

acre less than that on which they agreed, with the result that the farm remains unsold. It seems to me that when practical farmers agree on a price, it is wrong for a Government valuer to tell them, in effect, that they do not know their business, and prevent a sale from taking place. I was trustee for a small estate and had two cash offers of £600 from different buyers. When the official valuation was made, the figure was reduced to £415, which meant that no business was done. I did not push the price up; I did not advertise the property, or praise it in any way. Nevertheless the people were prepared to pay the figure I have mentioned; but they were not allowed to do so. I think the present Bill could have been set aside for some time to come. The set-up of the board in the parent Act is satisfactory—more so than that which would apply if the Bill were passed. I have at least one amendment I propose to move at the Committee stage. In the meantime, I propose to support the second reading.

On motion by Hon. V. Hamersley, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 8.50 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 16th October, 1945.

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

QUESTIONS.

DAIRYING INDUSTRY.

(a) *As to Mastitis Campaign Literature.*

Mr. McLARTY asked the Minister for Agriculture:

1, Has his attention been drawn to a statement headed "Mastitis Campaign" in the "Dairy Farmer" of August, 1945, in which it is stated the Victorian Government is distributing 30,000 coloured wall sheets and booklets to farmers giving information in regard to the spread and prevention of mastitis?

2, Will he obtain a supply of these wall sheets and booklets and have them distributed amongst the dairy farmers in this State?

The PREMIER (for the Minister for Agriculture) replied:

1 and 2, Wall sheet and booklet upon mastitis as issued by the Department of Agriculture, Victoria, have been sighted by appropriate officers of the Department of Agriculture. Certain aspects of this pamphlet are considered unsuitable for conditions in Western Australia, and the Department is preparing another pamphlet and wall sheet for issue in the near future. In the meantime a reprint from the "Journal of Agriculture" on mastitis is available, and large numbers have been issued to farmers.

(b) *As to Treatment for Contagious Abortion.*

Mr. McLARTY asked the Minister for Agriculture:

1, Is he aware that the Victorian Government with limited supplies of Strain 19 has had 400 Victorian dairy herds vaccinated, and that "The Australian Dairy Review" of the 24th September, 1945, states that the Victorian State Department of Agriculture reports that this effort to prevent contagious abortion is meeting with very satisfactory results?

2, In view of the importance of this information to the dairying industry, would he state what action is being taken by his department to obtain supplies of Strain 19, and with what results?

3, Is it proposed to conduct any courses of instruction amongst dairy farmers in the near future instructing them as to its use?

The PREMIER (for the Minister for Agriculture) replied:

1, Yes, the Department of Agriculture is fully aware of, and has complete information in respect to the work done in Victoria in connection with the vaccination of cattle with Strain 19. The vaccine was prepared and supplied by the Council for Scientific

and Industrial Research and the work has been done more or less in an experimental capacity.

2, The Commonwealth Serum Laboratories were requested to prepare quantities of vaccine for use in this State. Owing to lack of essential material, this has not yet been done, but it is believed supplies will be available this month. Provision is made for the manufacture of Strain 19 vaccine in the new veterinary laboratories which are now in course of construction.

3, Strain 19 vaccine is a live virus and infectious to humans. It remains potent only for a few days when subject to changes of temperature. It is therefore not proposed to instruct farmers in its use, and to prevent its use indiscriminately, it will be made available through trained departmental officers.

SUPERANNUATION ACT, 1871.

As to Claims of Railway Men.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER asked the Premier:

In view of the successful passage of the Federal banking legislation recently, is the State Government now in a position to meet the claims of the railway men under the 1871 pension scheme?

The PREMIER replied:

The passage of the Federal Banking legislation has no connection with the claims of railway men under the 1871 pension scheme.

BILLS (3)—FIRST READING.

- 1, Electricity.
- 2, State Electricity Commission.
- 3, South-West State Power Scheme.

Introduced by the Premier (for the Minister for Works).

BILL—SUPPLY (No. 2), £1,800,000.

Message.

Message from the Lieut.-Governor received and read recommending appropriation for the purposes of the Bill.

Standing Orders Suspension.

On motion by the Premier resolved:

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as is necessary to enable resolutions from the Committees of Supply and of Ways and Means to be reported and adopted on the same day on which they shall have passed those Committees, and also the passing of the Supply Bill through all its stages in one day.

In Committee of Supply.

The House resolved into Committee of Supply, Mr. Rodoreda in the Chair.

THE PREMIER (Hon. F. J. S. Wise—Gascoyne) [4.40]: I move—

That there be granted to His Majesty on account of the services of the year ending the 30th June, 1946, a sum not exceeding £1,800,000.

It will be remembered that in accordance with the Supply Bill (No. 1) of this session, Supply was granted for £2,700,000, that amount being made up as follows:—

Consolidated Revenue Fund ..	£2,200,000
General Loan Fund	200,000
Treasurer's Advance	300,000

The expenditure for the first three months of the current financial year from Supply then granted was—

From Consolidated Revenue—	
Governmental ..	£1,040,485
Public Utilities ..	1,273,880—£2,314,365
From General Loan Fund ..	225,195

The Revenue Estimates have been submitted to members but authority for further Supply is necessary pending the passing of the Appropriation Bill. The consideration of the Estimates will take its normal course but the need arises for the granting of Supply in accordance with the amount mentioned in the Bill in order to bridge the gap between the period covered by the previous Supply Bill and the time when the Appropriation Bill is introduced and passed by Parliament. The Bill before members now provides for Supply as follows:—

From Consolidated Revenue Fund ..	£1,600,000
From General Loan Fund	200,000

making a total of £1,800,000. It is expected that this provision will be sufficient to finance the activities of the Government until the passing of the Appropriation Bill.

Question put and passed.

Resolution reported and the report adopted.

In Committee of Ways and Means.

The House resolved into Committee of Ways and Means, Mr. Rodoreda in the Chair.

THE PREMIER (Hon. F. J. S. Wise—Gascoyne) [4.46]: I move—

That towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty for the services of the year ending the 30th June, 1946, a sum not

exceeding £1,600,000 be granted from the Consolidated Revenue Fund and £200,000 from the General Loan Fund.

Question put and passed.

Resolution reported and the report adopted.

All Stages.

In accordance with the foregoing resolutions, Bill introduced, passed through all stages without debate and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—BUILDERS' REGISTRATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—CONSTITUTION ACTS AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 9th October.

HON. N. KEENAN (Nedlands) [4.49]: This Bill deals with the relations, inter se, of the two Chambers of the Western Australian Parliament and contains certain proposals for the government of those relations in the future with which I shall presently deal. I do not propose to traverse again the ground which has been so fully and so well covered by the Leader of the Opposition except to say that I find myself in complete accord with the views he has put forward. The Minister in charge of the Bill, in the course of his second reading speech, spent a good deal of time and spoke at some considerable length—in fact, it occupied almost half his speech—on the fact that the franchise under which the Legislative Council is elected was a different franchise from that under which the Assembly Chamber is elected, and on the fact that the number of electors on the rolls of the Legislative Council is far less than the number of electors on the rolls for the Assembly, and also on the fact that the percentage of electors enrolled for either House to vote at elections is very much less in the case of the Legislative Council than in the case of the Assembly Chamber.

Now, the Minister used those facts and he commented on them for the purpose of supporting his case. I admit that he is quite entitled to do so, because those facts and the subject-matter, strictly speaking, of this

Bill are all part and parcel of one and the same proposition. I feel sure that the Minister will agree, and the House generally will agree, that I am doing full justice to the case put forward by him when I say it can be succinctly and accurately described in the following words: "The Legislative Assembly is a democratically constituted Chamber; on the other hand, the Legislative Council is not, and therefore it was only right and proper that the Legislative Assembly should be given full power and authority, as representing the will of the people, to impose its will on another place." As I stated, I think I am doing full justice to the case made for this Bill by the Minister and to very many other matters he discussed, in those few words.

I desire at once to say that I join issue with the Minister in his allegation that the Legislative Assembly Chamber is the democratically controlled or established Chamber, and I also join issue with him on the other allegations and on the reasons resting on those allegations which he put forward for the purpose of supporting the Bill. Any comparison between the number of electors on the rolls of the two Houses or any comparison in the percentage of enrolled electors who have exercised their franchise at election times, is misleading for two reasons. In the first place, no-one, however qualified to become enrolled as an elector for the Legislative Council, is under compulsion of any kind or description to become so enrolled; and, in the second place, no-one whose name appears on the electoral rolls for the Legislative Council is under compulsion of any kind or description to record a vote at election times, whereas in both those instances compulsion is applied in the case of the Assembly. Nevertheless, it has to be admitted that the number on the rolls for the Legislative Council is very much less than the number on the rolls for the Assembly Chamber.

The member for Geraldton, at that time Premier of the State Government, in his policy speech at the general elections of 1943, stated that the number of electors on the rolls of the Legislative Council formed one-third of the number of electors on the rolls for the Assembly Chamber: and, as he was quoting from the returns of the then Chief Electoral Officer—of course this is a few years ago now—his figures are unassailable. But if consideration be given to the

matter which I have just put before the House, namely, that in the case of the Legislative Assembly it is compulsory for any person who possesses the qualifications to be an elector to enrol as such, whereas in the case of the Legislative Council it is purely a matter of personal choice, the proportion of three to one would appear to be excessive. In fact, if every person who is entitled to be enrolled as an elector for the Legislative Council was in fact enrolled, the arithmetical ratio of the number of electors on the rolls for the Assembly to the number of electors on the rolls for the Council would not exceed, even if it reached, the figure of two to one.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: That is purely a guess, is it not?

Hon. N. KEENAN: It is a reasonable guess.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: Oh no!

Hon. N. KEENAN: It is a reasonable guess, because we know that a very large number is not enrolled. However, in the case of anything in the nature of a guess, it belongs entirely to the individual who makes it.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: That is so. I agree with that. It is just a guess.

Hon. N. KEENAN: Mr. Speaker, I want to get back from the land of guess. We come to a statement made by the member for Geraldton in the speech I have referred to as the result of his investigation of our electoral affairs. That statement was that every person whose name appeared on the rolls for the Legislative Council as an elector enjoyed three times the electoral value of a person whose name appeared on the rolls for the Legislative Assembly only as an elector. I am not by any means as good sighted as I once was, but nevertheless I can very clearly see on the countenance of the Minister for Justice a frown of deep disapproval at this flagrant breach of the ethics of democracy. "One man, one vote; one vote, one value", may be said to be the very corner-stones of the edifice of democracy. So it is not at all to be wondered at that the Minister for Justice, who is an avowed and genuine democrat, should be deeply distressed at the disclosure that there are some in the community who are enjoying even as high as three times the electoral value of others in the community.

We offer, with due respect, our sympathy to the Minister for Justice in his distress. But somehow I seem to recall that I warned the member for Geraldton he was treading on dangerous ground when he told the little world of Western Australia what was the result of his investigation of our electoral affairs. The reason why he was treading on dangerous ground was because he at that time was the leader of the party in this House which was kept in office and in power by the votes of members who were returned by constituencies the electors of which, owing to the paucity of their members, enjoyed not three times but over ten times the electoral value of other electors returning members to this Chamber. Such a disclosure ought to shock the Minister for Justice to the very depth of his soul.

Mr. Mann: Impossible!

Hon. N. KEENAN: It ought to distress him far beyond the capacity of any sympathy to assuage. But owing to the surrounding circumstances and the influence of those surrounding circumstances, I think not! The returns of the Chief Electoral Officer, to which the member for Geraldton referred in his speech in 1943, contain many illustrations of this extraordinary state of affairs. For instance, those returns show that seven electorates returned seven members to this House, and that the total number of electors in all the seven constituencies added together amounted only to 11,399, or over 2,000 less than the number of electors on the roll in one electorate in the metropolitan area returning one member to this House. All seven members elected for those seven constituencies sit on the Government side of the House. Again, those returns show that the total enrolment of electors for the Legislative Assembly for the whole State amounts to 274,856. There are 50 electorates returning 50 members to this House. Therefore, if we divide that number by 50, we will arrive at the average for the State for one electorate. That figure, if we carry out the division, will be 5,500. That is the net average for the State. Yet there are 11 electorates having between them a net average of only 2,300, less than half the State average—considerably less than half. The 11 members returned by those 11 electorates sit on the Government side of the House.

The Premier: When the Government of which you were a member lost those seats, it lost the Government, did it not?

Hon. N. KEENAN: And the Premier's party won it. Is that the idea?

The Premier: You had those seats, and the Government.

Hon. N. KEENAN: That is a very candid confession. We lost it and the party opposite won it. I do not know whether that is so. Three were Labour seats.

The Premier: No.

Hon. N. KEENAN: Still it is interesting to learn that the Premier believes in the game of grab, and he was lucky enough—

The Premier: I was not here. You were, and you got out while the going was good!

Several members interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Hon. N. KEENAN: I presume there is not an exact limit to the number who can take part in this debate. Therefore, I suggest that members who are anxious to speak should wait for their turn.

The Premier: As long as you do not speak out of yours!

Hon. N. KEENAN: The position taken up by us and the view we hold is this: Whilst reform of the Upper House—to use a phrase that is very common—is both desirable and necessary, that reform should be part and parcel of a general reform of Parliament which should be intended to produce a more equitable distribution of seats; in other words, a more equitable representation for the people of this State. It is obvious that such reform must include reform of this Chamber, so as to ensure that while due and proper regard is given to the distance of an electorate from the seat of Government and to the difficulty of those living in an electorate in reaching the seat of Government, in arriving at the number of electors who will be entitled to return a representative to this House, the past and present-day ridiculous farce of a Government being kept in power by the votes of members who represent what are no better than mere pocket boroughs must come to an end.

The Minister for Works: They elected your Government in 1930.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I would like to have the views of the Minister for Justice on that matter. I greatly fear what those views may be, because I know that the Minister for Justice sits politically at the feet of Mr. Theodore; and we all know that the same Mr. Theodore, when Premier of Queensland, left to the electorate of Queensland the issue as to whether the Legislative Council in that Parliament should continue or be abolished; and when the electors, by a considerable—almost a large—majority, voted in favour of retention, the same Mr. Theodore threw their verdict in the waste-paper basket, and by many curious and devious ways succeeded in abolishing the Upper House in Queensland. So I have a very limited hope of any sympathy from the Minister in any effort to rectify the scandalous outrage on democracy which this Chamber represents.

The Minister for Justice: This Bill deals with deadlocks.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I have already said that we favour a reform of the Legislative Council as part of a policy of general democratisation of Parliament. I venture to think that the majority of the members of the Legislative Council Chamber itself favours such a reform. But what is the proposal put before them and before us? As I remarked when I began my observations, although the Minister said very little about it, and though he said a lot about the difference in the franchise of the two Houses and the difference in the number of electors on the rolls of the two Houses, the purport of the Bill before us is to regulate the relations of the two Houses. However, I have admitted—and, of course, I admit again—that the Minister was perfectly entitled to refer to the franchise of the Legislative Council and its present comparison with the franchise under which the Legislative Assembly Chamber is elected; but it is perfectly clear that the Minister had no choice in his argument. He had to drag it in because he was not in a position to point to any clash of opinion between the two Houses which has occurred within the last decade, and which was of sufficient importance to justify the provisions of this Bill. The only clash of opinion of importance that has occurred in recent days was the difference between the two Houses over the Bill to refer to the Commonwealth

some of the sovereign rights of this Parliament and I venture to think that the Minister would not care to say, in the light of after events, and particularly in the light of what has happened in the last few weeks, that the Legislative Council was wrong in its attitude.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: The people of the State, by referendum, said they were wrong.

Hon. N. KEENAN: The people of the State were misled into saying they were wrong.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: What about Queensland? Were not they misled by the Press?

Hon. N. KEENAN: What is happening? The one bone of contention was on the question of the control of employment. The Bill proposed to hand over completely to the Commonwealth for a number of years after the expiration of the National Security Regulations—

Mr. SPEAKER: I think we had better get back to the Bill.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I am answering an interjection.

Mr. SPEAKER: Do not take any notice of interjections!

Hon. N. KEENAN: I submit that it was relevant in this case, in that it shows how utterly impossible it would be now, when there is not a man in this House who would vote to hand over employment to the Commonwealth, to object to the attitude taken at that time by the Legislative Council. So the Minister was forced to buttress up his Bill by dragging in differences in the franchise and the difference in the number of electors on the roll, and the difference in the percentage of electors on the roll who voted at the elections.

The Minister for Justice: And that was vast.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I did not hear the Minister.

The Minister for Justice: I said that was vast—V-A-S-T.

Hon. N. KEENAN: The only request I make is, that when interjections are made they should be made sufficiently loud or clear for me to hear. Otherwise, they are merely a nuisance.

The Premier: We gathered that!

Hon. N. KEENAN: I am delighted to listen to interjections and answer them if I can, but when I do not hear—

The Premier: Or do not want to!

