

as are the goldfields with regard to the mining industry. These are pinpricks causing us grave trouble. The motion, whilst it will not perhaps have any effect on the matter, must be an instruction to the Government that the country people, particularly, are not satisfied with the hours allocated at the present time.

Question put and passed.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [12.16]: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn to a date to be fixed by the President.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 12.17 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 11th May, 1912.

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 11.0 a.m., and read prayers.

NOTICE PAPERS.

The Speaker called on Question No. 1.

Mr. SEWARD: I point out that copies of the notice paper have not been distributed.

Mr. SPEAKER: There has been a breakdown at the printing works, so I have been informed, but the notice papers will arrive in a few minutes.

The PREMIER: Could not we postpone for the time being the questions of which notice has been given?

The Minister for Lands: It will be very difficult to follow them otherwise.

Mr. SPEAKER: In the unusual circumstances, I shall call on questions with notice at a later stage of the sitting. I understand that some members desire to ask questions without notice. These may be taken now.

QUESTION—DEFENCE.

Midland Junction Workshops Annexe.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON (without notice) asked the Premier: Will he inquire whether the information given to the House in regard to the serious curtailment of munitions production at the annexe at the Midland Junction workshops was not published because of the indifference of the Press or the activity of the censor.

The PREMIER replied: The matter has never been officially brought under my notice.

QUESTIONS (3)—CIVIL DEFENCE.

As to Lighting Restrictions.

Mr. SEWARD (without notice) asked the Minister for Mines: 1, Is it intended to replace the regulations dealing with lighting restrictions during brown-out and black-out periods, disallowed recently by the Legislative Council, by regulations to be enacted under National Security Regulations? 2, If so, will such action prevent this Parliament from reviewing and, if thought necessary, disallowing all or any of those regulations? 3, If so, does the Government approve of such action?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: The lighting restrictions were originally imposed at the request of the Commonwealth military authorities. On the disallowance of the regulations, the military authorities were notified of the position and it was left to them to institute such action as was considered necessary for the security of the State. What this action will be has not yet been determined.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON (without notice) asked the Minister for Mines: Further to that question, is the Government continuing

negotiations with the military authorities with a view to getting a speedy decision in regard to this matter?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: Yes.

A.R.P. Organisation.

Mr. J. HEGNEY (without notice) asked the Minister for Mines: According to Press reports the Prime Minister stated recently that he had referred the matter of the organisation of civil defence to the Premiers of the various States. Has the Government given consideration to the question of organising the members of the community, apart from those in the Services, for A.R.P. work?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: I presume the question refers to conscripting all those persons between the ages of 18 and 60 who are not working in any other sphere of defence. At the conference held in Melbourne recently, this matter was brought forward for an expression of opinion by the delegates from each State, and the proposal was referred back to the Department of Home Security.

QUESTION—TROLLEY BUSES.

Mr. NORTH (without notice) asked the Minister for Railways: Have the trolley bus chassis that were on order arrived from oversea, and how soon does he think the new buses can be put into service?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: The chassis have arrived; they have been here about a fortnight. They have been conveyed to the Midland Junction workshops, and the buses will be constructed and put into service as soon as possible.

QUESTION—RAILWAYS.

As to Carlisle Crossing Safety Lights.

Mr. RAPHAEL (without notice) asked the Minister for Railways: Have the safety lights, which were ordered for the Carlisle railway crossing 12 months ago for use during the black-out period, been supplied and when will they be installed?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: So far as I know, the matter is still under consideration.

MOTION—STANDING ORDERS SUSPENSION.

HON. C. G. LATHAM (York) [11.7]: I move—

That Standing Order 211 be suspended to enable a motion dealing with the question of the release of manpower for the purpose of assisting the farming industry to be moved at this sitting.

Mr. SPEAKER: The question is that the motion be agreed to.

Mr. Raphael: No!

Mr. SPEAKER: Then I must divide the House. Ring the bells!

Mr. Raphael: Why specify the farming industry only? Why not include everything? Bells rung.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am satisfied that there is an absolute majority of members in favour of the Ayes. I, therefore, call off the division and declare the question passed.

Question thus passed.

NOTICE PAPERS.

MR. SPEAKER: The notice papers having now arrived, I will take questions before the Leader of the Opposition proceeds with his motion.

QUESTION—AGRICULTURE.

As to Wheat and Wool Growing, etc.

Mr. BERRY asked the Minister for Agriculture: 1, Are the necessary steps being taken to formulate a comprehensive agricultural policy to obviate the risk of a general food shortage in the future? 2, Are there sufficient stocks of superphosphate to cover adequate farming operations for the ensuing season, 1943-44? 3, Is restriction of wheat production to continue in this State? 4, Will the Government immediately inform wheatgrowers concerning the areas to be fallowed in the coming months for the 1943-44 season's cropping needs? 5, What price is to be paid per bushel for this season's harvest? 6, What arrangements have been finalised for the payment of compensation for areas not cropped because of restriction as applied to Western Australia? 7, Does he believe that a cropping area of less than 200 acres can be made sufficiently profitable to allow the wheatgrower to meet his general obligations? 8, Is there any moratorium protection for farmers who cannot meet

their obligations because of legislative action by the Government or because of the exigencies of this war? 9, Are the wheatgrower and small woolgrower considered to be engaged in an essential war service? 10, If the answer to (9) is in the affirmative, can he inform the House why certain financial institutions are allowed to evict farmers as in the case of McInnes Bros., and Ryan of Kulin?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE replied: 1, Agricultural plans are constantly laid and varying demands affect plans and policy from time to time. 2, The supplies of superphosphate in Australia available for next year are the subject of inquiry between States and Commonwealth. Nothing can be anticipated, as requested, for the season following. 3, The future restriction of wheat production depends to some extent on the outcome of negotiations now proceeding between the Commonwealth and other major wheat export countries. 4, 1943-44 cropping needs cannot be anticipated at this stage. 5, I have no official information of any variation from last year. 6, This matter is at present the subject of communication between State and Commonwealth. 7, This to a large extent depends on the settler himself and on his complete activities as affected by reduced acreage. I am continuing firmly to request a reasonable basis for compensation for the area put out of production. 8, I do not know of any general moratorium. 9, This is a matter for determination by the appropriate military and manpower authorities. 10, No, unless it is that appropriate legal procedure has been adopted.

QUESTION—RUBBER SUPPLIES.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM asked the Minister for Agriculture: 1, Is he aware that experiments in the cultivation of the desert shrub known as Guayule (pronounced y-you-lee), which produces up to 30 per cent. rubber, chemically identical with tree rubber, has proved successful on marginal lands of 10-inch rainfall in California, and that U.S.A. Congress has voted 25 million dollars to finance the planting of 45,000 acres of that shrub to create a domestic emergency supply of rubber? 2, Will he take steps to have the cultivation and treatment of this plant investigated to ascertain if the State's marginal land can be utilised

for its production, and, if when grown, the rubber content can be economically extracted in Australia so that we may be less reliant on foreign rubber to meet our urgent requirements?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE replied: 1, It is known that large areas of land in California are planted with the shrub referred to, which belongs to the Aster species and from which it is intended to produce rubber. Since the loss of Malaya efforts are being made to increase the area by 75,000 acres. 2, We have supplies of seed on the way but experiments previously conducted were not very hopeful. For example, at Muresk Agricultural College of 24 specimens planted less than half survived the first summer although the ground was cultivated around them. At the end of four years, only one plant survived. At Merredin Research Station, although the ground was kept well mulched, only a few plants survived the first summer and all had died by the end of three years. The plant is usually considered mature at four years of age but under emergency conditions it may be cut at an earlier stage, although the yield of latex would be less.

While on this subject I desire to inform the Leader of the Opposition and other members who are interested that I intend to make a public statement on the subject of latex-yielding plants. The particular plant mentioned in the question has as its only habitat a very small area in America from 4,000 to 7,000 ft. above sea level. It is confined to richly charged limestone soil. As many different opinions are held on this matter, I will make the statement as soon as I can.

QUESTIONS (2)—TAXATION.

As to Production of Assessments.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM asked the Minister for Railways: 1, On Tuesday, the 12th inst., did I personally inform him that the certifying officer under the group taxation scheme at Midland Junction workshops requires from employees at the workshops presentation of tax assessments before giving certificates of tax paid? 2, Will he then give instructions that this practice is to cease on the ground that the individual taxpayer's assessment is a confidential document?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1 and 2, Group certificates will be issued to all employees of the department who have not sent in their assessment notices by the 16th instant.

Deductions for Donations.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON asked the Premier: Will the Government consider amending the Income Tax Assessment Act to provide that donations to funds raised for the relief of the Mercantile Marine should be an allowable deduction in the same way as contributions to naval, military, and air forces?

The PREMIER replied: This will be considered in due course.

QUESTIONS (3)—RAILWAYS.

As to Concession Fares to Conference Delegates.

Mr. DONEY asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Have railway concession fares, usually granted to delegates attending conferences, been suspended? 2, If the answer to (1) is in the affirmative, can he state—(a) the reason for such action at a time when road transport is almost impossible and the railways have a virtual monopoly of passenger traffic; and (b) will he give immediate instructions to the department to lift the suspension and grant the concession fares on the usual conditions?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, Yes. 2 (a), The desirability stressed by the War Cabinet of curtailing travel during the present emergency. (b) No.

