass. Perhaps we have a fair idea where they have gone. I am pleased that some members representing the South-East Province are here today because I wish to refer to one particular railway line. Recently I travelled from Wagin to Newdegate. I left Wagin at 2.30 a.m. and reached Newdegate at 12.30 p.m. that day—a journey of 113 miles.

The Chief Secretary: Did you say you arrived at Newdegate the next day?

Hon. J. CORNELL: No, the same day. I was unfortunate in the choice of night, because I chose the occasion when the children were returning home from school. There was one car without any lavatory accommodation whatsoever.

Hon. A. Thomson: That is a common thing on spur lines.

Hon. J. CORNELL: The hon. member did not mention it, although most of the railway runs in his province.

Hon. A. Thomson: We waited on the Minister as a deputation upon the subject.

Hon. J. CORNELL: There was an antiquated guard's van with two compartments which had lavatory accommodation. There was no light and in order to get into that lavatory one required to wear a gas mask. If that is the best the Railway Department can salvage out of the war effort for the travellers on that line we had better close it up, or let them travel in cattle trucks. Men

and women, boys and girls and infants had to travel in the train for eight or nine hours, mostly at night, without any lavatory accommodation. At some stations the trains stop long enough for people to do the needful, but the difficulty is to find the way into those places. I understand the Minister for Railways says he cannot interfere with the railway working because the Railways come under an Act of Parliament. He is a friend of mine, but I venture to say that if he were to put up that excuse to the people between Kanowna and Esperance, he need not stand for Parliament again.

I have travelled on the Victorian railways since before I was 10 years of age, and that is 60 years ago. I have never seen anything worse than I saw on the journey to which I have referred. I also travelled back on that line. We left Newdegate at 7 p.m. and did not reach Wagin until 8 o'clock next morning. Let the Chief Secretary work that out for himself, and find out how long people were in the carriage without lavatory accommodation. I admit there was a stop of a few hours at Lake Grace. Although there are only roughly 25 miles of that railroad in the South Province, I put forward a plea for some alteration to be made to the existing system. I approached the stationmaster, and told him I was an old soldier and could put up with a lot and that I could get along without a light, but I asked if there was anything that could be done for the other people. He said, "No; a train has just come in from Collie with a lavatory car and there were only four passengers." On my train people were packed like sardines without any lavatory accommodation. I plead for something to be done. I am sure if members of the Armed Forces were asked their opinion—there were a few on the train—they would say they preferred to travel in cattle trucks so long as the women and children were given reasonable facilities.

I wish now to turn to the Federal sphere. So far there has, I notice, been a wave of silence concerning what happened on the 21st August. I will now break that silence. The Australian electors gave their verdict in an unmistakable manner. They approved of the conduct of the present Commonwealth Government during the past two years, and gave a very pronounced decision that it should carry on with its good work for another three years. That being so, I offer

no criticism so far as the verdict of the electors is concerned. Neither do I wish to comment upon the shortcomings of the Government now in power at Canberra. It may not be amiss if I say that during the course of the 1914-18 war an opposite verdict of more sweeping dimensions was brought in by the electors of Australia. The position in connection with that war was identical with the issue in this war. But in the case of the last war, the elements to whom the verdict was given then wanted to conclude the conflict by peaceful negotiation, whereas the component parts of the same element today say that this is a global war, and that our main enemy in the last war, with his allies, must suffer total defeat. There are latent characteristics in the human family as paradoxical as many that appear in other phases of nature. The decision in connection with the 1914-18 war was paradoxical compared with that given this year, when we get to the bottom of things. Let us hope that the old axiom—electors seldom get the Government they want but more often get the Government they deserve—does not arise from the verdict pronounced on the 21st August.