Hon. N. KEENAN:—I am put in a position of great disadvantage. I was pointing out that the Minister was quite entitled to fall back on that line of argument because this matter, and the subject-matter of the Bill, are one and the same. What is the proposal that is put forward? It is this: That the Legislative Council should cease to be elected on a franchise different from the franchise under which this House is elected, and at the same time should submit to be degraded to the position of a mere rubber stamp so far as legislative authority is concerned.

The Minister for Justice: Similar to the House of Lords.

Hon. N. KEENAN: In a moment, I will deal with the House of Lords, and I hope I will deal with it effectively. At the present moment, I am pointing out that that was and is the proposal: that the Council should be degraded to the position of a mere rubber stamp. Without reserve, I say I cannot agree to such a proposition as being either honest or logical. It is not honest because those who make it must make it with the clear design that it will be rejected; and it is not logical because by no possible means of logic or reason could it be assumed that the Legislative Council would agree, if elected on the same franchise as this House, to occupy a position not merely of subserviency but of abject subserviency to this Chamber.

The Minister for Justice: It would be on a similar basis to the Senate.

Hon. N. KEENAN: If another place could truly allege that it was elected on the same franchise as this House, it could then claim that it had received exactly the same mandate to govern that this House receives. It could then claim the right to put Governments in and out of power, and originate money Bills, and indulge in all the privileges which at present are the sole right of this Chamber. Such a state of affairs is unthinkable and yet it is the end of the path that the Minister in his care-free manner is prepared gaily to tread. If the Minister brought down a Bill to abolish the Upper House, I would not vote for it, because I am a firm believer in the bicameral

system, but I would respect such a Bill. The Bill before the House deserves no respect, nor do any of the grounds put forward in its support. What possible support can be derived from citing the Parliament Act of 1911 of the Parliament of Westminster? The House of Lords is not an elected Chamber. A noble peer represents nobody except his noble self.

Mr. Cross: He can be a member of the House of Lords even if he is a lunatic.

Hon. N. KEENAN: Taken collectively, the members of the Legislative Council represent many tens of thousands of electors. The three representatives of the Metropolitan-Suburban Province each represent 30,000 electors or, if I am bound to be meticulously accurate, 29,917 electors.

Hon. J. C. Willecock: It could be said that they represent about 5,000 each, who voted for them. That is the proportion of the 30,000 on the roll that voted for them.

Hon. N. KEENAN: That is an absurd answer, that the elector does not bother to go to the poll. There is a cure for that, so why does not the member for Geraldton propose the cure? That also happened at one time in respect of elections for this House, until the cure was applied, so that argument is no good. I turn now to the reference made to some of the Canadian provinces, which was not even accurate. No-one knows better than does the Minister for Justice that there is a whole world of difference between the government of the Provinces of Canada and of the States of Australia.

In Australia, the Governments of the States are independent sovereign bodies, which have surrendered some, and some only, of their powers to the Commonwealth. All the powers that they have not surrendered remain absolutely within their prerogative, whereas in Canada the only sovereign independent power is the Dominion Parliament. It has delegated some, and some only, of its powers to the Parliaments of the Provinces. So it will be seen that in neither case cited by the Minister is there to be found even the shadow of authority for what is proposed. The one outstanding fact is that in the whole world of English-speaking people, whether within or without the confines of the British Empire, the Minister has found no other examples to buttress his case than the two that I have shown to be absolutely worthless. At the beginning of my speech I said, with the concurrence of the

Minister and, I hope, with the concurrence of the House, that the whole case for this Bill rested on the allegation that this Chamber is a democratic governing Chamber.

Mr. J. Hegney: Do you say it is not?

Hon. N. KEENAN: I am absolutely certain it is not, and that everyone in this House who gives the matter a moment's thought will agree that it is not, and that it is a standing scandal and an insult to democracy. I ask this House to throw out this Bill and to turn its attention, as soon as conveniently possible, to the framing of a measure that will secure equitable representation of the people in this Parliament, and so retain the loyalty of the people to this Parliament in what might possibly be the dark days to come.

On motion by the Premier, debate adjourned.

BILL—GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES (PROMOTIONS APPEAL BOARD).

Returned from the Council with amendments.

BILL—MEDICAL ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 9th October.

MR. MANN (Beverley) [5.20]: There has been a considerable amount of discussion on this Bill by members on this side of the House, but I have gone through it very carefully and I see nothing in it at all. This is the first time the Medical Act has come up for amendment in the last 50 years, and to me and many other members on this side of the House, there is very little in the Bill. I would advise the Government to withdraw it and bring in a comprehensive Bill. Under the proposals contained in this Bill we are to give the whole of the power to the doctors again. The Bill provides for the appointment of a board of seven persons, six of whom are to be medical men. I would like to know who the seventh person will be. It is mentioned in the Bill that he will not be a civil servant, but I would like to ask the Minister whether the seventh person will be an ex-civil servant.

The Minister for Health: Not necessarily.

Mr. MANN: Will the Minister give the House an assurance that the seventh member of the board will not be an ex-civil servant?

The Minister for Health: I cannot give that assurance, because it might be anyone.

Mr. MANN: I think it is time that the whole question of the medical profession and the charging of excessive fees and so on was dealt with. If such a board is appointed to deal with misdemeanours of medical men, such a man will be dealt with by other doctors. The thing is not democratic, and, if such Bills continue to be passed, this Chamber will become less democratic every day. Here is suggested a body of men to decide whether a certain man is incompetent, or whether he has committed a misdemeanour or has been disorderly. There are some medical men today who, though they have passed through a university and have obtained degrees and become qualified, are not fit to be doctors.

The Minister for Health: That applies to many professions.

Mr. MANN: No-one can disguise the fact that some of them, though they have the qualifications, should never be doctors.

The Minister for Health: As I have said, that applies to all professions.

Mr. MANN: That is so, but here we are dealing with a matter affecting human life and the saving of human life, so I would like to see the Bill withdrawn completely. There is yet time for a Select Committee of members to frame a Bill that would be much more comprehensive than this one.

The Minister for Health: That is your opinion.

Mr. MANN: It will be found to be the general opinion, everywhere. Who are to decide this question but the same body of men—

The Minister for Health: Who else could?

Mr. MANN: This board will decide and, as a board, will have the right to expel a man who may be a competent specialist. What is to be the position of country men who have practised for a long time in large country towns, and who may have proved themselves to have excellent ability in dealing with certain diseases? This board is to decide the question. No man should practise in the city as a specialist unless he has qualifications from a recognised university. The leading specialists in Europe today must have passed examinations and have gained their qualifications in the universities of Europe or of England. Prior to the war,

many men went to Vienna to do post-graduate courses, but other doctors went on pleasure trips, and now such people could put up their shingles as specialists.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: They can do it in any case, now.

Mr. MANN: We should make use of the man who is a specialist. I read the other day where a country doctor had bought a city specialist practice. I do not know whether he has any ability as a specialist, but he is now specialising. I hope the Bill is withdrawn. I hold no brief for refugee doctors, but I wonder what their fate will be if this Bill is passed, now that the war is over and it is the State, apparently, that is to decide their fate. They were of considerable help to us, though they were glad enough to be able to earn a living while the war was on. If they have the qualifications, it seems wrong for them to be turned out while we have not sufficient doctors available. If we are to bring down a Bill after fifty years, let it be one that will cover the position properly. I defy anyone to show that this is such a Bill. I hope the Minister will withdraw the Bill and either arrange for a Select Committee to go into the matter or frame a Bill that will suit the wishes of the House.

MR. GRAHAM (East Perth) [5.27]: My approach to this Bill is similar to that of the member for Beverley. I feel that it should be far more comprehensive than are the provisions contained in the amendment before us. I have some regard for alternative methods of healing or curing. I do not say, necessarily, that I would approach these other people for treatment, or that I fully understand the methods they adopt, but there is no gainsaying the fact that many people who are in trouble seek the assistance of those who do not come within the category of medical practitioners. In other parts of the world such people receive recognition on a broad scale. I understand that in America, for instance, there are in the vicinity of 25,000 registered practitioners, known as naturopaths. While I am not familiar with the methods of treatment and healing adopted by such people, I understand that the term includes dietitians, osteopaths, chiropractors, and a number of inter-related organisations that cover such people. It might happen that

we in Australia are not abreast of the times in the matter of medical treatment.

Mr. Cross: Diplomas in all these things are granted in the United States of America.

Mr. GRAHAM: That is so, and, in other parts of the world, people wishing to practice have to attend schools and pass certain courses and qualify on much the same lines as our doctors have to do. The reason why I give some emphasis to this point of view is that I in common with other members have received a circular setting out certain complaints from the point of view of those who style themselves the United Health Practitioners' Association of Australia.

Mr. Cross: It would make you laugh, would it not?

Mr. GRAHAM: That might be the reaction of the member for Canning. The Bill makes specific mention of chiropractors and dietitians, but I am unaware that there appears anywhere in our statutes a definition of those persons. With the member for Beverley, I feel that the Minister should consider bringing down a comprehensive Bill to cover not only those aspects of treatment or healing but also others worthy of recognition so that we might have contained in the law a proper definition of the other people of whom I have spoken. I visualise the greatest difficulty in seeking to incorporate in this Bill, of which I am not enamoured, any amendments along the lines of those suggested by the United Health Practitioners' Association unless we have a definition of the class of people covered by that association.

There are several other matters to which I desire briefly to refer. Here I repeat to some extent what has been said by previous speakers. There is no clause in the Bill providing for any control whatsoever over the fees to be charged by medical practitioners. It is not necessary for me to give individual cases of extortionate fees having been charged by doctors. Members are probably aware of numerous instances of this, both with regard to individual visits to the homes of sick persons and with regard to operations of various kinds. As the health of the community is of general importance, this is not the exclusive perquisite of the medical fraternity, and as the charges are so ter-

rifically high, it is the right of the people through Parliament to have embodied in legislation at least a maximum scale of charges.

It is quite beyond me to suggest what would be a reasonable figure for the many different complaints treated or the operations performed, but let me mention an instance from personal experience. A child of mine had an operation for tonsillitis—a very common complaint. From the time the child went under the anaesthetic until the doctor was speaking to me after having completed the operation, only 10 minutes had elapsed. Had there been a whole succession of patients, it is easy to work out that at that rate doctors could make for themselves hundreds of pounds per week, and the most payable operation would certainly not be that of extracting tonsils. Therefore I say that the fees charged are out of all proportion to the scale that ought to be charged or that we ought to permit. The fact that there is no specific provision in the Bill governing the fees that may be charged should condemn the measure.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: Is it not possible to send a child to the hospital and have the tonsils removed free of charge?

Mr. GRAHAM: I am unaware whether that could have been done, but in any event the fact that the great majority of operations of necessity are undertaken by medical men and exclusively so where they are major operations means that that avenue would offer no relief. I do not know that there has been any call for the amendment embodied in the Bill, but I feel confident that if a measure were introduced making provision to place some curb or check on the fees charged by doctors, it would meet with approval and approbation from many parts of the State and, I venture to say, there would be hardly any objection to it.

The Minister for Health: We could make provision similar to that contained in the English Act.

Mr. GRAHAM: Whatever line is followed, when a measure with that object in view is brought forward, we can consider the merits of the provision. Because this Bill is lacking in that respect, I have not much enthusiasm for it.

Another aspect upon which I desire to touch is that of the proposed new medical board. It is to consist of seven individuals,

six of whom shall be medical practitioners and one whom we may call a layman. Such a board might be satisfactory if it were intended to deal more or less with matters that are the exclusive prerogative of the medical fraternity, namely, to decide what shall constitute the qualifications to entitle a man to be registered as a medical practitioner, what qualifications shall be necessary before a medical practitioner may be termed a specialist, and what disqualifications shall apply in the event of a doctor's being guilty of any misdemeanour. With regard to the application of medical practice generally, however, this is a community Act and not a doctors' Act, and doctors should not be given all the effective say on a board as they would have if six out of the seven members were doctors. Rather is it the right of the community to have a direct, deliberative and decisive voice on the board with the assistance and guidance of medical practitioners.

I feel that a medical board to deal with the several matters covered by the parent Act should be far wider than that operating at present or than that proposed under this amending Bill. I do not desire to suggest the various interests that ought to be represented on the board, but I see no reason why members of the nursing profession should not be entitled to representation, the doctors being given a preponderance only when dealing exclusively with doctors' affairs. In view of the remarks I have offered, I feel that I must vote against the second reading. If the Bill should pass the second reading, I shall give my support to or assume the initiative in moving amendments that will substantially improve the measure. I think I have said sufficient to show that I am anything but satisfied with the Bill in its present form.

MR. NORTH (Claremont) [5.40]: I, too, have received a circular from the United Health Practitioners' Association. While the Bill provides protection for the orthodox doctors, it is very difficult to decide how far we should shut out unorthodox people from this important calling. Under the Legal Practitioners' Act, it is true, lawyers are fully protected, and there is no way of getting that work done other than by a qualified man. If we follow the course of history, however, we must realise that tremendous changes have occurred in the prac-

tice of medicine. In the lifetime of many of us, contrary ideas have been put into effect by various members of the profession, and it would be dangerous to pass legislation that would entirely eliminate the opportunity of rival theorists to come forward with ideas that in due time might alter the whole course of treatment. The United Health Practitioners' Association has, amongst its objectives, the following:—

(1) To educate the lay public towards an appreciation of the curative powers inherent in Nature and encourage the use of natural health methods.

We know that doctors today to a great extent follow that idea. We know also that as far back as the time of Hippocrates, 2,000 years ago, the nature cure was adopted. However, the question as I see it is this: Is it advisable for us to pass a Bill that would prevent any new idea or theory that may be discovered from being practised?

The Minister for Health: Do not you think that that should be provided for in separate legislation?

Mr. NORTH: It might have to be included in separate legislation, but in this Bill, the Minister has, to some extent, made provision for it. He says that dietitians and chiropractors may practice so long as they do not treat specific diseases.

The Minister for Health: That is the amendment that was inserted in the Bill last session.

Mr. NORTH: Yes. If a dietitian is going to advocate some sort of diet merely for the sake of doing so, it would not have much effect on patients who were not really sick, but if there are sick people who wish to undergo some particular kind of nature cure at the hands of a person who is not orthodox and who has not passed the ordinary course of training, the question we have to decide is whether it would be advisable to forbid that. It is a very important question.

The Minister for Health: Do you think anyone should be allowed to start in practice without qualifications?

Mr. NORTH: I think that in an educated community, which ours should be, if any sufferer goes to someone to be cured or helped, and does so with his eyes open, and if the person he goes to has on his brass plate the fact that he is not an orthodox medical man

and has not gone through the usual course, then I cannot see that we should interfere with the patient who goes to such a man.

The Minister for Health: Would you sanction that in all professions?

Mr. NORTH: No. The legal profession could not do that. If the Minister could find some way to enable these new theorists to obtain a cult or footing, that would be all right with me. I would support a separate measure if that were his idea. In other parts of the world we have seen that there is a large following of these other callings which are doing a great deal of good work. We know that years ago doctors did not give a thought to food, and laughed at it as a cause of illness. A certain Dr. Tibbett, in 1913, broke the ice. He was, I think, the first doctor in our generation to say that faulty food was the cause of two-thirds of the sickness, and that doctors must include food and dietetics. At that time there was no following for the doctor because he was the pioneer.

Suppose another new set of circumstances arose! It may be, for example, that some wireless enthusiast might discover that wonderful cures were to be effected by short-wave radio. Are such new ideas to be shut out for say 20 or 30 years until the medical profession cares to take them up? Unless the Minister intends to bring forward separate legislation to cover these points, I should like in Committee to take steps to bring about what I am aiming at, while making it clear to the public that these are not orthodox medical men and have not the qualifications as such, and that if patients went to them they would do so at their own risk and with their eyes open.

On motion by Mr. Shearn, debate adjourned.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1945-46.

In Committee of Supply.

Debate resumed from the 11th October on the Treasurer's Financial Statement and on the Annual Estimates, Mr. J. Hegney in the Chair.

Vote—Legislative Council, £2,363.

MR. LESLIE (Mt. Marshall) [5.48]: The member for York in addressing himself to the Estimates said that in his opinion the Budget made somewhat dismal reading. I do not consider it so dismal as disappoint-

ing after examining or analysing the various items contained in it. I was pleased to find that the Premier had departed from what seemed to be the growing practice so far as this Parliament and Government are concerned of ever bowing to the financial dictates of the mighty Eastern States. The Treasurer's departure from that was interesting, and in budgeting as he did for a deficit of £207,000, he took a revolutionary step away from the policy that has been followed by the Government for a considerable number of years. That aspect was pleasing to me because it revealed that there was an inclination on the part of the Government to consider more the needs of the community than the means, and the fact that we were, through unfortunate agreements, limited in obtaining those means. When I analyse the position however, I find that the prospect is not as pleasing as it originally appeared to be.