Midland Junction Workshops.

Mr. DONEY asked the Minister for Railways: Having regard to the fact that there is generally insufficient work at the Midland Junction annexe to keep the men there fully employed, will he investigate the desirability of the return to the W.A.G.R. of those boiler-makers and others who were previously in the employ of that department, so that the highly necessary repairs to engines and rolling stock generally may be attended to without further delay?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: It is the practice during slackness in the annexe, whilst awaiting supplies of materials, for surplus employees to be utilised elsewhere in the workshops.

Fires Caused by Engine Sparks.

Mr. McLARTY asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Has the Commissioner for Railways given any consideration to proposals, whereby farmers who have suffered loss, as the result of fires caused by sparks from railway engines, should receive fair compensation? 2, If the answer is yes, what are the proposals?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, Yes. 2, A scheme of compulsory fire insurance (broadly similar to the Property War Damage Scheme) to be financed by a levy on land in "dangerous" proximity to a railway and with a financial contribution from the Railway Department.

QUESTION—MEAT.

W.A. Meat Export Company's Works.

Mr. SEWARD asked the Minister for Agriculture: 1, Is it a fact that the Government has taken over the W.A. Meat Export Coy., Ltd.? 2, If so, what reason actuated the Government in so doing? 3, What amount of money has been or is to be paid to the company? 4, Does the Government propose to carry on the works as a Government activity or not? 5, If it is proposed to carry on the works will it be as a separate entity as in the past, or will an amalgamation of the works with the abattoirs and cold storage at Midland Junction be effected?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE replied: 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5, The Government has been approached by the directors of the W.A. Meat Export Company and negotiations are proceeding.

QUESTION—INDUSTRIES ASSISTANCE ACT.

As to Drought Relief.

Mr. WATTS asked the Minister for Lands: 1, In view of the disallowance of the regulations under the Industries Assistance Act (*re* Drought Relief), is it the intention of the Government now to make drought relief loan moneys repayable by farmers on terms and conditions the same as those granted to the State by the Federal Government? 2, If this is not done, will not farmers in some cases be deprived of the use of money at $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. or thereabouts and unable to use their annual proceeds

(now taken in repayment of drought relief) in reduction of indebtedness at 5 per cent. or more?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: 1, Regulations previously disallowed made provision for continuing the advances to farmers at the rate of interest being paid by the State with repayments where necessary to be spread over a number of years. 2, Continuing to disallow reasonable regulations will deprive farmers of the use of money at $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. or thereabouts.

QUESTION—WOOL.

As to Increase of Price.

Mr. WATTS asked the Minister for Agriculture: 1, Was his attention drawn to a statement made by the Federal Minister for Commerce as to an increased price for Australian wool, and recently published in the Press? 2, Has his department taken any steps to provide data and estimates showing increased cost of production of wool in Western Australia since September, 1939? 3, If so, what figure per pound represents the result of inquiries? 4, If no estimates have been made, is it intended to make them and supply the result to the Federal Minister?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE replied: 1, 2, 3, and 4, A statement was made by the Minister for Commerce (Hon. W. J. Scully) on 30th April that the Federal Government had decided to ask the British Government, because of added costs, to review the price being paid for Australian wool. The matter is being reviewed in an Australia-wide sense but farmers' costs are so complicated and involved that it is difficult to have items segregated which have a particular bearing on the cost of wool produced by farmers. Where wool is grown in conjunction with other agricultural activities, owing to the inter-relation of the various factors involved in production, it is difficult to arrive at an accurate determination covering the cost of any one product such as wool.

QUESTION—FARMING INDUSTRY.

As to Release of Manpower.

Mr. SEWARD asked the Minister for Agriculture: 1, Has he yet appointed an appeal authority (of which an officer of his

department would be a member) to deal with applications from personnel for release from military duties in order to perform seeding operations to be carried out on farms? 2, As delays still take place in securing the release of such personnel, will he endeavour to expedite the dealing with any applications that are made?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE replied: 1 and 2, No. But we are endeavouring to have the necessary liaison established.

QUESTION—AGRICULTURAL BANK.

As to Sustenance to Farmers.

Mr. KELLY asked the Minister for Agriculture: 1, Why are farmers who have handed their total wheat proceeds to the Agricultural Bank, and who are in receipt of sustenance, being so seriously hampered by the Agricultural Bank, through late payment of monthly sustenance allowances? 2, Why was payment of sustenance, due to farmers in the Yilgarn area, in the months of January and February, not received by them until 23rd March? 3, Is there any reason why March and April sustenance to farmers still remains unpaid? 4, Will he take steps to have sustenance allowances paid in advance or give a good reason why this method of dealing with farmers' sustenance could not be applied?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE replied: 1, 2, 3, and 4, Under special arrangements sustenance advances are made during January and February pending receipt of annual review statement from the farmer, but temporarily withheld in a few cases until the settler's position is examined.

MOTION—FARMING AND PASTORAL INDUSTRIES.

As to Manpowering of Workers.

HON. C. G. LATHAM (York) [11.18]:
I move—

That in view of the fact that protracted negotiations by the Minister for Agriculture and members have failed to secure the release of personnel from Military Forces to enable seasonal operations in connection with farming to be carried out, this House requests the Premier immediately to take up with the Prime Minister, as Minister for Defence, the matter of the immediate release of personnel required to ensure the carrying on of farming operations, and the formation of an appeal

board consisting of one member representing the Military forces and one the farming industry.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: What is the appeal board for? You do not say.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: If the hon. member will give me an opportunity I will do so.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: It should be set out in your motion.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: It can be added, if the hon. member desires. I am sorry he is so impatient. If the hon. member had any knowledge of farming, he would know why this motion is brought forward. For a long time farmers have been exercised in their minds about getting sufficient labour to ensure the carrying on of their operations. I regret to say that, in my opinion, the military authorities are so wrapped up in their own professional duties that they fail to see another side to the conditions in Australia, namely, civilian life. It should be pointed out to the military authorities that, after all, they cannot prosecute the war successfully without the assistance of the civilian population, which must be allowed to carry on its industries to feed and clothe members of the military forces and provide necessary finance for the war. If they bear that fact in mind, I feel sure they will appreciate that requests made to them are not made for the purpose of harassing them, but rather for the purpose of assisting the war effort. Unfortunately, there has been recently set up in this State two authorities, the Manpower Department, and a sub-department of that department in this State. Power has been delegated to the sub-department to enable it to deal with such applications as are made before a soldier is attested, that is, before he is sworn in and becomes a soldier.

It has been brought under our notice by reliable authorities—they are farmers—that appeals have been lodged in respect of farmers' only sons or only employees who have been called up. We are told that the manpower officer takes the applications, which are sworn declarations, but that some of them, although lodged as long ago as January of this year, have not yet been dealt with. The result is that these applications have either been pigeon-holed or lost, and the son or employee has been called up and become a soldier. A different procedure then takes place. The manpower officer, who is a civil authority, has power to deal with applications made prior to the man being

attested. He also deals with hardship cases. That is where an application is made by an individual who is running a one-man business. He has to make application to the court, through the Clerk of Courts. That is a power delegated from the civil authority to the courts. They also deal with the conscientious objectors. That is, as far as I know, the whole of the control delegated to the civil authority and exercised by it.

I propose to deal with this aspect first and then with the military side. In the first place the persons making the applications are called up on a certain date and medically examined, and they then lodge their applications. Often they are told that they have no chance of being exempted, although under the policy laid down by the Commonwealth Government, if I interpret it correctly, it was never intended to deplete the whole of the manpower engaged in farming operations. It was intended that adequate manpower should be available. Those manpower officers who are acting on behalf of the deputy manpower officer in this State say that the regulations provide that only one man shall be released for this purpose. A market gardener may only have five or 10 acres of land. He is entitled to one assistant, but the contention is that if he has 5,000 or 10,000 acres he is still only entitled to one man. It is ridiculous to suggest that any business can be carried on in that way. On a North-West station it is necessary to have four or five boundary riders. It only requires a certain amount of commonsense to read into these regulations what was intended. On a farm of two or three thousand acres it may quite easily take two or three men to water and feed the sheep, besides doing other work around the place.

I draw the attention of the House to the fact that at the present time vegetables are extremely scarce and expensive, and so are eggs and poultry. They are very difficult to obtain.

Mr. J. H. Smith: And always have been at this time of the year.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: No. I have lived here for 30 years and it is the first time that I have entered a shop and asked for a dozen eggs and been informed that I could only get three. Even when we were importing eggs from the Eastern States, there always seemed to be a supply.

Mr. F. C. L. Smith: We cannot import them from the Eastern States now.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I was in the hon. member's district a little while ago and asked for eggs and bacon and was told that there were no eggs. At Kalgoolie there is an extreme shortage of eggs. At the present time we have a large number of confreres from oversea assisting us in the gigantic struggle in which we are engaged—I refer to our American cousins. We have a perfect right to feed them as well as they desire to be fed, and we can only do that by producing the foodstuffs. We cannot import them and even if there were a surplus in the Eastern States we could not get it here, as the member for Brownhill-Ivanhoe (Mr. F. C. L. Smith) explained. It is impossible. We have to see that the foodstuffs are maintained. The only way we can do that is to release sufficient labour for the purpose. The production of eggs, poultry and vegetables requires a considerable amount of labour, and it is essential that we should have it.