It is pleasing to be able to say that the Allied armies are now on top of our enemies in all theatres of war whether at sea, on land or in the air. Nevertheless, much more remains to be done by our Armed Forces before victory can come our way. To the men and women of our Armed Forces we owe an unpayable debt of thanks and gratitude. Although victory now appears to rest with the Allied armies, we must not delude ourselves into the belief that our enemies are as nearly beaten as they can be without being beaten. They are still strong in every theatre of war and can be expected to fight to the bitter end. What of the future when victory rests with the Allied armies? Almost every second person one meets in these days glibly mouths such phrases as "the new order," "the Atlantic Charter," "Freedom from want," and so on. One could dogmatise indefinitely on how the future of mankind should be ordered and regimented, but I prefer to quote the opinions of the first Commonwealth Minister to break the silence that has prevailed since the 21st August. I refer to the Minister for Aircraft Production, Senator Cameron. I will take him in the affirmative. I think many members know him and know of his connection with

the last war. In rebuttal of Senator Cameron's utterance I will take the remarks of Field Marshal Smuts, who will probably not be known to many members of this Chamber. The report regarding what Senator Cameron said reads—

Predicting a lengthy term for the Labour Government, the Minister for Aircraft Production (Senator Cameron) said today that he was confident that Labour would handle the problems of the future in such a way that secondary industries would leap ahead after the war and that the right class of citizen would be attracted to this country because of the large amount of work offering, apart from the climatic and other factors.

Primary industries, he said, would forge ahead and antiquated methods of transport would go. Plane services would induce many to make their homes in the outback where waterless regions would become fertile and highly productive because of water being brought to those places.

Without the White Australia policy, which had enabled the Commonwealth to be held, he said, Australia would have had large numbers of Eastern inhabitants who would have been willing tools for Japanese infiltrationists. An Australia in Japanese hands would have threatened the white civilisation, and it was up to the white people of the world to urge Australians to develop this country on white man's lines.

I will now quote from what Field Marshal Smuts said. I had the pleasure on more than one occasion of meeting him in 1921. If there is one man in the world whom I would place as No. 1, so far as outlook and vision is concerned, notwithstanding Mr. Churchill, President Roosevelt and Stalin, it is Field Marshal Smuts. He is the one man who clearly foresaw the result of the Versailles Treaty. He forecast exactly what has happened. He is the one man who opposed the partition of middle Europe. He declared that the Slavs had been fighting each other for 1,000 years and it was only a matter of time when they would fight one another again. In connection with the League of Nations he for one did not go astray. Our cousins of America were the people who went astray. If there is one man in the world who stands out amongst all others, it is Field Marshal Smuts, and this is what he said—

The Prime Minister of South Africa (Field Marshal Smuts) said yesterday that he doubted whether the war would be over before the end of 1944. "The immediate problem after the war," he added, "will be the feeding of Europe and the maintenance of some semblance of order. When we have fed Europe and restored some kind of normal conditions, we can begin building the new heaven on earth to

which people are fondly looking. The task of feeding Europe will be the biggest man has ever undertaken. Europe will be a liability to the world for years. Russia, for instance, has lost the Ukraine, and with it much of her food supplies. She has only just enough on which to exist. That makes her achievements even more remarkable."

Here is a statement as to the future which may be compared with the statement made by the Minister who secured three-quarters of a million votes in Victoria! That is Field Marshal Smuts's prediction.

Hon. A. Thomson: I prefer his.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I think he will prove to be right. However, as far as the future of the world is concerned, I hope he proves, for once, to be wrong, and that Senator Cameron proves to be right. But that is wishful thinking. When the war ends, perhaps neither Field Marshal Smuts nor I will be alive. I have stated the problem which faces the United Nations, and our white civilisation will collapse unless the United Nations are able to do more than was done after the 1914-18 war. I support the motion.

**HON. H. TUCKEY** (South-West): The Lieut.-Governor's Speech on this occasion was much shorter than usual and referred principally to matters connected with the war. It is gratifying to note the improved position of the United Nations compared with that which existed when Parliament met last year. Although it may take a year or two completely to defeat the enemy, there is now the possibility that the Axis will collapse; at all events, there can be no doubt whatever about our final victory. It is now more necessary than ever to make a still greater effort to end the conflict in the shortest possible time. Post-war matters and a new order are frequently mentioned, the latter remaining unexplained. The Government has appointed committees to prepare reports on many aspects of the problem of reconstruction. Local government authorities have also been requested to furnish reports on any works suitable to be put in hand after the war. There seems to be a fear that it will be difficult to re-establish members of our Fighting Forces in civil occupations. I am of opinion, however, that if private enterprise is allowed to function in a normal way, there will be a shortage of labour for some of the proposed Government works.