The CHAIRMAN: I suggest that members on the front Opposition bench should cease from talking because that must be very disconcerting to the member for Mt. Marshall.

Mr. LESLIE: I find there is a proposed lessening in departmental expenditure of £324,000. A considerable proportion of that lessening in departmental expenditure is due to the transference of a certain amount of money, but I find that a good deal of the increase in expenditure that was indicated by the Budget deficit of £207,000 is actually not there. The departmental increase in expenditure amounts only to about £86,000. On analysing the position and the items contained in the Budget, I find the results disappointing. Let me instance the Education Vote. The Leader of the Opposition stated that the amount of £26,000 was skimmed over lightly by the Premier. No doubt the major portion of that amount is to be absorbed in the reinstatement of men who are returning from their war service to the service of the department, and that means that increased expenditure on educational facilities to schools has not been provided as we hoped the increase in the vote would indicate.

In the Department of the Minister for the North-West I find an increased expenditure of £36,000. Until I had analysed the figures that gave me some encouragement. I find, however, that in connection with the Department of Native Affairs there is a decrease of £200. That is disappointing, espe-

cially in view of the considerable agitation that has been voiced in this House and elsewhere to the effect that the Government should interest itself more keenly concerning the natives. A decrease of £200 in the expenditure for the current year does not indicate that any drastic action is going to be taken by the Government to overcome existing difficulties and to meet the problems which have been growing up in connection with our native population. Most of the amounts provided for the departments controlled by the Minister for the North-West concern mainly increases in salaries and wages for men employed on or about wharves, jetties, etc. We find that increased expenditure which may have stirred some hope in our hearts of a promise of additional facilities is not going to lead to a realisation of our hopes.

In connection with the Department of Public Health there is an increase of over £1,000 for the Flying Doctor Service, a very commendable increase. A sum of £3,000 is also provided for grants and subsidies to infant health centres, and another £3,000 is included in an amount payable by the Medical Department for salaries. Considering that last year the department took over the payment of salaries to the nurses employed in the Department of Public Health I take it that a considerable amount of both lots of £3,000 is going to be absorbed in the payment of Government commitments in that direction. I expect the Committee will listen with interest to what the Minister for Health has to say when bringing down his vote as to the direction in which it is proposed to spend the £6,000. Another disappointing feature of the Budget was that the Police Vote has been reduced by £695. We know that the police force at present is not adequate for the requirements of the State, and provision must be made with a return to normal conditions for the appointment of additional police officers. It seems that nothing is to be done in this connection during the coming year because only £31 is provided by way of an increase in salaries, which does not indicate the appointment of additional police officers.

There is also a decrease of about £700 in the amount allowed for services in the Police Department. Included in these services is the payment to police officers of travelling allowances. That is payable to officers at country police stations. I think

the Minister in charge of the Police Department is aware—he should be aware if he is not—of the fact that there is great dissatisfaction amongst police officers in the country districts concerning the allowance paid for travelling. Irrespective of the actual costs involved, the distance these officers have to travel and the amount they are obliged to spend—most of them use their own motorcars—they receive a set amount of about £4 a month. That is totally inadequate to meet the service they have to perform. Many of the services provided by the department to its own staff are also inadequate and unsatisfactory. It is going to be a great disappointment to the officers of the Police Department to know that the services they are entitled to are going to be pared down still further. They will also be disappointed because the number of police officers is not going to be increased during the current year, or apparently so as no provision is made for an increase.

A substantial increase has been allowed in the case of the Department of Agriculture. An examination of the items leads me to the conclusion that this is one department in which we can see that there has been a “dinkum” increase in the facilities that are to be made available to the people. One item I welcome particularly is the increased amount of over £1,000 to be made available for the destruction of the grasshopper pest throughout the State. This, of course, will concern my electorate to some extent. I also welcome the fact that there is to be increased expenditure in various research departments in connection with agriculture. I presume that expenditure will be absorbed in dealing with questions relating to soil and the examination of the problems of soil erosion. In dealing with revenue and expenditure, I think there is a definite need for an overhaul of the social and financial structure of our State.

Reference has been made by the Leader of the Opposition and the member for West Perth to our financial relations with the Commonwealth and the need for drastic alteration in that connection, so I do not propose to traverse that ground. I do think, however, that an examination of Government finance, its application to the people and the method of operations, is definitely needed. For instance, we take about 25 per cent. to 30 per cent. of our revenue every year to pay interest and

sinking fund on our borrowings. For a State that has a revenue of only £13,000,000 odd, that seems an extraordinarily large amount. Last year out of nearly £14,000,000, we paid £4,250,000 in interest and sinking fund. This year we estimate to pay about £4,000,000 in that way out of an estimated revenue of £13,750,000. It is definitely a disproportionate amount to go towards paying off a dead horse.

The Minister for Justice: What do you suggest to remedy the position?

Mr. LESLIE: Give me a moment and I will tell the Minister. The fact that we are paying off this large amount of money, which is making such a claim on our limited revenue, has restricted all the social services available to the taxpayers. According to the returns, the State tax per head of population last year was £7 19s. 7d. Out of that sum £4 5s. 1d. was spent on social services to the taxpayer. In other words, 53 per cent, was so used and 27 per cent. was absorbed in interest and sinking fund charges. Whether we have over-capitalised our State, whether we have over-borrowed or whether we are paying too much interest on the amount we have borrowed, I am not prepared to say. But I do say that it is a disproportionate amount, and for that reason we have a just claim to approach the Commonwealth Government and ask for a lessening of that burden.

The Minister for Justice: Do not you think we want monetary reform to rectify these things?

Mr. LESLIE: I do not think that is necessary. We really need a readjustment of values amongst ourselves. We in this State are in this position that we are the hewers of wood and the carriers of water for the Commonwealth. There is no question about that, but for every ounce of development in this State we are compelled to carry a big baby. We have to bear the burden of interest and sinking fund charges so that we repay the whole lot. But the Commonwealth Government is benefiting from the development in Western Australia because we are such a tremendously large exporting State. The imports and trade relations of the Commonwealth with outside countries are dependent on our export trade and, to a large extent, on the contribution that Western Australia makes. In these

circumstances we have a right to a greater share of the benefits that come from the national income. We should not be called upon to bear so great a proportion of these developmental charges out of our ordinary costs. I wish to deal with another feature of our public funds in connection with our public utilities. We have to provide, as a charge against the revenue earned by our public utilities, for the repayment of sinking fund.

It seems to me peculiar that it has never appeared to anybody that the levying of sinking fund charges against revenue before we are aware that the revenue can stand it, is not ordinary business practice, neither is it fair to the users of that public utility. No undertaking asks that it should pay a profit during each year of its operations and, at the same time, provide a return of portion of the capital invested in that business. That is what we are doing with the railways.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: That is not so. They do not pay sinking fund; they even cannot pay their interest!

Mr. LESLIE: It is charged against them.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: That does not matter.

Mr. LESLIE: It makes a difference. We are told every year that our railways show a deficit.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: It is not charged against them.

Mr. LESLIE: Let us take the railways with the rest of the public utilities. We are told that we have a deficit on our public utilities. If we analyse the figures we find charged against their revenue the sinking fund item; in other words, provision for the return of the capital. As a result, the charges to the users of those public utilities are based on costs which include that item.

The Minister for Works: That is not so.

Mr. LESLIE: It is so. I am taking the figures here. Provision is made in this year's Budget for £711,000 sinking fund.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: It is not charged against the railways.

Mr. LESLIE: It is charged against public utilities generally.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: It is charged against the taxpayers; against Consolidated Revenue.

Mr. Watts: It is all the same.

Mr. LESLIE: It amounts to the same thing. We cannot make a public utility pay for the simple reason that we are making this charge against each public utility irrespective of whether it is in a position to meet it or not.

The Minister for Works: The Leader of the Opposition cannot get you out of this one.

Mr. LESLIE: The payment of interest on the meeting of any fund should only come out of the surplus resulting from the normal operations of an ordinary public utility, and that principle should prevail here. I do not mind a sinking fund when we have spent money on something that is not a definite or tangible asset. But why there should be a sinking fund for the return of an established capital asset is beyond me. What is going to happen in 50 or 100 years' time when we have written off the whole of the debts in connection with the railways? Where will the money be then? It will all be gone, and in the meantime we are saddled with these costs. There is definite need for an overhaul of the public accounts so that these charges will not be levied against the users of public utilities, but against all the taxpayers.

Hon. J. C. Willecock: It is against the taxpayers now and not the railway users. The taxpayers of the metropolitan area contribute to that item.

Mr. LESLIE: I cannot find the figures as to the actual major portion of the tax, but the major portion of any taxation comes from the primary producers. I do not necessarily mean only the growers of wheat, because they are not the only producers of new wealth.

The Minister for Works: What about the hewers of wood?

Mr. LESLIE: They are primary producers. The people in the metropolitan area are not hewers of wood.

Hon. J. C. Willecock: What about the hewers of gold and coal?

Mr. LESLIE: They are also primary producers. I count all those people as primary producers because they represent the only source of new money. We do not circulate the same 2s. piece over and over

again. We have to find new money to meet our commitments. Let me say, in connection with our primary producers, that I am rather concerned at the Premier's attitude in regard to what is going to happen in the post-war period. It seems to me that he is looking to the future from an over-pessimistic point of view. He is afraid that the country is going to expand to such an extent that it will find itself reaching the position of tremendous over-production and will have to go into a depression or a state of deflation, which will be tragic. I agree that there will come a time when the disposal of our products will not be as easy as it is today; when the demand is going to lessen. That the demand for our products is any less or there are fewer users of them, will be because someone has interfered with the system of distribution.

While we have ended a war of shot and shell we are starting on one far more deadly—a war the effects of which will be similar to one that occurred about 1930. The result of that war—a trade war—was felt for many years. The war that we are about to face is one that no nation can afford because not only does it mean a loss of national health, but a loss of morale. I believe that in Australia, and in most countries, we have not yet recovered—particularly the younger people—from the tremendous blow to our morale that occurred during the international trade war which resulted in starvation in the midst of plenty. I say, with regard to the post-war period, that it is up to us to take advantage of every opportunity available for the expansion of our production, even though that expansion may be temporary. We are pretty weak if we cannot, as time and circumstances change, readjust to meet altered conditions. So I do not agree with the Premier that we have to watch carefully that we do not over-expand. I can see no possibility in these immediate post-war years of over-expansion, or of over-production. But I do believe that right here and now, and in these immediate post-war years, we must consider the question of stabilising our primary industries and getting them on to a solid financial foundation. I am particularly interested in the question of stabilising the wheat industry.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

[*Mr. Fox took the Chair.*]

Mr. LESLIE: I was making some reference to the necessity for the stabilisation of primary industries. The one I wish to deal with particularly is the wheat industry. Before touching on that matter, I desire to mention the fact that one of the vital primary industries—the wool industry—is, because of direct government obligations and because of the amount of money Governments themselves have invested in dealing with the raw materials, in a satisfactory position in that its stabilisation, over a long period of years, has been arranged. I do not think for one moment that the stabilisation plan in that respect was inaugurated because of any desire on the part of the Governments to assist the growers but rather was due to the fact that so much government money was involved. I feel that were the position similar with regard to the wheat industry in particular and other activities as well, those industries, too, would have had applied to them stabilisation schemes of a like description. I see no difficulty in that direction and it should be the duty of the State Government to interest itself in the matter. At present wheat is in heavy demand, so much so that the Canadian Government has fixed a ceiling price. According to Press reports, the Australian Wheat Board has accepted that price as the basis for the Australian wheat price round about 7s. 5d. and 7s. 6d. per bushel f.o.b. at ports. In those circumstances, there should be no difficulty in giving a reasonably payable price to growers, round about 6s. a bushel, and any surplus on realisations could be placed in a pool as a reserve against the day when wheat drops below a price that is payable to growers.

Mr. Watts: Provided the Government pays the difference on stock feed and the rest.

Mr. LESLIE: That aspect enters into the question. The member for Mt. Magnet referred to the subsidising of primary industries. As regards wheat it is not really the industry that is being subsidised at all. It is the consumers of the primary products that are receiving the subsidy in order to obviate the necessity for their paying a price that would mean an increase in the cost of living, which would have the effect of continuing the vicious circle. In effect, the price is being kept down—

Mr. Doney: And the growers, in effect, are subsidising the Treasury.

Mr. LESLIE: That is the position. If the growers receive the full price for their product that would be reflected in the price charged to consumers. It would affect the chicken-raiser and others who use wheat foods. The products of the wheatgrowing industry have to be made available at low prices that will enable such men to sell at a profit and for consumers to buy their requirements at prices they can afford to pay. Under this arrangement, in effect others are receiving the subsidy that the grower is providing. It is the consumer that is being subsidised and the price is kept down by a subsidy to the grower.

Mr. North: Do you approve of the idea?

Mr. LESLIE: I do not entirely approve of it because I consider it is the grower that is stabilising the industry, yet the Government says it is doing the stabilising.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: What will happen when the grower does not receive a remunerative price?

Mr. Mann: He will suffer, as he always has suffered, like when he received 1s. 8d. a bushel for his wheat.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: No fear!

Mr. Mann: He did not get a Government subsidy then.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: What about the flour tax? It was paid for years.

Mr. LESLIE: Under the present system, what is happening is that the grower himself is compensating the Government for the loss that the Government says was made on the earlier wheat pools. The grower will pay the money back to the Treasurer, and yet we are told that the Government is carrying the grower on all the time. Members will realise that the grower has been called upon to stabilise the industry himself. I see no difficulty from now onwards—we can deal with the matter from that standpoint—because we are facing a period of years during which wheat will be in demand. There is no question about that. Of course, it has always been in demand, but we would not allow our output to reach the people who wanted it because of silly international trade fights. However, I will not deal with that phase. The demand for our wheat will be incessant

and at high prices. Therefore, if we can arrive at a reasonable cost to the grower, the position will be more satisfactory.

The other night, the member for York pointed out that recently a committee had made exhaustive inquiries into the cost of wheat production. I am convinced it is possible to arrive at a reasonable cost to the grower who should be paid accordingly and the excess of any realisation price could be put into a pool and, as I suggested earlier, retained against the day when prices drop—if they do. In those circumstances, the grower will in effect be stabilising his industry—but it must be done as a Government measure. To suggest that the grower for the next two or three years, should adjust his costs and methods of production to meet a possible fall in prices, is simply out of the question. The grower cannot control prices because he has to sell his wheat on the open market. Even if he could control his prices, he could not control his costs. If we are to stabilise the industry, there must be proper control and a return to the grower of an amount equivalent to the costs associated with his industry. It is all very well to ask a farmer to reduce his costs and bring his prices down, if only a little while later he is again confronted with rising costs over which he has no control whatever. When it comes to a question of planning for the development and expansion of the State and its industries, we should first consider stabilising those industries that we have and placing them on a solid foundation while going in for expansion. Even though it might be for a comparatively short period, that period would not be so short as not to justify the cost that might be incurred—in my opinion, the cost will be comparatively small—in re-organising and transferring that expansion in some other direction.

It would be foolish for us not to take advantage of the prices available in the world markets today and to produce as heavily as we can all the products that are in demand. It would be foolish to restrict our production because of the fear that at the end of so many years the demand will not be there. That is a very short-sighted policy, and rather indicates doubt as to our ability to deal with any situation that may arise. The next question I wish to mention concerns the rehabilitation of men and

women from the various Services. In the course of his remarks, the Premier, when introducing the Estimates, was good enough to make some very acceptable references to the part our men and women had played in the Forces. I was very pleased to hear his remarks because it is only right and proper that some recognition should be accorded the very fine efforts of our Fighting Forces. I am somewhat concerned about the fact—I am not alone in this respect—that the progress of the rehabilitation scheme and the re-establishment of servicemen and women in civil life is not all that could be desired.

My attention has already been drawn to advertisements that have appeared in "The West Australian" and other newspapers appealing to employers to re-engage returning ex-servicemen. I very much regret the necessity that appears to have arisen for the insertion of those advertisements and also for the advertisements themselves. We have been told through the Press how our returned men are to be treated, particularly the prisoners-of-war. We are told we must deal with them sympathetically and endeavour to re-orient them back into society. As the returned men and women step over their doorsteps, they find in the morning paper something that is calculated to cause them grave concern. I have been approached by men who say, "Is this all we are coming back to? We thought plans for our rehabilitation and re-establishment in civil life were complete. Instead of that, we see pitiful appeals made through advertisements to employers to engage ex-servicemen. It appears as though we are to be compelled to beg for a job in civil life." That is the position that must cause the Government much concern, and I think it is up to Ministers to interest themselves in the progress made in rehabilitation plans. As a matter of fact, we have not really started the demobilisation of our Armed Forces and yet, at this early age, we have to appeal to employers to take ex-servicemen back.

Mr. Mann: There are plenty of jobs available, but the authorities are not releasing the men.