I do not suggest that a man who desires to evade his responsibilities as a soldier should be permitted to get exemption merely by asking for it. It is for that reason that I wish to see the safeguard I have mentioned in my motion. That is important. There will be members in the House who will say it does not matter if we do not go on producing wheat. But, after all, we have an important agricultural industry here in wheat production and while, at the present moment, I admit we have difficulty in exporting that wheat, that is not to say there is not a market for it.

The Premier: Our farmers are like the goldminers—we do not utilise their commodity.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: It is no good going out of production of wheat and other cereals and turning the farms into pastures. That cannot be done. If the land is not turned up every three or four years, the pastures soon deteriorate. We must fickle the soil, and that requires labour. In addition, it is necessary for us to go on producing wheat. We must have a continuous supply of wheat for our own people, and when this war has ceased we will have something that will be a valuable asset, because the world today is hard up for grain. We will get a ready sale for it.

I am not concerned only with that aspect. A much more important one is the shearing. There is a great demand for wool.

At the present time America is requesting a big supply of it, and we should allow that country to get it from the Commonwealth in return for the very great services being rendered.

Mr. J. H. Smith: Without selling it through Bradford?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I do not know about that. I do know that we have an agreement between Australia and the Imperial Government to purchase the whole of the clip. Just now a further agreement is being considered. If the wool is sold at any time to any other country, the Australian producer would share fifty-fifty with the Imperial Government. I do not know what would be the position if that agreement had not been entered into. I am not, however, interested in that side of the matter. I want to request the Premier, through you, Mr. Speaker, to approach the Military Authorities and ask them to get out a nominal roll of the shearers in their units. We would then be able to organise and have our shearing done at the right time without delay. Farmers now are getting so worried that they are talking of commencing to shear in the middle of winter. That is a serious matter because the losses of shorn sheep on cold nights will be heavy indeed. We should avoid such losses if it is at all possible. At the present time there is talk about commencing shearing in June, which is an unnatural period, and I view the proposal with alarm.

The Minister for Works: Some experiments were carried out, were they not?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I think the member for Beverley (Mr. Mann) could explain to the House what took place when shearing was undertaken in his electorate during August. He can tell of the deaths that followed.

The Premier: It is like going out at night without any clothing on.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: It is all right in the North-West where it is possible to start shearing early in the year.

Mr. Thorn: Nature provides for that there.

The Premier: It is like going out in the cold night air in a bathing costume. That is what shearing in winter amounts to.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: If the shearers who are now in the military forces could be released, we could make use of their services throughout the country. Upon the adoption

of my suggestion, I could offer to the Minister for Lands the organisation of the Primary Producers' Association which is available throughout the agricultural areas. If that course were adopted, we could ensure continuity of service by means of proper organisation. That is what is necessary; organisation, so that the shearing can be continued throughout the districts. If we worked from the north to the south, we would be able to get through the shearing with the least number of men required and in the shortest time. The whole business can be easily organised if the military authorities will agree to the proposal.

There is another phase to which I shall allude. I presume there is the necessity for the inclusion of a hardship clause in the National Security Regulations. I appreciate the fact that a man who has a number of dependants could easily be ruined if forced to undertake military service under certain conditions. I do not think we have yet reached the stage when it is necessary to ruin people by forcing them to render military service.

Mr. Patrick: Magistrates have told men that they should sell their businesses.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Yes, I understand that is so, but I do not wish to stress that phase. I am prepared to leave that matter in the hands of the magistrates. I wish to say something about conscientious objectors. To my mind, it is rather extraordinary that the prosecuting counsel in such cases is himself quite a young man. I think it would have been better had an older man been chosen to undertake the court work, for it is rather peculiar for one young man to be questioned by another young man as to what he would do if the Japanese invaded Western Australia. The prosecuting counsel in such circumstances could very pertinently be asked, "What would you do?" However, I do not wish to raise that issue, but rather to ask what it is intended to do with the man who is a conscientious objector?

Surely it is not fair to allow such a man to return to his occupation in civil life while another man is—I do not like to use the word "conscripted," although that is really the position. We all realise that today we have not only conscription for service in the Armed Forces but for labour battalions as well. I do not think the word "conscription" is the ideal one to use, and I would prefer to refer to compulsory organised service. I

do not care much for conscription. However, I do not think conscientious objectors should be permitted to carry on their businesses while others are required to render service in the Armed Forces.

Mr. Warner: At any rate, they should not be allowed to breed.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I hope something will be done to make the services of conscientious objectors available in other directions that will have a direct bearing on the war effort.

The Premier: We could hand them over to the Minister for Civil Defence.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I think he has enough worries as it is.

The Premier: But he could do with the services of quite a large number of men.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: If that course were adopted, I hope these conscientious objectors will prove themselves to be better men than they showed themselves to be in court. Personally, I cannot see how it is possible to have conscientious objectors in our midst at a time like the present. We are all in the job, and if not actively engaged on the military side we should be participants in other phases of national service.

Now I propose to deal with the position of men who have enlisted. Many young men find themselves in the Army, although they know very well that their services are urgently required elsewhere. Under existing conditions, should such a man make an application for release, his papers are pigeonholed, lost, or perhaps the military authorities decide they will take no cognisance of his application. Once a man joins the military forces, he has to send such an application to his commanding officer, and I find that after the application has been submitted, a month or more elapses before any reply is received. We have discussed this phase with some senior officers in the services, and I have pointed out to them the position of some who have made application and have received no acknowledgment.

For instance, in one case a man 70 years of age was the only male left on a farm. He was unfortunate enough to injure his only good eye, and he had to be sent to Perth to receive the attention of an eye specialist. The doctor gave him a certificate showing that he would be unable to do any work for a considerable time. That man had to leave his stock and farm to the tender mercies of a woman who was over 70

years of age. His son made an application for release, but he has not heard anything about it from his commanding officer. We must remember that the military officers to whom such applications have to be made are ordinarily untrained regarding agricultural matters. They are not interested to the extent that men are who have come from the rural areas. I maintain that when an appeal of the type I have mentioned is lodged, it should receive urgent consideration.

I could produce quite a number of instances of applications having been made to commanding officers a month or six weeks ago, in respect of which so far no replies have been received. As I say, that is probably due to the fact that many of those associated with military work have no knowledge of the business side of farming. They do not know what agricultural work actually means. We know there are many people who have no practical knowledge of agricultural or pastoral activities. I remember the instance of one man who purchased a station although he knew nothing about pastoral work. He had the benefit of the services of a very good manager, who reported progress to him from time to time. On one occasion the manager submitted a report indicating that the ewes were lambing, but that there was no feed for them and he did not quite know what course to adopt. The owner of the property replied suggesting that he should put off the lambing for a while!

The Premier: Oh no!

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: That is right.

Hon. N. Keenan: It is perfectly true.

The Premier: People may put off having children for a while!

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: So they do, very frequently.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I do not think that has anything to do with the question.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Quite so, Mr. Speaker. When these applications are furnished by soldiers, they are dealt with by a commanding officer who knows nothing about farming operations. For instance, he will probably know nothing about the importance of seeding. He will not realise that the seeding period is very brief.

The Minister for Agriculture: Did not someone suggest that we should breed from wethers?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Possibly so, but I do know that on one occasion a man went

on to a station looking for a job. He asked if he could be employed on lamb-marking, but he received the reply, "We have no lambs for marking now. We have not yet tipped the ewes." The man said, "Perhaps you could give me the job of tipping the ewes!" It is all very difficult, and I know how easy it is for those difficulties to be accentuated. If we do not secure the release of men at the appropriate time, the effort will be quite futile. For instance, seeding operations cannot be held up. If they are, then, instead of the Minister receiving payment from Commonwealth revenue on 22,000,000 bushels of wheat, he will receive a return based on a much smaller output. If the wheat return falls short of the estimate, it will not be because Nature has not been kind, for the season has opened wonderfully well. We know that officers commanding units in the Army to-day include professional men, such as lawyers and, I believe, doctors. Such people have never been engaged in agricultural activities. When they receive applications for release from farm hands under circumstances such as those I have indicated, they do not appreciate the importance of the claims.

If a person who applies for release, either temporary or permanent, is not satisfied with the reply he receives, he should be able to lodge an appeal. True, the Army regulations provide that a man dissatisfied with the decision of his commanding officer can appeal to a senior authority. We know, however, that the senior military authorities do not like letting down commanding officers. In order to overcome that difficulty, and to ensure that men will have confidence in the knowledge that their applications will receive due consideration and that finality will be reached promptly, I suggest the creation of a board comprising a military officer and a civilian who has a full knowledge of agricultural operations. I am sure that there are many retired farmers who would be willing to serve voluntarily on such an appeal board. With a body so constituted, the military man would have the advantage of the expert knowledge of the farmer, and thus the board would be able to deal satisfactorily with such applications.

The Minister for Mines: Why a board of two members only?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I think that would be satisfactory.

The Minister for Mines: What if the two members disagreed?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: In the event of a disagreement presumably the man would stay in the Army. But I think the military member of the board would be more likely to accept the advice of the farmer on such a matter.

Mr. Raphael: Oh yeah!