The difficulty may be in deciding the priority of works in order to meet the labour shortage position. Whatever Government may be in office, it will be necessary to ensure a cheap and plentiful supply of water and electricity. The metropolitan area will grow rapidly, while our country towns and districts are already in need of these two supplies. A few days ago, the Minister for Works kindly opened the Road Board Conference. During his address to the delegates, he referred to a proposal to construct a huge water scheme to serve many of the dry areas, at a cost of about £9,000,000. Later in the day, the Director of Works gave the conference certain details of that proposal and recommended delegates to give it their full support, so that it might be put in hand and carried out, otherwise it might be set aside for fifty years. I did not hear any objection to the proposal; in fact, I believe every delegate was pleased to hear the statement.

I was, however, disappointed not to hear something about a comprehensive electricity supply. If this is not dealt with as a post-war work, it also may have to wait another fifty years. It must be admitted that cheap and convenient power is essential to the development of the State. Its absence in my province has already proved to be a considerable drawback. I understand that it is desired to continue hauling coal from Collie to supply the East Perth power station, but costs alone should govern decisions with regard to the sites for electricity power stations. In Victoria, for instance, coal is mined at Yallourn and the electricity is transmitted about 80 miles to Melbourne over a 130,000 volt line, where it is converted to meet requirements. This supply is not tapped at any intermediate town. Yallourn also supplies large rural areas over smaller lines. In Victoria there are seven power stations, five of which are steam and two water. The smallest is at Ballarat; it is steam, 3,500 kilowatt. The largest is at Yallourn, steam, 144,000 kilowatts.

No guarantees were given by the local authorities when the State Electricity Commission in Victoria acquired the local undertakings. That is a rather important point, because the State Electricity Commission took those districts over and provided all their electricity requirements without any guarantee whatever. Many rural areas were also connected to the Yallourn supply before

the erection of a direct line to Melbourne was undertaken at a cost of about £5,000 per mile. The rural main at Yallourn is of 22,000-volt capacity, and it is already too small to serve the area. I understand that when circumstances permit, it is intended to increase it to 60,000 volts. That is evidence of the great increase in the demand for electricity outside the metropolitan area. Electricity is cheaper in Victoria than it is in New South Wales and, although that may not mean a great deal in saving of costs, it is said to be an advantage in favour of the Victorian manufacturers.

The State Electricity Commission in Victoria began its operations in 1919 by taking over power stations and planning the whole system. I will quote some results. During the short period which has elapsed since the country areas of Victoria were included in the electricity supply system, the service has been extended to 403 centres outside the metropolitan area, and of this number only 77 had at any time previously an electricity supply. In addition, 4,367 farms have been connected to the Commission's distribution mains. The system extends as far as Port Fairy in the west, Lakes Entrance in the east and to Echuca and other border towns in the north. More than 5,500 route miles of transmission and distribution lines are in operation outside the metropolitan area. During the financial year 1938-39, no fewer than 941 farms were connected to the supply, compared with 811 during the previous year and 645 during the year 1936-37, an annual increase of over 100 farms. For convenient administration, and to provide for the divergent economics of distribution in different districts, the country areas are divided into five branches, each under the control of a resident branch manager vested with authority to deal expeditiously with local requirements that arise from time to time. The whole of this organisation is designed to give the rural dweller prompt and complete service.