Mr. LESLIE: I know there are jobs available but it seems to me that the authorities are starting at the wrong end. They are going the wrong way about it. For instance, we know there is a great need for houses. We want skilled men but we are told that there

is a shortage of building materials. Surely to goodness there is someone who could plan and organise the releasing of men from the Forces and the placing of them in industries so as to provide requirements from the bottom. It seems to me that the authorities are starting releases from three parts of the way up the ladder. They should release men so as to secure the materials required and then houses could be built. That course should be adopted rather than releasing men and endeavouring to place them in industries that are dependent upon the provision of necessary materials before extended employment is possible. At the recent Congress of the Returned Soldiers' League mention was made of the reconstruction training scheme and the president of the league mentioned that it was operating very unsatisfactorily.

There can be no doubt that the position of the reconstruction training scheme is unsatisfactory. At present only 88 ex-servicemen are on full-time technical training in Western Australia, and they are 88 out of 562 who have actually applied for such training. Still another 45 men who have been approved for full-time technical training are awaiting the provision of facilities. What those facilities are I cannot say. Speaking from my own personal experience, I know that this scheme has been explained at great length and very frequently to ex-servicemen as something which was being established for their benefit in the post-war period; but it seems to be breaking down or not to have started properly. I am not seeking to lay the blame on any particular person. I merely point out to the Committee that definitely a mistake has been made somewhere, and that some inquiry should be made. If the delay is due to a shortage of material or to a shortage of facilities, something must be wrong with the department responsible. Apparently, there is a lack of co-ordination, and someone responsible should take charge and endeavour to co-ordinate the various departments concerned.

Such matters as the question of the technical training school, the provision of facilities and the release of men into avenues where they can supply necessary material, must be inquired into, because otherwise it seems to me that this will simply be another of those schemes which has to muddle

along; probably by the time the next war breaks out we may have a reconstruction training scheme working as we hoped the present one ought to be working at this stage. As I said, there were 562 applicants for this training scheme, yet only 88 were selected, a matter of 15 per cent. And this is at the early stage! What will happen in another three or four months when thousands of returned men will be applying to take advantage of the scheme? There are 936 applicants awaiting the decision of the reconstruction committee upon their eligibility and suitability for training in this vocational scheme. It may be coincidental, but those 936 have been awaiting that decision since the 30th April of this year; so therefore it would appear that in four to five months the committee or whoever is responsible is behindhand to that extent in ascertaining the suitability and eligibility of the applicants.

Those men are Western Australians and it is certainly up to the State Government to interest itself in investigating why the reconstruction scheme is progressing so slowly, disastrously and tragically, while such a huge number of men are awaiting training. An investigation into the position is essential in order to secure some speeding up. If additional facilities are required, apart from those already to hand, the Government should take action to ascertain whether these cannot be provided, so that a definite promise made to our soldiers shall be honoured. I hope that the questions of the re-establishment of our servicemen, the unsettling advertisements and the appeals being made to employers will be investigated by the Government to ascertain whether they are warranted in order that our soldiers will not, when they return to their homes, immediately fear what is going to happen when they take their uniform off.

HON. W. D. JOHNSON (Guildford-Midland) [7.50]: For the past eight or 10 years I have spoken on the Budget in a vain effort to try to get Parliament to appreciate the real effect on the economy of this State of the gradual strengthening of the Loan Council's grip on the State's finances. When the Loan Council was created as a result of the people's acceptance of the financial agreement, I in my humble way

opposed it strenuously. I was the only Labour representative that spoke and voted against it.

Mr. Mann: You were the only one in step.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I did so because I knew that we could not have both. Gradually, but surely, the operations of the financial agreement indicated to me that Commonwealth control of this State's economy would become stronger and stronger, and the Parliament of this State and its Government weaker and weaker. I am no financial genius or expert, but I try to use my commonsense. I did try at that time to understand the financial agreement, because it was so vital to the economy of Western Australia. It was introduced by the Bruce-Page Government—a National-Country Party combination—and it appeared to me to be a stranglehold. It would not, under its provisions, immediately take effect upon the State; but I prophesied at the time—and my speech is in "Hansard"—that within 12 to 15 years we would begin to feel the result of the operations of that agreement. Eleven years after the creation of the Loan Council and all it stands for, this State began to feel such effects. In 1939 we were beginning to appreciate that we could not maintain the assets of this State up to a proper standard of attainment and value and meet the obligations incurred as a result of the provisions of the 1928 agreement.

True, the war saved the situation which was developing, in my opinion, in 1939. It was about that time that I was trying—I tried years before—to get this House to realise that we had lost control of expenditure and that Parliament had not been consulted in regard to one penny piece of expenditure for some little time before, and it has never been consulted since. To me it is amazing how silent members were about the matter and why the Press had not exposed it. I am not blaming the Government. I am blaming the financial agreement and the Loan Council. The reason was that we had lost control of the expenditure and that was due to the fact that the Commonwealth was making money available to the claimant States which of course was being spent; but when the financial year came to an end it was found that no result was being obtained from such expenditure. The Loan Council, realising its respon-

sibility as a financial body to the electors of Australia, decided that something had to be done. It therefore immediately arranged for the whole of the income of the State, plus the amounts advanced by the Grants Commission and the Loan Council, to be paid into one account to the credit of the State.

Mr. Doney: The member for Geraldton does not agree with you.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I do not care. I am merely expressing my opinion and I may be wrong, but I want it to be criticised. It has been ignored up till now. I shall develop that aspect before I sit down. I have been ignored for years, but now the chickens are coming home to roost. The fact remains that at a given period all the advances that were made to assist this State through the Loan Council by way of grants for the relief of distressed settlers and such like matters, had to go into one account, and the whole revenue of the State had to go into the same account. There was a monthly balance instead of an annual balance. A monthly balance cannot be controlled by Parliament; that is impossible. Parliament does not meet; members are not here. They cannot be consulted, and therefore it became essential for Cabinet to control the monthly balance; and, to have a monthly balance, it was necessary to decide on monthly expenditure for new works, and Cabinet had to make the decision within the month nearest to the decision to enter upon the construction or erection of the works for which the money would have to be provided. So it went on. There is no other way of doing it. I have been trying to get Parliament to appreciate the impossible position we were in over the control of expenditure. That position is not due to any Government, nor to any Minister; it is due to this Parliament not realising it.

Mr. Mann: Who controls it but the Government?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: It is due to Parliament not realising it.

The Premier: Keep cool!

Hon. J. C. Willcock: The member for Beverley is responsible.

Mr. Mann: The member for Guildford-Midland is responsible.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: During the war-time period, as I say, we were relieved of our financial troubles for the time being; but today there is a general awakening to the impossible position the State is in financially.

Mr. North: What about the other claimant States?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The other claimant States are not as badly off as we are. South Australia has made provision for reserves; and Tasmania has made a remarkable recovery. But we have not been able to do all that the other States have been able to do.

[Mr. Rodoreda took the Chair.]

Mr. Mann: Why has Tasmania made a recovery?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Because of special circumstances that I do not propose to go into. I am dealing with Western Australia.

Mr. Doney: I think we all know those special circumstances.

The Premier: Tasmania has better prospects than any other State.

Mr. Mann: And Queensland, too.

The Premier: Yes.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I used the Address-in-reply debate for a discussion of this matter. It was a long while since I had spoken on the Address-in-reply; I generally reserve any comments I have for the Budget debate; but I spoke on this occasion because I was so struck with the changed outlook, the change in the atmosphere, not only in this House, but in the country at large in regard to this matter that I have been trying to bring home to the people since the financial agreement took effect. Might I say, in passing, that I made it quite clear during the last election campaign at Guildford that I was a unificationist; that I knew unification was the only hope of our recovering the position of this State, and of giving people a reasonable standard of comfort and of living.

Mr. Doney: Are you still a unificationist?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I made it quite clear that, if I were elected, I would continue to bring home to this Parliament the impossible position of allowing conditions to drift as they were drifting, in my opinion, at that time; and I was elected by a fairly substantial majority. So I am not talking without

some mandate to raise this question tonight; and I do it in all seriousness, because I do want this Parliament to appreciate where we are.

Mr. Mann: You want us abolished, do you not?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: During the Address-in-reply, I referred to and took as my text a leading article in "The West Australian" of the 9th August in which, for the first time, so far as I know, that paper became absolutely alarmed at the financial position of this State. The article was a striking one. I picked out its main features and spoke on them, so that they would be always in "Hansard" for reference. The article spoke of mendicant States. It was the province of the paper—and I think its duty—to refer especially to Western Australia. It did so, and pointed out that Western Australia was on the dole, and that it would remain on the dole until something extraordinary happened.

Hon. P. Collier: The financial agreement was a slight measure of unification.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Exactly.

Hon. P. Collier: And you would remedy it by complete unification?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Yes, I would now. That is the only remedy. The member for Boulder tinkered with it. He gave them the thin end of the wedge, which I tried to stop. I told the hon. member that if he put in the thin end of the wedge, it would be driven home in 12 years. That has been done. I could not convince the hon. member.

Hon. P. Collier: And you would let them drive in a dozen wedges with complete unification?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Yes, I would say definitely that the only hope of meeting the position we are in today is for the wedge to be driven right home. There is no other remedy. I am going to explain that before I sit down. I took the leading article of "The West Australian"; and at the time I spoke, the Leader of the Opposition had already spoken. He had drawn attention to the fact that Parliament had no control over expenditure; that Parliament was not consulted. He started to do what I have been doing over the years. He took special works concerning which he said Parliament had never been consulted. They were decided upon and the first information we had was from outside sources. I have specified, in

various speeches recorded in "Hansard," a number of works concerning which no member of this House knew anything—outside of Cabinet—until he read of them in the Press or saw them in operation. The Leader of the Opposition suggested a remedy, in the form of a public works committee. If he had gone into the matter and analysed it closely, he would have seen that, just as this Parliament cannot function on a monthly balance, neither could a public works committee, unless it were perpetually sitting. It would merely be a multiplying of Cabinet. Cabinet must accept responsibility, and if we were to delegate responsibility to a public works committee, that committee would have to sit as Cabinet does, regularly. Therefore it was, to me, not a practical proposition at all, because the public works committee could not function under the conditions now prevailing.

Mr. Doney: It was intended that such a committee should sit continually.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The member for Claremont made a speech in which he drew attention to the little knowledge that people had of the doings of the State Parliament. He was really concerned that people were losing interest in Parliament. He suggested a remedy. He thought that we should put copies of speeches in the town halls to bring right home to the people that the State Parliament really existed but was not doing anything and could not do anything of major importance. Following the member for Claremont, the member for Nedlands took up the matter, and I quoted quite a lot from his speech, in which he again appealed to this House to do something to get the people interested in Parliament. The member for Nedlands was concerned that the people had lost a knowledge of the activities of this Parliament and suggested that we should get busy and try to evolve an effective kind of programme that would appeal to them and would bring right home to them the way in which Parliament had slipped from an administrative point of view. At that period, the matter was brought up to date and, to my own satisfaction, it is in "Hansard." Since then, the Premier has spoken, and the member for West Perth, the Leader of the Liberal Party; and again we find a concentration on the financial difficulties this State must face in the very near future owing to the operations of and the extension of the control by the Loan Council, and the

supervision and the support, limited or otherwise, we get as a result of the investigations of the Grants Commission. A very significant change has taken place; to me it is most interesting. There has been a change of Premiers. The member for Geraldton, when Premier, set himself out religiously to produce a balanced Budget.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: During wartime.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I am talking of recent years. The hon. member took a pride in it; I do not blame him at all.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: It was a public duty.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Quite so. His policy was to produce a balanced Budget, and he succeeded.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: As a contribution to the war effort.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The hon. member can have it that way, if he wishes.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: Why do you disagree with it?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I do not think it is pertinent to the issue at all. What I want to do is to bring home that we did work on a policy of balanced budgets. Now there has been a change. The member for Gascoyne became Premier and Treasurer, and he has changed the whole outlook. The circumstances may be different.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: The war has finished.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: But the fact remains it is there. In one period there was a balanced Budget; in the next period there is to be a deficiency; and a deficiency of £207,000 is anticipated.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: The war finished in the meantime.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I do not say that the Treasurer is not realising this; because he made it clear in the Budget speech why that was done, why it had to be done, and the way he proposed to justify the granting of further relief as a result of it. God speed his efforts in that regard! All this is the result, an exposure of the difficulties of this State owing to the operations of the 1928 agreement. Every member is appealing for a reconsideration of the matter. I submit to the Committee that we will never get the financial agreement reconsidered. It is impossible to conceive that it will be reviewed. The Loan Council was created as a result of the agreement. That is part of

the Constitution, and it has been placed in the Constitution by the vote of the people. So what is the good of taking up the time of this Chamber in criticising a condition and suggesting it can be remedied by a review of the cause?

Mr. Leslie: It is the fault of taxation.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Taxation has nothing to do with the Loan Council. That is another issue. The financial agreement has no connection with uniform taxation. I do not want to be led off the track in that way. The position is that we cannot have the cause of our difficulty reviewed or reconsidered, because it is due to a vote of the people and an amendment of the Constitution. All the criticism that has been indulged in has been from the point of view of the Federal responsibility for the financial agreement. The speakers on the subject have never looked at the other side of this agreement. They have never thought of the State Parliament and its shortcomings. They have never thought of trying to put our own house in order before we start criticising the other fellow. Therefore, I say that we are not applying ourselves; we are not taking a realistic view of the position, but are allowing it gradually but surely to become worse, because of our inactivity and total disregard of the actual result of the financial agreement.

Hon. P. Collier: You know, of course, that the financial agreement was forced upon the States absolutely by the Commonwealth Government; that the Commonwealth Parliament was entirely responsible for it.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Unquestionably!

Hon. P. Collier: It was forced on the State.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The member for Boulder can make a speech afterwards.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I agree absolutely with the member for Boulder. It was the result of a decision by the Commonwealth Parliament; but the member for Boulder has to go a little further and say that it received the endorsement of the majority of the electors of Australia.

Hon. P. Collier: It did.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Therefore, it is signed, sealed, and delivered, and it is no use going back over it. The only difference between the hon. member and me is that he supported it, and I opposed it.

Hon. P. Collier: I had to; I had no alternative.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I opposed it.

Hon. P. Collier: You would have landed us in a further mess.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I think we would have got on better. If we had got in a mess then, we would have had matters reviewed. But we are in a mess now, and it is too late to obtain a review of the cause of the mess. I wanted to prevent the cause of the mess. I wanted the cause reconsidered at the time.

Hon. P. Collier: The financial agreement had nothing to do with the cause of the mess.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I think it had everything to do with it.

Hon. P. Collier: Then give us the remedy.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I say the remedy is not that advocated by other speakers. Their remedy is to say that the other fellow has to reconsider his attitude. He must make a more liberal interpretation of the Loan Council's operations, that it must be liberalised in some way or, in other words, the reform must come from the other fellow. I say the remedy is reform by the State Parliament. During the Address-in-reply I tried to concentrate on one reform that would introduce a totally different aspect regarding the State's appeal for further consideration being extended by the Commonwealth authorities. My suggestion is to abolish the Legislative Council. I say that the Legislative Council was never justified on honest democratic lines. The member for Nedlands tries to justify it, but we will deal with that at another time. The Council has never been justified as a necessity in the administration of this State.

The Premier: The member for Guildford-Midland could deal with the member for Nedlands while speaking on the Bill.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The member for Nedlands gave a glorious opportunity to use the fact that Queensland did abolish its Legislative Council. Why Queensland did that will be explained, and the member for Nedlands knows why it was done. It has now become firmly established as the kind of Government that that State wants. There have been changes of Government in Queensland, but never to the extent of re-establishing the Legislative Council. I therefore advocate that one of the major contributions towards State Parliamentary reform is to stop the wilful waste of £30,000 per year which the

Legislative Council costs. Members must appreciate the change brought about by the encroachment of the Commonwealth and the lesser responsibilities left to the State. Even supposing we wanted those 30 honourable gentlemen to help us in days gone by, we do not need their help today when there is not enough work to keep us busy in this House. In those circumstances I say that to continue the wilful waste of money by retaining an ornament such as the Legislative Council will never bring about reform.

Disinterested people outside say that a State Parliament that will maintain an obsolete Chamber of that description, spending £30,000 per annum on it, when it only sits for 129 hours in a session and costs £215 for every hour that it sits, does not deserve consideration from the Commonwealth authorities. I stress as earnestly as I can that as long as we have two Chambers operating as we have today, and as long as we keep 80 members of Parliament, at £600 per annum employed here, so long will we suffer until something strikes us one of these days and we will wonder what has happened. On an earlier occasion I urged that we should try to wipe out that unnecessary expenditure. Though I know it was not taken seriously, I suggested that we should appoint a Royal Commissioner to go into the working of the Legislative Council, its present constitution and its contribution to the welfare of this State, and to report not only to us, but to the Council, the findings of that Commissioner as the result of his investigation.