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I do not think a board of three would be required and, so long as a representative of the farming community is on it, what I suggest should be satisfactory. I appreciate the fact that the military authorities will be reluctant to agree to the establishment of an outside body. But if possible I would like to test my proposal for a two-man board to see if it proves effective. I am sure the Minister for Lands could secure the services of a retired farmer who would be willing to assist the military authorities voluntarily in the direction I have suggested. I sincerely hope the House will agree to my motion, for I assure members it is very important. Last week-end I was at York where quite a lot of market gardening is being undertaken. When I appealed to the growers to increase their production, they told me of their problems. They told me they had to work very long hours every day of the week, and that each was already trying to do the work of two men. In consequence, they felt that there would be a shortage of vegetables in the future. There are other difficulties as well. For instance, they cannot secure supplies of fertiliser without importing them from the Eastern States.

When those supplies come to hand, the men will have to work very long hours indeed. If we could secure the release of some men familiar with market gardening, our production of vegetables would be much more effective, and would be obtained at a much lower cost than is possible under present-day conditions. As it is, both the military authorities and the civil population are being deprived of the essential commodities. Obviously civilians are quite willing to make all sacrifices possible so that the men in uniform may be well fed and clothed. We must face the fact that adequate supplies of foodstuffs cannot be forthcoming unless the necessary labour is made available. It is futile for the military authorities to think that the nation can continue properly merely on the basis of the armed forces alone.

There is the other side to the national problem and that fact should be impressed upon the military authorities. We are anxious to help them in every way, and I think that is appreciated. In all probability the present situation arises from a misunderstanding.

The Premier: What did Napoleon say about an army?

Mr. Withers: That it marches on its belly.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: We must get men out and set them to producing. I thank the Premier for the opportunity to ventilate this matter. I hope an approach can be made through the hon. gentleman to the Prime Minister, who now carries the responsibility of production and everything else.

MR. MANN (Beverley) [11.46]: In supporting the motion I wish to state that in my electorate there has been trouble as regards manpower for some time. When men are called up in a country town, a manpower officer accompanies the military authorities to assist in making selections. The manpower officer who visits Beverley, however, has not the faintest idea who the men are that come up for selection. It may be said, of course, that the men have various jobs and therefore represent manpower. For my part I would suggest an honorary board of three, including the chairman of the road board and the local constable. They know the circumstances of the various men, and they would willingly assist. In my electorate I know of a farmer who has four boys in the Army. He is now appealing for assistance. On the other hand, there is another farmer with four sons, not one of whom has joined the Army. That position causes dissatisfaction. It is asked why should four young men join the Army while four others do not? I urge that a board of the kind I have described should be established at once in each country town. With three responsible men to adjudicate, no such anomaly should arise as I have described. The board would be able to decide who should be released.

Now as regards the authorities in the metropolitan district! I have here a letter to a man holding an important position. He has two sons in the Army, one here and one in the East. He has asked for one boy to be released. That boy went into camp voluntarily, not as a conscript. The release of the son was asked for so that he might

manage the farm. The letter I have mentioned states, in reply to the application—

It is regretted that it is impossible to accede to your recommendation for the release of the abovenamed. The circumstances disclosed are not exceptional and, if similar applications were acceded to, army organisation and training in this State would be seriously affected.

That letter was written on the 27th April, and the reply to it arrived yesterday. The reply is signed by Mr. Stitfold. Authority is divided between the Swan Barracks, Army Corps, and Mr. Stitfold's department. There seems neither rhyme nor reason for such delays as occurred in this case. As regards the Great Southern district, there has been practically no rain this year. From York to Wagin the country is in a very bad way for cropping. If a farmer there asks that a man be released for work and a man is released for three weeks and no rain falls, nothing can be done. The whole thing is stupid. Farmers have large numbers of cows and heifers going to market because the farmers cannot feed them. Thus the breeding stock is being depleted.

Unquestionably our farmers have shown themselves highly patriotic in joining the A.I.F.—I am not referring to the Militia. Many of the men on the land are simply heartbroken. I know of one farmer who has two sons and holds 6,000 acres of land. One son decided to join the A.I.F., and the other son decided to carry on the farm. The first son is marching up and down guarding some buildings in Perth. A great many men who at the present time are not worth a damn to the country could be enlisted. I refer to the racing and trotting crowds. The conscientious objector, again, is not worth a snap of the fingers. The other day a man of that description went to a dentist to have his teeth pulled. He was talking to the dentist and mentioned that he would very much like to help his country as he felt patriotic although he could not take up arms. A nurse asked, "Why not be a stretcher-bearer?" The man replied, "Good gracious, woman, that is the most dangerous job of all."

I know of the case of a man 72 years of age who has asked for his son to be released. I submitted the case to Mr. Stitfold, supporting the man's application. That was a month ago, and I have not had a word in reply as yet. I discussed the matter with the Leader of the Opposition, who said that application should be made to Colonel Hoad. I rang up the colonel. He

stated that he did not know anything about the matter and that we had better apply to Mr. Stitfold. That shows great lack of co-ordination. I will quote another case to enlighten the House. This morning a man came to see me who has a shearing contract of 40,000 sheep to start on the 10th June at Perenjori. The work is to be done by three men. The contractor himself is past military age, and he asked for the release of a man, one capable of shearing 120 sheep a day. Here is the reply he received—

Subject: Re W.42902 Pte. Bartlett, G.R. Ref. your application for leave for the above, it is advised that as shearing does not come under the category of Essential Services, leave cannot be approved.

That is signed by Capt. Burnett, Adjt. 11th Battalion. What is one to make of that? The effect of the reply is that shearing is not considered to be essential!

Mr. Marshall: Are the farmers having no trouble in the Eastern States?

Mr. MANN: The wool has to come off. I agree with the Leader of the Opposition that the idea of shearing during June and July in the southern part of the State is entirely wrong. An instance of an August shearing happened some years ago. Due to cold 4,000 sheep died in the night. In the open areas there are very cold blasts.

The Premier: How many sheep were shorn when that loss occurred?

Mr. MANN: About 30,000.

Mr. Marshall: Wet sheep cannot be shorn.

Mr. MANN: No. They were not wet sheep. The day had been dry, but the rain started towards evening. No man should shear lambing ewes in June or July. If he has 500 sheep to bring in and shears them himself, he will lose half his lambs. Here is another anomaly that has crept in. Recently a Jewish woolbuyer was travelling to Beverley. He was buying crutchings and skins, for which he had a permit. I said to him, "Why aren't you in camp?" He replied, "I tried to enlist, but they would not have me. I was called up under the military regulations and informed the authorities that I was a qualified carpenter, and I am still waiting to serve my adopted country, but apparently they have no use for me." Here is a man willing to help this country, and he is not called up. There is something definitely wrong with the military organisation when such things occur.

Again there is the case of a butcher in Beverley. There are in fact, two butchers in Beverley; one has a shop and the other sells by the quarter. The man who sells by the quarter applied to the Development and Supply Department for permission to cart his meat to customers, and the reply was that he could not be permitted to do so. Thereupon he asked what he was to do to earn a living. He received a reply to the effect—"Join the Army." The man is 54 years of age and is drawing a pension in respect of injuries sustained during the last war, which injuries unfit him for hard work. His own sons are in the A.I.F. I can safely affirm that that man has served his country, and yet such is the reply he received from the Development and Supply Department. Is it any wonder that the people have their backs up against the whole organisation? I maintain that it is rotten from start to finish. The trouble is that there are men on the board who have no knowledge of the subject. Why is there no co-operation between the three authorities? As regards Mr. Stitfold—

Mr. Raphael: Mr. Stitfold is a Commonwealth officer. Does he get any pay as such?

Mr. MANN: Another farmer I know of was sitting in a hotel among a big crowd of men, and the barman was working at top speed when suddenly the radio went on and the Prime Minister's high-pitched voice came over saying, "Ladies and Gentlemen, every man is at his battle station." And so these men were—drinking beer. That is what we have got down to. Let us face the facts boldly.

Mr. SPEAKER: Does that come into the motion?

Mr. MANN: The Minister for Lands knows the position of the primary industries. This is not a squeal that is being raised. We are merely asking for men to be released to enable the farms to carry on. Unless that is done many farms will degenerate. Fencing will fall into disrepair, pastures will decline and stocks will deteriorate. Another important fact is that there will be no imports of merino rams from the Eastern States in the future. The railway and shipping authorities have said they cannot grant shipping facilities for the export to this State of top stud rams and the position in that industry alone is very serious.

I am pleased the motion has been introduced and hope that some good will come

from it. The military authorities are aware of the importance of the agricultural industry. In my own case, unless I can secure labour, I intend to let my place go. I am not going to carry on, because I cannot do so. I am speaking personally, but I am not the only one in that position. On my property I am trying to manage 1,700 sheep, of which 700 are ewes, and my daughter, 16 years of age, is looking after the sheep. There are horses on the property that cannot be worked, but they have to be fed. Young ewes and other young female stock will have to go to market because of the shortage of labour. There are exceptionally good herds and stocks in this State, but unless something is done quickly there will be a rapid deterioration on properties which will take a long time to recover from the setback experienced. When the war is over primary industries will be essential for feeding the world, and our job is to endeavour to maintain them to the best of our ability.