It is worthy of note that in the 77 country centres with local undertakings acquired by the State Electricity Commission, the overall use of electricity has increased by 774 per cent.; while the average overall cost of electricity sold in the same centres has decreased 71 per cent. from 8.62d. to 2.45d. per unit. These figures indicate the great success of the scheme and the benefit it must be to the people of that State. The Commission began

operations on a comparatively small scale, with provision for expansion in all areas. Cannot this Government ascertain whether a similar policy could be put into operation in this State? The matter is so important from every angle that some definite action should be taken to include an efficient and satisfactory scheme in post-war works. Investigations should be made by independent engineers, and local authorities would be pleased to render any assistance required in such investigations.

It is perhaps unnecessary to refer to the number of small electricity concerns that I have spoken of during the past two or three years. I have mentioned a number of them in this Chamber, and I pointed out the great cost they were to the small populations in those centres that had to support such undertakings. Collectively, they cost a great deal of money and I think the sooner some comprehensive scheme is put into operation the better it will be for the State generally. There are still many places where people are without electric light and power. I am sure that after the war many of those small centres will endeavour to emulate what other places have done; they will try to secure their own little plants if they think there is no possible chance of the Government stepping in and providing a systematic supply. I therefore hope the Government will move in the matter, if it has not already done so, and make the necessary investigation, so that, if it is at all possible, a beginning may be made when the war ends.

Considerable attention has been devoted to new industries. These, in my opinion, should be based on sound economic lines, so that they may be able to operate after the war. We have tremendous quantities of raw materials, but are faced with the problem of overseas trading. The Prime Minister and the Commonwealth Attorney General both now admit that Australia must have a much larger population; we cannot, however, have it both ways; that is, we cannot continue to live within ourselves and expect to have a large population, too. The Commonwealth Government has all the necessary power to arrange for reciprocal trade with overseas countries, and I have no doubt that sooner or later Australia may be forced to adjust the present policy of extreme nationalism.

There was some criticism in another place with regard to the Perth herring industry. It was stated that only recently was it dis-

covered that Perth herring were good to eat and that further investigations were being made. Perth herring were canned at Mandurah 60 years ago. In the early days of the industry they were considered to be an uninteresting sideline that would not sell against the sea mullet. Over 30 years ago a firm in which I was interested received an order from J. & W. Bateman, Fremantle, for 100 cases of Perth herring. There were four dozen 1 lb. tins to a case and the price was 3s. 10d. a dozen landed at Fremantle. That figure was governed by the price of the imported article which, at that time, was 3s. 10d. at Fremantle wharf. Some time later I was advised by one of Bateman's men that 75 cases of our order went to one firm at Broome, namely, Streeter & Male. If a place like Broome, which I suppose at that time was experiencing the busy pearling days, could take 75 cases it showed the large outlet we have for locally canned products. Perth herring have never been as plentiful as mullet and, unless smoked before being canned, are not in the same class for eating purposes. They are easy to catch when about, but they do not frequent the waters along the coast as do mullet. When put up as fresh herring they do not compare with sea mullet.

Possibly the idea that only recently were they found to be good to eat is due to the fact that when fried or steamed they cannot be eaten because of their many fine bones. It is almost impossible to eat them unless they are cooked under high pressure steam which softens the bones. When properly processed the bones are not noticed. At the time Bateman's bought the trial order of 100 cases of fresh herring they were being canned as kippered herring, and as such they brought a much better price. As a matter of fact, they brought 5s. 6d. per dozen which was better than the price obtained for mullet which was selling at 4s. 6d. per dozen. But it did not pay to can fresh herring at 3s. 10d. per dozen when, with less work, the same quantity of mullet could be preserved and bring a better price. The Perth herring in those days were considered to be a nuisance. They were found in large schools and if a fisherman surrounded them clearing the net entailed considerable work.

While on this subject I draw attention to the fact that recently quantities of immature Perth herring were being sent to a



factory at Victoria Park. I have not seen that factory but I believe it is a very small affair. Undersized or fish of an illegal size have been sent there, the excuse being that the restrictions were being waived in order to get the fish for processing. One lot that I saw going forward would take from eight to 12 fish to fill a 1 lb. tin. That is plain destruction. We have not reached the stage at which there is occasion to can immature fish to feed the people of this country. We should preserve them in order to increase their size and not use the small fry.