In my own electorate, where I think the standard of intelligence and political education of the electors is equal to anywhere else in the State, I am positive that not one elector in every hundred knows who are the Legislative Council members for that area. I have tried it out when travelling on the trains in that area, and it is remarkable how hard it is to find one person who can name even one of the Legislative Council representatives for that area. I never found any person there who could name the whole three.

Mr. Seward: The member for Guildford-Midland should try some of the other provinces.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Pingelly is an electorate of broad acres, where large properties predominate, and it is not the Assembly that makes for their welfare, but the Legislative Council.

Mr. Seward: The people there know who their members are.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The people of that electorate would say, "See that hands are kept off the Legislative Council." What else would one expect from Pingelly? There is another question that I wish to raise tonight, and I trust members will bear with me while I develop it. At one stage the price of gold was increased almost 100 per cent., practically overnight. Of course the Bank of England endorsed that increase, but no one knows on what it was based or what calculations were made to ascertain why this metal should be increased in value overnight by about 100 per cent. The metal was not in greater use. Is the member for Nedlands going to help me?

Hon. N. Keenan: I do not believe it.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The member for Nedlands would not believe it. The value of gold was increased, as I have said, and this House considered the increase at the time. The problem concerned not only this State, but other parts of the British Empire where gold is produced in reasonably large quantities. The problem was to decide who should get the benefit of the increased price. In South Africa the Government said, "This is a people's commodity. Gold belongs to the people, so we will take the whole of the increase", and as a result of securing a large percentage of the increase in the price South Africa made millions out of it. Canada did the same thing, to a lesser extent, and imposed a reasonable tax on gold. New Zealand did the same thing.

Western Australia is a gold-producing State. Gold is our major product, and yet when the price was raised 100 per cent. we did nothing. The Government took it into consideration, and an extraordinary thing happened. The Bill was introduced and went through with very little criticism, and the tax imposed was £80,000, whereas the increased price of gold amounted to millions of pounds. However, the Government took not millions, but only tens of thousands of pounds. At that time I fought strenuously and appealed to the Government, which I was supporting, and said it was a grave injustice that we should sacrifice the interests of this State to the gold investors. I said it was a

crime—if I did not use those words I should have done so—for the Bill to be introduced in the form that it took. An extraordinary thing was that when the second reading of the Bill came on I was caught napping. The second reading was rushed through, and both the member for Murchison and I missed the second reading, though we were members vitally interested in the contents of the Bill. When the third reading came on I spoke, and my remarks are to be found in Vol. I of "Hansard" for 1934, at page 1117. There I said—

Deeming that a grave injustice is being done in connection with the proposed tax on the profits of goldmining, I shall take the somewhat extraordinary course of speaking definitely against the Bill on the third reading. One would not do that unless one felt that a wrong was being done, and that some further protest was necessary; or, I would rather say it was necessary to make a further appeal to the Government to recognise that an injustice is being done.

[Mr. Mann took the Chair.]

Further on I stated—

My feeling is that the Government and Parliament, if they allow the Bill to pass in its present form, will be totally disregarding the State's interests and those of the people. It is a very just and lucrative form of revenue, and it can be raised without any revolutionary method at all. If we turn to other countries that have given consideration to this question, we get from them an indication of how best it might be done and what revenue it would be reasonable to collect on behalf of the people. I disagree with the Government's method and with the Government's going to the London investors to discuss a matter of this kind. It was a most extraordinary thing to do, and I can quite imagine that if Labour were on the Opposition benches and the Government announced that it had done such a thing, Labour very rightly would enter a vigorous protest against it.

It is an interesting speech and members may read it if they like, but I have quoted that portion to show that at the time—I am not crying over spilt milk—I tried to stop it and received little or no support in this Chamber.

Mr. Watts: Reformers always take years to get their reforms put into practice.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: That is so. Callous disregard of this sort always has its repercussions. There is no question that the interests of the people of this State were sacrificed at that time. The

people were entitled to a much greater share. Other countries had already adopted this course. We were not introducing something new. We were following what had been done elsewhere, and we had a glorious opportunity of saying that the increased value of the commodity of this State, the commodity that produces the main wealth of the State, the commodity that overnight doubled in value, should be held by the people and that investors and mining companies had no right to it.

I pointed out in my speech that the Chamber of Mines had combined with Mr. de Bernaldes and others to get the gold bonus some little time before the gold premium came in. The Chamber of Mines went to some trouble to quote figures to the effect that if the Commonwealth Government would grant a bonus that would increase the value of gold to £5 5s., the low-grade propositions in this State could be worked, and worked economically. I quoted all that, yet the value of gold went up, I believe, to £9 or £10. The Chamber of Mines said all that was wanted was £5 5s., but the State did not step in and take all that the Chamber of Mines said was unnecessary to make the mining of the commodity an economic possibility.

I repeat that callous disregard of this sort always has its repercussions, and in 1939 or thereabouts the Grants Commission drew attention to the low amount that was being received by the State in revenue from gold. No reform took place. No interest was displayed in the matter by this Chamber. Then the Commonwealth Parliament made up its mind that an injustice was being done to the people of Australia. The people of Australia were subsidising this State through the Grants Commission and were helping this State in other ways, and at the same time this State was allowing its main commodity to be sold at a price that gave an enormously increased profit to investors and mining companies. Wages did not go up; there was no improvement in industrial standards, but the whole of the increase went to those who were not entitled to it. The increase was given for other reasons, world-wide in character, that I do not understand. But when it was given, it should have been enjoyed by the people as a whole. About 1939, the Commonwealth Government imposed the gold pro-

fits tax; in other words, the Commonwealth did what we neglected to do.

Let us see what has happened since then. In 1939-40, the total revenue received from the tax imposed by the Commonwealth amounted to £1,214,621; the contribution by this State was £706,787, and the rebate made in that year was £1,778. The tax was imposed on gold profits, but if any company or prospector could prove that no profit had been made during the year, an amount of the tax was returned by way of a rebate. In 1940-41, the total revenue received from the tax was £1,452,260; this State contributed £807,474, and the rebate was £66,668—an extraordinary sum. In 1941-42, the amount received from the tax was £1,030,425; the State's contribution was £613,786 and the rebate was £160,623. In 1942-43, the tax yielded £524,694—this was the effect of a reduction of mining; this State's contribution was £366,996, a fairly large proportion of the total received, and the rebate was £129,710. In 1943-44, the tax yielded £317,720; the State's contribution was £193,107 and the rebate was £153,873. In 1944-45 the tax yielded £342,457; the State's contribution was £247,225, and the rebate £128,493.

That was a tax imposed by the Commonwealth. In my opinion—after all, this is only my opinion—it was imposed because the State had neglected to do it. The officers who are responsible to the electors of Australia realised that this State had failed in its responsibility to the general economy of Australia.

Hon. P. Collier: It was a war tax because of the need for finding extra revenue for the war.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: We left the opening for the Commonwealth to take it from Western Australia. If the hon. member had taken it when I wanted him to do so, the Commonwealth would not have had it.

Hon. P. Collier: You have misrepresented the facts all through.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The facts are on record.

Hon. P. Collier: The price of gold did not double in a night; it went up gradually and our gold price was regarded as fair at that time.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The hon. member may split straws on the point whether it took a month or a week to double. I used the term "overnight" to convey that the price jumped very quickly.

Hon. P. Collier: It went up gradually.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The fact remains—

Hon. P. Collier: The whole thing is a misrepresentation.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: It did increase in price. I want the Chamber to take official notice of the fact that the Commonwealth Government is doing an extraordinary thing in the matter of the gold profits tax. So far as I know, there is no other commodity that is specially taxed. It is true we have the sales tax, an indirect sort of thing, but I do not know of any other commodity amongst the production of Australia that is definitely taxed at the source. Gold is the one exception. I say that tax would not have been imposed by the Federal authority had we imposed sufficient tax to protect the interests of the people and the rights of the people in gold at the time when the opportunity occurred. I hope the Premier will take notice of this matter; I want him to devote a great deal of thought to it. The member for Boulder says I have indulged in misrepresentation.

Hon. P. Collier: Absolutely.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I say I have not.

Hon. P. Collier: You would say anything.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: An inquiry would quickly clear up the point.

Hon. P. Collier: You have no regard at all for facts, and never will have.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The point could be cleared up by an inquiry. I do not want members to accept all I say without investigation and I do not want them to allow the statements of the member for Boulder to discount without investigation what I have said. Let us have a thorough inquiry into whether this gold tax should continue, whether it is not a special tax imposed upon the economy of this State, whether it is not unjust in its incidence as compared with taxation generally applying in Australia, and whether the amount derived is not enormous as compared with the contribution of any other State. If the in-

quiry proved that this is so, then I suggest that a case should be prepared for submission to the Grants Commission. When it is submitted to the Commission for a review of the position, the Government, having a majority behind it, should be prepared to give an undertaking to the Grants Commission that as soon as the Commonwealth relaxes its grip on the profits on gold, the State will impose a similar tax; in other words, if the commodity is to be taxed, it should be taxed by the State, not by the Federal authority.

Mr. Doney: That portion of your remarks is worth listening to.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I do not care whether the hon. member is interested or not. My contribution to the debate will appear in "Hansard." One thing I do claim, and that is that I do not blow hot and cold in my contributions. What I am doing to-night I did away back in 1934. I have been fighting all the time for the protection of the people's rights, and whether that suits the hon. member or anyone else does not affect me so long as it suits the people I represent. If the hon. member has any doubt as to whether I am representing the people of Guildford-Midland, let him put up one of his stalwarts to test it.

Mr. Doney: For a wonder, I was agreeing with you.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: There is one other thing that I want to refer to, and then I am going to sit down. The member for Mt. Magnet made, as he usually does in matters of this kind, a thoughtful contribution. In speaking to the Budget he referred to the wonderful asset we had in the fish that could be caught in the ocean in different parts of the North-West, particularly, and profitably marketed. The hon. member got far away from Parliament House. He went right up to the islands to say that an industry was waiting for profitable development. He forgot all about Fremantle. The profitable part of fishing is, and has been for many years, at Fremantle. It is the subject of a cruel, vicious monopoly. It is one of the cruelest things that has taken place in the exploitation of an activity of this State. It is in the grip of foreigners. They dictate in connection with all phases of this activity. I know what I am talking about because at one time I, as one of the enthusiastic co-operative organi-

sers, was approached to suggest a scheme that could rescue this lucrative activity at Fremantle from these foreigners.

I prepared a case and the Co-operative Federation, in its desire to help, financed the issuing of circulars to all fishermen. Now, all fishermen are supposed to be licensed. I say "supposed" advisedly because we do not know whether they are all licensed. They are too cute for us in the combinations such as operate at Fremantle. However, we circularised everyone possible and a meeting took place, but the suggestions put forward were too dangerous. Had they been realised the grip would have lessened and fish would have been marketed under reasonable conditions and at a reasonable price compared with the cost of production. After some little time the Federal authorities wrote to the Co-operative Federation stating that they had heard that we were interested in this matter and asking if we could give them advice about the position. We sent them the correspondence and a copy of the circulars that had been issued. We have not heard anything since, but we have read in the Press that the Commonwealth Government is trying to organise the fishing industry on a co-operative basis in the various States of the Commonwealth. But here, at Fremantle, we can get no information as to whether anyone, outside of the members of this vicious combination that is operating to the detriment of the people's supply of fish today, is interested.

I suggest to the member for Mt. Magnet that, in his enthusiasm and in his knowledge—it is far greater than mine—he should devote his attention to Fremantle, and I will be 100 per cent. with him in his efforts. Today there are returned men who are looking for an opportunity to get into this industry, but they are afraid to make the attempt. These men have had experience in the Navy. They are inquiring as to whether there is any chance to get into the industry. They are appealing for some advice and help.

Mr. McLarty: What are they afraid of?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: It is difficult to sell the fish when they are caught because the shops are all part of the combination. The man who made representations—I understand he is a petty officer of the Navy—said that it would be impossible for the returned men, of whom there are 10, to undertake the obligation of getting into this in-

dustry because they would have to fight the combine, and that fight would necessitate the opening of retail shops in competition with those already existing. All I can say is that the Co-operative Federation is prepared to help, on a co-operative basis. It could do a lot to try to release this industry and place it in open, decent competition. But that cannot be done unless there is a change of heart at Fremantle, not altogether on the part of the people but those in authority. They might take a hand and help in this direction. I commend to the member for Mt. Magnet the idea that he devote a little of his time to an investigation of what is taking place at Fremantle. If he is prepared to put his knowledge into use I am prepared to arrange for these men, and myself as well, to meet him to see if we can release this industry for the use of our returned men and give protection to the people against the monopoly that is largely in the hands of foreigners.

I do not propose to say any more. I make this contribution purposely in an endeavour to get this Parliament to realise that any necessary reform has to take place here. The Western Australian Parliament will never reform the other Parliament because it is too mighty and too firmly entrenched. It has captured the imagination of the people, and it is established for keeps. The financial agreement is there for keeps, and uniform taxation is here to stay. The right of States to levy taxes will never be returned. The people will see that it does not come back to the States. We must, therefore, look around and by example, more particularly to the Grants Commission, demonstrate the seriousness of the present position and that we are prepared to do this, that and the other thing provided the State's economy is put on such a basis that we can face with equanimity the trying times to come. I went through the period of the last war. That was heartbreaking. I want to say to members that there will be another period like that. The only thing is that the results will be different. The workers of this country will not again submit to the privations they suffered after the last war. These privations are developing now.

Mr. Leslie: We know that.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: We have to take time by the forelock and anticipate what is coming. We must not wait.

Mr. McLarty: What are we to do?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: We should get rid of the Legislative Council for a start. We would save over £30,000 by doing that. Members should be able to read the writing on the wall. Turn where we will to-day we find that the other nations and countries of the world are leaning to the Left. They have all made revolutionary changes in their Governments. When I come to the debate on the proper Bill I shall quote what has happened in France and Poland, and what took place in Britain.

The Premier: We will have the Greenough figures then, too.

Mr. Seward: They will not please you.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: We can be blind to these developments and ignore them and sit smugly here, but the people outside are thinking, reading and appreciating what is developing, and they are organised to face that development. That organisation will not be bluffed or stampeded into suffering as it was before. Those people look to this Parliament, but mostly to the Commonwealth Parliament to protect them and their families against a recurrence of the privations and poverty that took place after the last war. I am trying to demonstrate that we realise the weakness of our economic condition, and realise that we cannot face it, as a State. Members must know we cannot face it, yet we are continuing with 80 members of Parliament, while men and women suffer outside.

Do members think those people will go on suffering? No, they will simply say, "We had enough last time. We are not going to have any more unless Parliament is put in order and made representative of the people." If that is done we can go to the Commonwealth Parliament, which is representative of the people, and make common cause with it, and help it to carry on and it, in turn, will do what is right and just for the people of this State. To go to the Commonwealth Government, with a property Chamber elected in 1945, when property Chambers all over the world are being cast on the scrap heap, and to ask to be allowed to retain a property Chamber such as that, while asking the Commonwealth to come to our rescue economically, is asking too much. The best con-

tribution we could make would be to have a Royal Commission to inquire into the Legislative Council, and then to have an investigation into the gold tax. If we had those two major reforms we could go, with confidence, to the National Parliament and get the just consideration to which the people of this State are entitled.

MR. READ (Victoria Park) [8.57]: In the estimated revenue for the year 1945-46, under the heading of "State trading concerns" we see the astounding figure of £1,503 deficiency on the State hotels. It is an astounding thing to see a deficiency anticipated for a trading concern of that sort, when the hotel business, all over the country, is a most profitable one. To my mind, this shows bad management, or worse. I propose to suggest a form of management which would turn that anticipated deficit into a large profit, and which would be a blessing to the people of the communities served by the State hotels. We read in the Press, in connection with war loans and victory loans, that those engaged in the hotel business are some of the largest contributors to such loans. One of the poorest hotels I have ever seen, I saw about this time last year, half way between Cue and Meekatharra. That hotel is situated on an alluvial flat, on the main road. Occasionally travellers stop there for refreshment. It is in a deserted gold-field, and there are only a few sheep stations round about from which the men come to this hotel. Its only other customers are a few impoverished prospectors. I said to the licensee, "I suppose you are scratching for a living?" But he answered, "No, I am doing very well."

My suggestion is that the State hotels should be sold to committees composed of business people and local residents, together with the local governing bodies elected by the people, in the towns where they are situated. The hotels could then be managed properly and the profits put towards improving those towns. An outstanding example of that class of management is in the Barossa Valley in South Australia, at a town called Nuriootpa, about 45 miles north of Adelaide. The hotel was bought and is managed by a committee of the people, and the profits are put into a community centre that is second to none in Australia. If that was

done generally in this State we would improve the conditions of thousands of people and would turn what is now a loss into a considerable profit. We have a few hotels to cater for tourists. There is the Yanchep Hotel, for instance, and Cave House. Those are necessary, not only to serve tourists, but to supply the wants of the communities in which they are situated. Another place on similar lines would be useful at Denham, in Shark Bay. There should be an airstrip there, and a State establishment to accommodate people would be a paying concern.