MR. WARNER (Mt. Marshall) [12.3]:

I do not desire to speak at any length on the motion, because the lack of manpower on the various farms throughout the State is realised by most members of this House. The question is one of great moment. All of us are anxious to do the best we can towards winning the war and bringing the conflict to a speedy issue. I do not think any of us can be accused of shirking his responsibilities and no such charge can be levied against the farming community. The production of arms and munitions is not the only thing required to bring the war to a speedy end. The people engaged in the Services and in the production of arms and munitions must be fed. The farming community is responsible for supplying much of that food, but to enable it to carry on it must have sufficient manpower efficiently to carry out work on the farms.

Food must be found not only for the people but for the fattening and rearing of stock. Requests have been made by the Government and by the heads of the fighting forces for people to do all they can to increase the production of vegetables and other produce so that there will be no danger of a food shortage in the State, but labour must be released from the Army to enable the farmers to undertake that production. On the smaller farms at present only the farmer himself is left. His employees and members

of his family have joined up. Farm workers have been very heavily called upon. As a matter of fact, many of them jump at the chance of joining the Army, for reasons that I will explain later. I agree that much of the trouble now experienced is attributable to the farmers themselves. Had they acted like many other sections of the community and formed themselves into an organisation, they would not be in their present position.

When the Army demanded that they supply foodstuffs they would have been able in their turn to demand the labour necessary to grow that food, and also would have been in a position to have a minimum price for produce fixed and a guarantee given that the whole of the produce that was grown would be purchased. Many of us are aware of men who have been called up but have not been placed in their proper categories. I know of three accountants who are at present working in the labour corps in the metropolitan area. There was a great outcry for clerks for the Military Department. These three accountants to whom I have referred were called up at the same time as was the clerk of a business man I know. They called these men up because they said they must have 800 clerks immediately. The employee of the business man was not expected to live a year or two ago. He has been able to carry on only because his employer found a right job for him. I do not know how long he will last now that he is in the Forces and is working such long hours. Men have been taken from various occupations and proper consideration has not been given to their replacement by others.

Accountants have been employed running harped wire round certain places in our State while the military is bashing for "B" class men to fill clerical positions. In view of such occurrences one cannot believe that things are being done as they should be. I do not think that any member of this House would carry on business under those conditions, nor that the military would expect once any difficulty if men were released for work on the farms. I do not know whether it is right that more boards should be formed to investigate these matters, but certainly an inquiry should be made to ascertain whether men can be spared from their occupations for the Army. On the other hand, too much consideration should not be given without delay.

Another fact must be taken into consideration. Prior to their enlisting, many farmers' sons and farm employees never knew what it was to have a reasonable chance in life with plenty of food and clothing and good wages. Farm workers have never had any reason to stay on farms, particularly when they could find occupations in other callings to which good wages were attached. When farm workers enlisted or were called up, they received wages and plenty of food and clothing, and after having enjoyed those benefits sons felt dissident about securing release from the Forces even to help their fathers, and farm labourers were not inclined to leave the Army to return to work for farmers. Labourers on farms have never received the wages that should be paid to them in accordance with the work they have done.

Organised labour in industry, through its unions, has demanded that men should have a better living wage, but in the country districts the position of the farmers has been such that they have not obtained a living from their work, and have been unable to pay good wages to their employees. Until that state of affairs is remedied, there will always be trouble with employees. However, that matter cannot be considered now every time when there is a demand for the production of more food and when labour is required for that purpose. Before a man can be released from the Army he must himself submit an application. He cannot be released merely at the request of his father or his former employer. As I have pointed out, the trouble is that once some of these men have joined the Army and have enjoyed to be a good living and wages, they are dissident about submitting applications to be released. However, manpower is needed and I hope the Premier will support the motion and that it will be put into effect

MR. SEWARD (Pingelly) [12.14]: In supporting the motion I desire to confine my remarks to the latter part, namely, that dealing with the suggested appeal board. Quite recently a radical change has occurred in the method of the Army Department in dealing with applications for the release of farm labourers. Up to the end of harvest time any applications I had to make were addressed to the G.O.C. Western Command and were dealt with by that authority fairly expeditiously. In only one instance was release not granted. Since that date a change has come about. The authorities have released men for harvesting work, but they say there is no authority to release them for the putting in of crops; consequently it has not been possible to arrive at any decision in the cases that I have lately submitted to them. The first aspect of the question that arises is as to the reaction consequent upon appeals against the decisions arrived at. The Minister for Lands, a few weeks ago, gave us a detailed statement of the many shortages that are likely to occur in the food production of the State, and he appealed to the farming community to grow a great deal more foodstuffs, particularly vegetables, than it had been growing in the past.

If foodstuffs are to be grown, there must be manpower available to enable the growers to put in the necessary crops. When we applied to the military authorities to have men released to put in the crops, the applications were turned down. I will quote one particular case that came under my notice. The owner of the property, situated at the west end of my electorate, has two sons. One is a flight lieutenant in the R.A.A.F. and the other is a volunteer in the military forces. The father, who is a man about 50, thought he could carry on the farm, as many other farmers are doing. One of the sons had not been in camp more than two or three months when the father was taken ill and had to be hurried to hospital. An operation had to be performed and the father has been told that other operations will follow. The mother got in touch with me and asked what I could do. I said the proper procedure was for the boy in the Army to apply to the commanding officer for his release. The boy followed that procedure, and in due course he was granted leave for one month to enable him to proceed to his father's farm. That leave expires next Saturday. I told

the mother that if the father saw no prospect of being able to continue his farming operations she should let me know. She saw me later, and I applied to the military authorities for an extension of leave. The application was, however, not granted. The other morning the mother came to Perth to interview the military authorities herself. In this case I find that the boy has only one eye and is classed as an A2 man.

On investigation we found that the lad was employed washing dishes in the cook-house. That is a job which anybody could do. Next week eight cows will be coming in, and if the mother cannot get help she says the cows will have to be sold. Surely this young fellow is of far greater value to the State on his farm than he is when washing dishes in camp! I know of another case of the same kind, that of a farmer in East Pingelly. The son also went into the Forces. The father was stricken down with an illness and was taken at once to the Narrogin hospital. As the result of an operation, he will not be able to do farm work for at least 12 months. Because of bountiful rains, the fallow will soon be covered with weeds and the farmer will be unable to put his crop in. I have received a letter from military headquarters this morning stating as follows:—

Your letter of the 4th May has just reached this H.Q. The general instruction in regard to leave for seeding purposes has already been promulgated and therefore the above soldier, and also those mentioned in your previous letter, should by now have received their leave.

I telephoned to the mother of the boy at 10 o'clock this morning. She informed me that no notification had been received as to the release of the boy. That is the trouble in these cases. Another farmer, who lives within 10 miles of the one to which I have just referred, has an employee who is engaged in the band at the Northam camp but cannot be released from his duties. Because of these instances it is important that the Leader of the Opposition should have provided in his motion for the setting up of some authority to whom these people can appeal, and from whom they can get some ready reply to their applications. It may be asked whether we have done anything to get the position rectified. I think we have done a good deal. When the House was last sitting, on the 22nd April, I received a telegram from the mother of the boy who is employed in the military band at Northam stating that his applica-

tion for release had been refused. Knowing that the Minister for Lands has more influence than I in these matters, I showed him this telegram and asked him to take the matter up with the Defence authorities, and see if he could obtain a satisfactory answer from them. The reply of the Minister to me is as follows:—

Dear Mr. Seward, I desire to advise you that I arranged for an officer of mine to see the district manpower officer in connection with J.S., and he was advised that no action without direction from military headquarters could be taken where a serving soldier was concerned. My representative saw Captain Gough at Francis street, who, after discussion, took him to Lieut.-Colonel Walker, officer in charge of administration. Lieut.-Colonel Walker stated that he was powerless to act but that an interview could be arranged with Colonel Cleland at present at Perth College, Mt. Lawley. It was pointed out, however, that the whole question of cropping leave was one of national moment and suggested that I take personal and official action in the whole matter. Lieut.-Colonel Walker further stated that Colonel Cleland would not act without official clarification of the position. Since then I have written direct to General Bennett.

The Minister for Agriculture: Did you receive any further reply?

Mr. SEWARD: No.

The Minister for Agriculture: You have another letter, which I would like you to read.

Mr. SEWARD: The letter I have just read shows how far a private member is likely to get when a Minister of the Crown can do no more than is shown in that communication. How could a private member expect to get anywhere seeing that the Minister himself can only get an evasive answer of this kind when he makes an application? As I had made so little headway with respect to these applications I sent the following telegram to the Minister for the Army at Canberra:—

Application for release of personnel from Army to enable farmers to sow crop and in special cases where women only on farm to carry on refused local military headquarters. Early rains have promoted weed growth to such extent that unless land is worked immediately heavy financial loss to owners must ensue. Ask you take immediate action to release required men.

I received a reply from the Minister for the Army (Mr. Forde) dated the 7th May as follows:—

Your telegram regarding release of men required for farming purposes receiving attention. You will be further advised as soon as possible.

No further advice has yet come to hand. That is the reason for the urgency of this matter. Here we are at the 14th May, almost halfway through the seeding season. Unless the crops are put in there will be none to harvest. I also wish to draw attention to the financial aspect. These farmers have their commitments to meet, and if they fail to do that they will get into serious trouble. When the House was last sitting I received a telephone message from a farmer east of Pingelly to the effect that he had received a summons for the non-payment of his rent. On investigation I found that the young fellow concerned had purchased the property three years ago. Under the terms of purchase he has to make 20 annual payments of £100 each. He was due to pay an instalment of £100 out of the proceeds of his wool. The sheep were shorn in October, and in due course the wool was sent to Fremantle for appraisal. The wool was, however, not appraised until March so that he could get no money from that source. The £100 was due in February.