I was interested in Mr. Thomson's remarks yesterday when he was speaking of the half-caste problem. He could have said more had he had the time, but he said sufficient to give members an idea of the trouble. We have not experienced much bother in the province I represent, but still it is there. We have a number of half-castes, and they are increasing each year. The time will come when something will have to be done in order to cope with the trouble that they are causing. Some of them are quite good workers but frequently they are most unreliable. They are always after drink and if they get it become a nuisance. I would like to know why they are not called up by the Defence Department and put to work. They enjoy all the privileges given by the Pensions Department. They are entitled to the old age pension, the invalid pension, and child endowment, and the women are entitled to the widow's pension. Why should they not take their place and do a bit of work for the country?

It would be a good thing if some of them were called up. We could do with them in the country where we are short of labour. On the other hand there are a few that we could very well do without. They cannot be relied on. When working they make good money, and they have ways and means of going bush and getting a bit of tucker if they are short of money. The important part about it all is that in some districts, such as Mr. Thomson referred to yesterday, they are increasingly fairly rapidly. It is futile to criticise the Government for all the shortcomings because it is a difficult problem. If any member has a suggestion to make to assist the Government, he should advance it. We should co-operate and evolve some policy to provide for these people in the future. Last year I referred to the shipping problem between the Eastern

States and Western Australia. I pointed out the unfairness of bringing manufactured articles from Victoria while manufacturers here could not bring raw material from South Australia. I particularly referred to gas-producers on that occasion. The Minister agreed that there was some room for complaint, but he could not say just who was responsible although he knew that someone was to blame for what was going on.

I think that the Advisory Committee dealing with this matter is still somewhat unsatisfactory. I do not know the members of it, but when I was in Melbourne the other day a manufacturer told me that he had received an order for 1,500 dozen water bags for the Perth trade last summer. He still has the bags in Melbourne and is unable to get them transported here. They are essential in this State. Last year water bags could not be purchased at country stores. I am told on good authority that some locally made bags marked or branded "not guaranteed," went to the North-West. Of what use is it to send an unguaranteed water bag to the North-West? It would be better to send none at all. The Melbourne man I mentioned said that manufacturers never knew when a ship was leaving. If the authorities would give them one boat to ply between the Eastern States and Western Australia, they would know where they stood. As it is now they may get two or three days' notice of when a boat is to leave and are able to get only small supplies away.

He said that the secrecy was too stringent and that they could not co-operate with the shipping authorities. At the same time he showed me a lettergraph he had received from London which set out the name of a ship, the date it was leaving, the class of goods being carried and everything in connection with the shipment. That boat was to travel through the North Sea where the enemy is operating. If the movements of shipping across the North Sea are advertised in this way, why cannot we get some notice of when ships are going to Western Australia? The firm dealing in water bags wanted to sell them in Victoria but the Perth firms said, "No, we must have them. Keep them on hand even if it takes a year or two to get them here." There certainly seems to be room for better management regarding ship-

ping arrangements between eastern and Western Australia. The housing problem is very acute. We all agree that not only in Perth but throughout the country districts there is a shortage of houses. Some mention has been made of a large scheme to build houses for letting purposes. I will support the authorities in every way to make it possible to build houses, but not if they are to be erected for letting purposes. I want to see them built on the Workers' Homes Board principle so that the people will have some interest in the home they occupy.

I have not had much to do with the letting of houses, but the little experience I have had has led me to believe that many tenants have no respect for other people's property. It would be bad for the country as a whole to have 1,000 of these places let on a tenancy basis under which no proper care would be taken of them. Under the best of management the depreciation is great, and we can well imagine what it would be without any care being exercised at all. I quite agree with the proposal to raise the school leaving age from 14 to 15 years. I agree with Mr. Cornell that we should give as much attention as possible to the country districts. In fairness to the Government, however, I must say that, in my experience, the small country districts have been given a fair amount of attention in the past.