The people of Cunderdin have also conceived the idea that I have mentioned and have formed a committee and started out to do what has been achieved in several places in the Eastern States. Already they have begun to improve the amenities of their town. At Nuriootpa there is a baby health clinic, a kindergarten, a library, a swimming pool of Olympic dimensions, a war memorial community hall, and they are still going ahead with playgrounds and so on out of the profits of the concern. The population there is about 2,000. That hotel has become a picnic place for people on holiday from hundreds of miles around, and in that way the town is accumulating a great deal of capital from outside. We hear much talk about a new order but, if the Minister adopted this idea, we would be doing something worth while. If legislation were introduced to give effect to it, I am sure members would support the measure because of the value to the people living in their own communities. While the hotels are owned by the people of the State at present, they would be community-owned, the only difference being that they would be owned by smaller communities and worked for the benefit of those communities. If this were put in hand, it would bring improvement to the health of and lasting happiness to thousands of people in those areas.

[Mr. Rodoreda resumed the Chair.]

MR. KELLY (Yilgarn-Coolgardie) [9.6]: This Budget which has been before the Chamber for the last 10 or 12 days might aptly be described as a transitional Budget. It has been brought down at a period when we are casting our eyes towards

the task of dealing with conditions that prevailed previous to 1939, and it was quite expected that the Premier would anticipate a deficit, although that has not been the case in the past few years. It was rather surprising that the Premier did not estimate a greater deficit. When we consider the position in some other countries, we must realise how small a deficit of £207,000 really is. According to this morning's newspaper, Canada anticipates a deficit of 1,150, million dollars which, in our money, would be equivalent to roughly £537,000,000 deficit for that country during the present transition period. That is a very large sum. The Commonwealth anticipates a deficit of £152,000,000, which is less than one-third of that anticipated by the Canadian Government. So the State Premier should not have any cause for anxiety at the very small amount of deficit for which he has budgeted.

The Budget contains a number of surprises and some disappointments. I think the chief surprise and the chief disappointment must have been experienced by members representing goldmining constituencies. When we find that one of our most important industries—goldmining—is to have a vote of £3,533 less than the expenditure for last year, we must feel some concern for the future of the industry. The Premier, in the course of his speech, made no mention of the mining industry, but I take it his reason was that when the Minister for Mines introduces his section of the Estimates, he will deal fully with the situation.

We must bear in mind that when the Premier is compiling his Budget, the Commonwealth is virtually a dictator as to what that Budget shall be, and any State Premier is able to cut only the number of coats for which he has material. With this in mind, it is not hard to understand why some of the departments have been provided with such slender funds. To prepare a Budget in any circumstances is difficult, but in circumstances such as those prevailing here at present, the task is exceedingly hard because of our dependence on Commonwealth grants, on Commonwealth reimbursement of taxation and Commonwealth refunds. With other members. I hold the belief that until we regain control of our taxing powers, this State will continue to suffer.

At this stage I wish to deal with the subject nearest my heart, namely the goldmining industry. When the member for Guildford-Midland was speaking, I was afraid that a spanner might be thrown into the works. My desire is to gain some idea of what is in the mind of the Government in dealing with the goldmining industry. So far we have had little more from Commonwealth or State than lip service. In 1944 a mining panel was formed. Doubtless some ground has been traversed by this panel but, so far as the industry is concerned, little has been divulged. The industry remains in the dark, and those who are keen to recommence operations are receiving little encouragement to formulate plans for the future carrying on of their sections of the industry. During July, a conference was held in Kalgoorlie which discussed the subject of an orderly rehabilitation of the industry. That, in its way, might be commendable, but it still did not bring us any closer to the ultimate solution that will lead to the re-establishment of the industry on a basis that will be necessary if the industry is to flourish, as it is entitled to do, during the post-war period.

On the 8th August, a deputation waited on the Prime Minister and received heartening assurances and sympathetic consideration. On reading the account of it in the daily Press, one would expect that the industry would be the subject of early attention, but that is nine weeks ago and the industry still knows nothing of what is taking place. I submit that the industry is entitled to be told just what is in the mind of either the State Government or the Commonwealth Government. We want to know what the position is with regard to the release of both men and material. We want to know also what amount has been set aside by the Commonwealth Government for the rehabilitation of the industry and how soon that amount will be made available. It is not a bit of use, if it is to be made available in six months' time for the simple reason that if it is going to take a number of months to get men back into the industry by dribs and drabs, no mine can frame its policy in such circumstances. We want to know when the industry can expect the return of the machinery, the plant and the electrical equipment which was taken away by the Commonwealth Government during

the war period, in many cases quite justifiably. We were assured some time ago by the then Minister for Mines that that machinery was being earmarked for return to the mines; but it is time we had some definite knowledge of its likely reappearance, so that we will know how to proceed with the industry.

Those are questions which, in my opinion, should have been tackled by the State Government long ago. It should have received replies from the Commonwealth Government, if that Government is going to continue to direct matters in this State. This the Commonwealth Government must do while it is taking the excess profits over £9 per ounce. We should know all these things. If the State Government has the information, then it is up to that Government to make a statement so that the mineowners may be in a position to plan for the future. The member for Mt. Magnet suggested that £500,000 should be made available by the Commonwealth Government for the rehabilitation of the industry. The figures quoted by the member for Guildford-Midland this evening disclose that if £500,000 were earmarked for the industry, it would only represent 12½ per cent. of the amount paid by the producers of gold in this State to the Commonwealth Government during the war period. I personally consider that the £500,000 should be an interim advance to be applied for the rehabilitation of the industry. It should be made available immediately and placed under State control.

A special committee should be appointed by the Mines Department to deal with the advance, and on that committee there should be a representative of the Commonwealth Government, as that Government would be interested in the expenditure of the money. That amount should be made available at the earliest possible moment so as to get the industry into gear again. Such a special committee would be necessary to control the rehabilitation of the industry, because during the initial months it will be necessary to re-start the mines which have been closed. The committee should be charged with the responsibility for the prompt examination of those mines and for quick response to the requests for assistance, for speedy decisions, for avoidance of bottlenecks, and freedom from red-tape. It should be subject to one

restriction only, that of commonsense. If those ideas are adopted and carried out, much valuable time would be saved. Apart from the sum required for re-opening the mines closed during the war, a large amount should also be made available by the Commonwealth Government for investigating new areas and also many centres and mines which were closed in past periods because of lack of capital, and in some instances because of the grade of ore being too low when gold was at a much lower figure than it is today. These investigations should be undertaken on a large scale, because it is only by those means that the industry will survive.

Over a period of years we have worked out many old shows, and some of them were first worked anything up to 50 years ago. Many of those mines were producing a high grade of ore and there is left behind in them a good quantity of low and medium grade ore which, if correct investigation were made, would be found to be payable if the mines were opened up again. They would yield handsome dividends. A large amount of money is required for the development of sulphide ore zones. There is one in the Yilgarn area which has a particular attraction because of its extent and its high value, and because in many instances the sulphides are encountered at a very shallow depth. This field alone offers a gigantic opportunity for the expansion of the sulphide ore if adequate treatment is developed. There is no need in this instance to undertake costly experiments, because experiments have already been made and what remains at present is an established fact.

Some little time ago it was thought by the Mines Department that information was needed before embarking on a plan for working the sulphide zones not only in the Yilgarn area, but in other parts of the State. Accordingly, a departmental official was sent to the Eastern States to obtain the necessary information to guide the department in its deliberations as to what type of treatment plants were to be placed in the sulphide ore zones. There was no necessity whatever to go to the Eastern States to get that information. We have always relied on the Golden Mile for such information, and it would not have required one-tenth or

one-twentieth of the outlay and the time to get full details there of an adequate plant suitable for the treatment of any of our ores. If we desire to obtain any information that is thought to be of value to the State, why not let us send qualified men to America and other countries to examine conditions there and obtain details of improvements? In many of those countries there are plants compared with which those on the Golden Mile would probably be obsolete. I think, too, that money should be made available for the development of a modern type of special treatment plant for oxidised ores. These should be subjected to intense investigation and research. For over 50 years, as the member for Mt. Magnet said, we have persisted in the same type of milling process in the State batteries.

We have never made any effort to get out of the rut we got into 50 years ago, and the consequence is that, instead of our being in a position to reduce costs to prospectors, we have made little attempt to lower the charges to them. In fact, in some cases because of the obsolescence of the plants and the state of disrepair into which they have drifted, they are losing more gold today than they did 50 years ago. The State batteries should be given special attention, because to put them in anything like good order a huge amount of money will have to be expended. There are many that have not turned a wheel for 12 months, and in some instances two years; and it is quite easy to visualise the amount of expenditure that will be necessary to place many of those mills in operation again. Sand treatment plants, too, will be in very poor heart at present; and there is only one way we can hope to reduce our battery costs, and that is by putting those plants into thorough up-to-date order with adequate modern-type machinery.

I consider that an error was made only recently when the old weighbridge that used to be at Southern Cross was taken to Coolgardie. That weighbridge was probably 40 years old; and after it had reached Coolgardie, although the bed had already been sunk in preparation, the installation took three weeks and five days. I cannot understand—and I do not suppose anybody else that saw the amount of work necessary to instal that plant could realise—why it took three

weeks and five days to carry out the task. However, that was the case; and now that it has been installed, it is totally inadequate. Although it was suitable in days gone by, when drays were the only means of transport, and when a dray could get on to that type of platform, it is totally inadequate in these days of large, dual-wheel trucks. At the best, it can only weigh a load in two bites; that is to say, half goes on and is weighed and then taken off; and then the other half is placed on and weighed. Again, there is a particular type of cracker—the old bell type—at the State batteries.

This type of cracker has far outlived its usefulness, and the only type worth considering for the work being done at the State batteries, which handle varied types of ore, is the jaw-cracker. There was a bell-cracker in one State battery recently which broke down five times. That would not be so bad if, when in use, it was doing a reasonable job. But instead of that, in nine cases out of 10, it is the prospectors who are having to crack the stone they have won from the earth and taken to the battery for treatment. While that type of obsolete machinery is in use at our State batteries, the batteries will continue to give dissatisfaction and be costly to the State, and also to the prospectors who are patronising the battery. Those obsolete methods apply also to the sand treatment plants; and in some cases, particularly in the low or medium type of crushing, the majority goes into the sands. If the various plants were brought up to date, such a great amount of loss would not occur.

Some batteries must be prepared in the near future to run for longer periods. During the past 12 months, we have had instances of four or five batteries being run by the one crew with, in some instances, a manager resident at the battery and an assistant and a travelling crew for the operation of the mills. That is entirely wrong, particularly at present, when many of the older prospectors are getting out into country which has been denied them for the last few years, mainly on account of difficulties of transport. It means that where these men go out and obtain small crushings, they are being denied the opportunity of regular crushing, unless mills operate in centres adjacent to where the stone is obtained.

The Coolgardie State battery, in July-August, crushed 1,200 tons in three weeks.

At the end of that period there was still 500 tons waiting to be crushed. But what do the crew, under instructions, do? They are sent to Kalgoorlie. After remaining at Kalgoorlie between six and seven weeks they succeed in crushing a further 408 tons. That is to say, after three weeks' crushing in Coolgardie, they go away, and, in the ensuing six or seven weeks, they crush only 408 tons.

That goes to show the cost involved in these State-run batteries. They are a wonderful blessing to the prospector. They have served the very excellent purpose of developing much of our auriferous country in the past 20 or 30 years; and, in some cases, much longer than that. But there is no excuse for those batteries remaining obsolete and in a state of disrepair. In that condition, they will be a decided drain on the finances of the State. At present, there are 2,000 tons ready for crushing in Coolgardie. The mill has started up; but it means that, when those 2,000 tons are crushed, another 1,000 or 1,200 tons already broken will be ready for the mill. Instead of carrying on and doing that amount of crushing—and it is practically a full-time job for the battery crew—they will be taken to some other centre; and in all probability, many prospectors will be unable to get their Christmas parcels through in time for it to be of any use to them. I make no apology for again stressing to this Chamber the importance of the mining industry; and I cannot overstress the importance that attaches to the future of the industry. We should leave no stone unturned in advising people concerned in the industry of the Government's attitude in this connection.

MR. CROSS (Canning) [9.35]: I was astounded at the remarks of the member for Victoria Park. Evidently the hon. member is not aware of the fact that we have the Auditor General's Report. I desire to correct any misapprehension that members may have. If the hon. member had taken the trouble to look at page 15 of that report he would have seen that the State hotels have paid into Consolidated Revenue an accumulated profit, since their inception, of over £175,000.

Mr. Perkins: How do you account for the loss estimated for the coming year?

Mr. CROSS: As far as I can see no loss is estimated for next year. In the further figures, which are of interest, we find that an amount of £1,900 has been provided for reserves for repairs and renewals, and that provision has been made for a depreciation reserve of £14,646. Actually the value of the hotels has been written down to a net amount of just over £60,000. I venture to say that the newest of the State hotels, that at Wongan Hills, could not be built today for less than £30,000. Incidentally it is one of the best hotels in the State, those in the metropolitan area included. If the hon. member doubts what I say, I recommend him to try a week at the Wongan Hills hotel where he will spend a pleasant holiday with the best attention. The Premier is to be congratulated on the manner in which he brought down his first Budget, because we have difficult times ahead. I believe that in the next two or three years tremendous difficulties will confront the State Treasurer because Western Australia is practically hamstrung, financially, by the Commonwealth. Many of our problems mean the provision of funds.

I forecast that the next couple of years will be the most difficult in the history of this State. On every hand today there are tremendous shortages. The average man does not realise the shortages that exist in the provision of new water supplies. Hundreds of applications that have been approved for new extensions, new works, and new connections for houses, lie in the Water Supply Department but they cannot be put into operation, not for the want of money, but because no pipes are available. Few people seem to realise that in spite of the fact that the B.H.P. has stepped up its production to just over 2,000,000 tons of steel a year, the necessary quantity is not yet available. Unless there is a sharp increase in the quantity of steel made available for pipes, the people in this State wanting water supplies will not be able to get them. Many residents in my area are justified in the complaints they are making, but it is impossible for the work to be carried out unless pipes are provided. I merely mention that to illustrate one of our difficulties.

I know that if anyone placed an order for 1,000 running feet of 6 x 1 tongued and grooved floorboard in Perth today he could not get it. There is none. People have permits to build, but I challenge anyone to produce in Perth tomorrow 1,000 feet of floorboard. The reason, perhaps, is not a shortage of men at the State mill at Carlisle, but the shortage of manpower at the bush mills. Similar conditions apply in connection with baths, bath heaters, and gas stoves. I venture to say that the shortage of materials alone will cause an extremely difficult position. On the other side of the river—though this does not affect the State Government—dozens of people desire to instal telephones. Last week I interviewed the Superintendent of Telephones on behalf of two or three people who required instruments urgently. He informed me that it is impossible for another 'phone to be installed in South Perth or Victoria Park—particularly Victoria Park. He said it is quite possible that we may not be able to instal a new 'phone for two years. The reason is not because of the telephones, but because both South Perth and Victoria Park are on automatic exchanges, and the switch gear for these exchanges comes either from America or Great Britain. A supply of switch gear equipment is not likely to be available for some considerable time.

Mr. North: You cannot connect gas, either.

Mr. CROSS: No, although I know a few pipes have come to hand because I saw a truckload travelling to Perth today.

Mr. North: That is good news.

Mr. CROSS: At the same time the type of pipe for house connections is still not available, so that that presents a difficulty. Yet people are clamouring for new installations. These things will cause discontent. In addition—and I need not remind members—there are instances of industrial unrest, not only in Western Australia, but in the Eastern States and in Great Britain and America.

The Premier: And in Argentine and everywhere.

Mr. CROSS: Yes, in almost every country of the world. We often hear people say that this industrial unrest is due to the Communist element. I do not believe that.

Mr. Mann: What is the reason for it?

Mr. CROSS: I shall tell the hon. member. The reason, in my opinion, is this: Since 1938 the purchasing value of money has so

depreciated that the people now find it is very difficult to live and pay the high prices obtaining. In spite of the fact that the basic wage has increased by about 30s. per week since 1938, many articles that were not calculated in the basic wage at all have increased in price. This means that, during a period when wages have been pegged and taxation has been heavy, it has been difficult for many people to carry on. Unless this problem is effectively tackled, we may have a great wave of industrial unrest. Like the member for Williams-Narrogin, I believe that in a few years there will be another attempt to appreciate the purchasing value of money. I believe that world financiers realise that many of their large investments in war stock, when the time for repayment comes, will be paid in depreciated currency. Though we talk of controls, and though prices have been fixed and wages pegged, everybody knows that costs have gone higher.