He wrote to the owner of the property—it was not a rapacious bank or an insurance company in this instance—and explained that he could not pay his instalment at the due date, but said that as soon as he received the money from the wool appraisements the sum of £50 would be paid, and the balance would be forthcoming in due course after some of the sheep had been sold. The farmer received no reply from the owner to his communication, but did receive a summons for the full amount with the legal expenses added. How can these people meet their commitments if such things as these happen, and if they cannot put in their crops out of which they expect to pay their way? The position is a desperate one. We are asking that an appeal board shall be established so that cases of this kind may be dealt with expeditiously. There is also the question of the military authorities being asked to make arrangements for the harvesting of crops. In the "Daily News" of recent date is published a reference to the Bengel potato crops being menaced. The article pointed out that unless the crop was got in quickly and before heavy rain fell, probably 3,500 tons of potatoes would be lost. Imagine the country permitting such a loss to be incurred and yet hoping to win the war.

Are we altogether devoid of initiative? Any day in the street we can see hundreds

of soldiers walking about. I do not refer to those who are on leave from the Middle East. I am particularly pleased to see that they are having leave, and I hope they will enjoy the spell they so much deserve. We see soldiers in the streets almost every day in the week, home on leave. Would it not be a sensible thing to employ 200 or 300 soldiers in digging potatoes at Bengier? That would be useful training for the men, and provide opportunities for the officers to gain valuable experience in the control of men under service conditions, and so forth. It would also have the effect of saving the crop. The Army authorities, however, say that the training of the men would be interfered with. What kind of training is a man getting when he is engaged in washing dishes in the cook house? I hope the Premier will take up this matter with the Prime Minister and the Army authorities, and establish an appeal board to which these cases may be referred.

It is of no use to give a man the right of appeal from a junior military officer to a senior military officer. Men in the Army are drawn from all walks of life. It does not follow that the Army man who has proved himself a successful leader has any knowledge of farming operations, or is able to judge of what is required for the conduct of those operations. He may be a legal man or a professional man of some other kind. When an application comes before him he considers only the effect that the application may have upon the training of the men in his unit. He is not able to take that broad view which is entailed in the production of foodstuffs. I strongly support the motion and hope that some action will be taken in the immediate future.

MR. STUBBS (Wagin) [12.28]: The importance of this motion is my excuse for taking up the time of members this morning. There are a few aspects of this matter which members who do not belong to country areas may not fully understand. A few days ago we were told that the House was going to discuss two questions only. I wish to pay a tribute to the Government and the Premier for the manner in which the information in their possession was placed before members. In my judgment dreadful things are going to happen to Western Australia if the Federal Government takes action which leads to the closing down of our mines, and

if it carries out its other intention which, in my view, will mean the end of the Parliament of this State. The problem is an urgent one. Various instances of the extraordinary manner in which the military authorities deal with individual applications have come under my notice, and they certainly warrant the House in passing the motion. A man nearly 70 years of age came to the metropolitan area where his son was in camp. The father was not in a position to carry on the farm and, time being the essence of the contract, he endeavoured to get one month's exemption for his son. The extraordinary things that were done and said to this man were worthy of inclusion in a Gilbert and Sullivan opera.

The father brought his son to Parliament House, a lad of 20, in uniform. I got into touch with Swan Barracks. The Commandant was not in, but the next senior officer, after hearing what I had to say on behalf of the young fellow, replied, "If you will ring Bazaar-terrace and ask for Major So-and-so, he is the officer who can deal with the matter." I got into touch with that officer and was told that he had nothing to do with it; the matter had been taken out of his hands, and I should apply to the officer commanding the young man's unit at Melville. The major said the unit officer could grant exemption. But what did the unit officer tell me? He said he had no power to grant the exemption, but if the young man submitted an application he would recommend it and forward it to the manpower officer. This sort of thing continued for two or three days. I have not seen either the young man or his father since, but I know that the father was greatly distressed. He had recently suffered sad bereavement through his daughter being killed in an accident, and no doubt he was broken-hearted at the treatment meted out to him by the military authorities and returned home.

I say definitely there are very few members, not excluding those representing agricultural districts, who are aware of what is happening on the farms. In the Ravenshorpe district many of the farms are being controlled by women. Can anybody maintain that it is fair to ask a woman to drive a tractor, plough or other machine to sow crops? I hope the House will appreciate the urgency of the motion. Given that it is possible to make representations in the right quarter and secure exemption for

many of these men, that should be done. If the farmers are not going to be permitted to carry on their operations, it will be a matter of only a brief time before most of the farms return to a state of Nature. I appeal to every member to support the motion.

MR. McLARTY (Murray-Wellington) [12.35]: I appreciate the necessity for manpower for the defence services and, with other members, I would not do anything to prevent the military authorities from getting all the men they need. They should have the first call, because every able-bodied man in Australia is of tremendous importance. At the same time, I feel that there is not sufficient co-ordination between the military authorities and the primary industries. I agree with the suggestion of the member for Beverley (Mr. Mann) that the appointment of local committees would assist in overcoming this difficulty. The manpower officer in my district comes from Bunbury and is a very fair man, but he has a large district and it is exceedingly difficult for a manpower officer to do justice in all cases.

Mr. Mann: He has a big district to cover.

MR. McLARTY: Yes. The suggestion for the appointment of local committees is one that should be adopted. The Leader of the Opposition has explained that a farmer is allowed only one employee. If he has 100 acres, the authorities grant him one man, and if he has 10,000 acres he is still allowed only one man. Surely that is neither logical nor practicable! This is a matter that the Minister for Agriculture should take up with the military authorities.

My district is a mixed farming area where dairying, potato-growing, fat lamb-raising and, in fact, most of the primary industries are carried on. Only recently representatives of the military authorities have been right through the district trying to arrange military contracts. They have pointed out to the farmers, in urging them to make these contracts, that they will take all the potatoes and other vegetables they can grow, and give a guaranteed price for them. Many of the farmers, from patriotic motives, are entering into these contracts, but the extraordinary fact is that the farmers are not guaranteed any labour at all. That seems to be a remarkable state of affairs. In these areas are many enemy aliens who are demanding up to £2 per day before they will work for

farmers. They will work and co-operate amongst themselves and undertake these contracts, but they will not work for Britishers. This sort of thing is causing keen resentment in my electorate, and is not to be wondered at.

Owing to the shortage of labour, the dairying industry is in a precarious position. One man told me he would have to turn out 100 cows because he could not get the requisite labour. He is well known to the member for Bunbury. Another farmer was seriously ill, his wife was also in bad health, and they could not obtain any labour. I know of a returned soldier who was badly wounded in the 1914-18 war, and whose three sons are in camp. He has a large holding and cannot obtain any help. These are only a few instances where help should be given. These industries must have labour if they are to continue operations. I do not know how the dairying industry could be carried on were it not for the fact that the farmers' wives are turning out and helping with the milking.

Unless something is done to provide labour in these farming districts, the result must be a greatly decreased output. In the matter of growing and supplying vegetables, many Britishers will not enter into contracts, because they fear they would not be able to carry out the terms of the contract owing to the acute shortage of labour. Just about everything that can be said has been said on this matter, and I do not propose to continue further except to join issue again with the member for Beverley (Mr. Mann) as regards early shearing. I would not like to see the farmers in my district start shearing in August, or at any rate early in August, because they would be running a serious risk. I support the motion.

MR. CROSS (Canning) [12.41]: Whilst supporting the motion generally, I consider its scope to be somewhat narrow. Probably that is due to the single-track minds of members of the Country Party.

Hon. C. G. Latham: What a rotten thing to say!

Several members interjected.

MR. CROSS: Country Party members seem to think there is only one industry in this State. Therefore I shall propose an amendment which in my opinion will cover an oversight, besides causing Country Party

members to realise that they have disregarded another section of primary producers. I move an amendment—

That in line 5, after the word "farming," the words "market gardening and potato growing" be inserted.

I consider myself entitled to say something about market gardening. In my own electorate there are over 1,000 acres in vegetable production, and the market gardeners there are in acute trouble as regards labour. I may mention that what is probably the largest market garden in the State is situated in my electorate. This year those market gardeners have entered into contracts with the military, and they have permanently employed from 70 to 100 men. Now they have undertaken to double the area under crop. One firm alone would have 700 acres for cropping. Moreover, that firm is extending its activities into the country areas. It now has about 50 men working at Bengger, and not too many of them are foreigners. There the firm has a magnificent potato crop, but is experiencing great difficulty in taking it off. At Bengger, too, the firm proposes to plant another 100 acres of potatoes forthwith. In the metropolitan area it has considerable acreage ready to be planted out with cabbages, potatoes, and other vegetable foods that are urgently required. I hope members opposite will agree to extend the motion so as to include the producers I have mentioned.

The Leader of the Opposition said that prices for vegetables are now higher than they ever were before. That is positively true, but we cannot be sure that the growers receive the full benefit of those higher prices. Inquiries should be made as to the source from which the quotations have been obtained. I have taken personal notice of the markets, and I am quite certain that consumers of vegetables are being charged unnecessarily high prices and that the margins of increase are not going to the growers.