In the South-West, schools with only eight or nine children attending have not been closed until it has been absolutely imperative because of the continued falling off in attendances. A system has now been inaugurated of transporting children from surrounding districts to a main school so that they may have the advantage of better educational facilities. That scheme is working very well. Generally speaking, while the position has improved, there is still room for progress. A step in the right direction would be to increase the leaving age from 14 to 15. At that stage boys or girls are not able to do very important work, but they are at an age when they need care and, unfortunately, a good many parents do not then give the necessary care and attention to their children. It would be a good move if they were given further education and kept away from disturbing influences.

The Railway Department has come in for a good deal of criticism. I know some of the railway officials pretty well and from what they have told me I have gathered that the rolling stock is in a bad state of disrepair. We must understand that at the Midland Junction Railway Workshops, we are turning out work that is sent to various parts of the Commonwealth. I was surprised recently to learn that certain engines built there have gone as far away as Queensland. It is well for members to know that a lot of high-class important work is being carried out at Midland Junction that is essential to meet the requirements of other parts of Australia. For that reason we have to pay the penalty when it comes to train travelling. As soon as possible I would like to see a speeding-up of our passenger trains. Something like 40 years ago I used to travel six days a week between Perth and Fremantle, and the journey was then done in the same time as it now takes. In view of the rapid strides that have been made in other directions, surely we can do better than that! If it is at all possible, railway travelling should be speeded up because rapid transport means so much to the travelling public. The department should endeavour to improve the time-table, if not immediately, then as soon as the rolling-stock can be put in better order.

I have referred to the subject of electricity principally because I felt that it was not receiving the notice it deserved from the Government, especially in view of the fact that the Minister made no reference to it at the recent Road Board Conference. That gathering was held mainly at the request of the Minister for Works, and while he and his departmental officers gave a lot of information, I felt that the question of electricity supplies was being omitted almost entirely from the programme. No matter how small a beginning we make, it cannot be gainsaid that this is a most important matter. I support the motion.

**HON. W. R. HALL** (North-East): I did not intend to speak on the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply this session, one reason being that not much notice seems to be taken of our remarks by the Government. There is generally a lot of talk on this motion and members point out how various matters are affecting their constituents, but little or no regard is paid to them by the Government.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: Get a new Government.

Hon. W. R. HALL: Presently we shall see what the recently-elected Commonwealth Government will do for Western Australia.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: I meant a new State Government.

Hon. W. R. HALL: Even that might happen before long. I feel that I would be failing in my duty if I omitted to mention two or three matters that are seriously affecting my province. Reference is made in the Speech to the goldmining industry. This is the industry which for years has carried Western Australia; it has suffered more than any other industry on account of the war; it is the industry that we hope after the war will absorb in employment thousands of the boys now fighting for us. There are some 4,300 men left in the industry, a mere bagatelle as compared with the number required to keep the industry operating in such a way that the mines will be in readiness to resume full operations when the war is over. These men are doing a wonderful job. I have stated in Kalgoorlie that the highest praise is due to the managers of the mines, their staffs and the men particularly for the magnificent job they are doing to keep the mines going so that they will be available to absorb labour after the war. We all hope that the war will not last so long as to cause the mines to deteriorate to such an extent as to take a long time to get them into working order once more.

I am pleased to be able to say that Kalgoorlie is a little brighter than it was a year ago. The people now have a vastly different outlook, due doubtless to the knowledge that we are on the road to victory. The people of the goldfields, in common with others, are looking for the return of their loved ones in order that they may settle down and enjoy the luxury of peace and prosperity again. I wish to direct the attention of the Government to the appalling state of affairs prevailing in the ghost towns north of Kalgoorlie. I refer to centres between Kalgoorlie and Laverton. I was interested in the remarks of the two previous speakers on education and can endorse every word they said as regards those outback centres. The children there are not enjoying the same standard of education as even those in Kalgoorlie. The outback schools are not staffed with teachers of the higher grades, and if only monitors are employed to teach the

children up to a certain standard, it is certain that their education must suffer. Those children have not the opportunities that are open to others to gain their junior and leaving certificates.