It is no secret that the cost of many imported articles is likely to be 40 per cent. or 50 per cent. higher than pre-war. I think the financial wirepullers will make a great effort to get money back to its pre-war purchasing value, but I do not think they will succeed. They will fail just as any attempt at wage-pegging and price-fixing must fail in the end. The cause of this change in values is the tremendous increase in the public debt. I will give some figures indicating the position that must be faced, and I will then mention two or three remedies that can, or should, be applied. Twenty-five years ago, in 1920, this State owed £46,000,000—the Treasurer must give this consideration because it affects the interest bill—and the Commonwealth owed £381,000,000, the total debt of the Commonwealth and States being £510,000,000. The latest figures show that this State now owes £96,000,000, or nearly double what it owed 25 years ago. The Commonwealth now owes £1,476,000,000, so its debt has increased five times over, and the total debt of the States and Commonwealth is now £2,366,000.

Though the rate of interest is now just over 3½ per cent., as against 5 per cent. 25 years ago, the Commonwealth and States have to face a fixed annual charge of a far greater amount than they paid in interest 25 years ago, and war expenditure has not yet finished. Members may have seen in the paper this morning some figures relating to Canada. There it was pointed out that the Premier of

Canada, in announcing his Budget, said that now the Commonwealth debt of Canada amounted to 11,298,000,000 dollars, and that does not mention the debts of the Provincial Parliaments. In Australian currency, that means £2,250,000,000, and there will be a sharp increase in the Canadian debt. Great Britain's debt pre-war was £7,800,000,000. The latest figures show that the debt is now £29,000,000,000. Great Britain's revenue in 1914 was £214,000,000, but the interest bill alone last year was £280,000,000, without allowing anything to carry on social services. This is not merely a State or Commonwealth problem, but an Empire problem. Many other countries will be in the same position, with heavy interest bills to meet, and when we have to trade with other countries this huge annual interest bill will be a tremendous millstone to carry.

If our primary producers had to compete with those of a country without a national debt, they would be hopelessly out of the race. It might be all right to have pegged wages during a time when the debt was growing, but if there is a serious attempt to peg wages at a time when debts have to be repaid or interest charges met, we shall be faced with a wave of industrial strife such as the world has never seen. It will be impossible for the workers of different countries to go back to pre-war rates of wages and still live. When there is talk of preventing inflation, that, in my opinion, is simply to get people ready for the time when the financiers will try to appreciate the purchasing value of money by getting it back to its old rates. If that is tried, it will fail and will leave a trail of disaster and bankruptcy behind it. I remember when an attempt was made to get it back, when the Mitchell Government was in power, and the Government put up a parrot cry of "Work harder, and longer hours." Wages were reduced by 22½ per cent., and soon there were thousands of men out of work in the State.

I will give an illustration to prove the absolute farce of attempting to appreciate the value of money possessed by bondholders to pre-war values. Incidentally the people who are providing the money for the purchase of bonds and war stock, not only here but in Britain, are the big financial institutions. In these

days the workers are not able to subscribe to the current war loan because they have not the wherewithal to do so. That is all on account of the high prices prevailing.

Mr. Doney: The Savings Bank deposits do not suggest that.

Mr. CROSS: If we were to take into account the increase in the Savings Bank deposits from 1938 contrasted with the position today—I will give the hon. member the figures if he doubts my statements—there would not be sufficient to fill the present loan. There might be if the increase were to be taken throughout Australia, but not from this State alone.

Mr. Doney: No-one suggested that.

Mr. CROSS: It is said that the Savings Bank deposits in Australia have increased by £30,000,000, but that would not be sufficient to fill the loan at this stage. The simple illustration I was about to give to the Committee is this: Let us assume that a man is today receiving £6 a week. We proceed to divide that into three equal parts. We give the man two parts to live on and the other part to the Government so that it can pay its interest bill. Thus the man would get £4 and the Government £2. Then we may say, "If we reduce wages and the cost of living in proportion, this man will be just as well off." He would not be just as well off. I will tell the Committee why.

In the illustration I have given, the man's salary has been divided into three parts of which the man received two and the Government one. If we reduce the wages the Government will receive only half of what it formerly received, whereas the public debt is fixed. So the effect is that the Government must take £2 from the man who has only £1 left. The position would be impossible for that man. Now, assume the man's income was increased to £9 per week! Divide that into three equal parts! The man has two parts equal to £6, the cost of living rising accordingly. The Government takes the remaining part which would be £3, and would thus be able to pay its fixed commitments more easily and, in addition, could reduce taxation. We must have regard to the natural processes of events. What will happen has been going on for a hundred years, and no Government can stop it. With the growth of the public debt there is inevitably an increase in prices due to the war,

and all wars are inevitably followed by waves of industrial unrest. Some people talk about the dog chasing its tail in this connection, but it is not true.

The Premier: It is just a tale!

Mr. CROSS: The workers make their demands and if they do not get what they want, there is direct action and eventually they get it. Nevertheless they are no better off than before—but Governments can carry on. This sort of thing has gone on for years, and history will repeat itself. As a result of this depreciation of currency values some sections of the community have suffered more than others. Three classes have suffered severely. These include people on fixed incomes from investments. They include workers who are paid a margin for skill. While such workers receive an increase in the basic wage, the margin for skill remains exactly the same as it was in 1938. Everyone knows that a man who enjoyed a margin of 30s. in 1938 and a similar margin today is placed in the position that his margin will enable him to buy only 15s. worth of goods compared with what was possible in 1938. Then take the position of pensioners. I do not refer to the old-age pensioners, because the Commonwealth Government did something about them.

Take other pensioners and people who are in receipt of superannuation! They are suffering because the value of their money has depreciated by about 40 per cent. Members themselves know that with the salaries they receive today they cannot buy the quantity of goods that they could in 1938 or 1939. I believe something should be done to relieve the situation. It is a matter for consideration at a Premiers' Conference and is not for this State to deal with alone. The Commonwealth Government did something in connection with the pensions payable to soldiers from the 1914-18 war and increased them to some extent. Old-age pensioners also received an increase but I again remind the Committee that many civil servants who retired on superannuation as far back as ten years ago now find that half the purchasing power of their money has gone, and they are suffering in consequence today. If anyone is contemplating buying a house, he will find that as soon as the restrictions are lifted values will increase 40 per cent. compared with what they were previously. In Britain wages have increased

81 per cent. since 1939 and are still rising. In Australia wages have been pegged and the only increase the workers have received has been in the basic wage. I think the whole position of the three classes of people I have mentioned should be listed for consideration on the agenda paper at a Premiers' Conference.

This Parliament could devote two or three days to a debate dealing with nothing else than immediate war-caused problems such as shortages and various other matters. That is the position as I see it today. I believe the whole matter should be the subject of a discussion at a special conference because the purchasing value of money has also decreased and our huge interest debt has mounted so high. It is time that not only Australia and Great Britain, but the Empire as a whole, tackled the problem. If that is not done, later on other countries that are not confronted with similar huge debts and heavy commitments will be in a better position than the Empire to compete for world trade. What did Germany do in 1917? That country set out on a planned scheme of inflation. Overnight, rents were increased by law and all export transactions were forced to go through the Reichbank. They unloaded in one way and another hundreds of millions of pounds worth of useless marks by purchasing properties in England, America and elsewhere.

Take the position in France! That country secured a £50,000,000 loan from Britain and then adopted a policy that sent the franc sky-high and Britain received only £5,000,000 back. I do not believe in uncontrolled inflation; I do not regard that as a cure; but a form of controlled inflation is never so disastrous to the masses of the people as is a form of deflation. The huge interest bill that we have to pay really affects the revenue because, unless we take action to deal with it, we cannot get the requisite money with which to start new industries. I believe there is action that could be taken to remedy the position. There are three things we could do. First of all, although rates of interest have been lowered, I believe they should be still further reduced. Before 1900, the average rate of interest paid by Great Britain on its old debts was less than two per cent. and we were paying five per cent. or more than five per cent. until about 1938.

Mr. McLarty: Yet the Commonwealth cannot fill the present loan at $2\frac{1}{2}$ or $3\frac{1}{4}$ per cent.

Mr. CROSS: Possibly not, but the hon. member must appreciate that the more we increase the interest bill, the greater the number of drones we shall have in the community. In Great Britain in ordinary times a large army of people live on their investments.

Mr. McLarty: There are not too many drones in this State today.

Mr. CROSS: There may not be so many today, and in an ordered community we should not have them. The rate of interest should be reduced even below the present level because a controlled form of inflation is infinitely better for the masses of the people than is deflation. The second thing that will help to ease the position is to create new industries and as many of them as possible. The third is an increase in the population of this State. If we had twice as many people in the State, it would be twice as easy to pay the interest bill because there would be twice as many people to share the burden. This is a matter that should be discussed in a full-dress debate in the House. It is also an Empire problem. In Great Britain the Government realised that something had to be done for people on fixed incomes and people living on superannuation and pensions granted years ago, and in 1944 legislation was introduced which became the Pensions Increase Act, 1944, 7 and 8 Geo. VI, Ch. 21. I will read a portion of the first schedule to indicate what the Government did. The Act provides for increases of pensions, mainly the pensions granted years ago. The extract is as follows:—

Pensions which may be increased under this Act.

Part I.

1. A pension payable under the Superannuation Acts, 1834 to 1943.
2. A pension payable under the Elementary School Teachers (Superannuation) Acts, 1898 to 1912.
3. A pension payable under the Teachers (Superannuation) Acts, 1918 to 1939, not being a pension payable under paragraph (b) of subsection (3) of section fourteen of the Teachers (Superannuation) Act, 1925.
4. A pension payable under the enactments relating to the pensions of the Royal Irish Constabulary.
5. A pension payable under section twenty-nine of the Finance Act, 1932.

Many local authorities also pay pensions and Part II provides that an increase shall be payable by any local authority solely in relation to any local government service. Many of the police in Great Britain are controlled and financed by the municipal councils, and it was provided that their pensions should be increased as defined by the Third Schedule to the Police Pensions Act, 1921, in the exercise of their functions as such an authority. It was also provided that increases should be made in pensions payable by any local authorities in respect of the service as a professional fireman. In Britain there is not a board such as we have to control fire brigades; there are dozens of fire brigades, each town controlling its own. The Act provided for firemen receiving increases and for increased payment on all superannuation. The amount of pension which should be paid was laid down. While the real increase that has occurred in the cost of living was not granted, a considerable increase was made in the pensions of those people.

In Australia there are thousands of people living on pensions; these people are not confined to Western Australia, and if Great Britain could take that action, similar consideration should be extended to our people who are in receipt of pensions or superannuation. Consideration must also be given, either by the Arbitration Court or by Parliament, to the change in the value of margins for skill. I pointed out previously that a man in receipt of 30s. a week as a margin for skill finds that the purchasing power of his money has gone. There is not likely to be any reversion to the pre-war values of wages. History shows that there will not be. Members will recall the change in values that occurred immediately after the Boer War, and we had a similar experience after World War No. 1. Since I have been in this State, the basic wage has been increased considerably. When I came here the rate was 7s. per day; today it is 16s. 6d. That represents the change in the last 35 years. There are people drawing pensions who retired 14 or 15 years ago; and it is safe to say that the money which they now receive will purchase only half of the goods which they could have bought at the time they retired. This is a matter that ought to be discussed at a Premiers'

Conference. I could say quite a lot more about it, but I know the Premier wishes to finish the general debate on the Estimates tonight. I therefore suggest that the Premier make a date available for a special debate on all our post-war problems, with a view to improving matters and placing our State in a better position, so that we might avoid further depression and do all we can for the benefit of the people.

MR. McLARTY (Murray-Wellington) [10.16]: There are but a few matters to which I wish to make reference on the Budget. First, I wish to refer to the urgent position of a number of hospitals in this State. We hear today that one of our largest private hospitals has closed, and that in another the children's ward has had to be closed, while in some of our country districts grave danger exists that hospitals will not be able to remain open. I think that if representations were made to the Defence authorities as to the urgency of the position and if the Government took a strong stand, personnel could be made available to carry on the hospital work. We see today quite a number of young women still in the Services. We see them in uniform, in all three of the Defence Services. Many of them are cooks; they have been trained to be competent cooks and to do work of that class generally. I suggest that the Defence authorities should release them, in view of the urgency of the position, to do this hospital work. After all, it is quite as necessary to look after our sick in the public hospitals as it is to look after our sick in the military hospitals.

If it is a question of wages—and I do not think these girls are overpaid—I suggest that if increased wages are demanded they should be paid. If the girls cannot be discharged from the Defence Forces immediately, then let the authorities grant them leave. If a call were made for volunteers, I think we might get them, but to think that hospitals are closing today, when they are overcrowded as it is, does not redound to our credit. I do not propose to say much on the Budget at this late hour, as I know that Budgets delivered in the State Parliament today do not create the interest which they formerly did. That is natural. The taxpayer is interested in what increased taxation he has to pay.

Mr. Smith: There is not much interest in that on this side of the Chamber, anyhow.

Mr. McLARTY: No. That might apply to the whole Chamber. I understand the Premier wants to finish the debate, so we shall have to stay here until this general discussion is completed.

Mr. J. Hegney: Early morning will do.

Mr. McLARTY: It might suit the hon. member, but not me. We know that the Commonwealth Parliament controls the finances of this State, and I have no doubt it will endeavour to retain that control. Before long, I fully expect that another referendum will be put to the people and that the Commonwealth Government will be telling us that it is impossible for it to face up to post-war problems unless it is given complete control of taxation and finance generally. No doubt the member for Guildford-Midland will welcome such a referendum, and if it is carried, he would have the unification which he has so long desired. We must face the position as soon as possible. Suggestions have been made to this Committee that a convention should be held. I think it is necessary. I also think that we should have defined what avenues the Commonwealth Government should tax and what avenues should be left to the State. If uniform taxation is to continue, the importance of State Parliaments will be greatly diminished and eventually they will be abolished. In my opinion unification in a country like Australia is unthinkable, because the more sparsely populated States are bound to suffer. When the States federated no one imagined—no one at all—that the Commonwealth Parliament would be able to invade every field of taxation that could be thought of.

When introducing his Budget, the Treasurer mentioned the transition from war to peace and told us that money was only obtainable from certain sources. We have been reminded by many people of the dangers of inflation. I think the greatest safeguard against inflation here is to encourage civil production. A search should be made by the Government immediately as to what is offering in that direction. Again, there is need to release all Service personnel as soon as possible; and it would be in the best interests of the country to cease the war production which is still proceeding, and which

I suppose will be handed over to the War Disposals Commission for sale and sold at a considerable loss.

I desire to say a word or two about taxation. I think the people of Australia generally are disappointed at the reduction which the Commonwealth Government has made in taxation. All said and done, I think it amounts to about only £3,000,000, and the Commonwealth Government will collect millions more this year than it did last year. It will be able to collect more because there will be more taxpayers to collect from. There is no doubt this high taxation is having its effect upon all classes of the community. There is a tendency to slacken, both on the part of the employer and the employee. They were willing to submit to this taxation during time of war; but there are definite indications, which are growing, that there is a slackening of effort. I want to refer to company taxation. The Minister for Industrial Development has told us on a number of occasions that he is keen to establish secondary industries in this country. If he is going to establish them and the necessary capital is to be raised, it can be raised only through the formation of companies. There is no inducement for companies today to invest money, or to raise money, to start with, when the Commonwealth Government takes one-third, or nearly one-third—6s. in the pound—of their profits. What inducement is there to companies today to develop industries? Apart from the 6s., there is taxation on their dividends.

I think some people have an idea that companies, or shareholders in companies, are wealthy people, but that is far from being so. There are thousands of shareholders throughout the Commonwealth who are poor people; and the fact that they have shares in companies means that they are not a charge on the Government, although the income they derive from their shares in many cases would not be equal to what the old age pensioner is drawing today. If we are to develop secondary industries in this country, companies will have to be relieved of taxation. Taxation should certainly be substantially reduced, and when new companies are being formed they should be given a certain period in which they will be exempt from the company tax. The Premier referred to migration. I agree with him that we should not attempt any large-scale

migration until we have settled our Service personnel, and that is going to take some time. There are enthusiasts who tell us that we should start migration immediately, and who impress upon us the need for increased population.

We all agree about the need for increased population; but the Treasurer is right when he says that he will attend to our Service personnel first and whatever form of migration we have in future has to be well ordered. I do not think it advisable that anyone over 40 should be assisted to migrate to this country. The younger migrants are the better, and child migration is the soundest form of migration. I know that the Commonwealth Government is trying to make arrangements, or has made arrangements to bring 50,000 orphan children to Australia, three years after the cessation of hostilities. We in this State should try to get a fair proportion of those children. We have the Fairbridge Farm, on which a solid amount of money has been expended, and which is now practically empty. It is fitted to receive such children and there they could be trained. Every effort should be made to make use of that farm once more. I do not altogether agree that these children should all be brought out with the one idea of their being put on the land. We know from our own experience that many boys are not adapted to the land, and do not want to take up a career on the land; and these children should be given an opportunity to choose their own careers, and we should help them.