As regards manpower for market gardeners, I may mention that at Bannister Lagoon there is a market garden with two men, and on some of the land two crops a year are grown, and perhaps three. One of the men has two sons. Of these sons one enlisted voluntarily and the other is expecting a call-up. During the last two months the two men and the second son have prepared an additional ten acres of land for irrigation not from the river but from subterranean waters. A great hardship will

be inflicted in that instance if the second son is called up. It will be impossible to carry on the garden, although all the women in the family are assisting in the effort to provide food for the State. With further reference to manpower for market gardeners, I am aware that some men of Italian descent have been interned. Of those men several are known to me to be decent fellows, for whom, if they were released, the employers would be willing to accept responsibility. Some of these interned Italians are experts in market gardening and have resided in the State for a long time. I consider that internees who are known to be decent citizens and to have attempted to establish homes here should be released to employers who will accept responsibility for them. I commend my amendment to the House.

HON. C. G. LATHAM (York—on amendment) [12.48]: I shall not oppose the amendment, but the word "farming" covers all that the amendment seeks to include. If market gardening and potato growing are to be included, why not include horticulture?

THE PREMIER (Hon. J. C. Willcock—Geraldton—on amendment) [12.49]: I do not think the motion should specifically mention one or two or perhaps three aspects of farming. If we omitted, for example, flax growing or apple growing or tobacco growing, it might be argued that as those activities are not included in the motion they are not entitled to benefit by it. We would be well advised to adhere to the all-embracing term "farming." I do not know of anyone doing anything on the land who cannot be said to be engaged in farming operations. It is said that in England a million farmers are engaged in producing hundreds of different commodities.

Mr. North: "Farming" includes dairying.

The PREMIER: Yes. The Minister for Agriculture is proposing to move an amendment later, and this might prove more satisfactory than the present one. It can safely be taken that the term "farming" embraces all agricultural activities.

Amendment put and negatived.

MR. J. H. SMITH (Nelson) [12.51]: I shall not take up a great deal of the time of the House, although I have a number of subjects to discuss. I am pleased that the Leader of the Country Party brought for-

ward this motion, and am grateful to the Premier and the Government for giving members an opportunity to discuss it. Parliament reassembled specifically to deal with two motions, one in regard to uniform taxation and the other in regard to the gold-mining industry. I did not speak to the first, because what I might have said would have been repetition; nor did I speak to the second, because I left it to the goldfields' members, who know much more about the subject, and because I knew the vote on it would be unanimous. But I believe that this present motion is of far greater importance than was any motion brought before the House in past years. It deals with the feeding of our civilian population and our troops. One recalls the old adage that a soldier cannot fight on an empty stomach.

The trouble is that our primary industries are today depleted of their workers; in fact, that has been the case since the outbreak of hostilities. I could quote many instances of what has happened to the dairying industry, but shall mention only one. Members are aware that today there is a shortage of butter fat and cheese. I will quote the case of a family at Bridgetown consisting of three brothers, all of whom are married. The eldest brother enlisted and left the management of the properties to his two brothers. Then the second brother enlisted. He had 60 milking cows, and left the management of the properties to the remaining brother, who had 90 milking cows. This brother was not strong enough to perform military duties, although he had submitted himself to examination. He was left to carry on the three farms, but found the work impossible. The result is that 190 cows went out of production. I told the manpower officer in Bridgetown that he had no right to allow those men to enlist, as they were required for the carrying on of an essential service. The 190 cows that I mentioned will now rear their own calves. Heifers, when grown, will be too wild to milk, so they will have to be sent to the slaughterhouse. That is what we should prevent, if it is at all possible. The production of the dairying industry, owing to enlistments, has been halved.

To give another illustration of the way in which manpowering has affected primary industries, I shall deal for a few moments with the flax industry at Boyup Brook. I was there only last week and was told by

the manager that the industry is in need of workers; black, white, and brindle workers including foreigners, a few Britishers, and some girls are working there. The manager told me that he needed from 50 to 75 additional workers, and that the industry was languishing for want of them. That applies to Boyup Brook. I suppose it applies also to Donnybrook, where a big flax mill is being erected, although the production there is perhaps less than the production at Boyup Brook. It would apply also to the Yarloop district. I understand that the industry there is not so active, although that was the district where the industry was originally started. It has not made the strides there which it has made in other districts more suited to flax growing. I am afraid the industry will collapse for want of workers.

In regard to the tobacco industry, two growers employing labour came to me only a fortnight ago to see what could be done in this matter. They are foreigners who have resided in Australia for a number of years, although they did not become naturalised. Their graders were called up by the military and examined. I interviewed the manpower officer on behalf of these employers and obtained exemption for the men until August. It would be a disaster if these graders were called up. I also spoke to the manpower officer on behalf of growers in the Manjimup district on the subject of enlistment of graders. I received an assurance from the military authorities that the Department of Agriculture had also interviewed them and pointed out how necessary it was not to call up the graders until the end of August, when the season would be over.

Despite the moralising of the member for Beverley (Mr. Mann), who would deprive the people and the troops of beer—and possibly also of tobacco; I presume he would also object to their attending picture shows and dances and taking walks in the moonlight if the weather permitted—I say we must keep these industries going. What applies to tobacco applies also to hop growing. We produce in my district all the hops that are used in the manufacture of beer in Western Australia. Men in those industries should not be manpowered. As the Minister for Agriculture is aware, two years ago we offered to put in 1,000 acres of flax at Bridgetown. However, that opportunity was missed because no seed was available. Flax is essential to the Empire for the

making of fabric for aeroplane wings, and nothing must be done that will interfere with its production. I presume the industry at Donnybrook also requires 50 or 75 men.

In his motion the Leader of the Country Party suggests the establishment of an appeal court consisting of two persons, one of whom it is proposed shall be a member of the farming community. Who is to select that member? Is he to be the organiser for the Country Party who has lately been so active in my district, a man named Bullock? Possibly he would be selected if the motion were passed in its present form.

Mr. Hughes: You should not have said that.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I am sorry. I did not mean that in a derogatory sense.

Sitting suspended from 1 p.m. to 2.15 p.m.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Before dinner I was referring to the latter portion of the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition, and suggested that perhaps there could be an alteration with regard to the farmers' representative. I regret that, as pointed out by the member for East Perth (Mr. Hughes), I mentioned a name that I should not have mentioned. I did not do it intentionally. All members of Parliament are anxious to assist the war effort in every way possible, and I suggest that they should represent their respective districts on the appeal board. Members of Parliament know their own districts and are aware of the places where manpower is required and, if the course I suggest were adopted, members would be able to meet the request of the Premier to assist in the prosecution of the war. This is one way in which I think we could give general satisfaction.

Some members have referred to the political aspect of representation on the appeal board, but that does not matter one iota to me. Our objective is to win the war and that cannot be done unless we feed the men who are fighting for us. I would be prepared to accept any position of that kind. To my mind many men are evading their obligations. On the other hand I know scores of men in the A.I.F. who have no right to be there. They have enlisted because of their loyalty and their desire to serve their country when it is most in need of their services. They say "Why should we not go to fight and protect our interests, to defend the country that has reared us and

our fathers? It is worth while to fight to retain our rights." Scores of men have adopted that attitude, while other men who should be serving their country are sheltering behind manpower restrictions. Again, there are men who have been manpowered, and are scoffed at by foolish people who would insist on their being sent away.

I suggest to whoever is entrusted with the making of the appointments to this board, if the motion is carried, that the services of members of Parliament might well be utilised. With regard to the proposal to have farmers' representatives on the appeal board, I would ask who is going to select those representatives. The farmers have a big organisation, the Primary Producers' Association, but most of the representatives in this House of the agricultural constituencies in the South-West portion of the State are members of the National Party, except with regard to Collie, Bunbury, and Forrest in which there are extensive agricultural interests and the Parliamentary representatives of which are members of the Labour Party and also do not belong to any farmers' organisation. How are farmers' representatives to be appointed for those areas? It would be much better if members of Parliament were appointed to represent their own districts in regard to this matter.

Reference has been made by the Leader of the Opposition, the member for Beverley (Mr. Mann) and other speakers to the difficulty experienced in regard to shearing. That applies throughout the State. There is no possibility of getting men released from the Army to carry out shearing or to engage in any other agricultural or pastoral avocation. The men in authority do not seem to realise that the welfare of the State is dependent on the release of manpower for these purposes. Then there is the question of who is going to pay the wages. I consider that men on active service should be receiving the basic wage and men who are not serving their country should be on military pay. I have mentioned how I arranged for tobacco graders to be released, but it is not possible to secure the release of workers in the dairying industry. Dairy farmers sent their cattle 70 or 80 miles away to the coast when the dairying season was not in operation. The farmers do not know the run to the coast, and many of them are too old to go there and muster the cattle and bring them back to the farms. In many instances they are carrying on

merely with the assistance of their wives and daughters. There does not seem to be any discretion exercised as to who are taken by the Army.

Mr. Cross: The military Pooh-Bah decides that question.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: To win the war we must make sacrifices. I do not know who does it, but not much discretion is exercised in the matter. In my district three boys out of one family and all the skilled shearers have either enlisted in the A.I.F. or been called up for the Militia. How are we going to get these men released? I do not know what influence we can bring to bear or how we are going to get our shearing done. Shearing cannot be done in June and July. Until the member for Beverley mentioned it, I had not heard of any farmer being so foolish as to attempt to shear sheep in this climate in those months.