Within the last three weeks I have travelled through all those towns from Kalgoorlie to Laverton and, with the one exception of Gwalia, all of them are merely ghost towns. In them may be found perhaps 16 or 18 people just hanging on to keep things going until the war finishes and they are able to get back to peace-time conditions. They are living under disabilities not comparable with those suffered by people in other parts of the State. They have not even the facilities to get the foodstuffs they need. There is only one train a fortnight from Kalgoorlie to Laverton, a distance of a little over 200 miles, and there are only two trains to Leonora. The people there have difficulty in getting the foodstuffs necessary to enable them to exist and to keep the industries going. These are mainly mining towns, though there are a few pastoral properties. I wish to emphasise the struggle these people have to keep going owing to the lack of railway transport ensuring supplies of the necessities of life. Members, irrespective of whether they represent mining, pastoral or farming districts, are all looking forward to the mining industry being able to absorb many men in employment after the war. I hope that the Commonwealth Government and the manpower authorities do not interfere with the industry further by taking more men from it, but that they will stick to the agreement with the State Government and permit the present number of men to be retained in the industry.

Speakers this afternoon have mentioned conditions associated with railway transport. I can endorse all that has been said. One member stated that glasses are no longer to be found in compartments. Travellers on the goldfields lines cannot get a drink of water on the train, much less anything else. If a passenger does not carry a glass of his own, he runs a risk of having to go dry, even on a journey of 24 hours. I have travelled on the Kalgoorlie-Perth express practically every week within the last 12 months, and I can say that the conditions under which people are expected to travel are by no means fair. For some reason or other the department seems intent on overloading trains to

such an extent that many passengers cannot get sitting room, much less sleeping berths. On the express from Perth to Kalgoorlie there may be one second-class sleeping coach and two carriages for sit-up passengers. If anyone boards the train at an intermediate station, the conductor is not permitted to sell him a ticket for a sleeper. This seems to be ridiculous. That passenger has either to sit up or stand up.

The Kalgoorlie express must be a wonderful source of profit to the department. The accommodation is practically fully availed of every night. In order to get a sleeping berth to Kalgoorlie, passengers have to book six days ahead. As regards members of Parliament, they have to go upstairs at the Central Station in order to book sleepers. I do not claim to be entitled to any greater privileges than the general public receive, but there should be means of booking sleepers without requiring people to stand in queues and wait their turn outside the Central Railway Station. It is a disgrace to the department to have people queued up there trying to book sleepers.

Hon. A. Thomson: Some of them, after standing there for two hours, have found that the booking was closed.

Hon. W. R. HALL: One man went there at 6.30 a.m. in order to try to get a berth. Why does not the department run an extra train? I understand that trouble regarding the extra coal is the reason why special trains are not run. Seeing that between Perth and Fremantle half the day, long trains are run with nobody in them, the department could save the coal expended on those trains and give the public what it actually desires. Even when our soldiers are travelling to the Goldfields, no allowance is made for intermediate passengers, with the result that at Northam, and at various camps where service men require transport, particularly towards the week-ends when soldiers go on leave, the men have to lie down on the platforms. That is quite wrong. I have seen that sort of thing, and so has Mr. Cornell. No wonder that the soldiers want to borrow the rugs or break the glasses in their efforts to obtain a little comfort on that kind of trip!

In favour of the Railway Department I wish to mention that it has done a wonderful job in catering for service men throughout the State, and from East to West. That fact, naturally, has a great deal to do with

the condition of our rolling stock. After all is said and done, we know that many thousands of men have been transported from Perth to Kalgoorlie and elsewhere by our railways in the darkness of night. A wonderful task has been accomplished in that respect. Again, we are very fortunate in having such men as the conductors and attendants on the Kalgoorlie express. The set of conductors is A1 in every respect. They do their best in circumstances which are most disadvantageous. In spite of that, I understand, they get harassed by the Railway Department. After having been in the service for 38 years a railway conductor was fined £2 for some trivial offence. A high executive officer of the department, I understand, travelled a hundred miles up the line in a motor car to jump on the train and, in fact, harassed conductors whose utmost efforts were being directed to carrying out their difficult task in highly unfavourable circumstances. I do not think very much of officers who try to gain anything by such tactics. If the acting Commissioner of Railways and his leading officers would take a few trips on the express, they would obtain a better appreciation of the traffic. Further, if they were fined every time they were wrong, they would not draw much pay. I have done with this matter, but I could not let the occasion pass without mentioning it, because, in addition to soldiers who are travelling, it must be borne in mind, there are still many goldfields people in Perth who want to get back to their homes.