I am alarmed at the rising cost of houses. Workers' homes are today costing over £1,000, and I think there is a tendency for those costs to rise. I do not believe those costs can be justified; and I would like to see tabled in this House a detailed statement of these costs generally, including costs of labour and material and other expenses. I feel that some people are getting more out of this house-building than they should get, but I do not know where the excess cost is mounting up. It will be well worth while to institute an inquiry into building costs. I desire to conclude with a reference to the industrial position. There is no doubt that our industrial conditions in Western Australia—I refer to peace in industry—will have more to do with our success in establishing secondary industries than any other factor.

Generally speaking, we have been freer from industrial unrest than most States. We should encourage more round-table conferences between employers and employees and, if agreements are not reached, appeal can be made to the Arbitration Court. But it is useless going to the court unless both sides will obey the awards given. I would much rather see the States handle industrial matters, where possible, than see the Commonwealth do it, because the Commonwealth has not succeeded in regard to industrial turmoil. Even today, we have the spectacle of our troops in New Guinea and other places being on short rations because the Government is unable to enforce peace in industry.

Mr. Fox: That is very doubtful.

Mr. McLARTY: There is no doubt about it, as the hon. member would see if he read this morning's paper.

Mr. Fox: I read the paper.

Mr. Doney: What right have you to deny the truth of what soldiers write home?

Mr. McLARTY: If the hon. member had read the paper, he would have seen letters from soldiers. Not only did I read the paper, but I myself have seen letters from soldiers stating that they are on short rations and have to exist on bully beef and M. and V. That is no credit to our Government; and if it is unable to maintain peace in industry today under those conditions where men are waiting to come home, there is not a very bright outlook for the future. I am personally more inclined to put my faith in the State Government keeping the peace in industry than I am in the Commonwealth Government doing so.

Mr. Watts: Your faith would not be misplaced, either.

Mr. McLARTY: I do not think it would be. Those disrupting industry should be punished. We have heard reference tonight to the Communists, and I have read where leading trade unionists have complained of Communist influence. If we are strong enough, surely we can get rid of that influence! If Communists are disrupters of industry, they should be punished, and I hope not only our Commonwealth but our State Government will have strength to deal with this matter.

MR. GRAHAM (East Perth) [10.34]: The proceedings tonight seem to have developed into a contest between the Govern-

ment, on the one hand, endeavouring to wear down members; and members, on the other hand, endeavouring to wear down the Government. I appreciate that the hour is late, but if one has a contribution one desires to make, it should be made, irrespective of the hour. In the past there seems to have been a particular merit perceived in the fact that Budget surpluses were achieved. I can see that during periods of acute crisis, such as during a war when there is necessity to retract from any activities that might militate against the successful prosecution of the war, such a course is necessary and desirable; but ordinarily I can see no virtue whatever in a Budget surplus being achieved. I prefer that work shall be done by both the Commonwealth and the State Governments rather than that they shall be influenced by a set of bookkeeping figures. After all, be our public debt what it may, if we have homes, schools, hospitals and transport facilities, we have the things that are vital.

I find, on perusing the indebtedness of the various States, that in Victoria the average indebtedness is £93 per head, while in Western Australia it is £211. Those are the most recent figures available. I find that there is a great disparity between one State and another. By no stretch of imagination can it be said that the prosperity of a State is governed to any considerable extent by the size, be it great or small, of the indebtedness of that State. I feel rather that the people as a whole of New South Wales, for instance—notwithstanding the indebtedness of that State is greater than that of Victoria—enjoy a condition of living infinitely superior to that of the inhabitants of Victoria. After all, it is the physical satisfaction, so far as the hard school of economics is concerned, that is the paramount factor.

During the addresses on the Estimates practically every speaker had something to say about the effect of uniform taxation upon the capacity of the States to manage their own affairs. That position has to be acknowledged. I want to say quite frankly, as did the member for Guildford-Midland, that we have to face up to the situation that uniform taxation has come to stay, whether we like it or not. I think, too, that the people of the Commonwealth favour a permanent continuation of uniform taxation. It is not suggested that the rates should in any way approach the heights they reached during the war. But if the requirements of

the States are in excess of the pre-war levels by 50 per cent. I do not think the average person will find the burden in any way intolerable. When all is said and done the amount involved is approximately £2,500,000, so far as Western Australia is concerned, whereas the amount we expend is in the vicinity of £14,000,000. It will, therefore, be appreciated that only a fraction of the income of the State is in any way affected by this system of uniform taxation.

I will agree, of course, that many items are such that it is impossible to vary them to any extent. I do not think it is suggested that if, contrary to my belief, we ever again have the power to impose taxation, apart from the Commonwealth, the rates should in any way be raised. I believe, therefore, that the idea of members is that there should be paid to Western Australia, a greater proportion of the taxation received as a consequence of the increased standard of living and the general higher prosperity that has, paradoxically enough, existed during the war and is continuing, at any rate, for the time being. Members are aware that in the Federal Act which made uniform taxation an accomplished fact, there is a distinct and definite provision to the effect that if the payments made to a State are, in the opinion of the Treasurer of that State, insufficient to meet the State's requirements, then application may be made to the Grants Commission for the purpose of endeavouring to secure a greater allotment of money from the Commonwealth. I am interested to know whether any such application has been made by the Government of Western Australia. I feel that an exceedingly good case along those lines could be made out.

I am informed that at present the Commonwealth Government is consulting with the representatives of certain States with regard to making to those States a greater allocation out of the money received by uniform taxation. If that is a gesture or a move by the Commonwealth Government recognising a certain state of affairs, there is, notwithstanding that fact, a responsibility devolving on the Government of this State to make direct approaches in order to secure a greater measure of financial aid than it receives at present. There is no denying the fact that Western Australia is in a very sad state of disrepair. No matter

in which direction we care to look maintenance work is long overdue. Extremely important developmental works should be undertaken. There is no need to itemise them because all members are aware of the many works that are simply shrieking to be done. We must expand and carry out reforms. We, as a Government, must venture forth in order to give something better to our people than has previously existed.

Some criticism has been levelled at the paucity of the amount devoted to mining, particularly goldmining, for the forthcoming year. I do not desire in any way to deprecate the work of the goldmines, but I do suggest that a tremendous number of other tasks, of far more value to the people of this country than the opening or re-opening of the goldmines, should be undertaken.

Mr. Kelly: Where will you get the labour?

Mr. GRAHAM: The commodity produced may have an extremely high, and, may I say, artificial value on the international market, but I am convinced that gold is not going to satisfy any of the basic requirements of our people.

Mr. Perkins: What if it is needed in exchange for imports that we require?

Mr. GRAHAM: We must pursue that argument at greater length, and to more effect, when we have a more favourable opportunity. In reply to the interjection of the member for Yilgarn-Coolgardie in connection with finding employment for people, I visualise that, when this transition period has passed, the situation, which is difficult at present on account of the demobilisation of so many thousands of men and the impossibility of immediately embarking upon the projects that we have in mind for the future, will be very similar to what has obtained over the past few years. There will be a grievous shortage of manpower, rather than a shortage of jobs. I think I could give a list of works to be undertaken in Western Australia that would keep every able-bodied man, woman and child occupied for many years to come. The only thing likely to prevent those works being undertaken is if in the future, as we have done in the past, we allow ourselves to be dictated to by financial considerations. If we regard the matter from the point of view that there

is work to be performed and that we have people capable of doing that work, we shall proceed with the work instead of, as in the past, looking at figures in a book to see whether those works should be undertaken. I anticipate that that will be the spirit that will pervade all future undertakings where the Commonwealth Government is concerned. The agitation by many members regarding the extreme urgency—as they see it—of a considerable expansion in tourist facilities does not strike home to me.

I am not convinced that in Western Australia, or in Australia as an economic unit, we can secure any great advantage by persons coming here and by our people becoming waiters and stewards to them and providing them with food, accommodation, transport and all the other facilities they require. I do not think that we should become workmen to satisfy their wants, however extravagant they might be. If we carry that to its logical conclusion we become slaves to the visitors who come here holding in their hands papers that are recognised by institutions known as banks, and if that comes about, then, hey presto, the millennium has arrived in Australia. The more of these people that come to Australia the more of our wealth will they consume and the more people will be required to satisfy their wants, instead of performing tasks that will assist in building up the living standard of the people of this country.

Mr. Perkins: Do you not think we might get some useful imports back in return for those pieces of paper?

Mr. GRAHAM: I would have thought that the debate held a few nights ago in this Chamber would have satisfied a number of members that, if we are going to hitch our waggon to a star called the export market, we will be hitching it to something that is extremely uncertain and shaky, to say the least of it. While I believe much that has been said of the necessity for an international outlook, I also believe that there is necessity to make our own people secure. If we are constantly seeking illusive overseas markets, which may or may not be there next year, to sell our commodities at prices that may or may not be payable, we are building on a very shaky foundation.

Mr. Perkins: The member for East Perth sounds very like an isolationist, to me.

Mr. GRAHAM: I think I sound like a realist. Another matter that has recently received publicity is the liquor trade, with particular reference to trading hours. The Premier is aware that representations have been made to him in this matter from various sources. Twelve months ago I suggested that, because of the circumstances, when licensed premises were—as I put it—to a great degree in a state of suspense owing to war-caused difficulties, the time was opportune to undertake a comprehensive inquiry into many of the—in some respects unsavoury and questionable—items calling for investigation. However, nothing has been done regarding a general inquiry into the ramifications of the liquor industry, though some alteration was made several months ago into the hotel trading hours in the metropolitan area. I refer to the extension of the trading hours to 7 p.m. I am confident that that alteration was not satisfactory to a single section of the community—the drinkers, the publicans, the barmaids and barmen, or even the temperance people—not one section was satisfied with that change. I think, therefore, that there is now a greater necessity for a full inquiry, so that when a determination is made it will have some appreciation of the realities of the situation, instead of merely making a stab in the dark.

I am prompted by the remarks of the member for Murray-Wellington, who mentioned another matter. He referred to what we have read in the Press this evening regarding the tragic situation that has developed in the hospitals, owing to the impossibility of supplying staffs for those institutions. The reason, of course, is that the working conditions offering are not sufficiently attractive. Whilst it may not be before our minds at the moment, I think the same can be said of many other vocations of extreme importance to the public, where work must be performed without interruption. I appreciate that, because of the Commonwealth regulations that exist at the moment, the outlook for an immediate change is not hopeful. I will refer again to remarks I made earlier this session, to the effect that the time is opportune for a full investigation into all the items that go to make up the standard of living of the people, in order that the tribunal appointed might make recommendations for our guidance, to determine what will then be constituted as a minimum standard for the people of Western Australia.

When that minimum is decreed, a full consideration, to an extent greater than in the past, can be given to questions such as margins.

So long as there are defects regarding annual leave and conditions generally, apart from hours, wages, broken shifts and so on, there will be a continuance of the dissatisfaction that is making itself manifest from one end of Australia to the other and from one end of the world to the other. Instead of waiting until such time as the Government succumbs to pressure by an aroused people, or until the Government is driven into the position of granting a concession here and there, which will probably create more anomalies than it overcomes, the Government should anticipate the situation by embarking on something that would be new to Western Australia in many respects, and new in certain respects to many other States, but which would take the best from all the States and break new ground in certain directions. I hope the Government will seriously consider making a move along the lines I have suggested. I extend congratulations to the Treasurer for the manner in which he introduced the Budget—a very informative manner—and for having made a dry subject as interesting as he possibly could.

Vote put and passed.

This concluded the general debate.

Votes and items discussed as follows:—

Votes—Legislative Assembly, £3,638; Joint House Committee, £5,473; Joint Printing Committee, £6,450; Joint Library Committee, £290; Premier's Office, £10,222; Treasury, £30,592; Governor's Establishment, £2,718; Executive Council, £5; London Agency, £9,715; Public Service Commissioner, £2,073; Government Motorcar Service, £1,994; Audit, £18,250—agreed to.

Vote—Compassionate Allowances, etc., £3,482:

Items 4, 5 and 6, Widow of the late Det. Sergeant Pitman, £109, widow of the late Police Sergeant Mark, £109, widow of the late Constable Buzza, £66.

Mr. McLARTY: Is this the only provision made in the case of the three widows of police officers who lost their lives while carrying out their duties? There should be some provision other than merely a compassionate allowance. I knew Sergeant Mark who lived

in my district for a number of years. He was shot by a lunatic who had escaped, when he attempted to arrest the man. The case of Detective Sergeant Pitman is well known, while Constable Buzza was also shot while carrying out his duty. The allowances set out seem to me to be very small and I think the widows, considering the circumstances in which their husbands lost their lives, should receive more generous allowances. I suggest that the vote should be increased by the Government.

The PREMIER: These matters are covered by the Police Act and represent compassionate allowances which may be allowed either by way of annual payments or in lump sums. The payments represent annual allowances to the widows concerned and each case was given the fullest consideration at the time.

Vote put and passed.

Votes—Government Stores, £20,827; Taxation £12,000—agreed to.

Vote—Workers' Homes Board, £5:

Mr. CROSS: I understand the Government is building 64 workers' homes on the polo ground near the river at South Perth and that the buildings are being erected for the purpose of renting. They will be allotted mainly to people with fairly large families. Has any provision been made for another school in the district, because the present institutions are overcrowded and there is no other land available for such a purpose in the vicinity? I should have thought that, with the advantage of a competent Town Planning Commissioner, some such provision would have been made.

The CHAIRMAN: What item is the hon. member dealing with?

Mr. CROSS: With the vote for the Workers' Homes Board?

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member has missed his opportunity and should have spoken on the main debate.

Mr. CROSS: I will take the first item dealing with salaries and allowances.

The PREMIER: Wherever there are plans for the erection of workers' homes involving the development of new areas, every consideration is given to the provision of necessary amenities.

Vote put and passed.

Votes—Superannuation Board, £3,320; Printing, £76,476; Tourist Bureau, £3,033; Literary and Scientific Grants, etc., £13,050; Miscellaneous Services, £1,130,236—agreed to.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 11.3 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Wednesday, 17th October, 1945.

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

QUESTION.

FREMANTLE WHARVES.

As to Sanitary Conveniences.

Hon. G. W. MILES asked the Chief Secretary: Will the Government take immediate action to compel the authorities concerned to instal adequate sanitary conveniences on the Fremantle wharves for the use of both the wharf workers and the general public?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: The sanitary conveniences on the wharves for both sexes are considered to be adequate for normal conditions. A ladies' waiting room with modern conveniences is located in a central position on Victoria Quay, and conveniences for males are situated under the wharves, approximately 500 feet apart, along both quays. The modernisation of the men's conveniences will receive the attention of the Fremantle Harbour Trust in due course.

MOTION—URGENCY.

Hospitals and Staff Shortages.

The PRESIDENT: I have received a letter from Hon. E. H. H. Hall as follows:—

I desire to inform you that at the commencement of the sitting of the Council to-day, it is my intention to move, under Standing Order No. 59, the adjournment of the

House to discuss a matter of urgency, namely, the urgent necessity for the State Government to appeal to the Commonwealth Government to lift the restrictions under National Security Regulations in relation to nursing so as to enable the Government to deal with the existing difficulties in connection with the staffing of hospitals and thereby allay the unrest at present existing.

It will be necessary for four members to rise in their places to support the proposal.

Four members having risen in their places,

HON. E. H. H. HALL (Central) [4.38]:

I do not think I need occupy the time of the House to any great extent on this matter because surely it is known to all, not only here in Parliament, but also throughout the length and breadth of the State, what a very dire situation exists in the hospitals in the metropolitan-suburban area and also in the country districts. Yesterday I received a letter asking me to endeavour to get two nursing assistants, as they are called, for the hospital at Three Springs. This is another term for probationers, so the hospital was not asking for fully trained nurses; it wanted two assistants who would be able to minister to the sick in that hospital. I know of my own knowledge that the hospital at Three Springs is only one of many hospitals throughout the State that are seriously short-handed in the matter of trained nurses and short-handed in the matter of what might be termed domestic help.

I have it on good authority that there is at present a shortage of trained nurses to the number of 140 odd. It was 140 about a week ago, and every day word is coming in of an increasing shortage. There is also a shortage of a similar number of nursing assistants, and of 30 to 40 cooks for hospitals. This is not a shortage that has occurred only in recent weeks. It has been gradually getting worse for months and months. In a democracy such as that upon which we pride ourselves, the time has long passed when this matter should engage the attention of the State Parliament. Matters industrially are somewhat confused today by what I can only term an unfortunate intrusion by the Commonwealth.

Hon. G. B. Wood: Hear, hear!

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: In case they have forgotten, I would remind members that the nurses' union in this State—and I am now dealing with trained nurses—is desirous of