As regards the Liquid Fuel Board and the goldfields wood supply position, some time ago the board did at intervals send a representative to Kalgoorlie to investigate the position in regard to household firewood, with the result that a year or so ago the two local municipal councils and the various road boards were issued with tickets authorising men who had trucks to go out and obtain enough domestic firewood to keep their homes going. To a certain extent that practice has been done away with this year. In spite of what I read in the Press and hear from people who say that the wood position in Kalgoorlie is fairly good, I assert that the difficulty is acute and that it is practically impossible to buy firewood, which has resulted in much suffering during this winter. Relief could be extended by the Liquid Fuel Board by granting petrol to firewood carters

who could help to alleviate the position. In very few instances has this been done, with the result that it is still impossible to have more than a small percentage of goldfields residents served with firewood. The firewood company has done a little to help the hospitals and other essential establishments, but the ordinary people have had a great struggle to get any firewood at all.

I maintain that the goldfields people in general should have direct representation on the fuel board there. I have placed well over 1,000 cases before the Liquid Fuel Board in Perth, until I have become sick and tired of wearing out boot leather in visiting the board's office. My object, needless to say, was to obtain consideration for the goldfields people. Let me make it clear that I have a great admiration for the Chairman of the Liquid Fuel Board, and that I acknowledge that the board is trying to deal with tens of thousands of cases; but the goldfields people, or the people of the North and South Provinces, suffer through having to wait for weeks while their applications are sent down to Perth for decision. I could write a book on the subject. The applications should be dealt with on the Goldfields, on the spot. Only today someone came along with a broken part of a motor car which he wanted replaced. He had a couple of forms for both the Supply and Shipping Department and the Munitions Department. What would be the position in, say, Laverton, where there is only one train per fortnight, if a man were similarly circumstanced? This is the result of all departments being centralised down here in the metropolitan area. Some of them should be directly represented in Kalgoorlie, and also in Leonora and Laverton. The Munitions Department and the Supply and Shipping Department appear to be governing the whole State now. For my part I do not know what will become of all these Government servants when the war ends, but I am waiting for the State Parliament to secure more control.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Those Government servants will be found some work to do, I hope, then.

Hon. W. R. HALL: Numbers of them were out of jobs before the war, and now they want to turn round and dictate to the public and to ask this and that. I could tell the House a good story in that connec-

tion, but I shall not do so. It is about time we had a little more authority than we have at present; otherwise we shall not get anywhere. On the Goldfields are 30,000 or 40,000 people. I hope all those boards realise that the Goldfields do not constitute a little tinpot place. The housing problem is again becoming acute on the Goldfields. In the backblocks, however, are numerous abandoned dwellings. Still, that is a matter over which we have no control. I believe we can see the way to victory now; I believe we are on the road to it. I hope we shall get back into our pre-war stride so that the people we represent will have a fair go. In various ways they are not getting it today. Some of them are finding life difficult. They may have the money for embarking in business, but the money does not go too far. The Goldfields people have given up a great deal in order to assist the war effort, and they will continue to do so. All over Australia the goldfields people have had a lot to lose. I hope the time is not far distant when we shall all return to peace conditions and carry on with post-war reconstruction, which I know is now in the minds of the Commonwealth Government. I have much pleasure in supporting the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply.

On motion by Hon. J. G. Hislop, debate adjourned.

#### BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

- 1, Trade Unions Act Amendment.
- 2, Pensioners (Rates Exemption) Act Amendment.

Received from the Assembly.

*House adjourned at 6.15 p.m.*