There is one matter that strikes me forcibly and I hope members of this House and the Minister for Agriculture will not lose sight of it. There has been an appeal to people to grow their own vegetables. That is being done in my district and on a large scale in the metropolitan area. Vegetables are seasonable. Although there has been a great influx of population and a consequent shortage of vegetables, in the springtime there will be an accumulation, with serious results. The Speaker has told me about lettuces being offered at 2s. a crate. Growers cannot produce at that price. I am afraid the same thing will occur with regard to the growing of vegetables as has occurred with regard to the growing of wheat. People were urged to grow more wheat and the more they grew the poorer they became. Similarly, the more vegetables people grow the poorer will they become because there will be no sale.

Hundreds of tons of vegetables will go to waste unless we make proper provision. We cannot grow too many potatoes, or too many tomatoes, peas, or beans, or such vegetables. But we have to see that an organisation is established for the canning of these vegetables, and that provision is made for the lean periods of the year, extending over seven or eight months. The man who grows the vegetables must be paid a fair market price for them. How can that be done? It can only be done by fixing a fair price in between the flush and the shortage. If that can be done, then I will agree with the slogan. "Grow More

Vegetables." Today people everywhere are growing vegetables, and I can guarantee that when they are picking peas or beans they will be selling in the shops at 1d. and 2d. a pound, and cabbages at ½d. a pound. In a few month's time vegetables will be over-produced. We will then go into canning operations.

Hon. C. G. Latham: There is a big canning factory half-finished now.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: A big factory will operate, but what is it going to do? Is it going to buy vegetables at ½d. per pound, with the result that the producer will get nothing? Or will the Minister issue a proclamation to say that the price will be so much? Unless we have fixation of price, the primary producer can never succeed.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is getting away from the motion. There is nothing about prices in the motion; only the forming of a board for certain purposes.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Yes. In regard to production, there is a slogan, "Grow More Vegetables," the same as there was one, "Grow More Wheat."

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! There is nothing in the motion about growing more wheat or growing more vegetables.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I will refrain from saying more on that point. In any case, I have said all I desire to say. There is today a danger that unless labour is made available, thousands of tons of potatoes from our crops in the South-West will be lost. Our tomato crops will also be affected. It only needs a few more days of weather like we had a day or two ago and not a potato will be dug at Benger Swamp, because of the labour shortage. The Federal Government is providing a labour corps. There is one on the transcontinental railway. I presume it comprises the Italians from Harvey. We have no chance of getting them back. We will have to provide a labour corps to go to these wet areas and dig the potato crop, otherwise we will lose 7,000 or 8,000 tons of potatoes. The same position applies, but in a lesser degree, to the people in the Albany area. I remember that, some three years ago, the growers in that area lost about 75 per cent. of the potato crop on account of unseasonable rain. I want to know if anything along these lines has been done.

This is a most important motion. Primary production is the feeding of the people. Today we have a shortage of foodstuffs throughout Western Australia. The influx of population here affects the position, and we cannot import these commodities from the Eastern States. There is a danger of the population going short. We have not sufficient fat lambs or beef. Pork, the produce of bacon factories, and all other primary produce that can be mentioned will be inadequate, unless we preserve our manpower from the military authorities. The motion has my whole-hearted support except for the latter portion. I do not wish to move an amendment. We want to get the sitting over as early as possible, and are grateful to the Government for giving us an opportunity to express our views on this important question. I think, however, it would be advisable for the Leader of the Country Party to alter the wording so as to provide for the member of the appeal board to be the member for the district, and not to be drawn from the farming community—if we have the appeal board.

Mr. Thorn: Could we have an interchange of members?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The member for Toodyay would probably not know the difference between what is produced in his electorate and what is produced in mine.

Mr. Thorn: I think I would.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: A great many wheat-growers would know nothing about the production of tobacco.

Mr. Marshall: Or hops!

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I think they would know about hops.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! There is too much conversation.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: This, however, is a matter which could be adjusted afterwards. I do not know how the member of the board will be elected, but I hope he will not be drawn from a political organisation which seems to be the order of the day in Federal politics. I trust the Leader of the Opposition will think this matter over, and see if we can accede to the Premier's request to assist in the war effort. That is one way in which we could assist.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE
(Hon. F. J. S. Wise—Gascoyne) [2.32]: I am very interested in this debate. This is one of the urgent matters requiring consideration

not merely by the military authorities, but by a properly constituted committee or board representing both military and civil authorities. For many months I have been greatly concerned at the intensely developing position of manpower shortage. Although it was realised before Japan entered the war just how serious it might become, since the entry of Japan the matter has been greatly accentuated. There is, today, in every sphere of rural and pastoral activity a serious position developing because of the lack of manpower. Until Australia was directly threatened by the intervention of Japan, it was a much simpler matter to arrange for the release of personnel than it is today. Until that time we were able to overcome the shortage of manpower in many directions.

It was possible to arrange for the release of individuals; it was possible to arrange for the easing up of any call-up, but since the intervention of Japan and the obvious necessity for the military authorities to take a very strict view of affairs, the matter has become increasingly difficult. Many avenues of labour have been exploited, and many demands for labour in rural industries have been filled by women. As a matter of fact, the organisation of a women's land army has materially assisted in many classes of rural production where lighter work, and work suitable for women, could be carried out. I refer particularly to apple picking, hop picking, and tobacco picking and grading.

Hon. C. G. Latham: We have had them employed in those industries.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: In some of those industries they were not employed in an organised way, particularly in the case of tobacco. The organisation responsible for bringing women into those industries has done an excellent work in facilitating the release of manpower. Still, the fact remains that there are many types of rural work generally that are unsuitable for women, and it is noticeable that in all rural pursuits the first effect of shortage of manpower would be in seasonal crops or lines of production that are of short duration. Hence we have felt immediately the effect in the vegetable-growing industry. But with the more continuous operations of wheat-growing and mixed farming generally, it is only now that the seasonal practice of seeding and the attendant responsibilities of farm work have brought

about an intense difficulty in the manpower position on the farm.

As members on both sides of the House know, I have frequently, at their special request, attended to matters that probably have had nothing whatever to do with me. When the Deputy-Director of Manpower was appointed in this State, he had vested in him certain authority, but that authority applied only prior to enlistment or prior to a man's entering camp. Although he was willing at all times to exert any authority he possessed, many difficult positions have arisen. Approaches have been made to Brigadier-General Martin and others associated with this problem. Earlier in this sitting I received a very important suggestion from the Leader of the National Party that I believe could be put into effect. The suggestion was that you, Mr. Speaker, should approve of the Sergeant-at-Arms, Brigadier-General Martin, addressing the House on this subject, and he could perhaps acquaint us of many of the difficulties he has met with and many of the difficulties he has helped to overcome.

There are generally three types of agricultural operations that have been affected by the manpower position. Those three types are seasonal operations by individual farmers seedling and sowing; the special need over some of the flush months, as happens in the dairying industry in parts of the State, and in vegetable-growing, and also the immediate and urgent demand for potato-digging and operations of that kind. There are many serious aspects of the matter and one particularly is in connection with the potato-growing industry. Within that industry for many years there have been engaged naturalised persons and also aliens, friendly and unfriendly. The position has recently arisen that these men who are at large, and some of whom are unnaturalised, have been able to demand three times normal contract rates before they would work in a particular line of harvesting or planting crops. We have instances of Italians having demanded three times normal contract rates for potato-digging. They have dug their own crops and would not dig their neighbours' crops unless paid at excessive rates.

Mr. McLarty: And meanwhile neighbours' sons were going to the war.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes. The place for those men is in a uniform of some sort as part of a land army paid at soldiers' rates.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I am glad to hear you say that because your colleague, the Minister for Labour, stated that he was interested not in the maximum amount demanded but in the minimum amount paid.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I think it only reasonable that those who are making a sacrifice by the voluntary offering of their lives should have their interests and those of their parents protected, and that those men remaining should not be exploited by people who are unacceptable to us in khaki.

Mr. Thorn: We have not the stomach to do things like that.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I think we have. In connection with potato-digging we have met with difficulties at Donnybrook, Waterloo, Harvey, and Bengier. The threat of flooding at this time of the year is always with us, but it is very rare that as late as this the Bengier swamps are threatened with loss and only a matter of weeks remains to get the crop out of the ground. Certain individuals were for a time at the quarantine station at Fremantle and came within the scope of the alien immigration restrictions, and we have been able to assemble those people—Chinese—and have them placed under the control of the military authorities. They have taken out a very large tonnage of potatoes in more than one district.

Mr. Thorn: The Chinese are a friendly nation.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes, but still they come within the scope of the immigration restriction laws. We are endeavouring to use those people. They are interested in the work and are doing a good job. They are a bit slower than are some of the contract diggers, but they are careful—there are not very many prong marks—and the finished product is very good. I think there were originally 350 Chinese so affected. Recently 70 Koe-pangers have arrived from our pearling centres. As soon as we heard of their arrival we made all possible representations to have those men also enlisted in the services of the rural industries. Those men are accustomed to very hard conditions; they are not big in stature but are strong and able, and I think would be quite willing to assist us in this difficult position of manpower.

I believe, with the Leader of the Opposition and many other speakers, that in

civil as well as in military spheres there are still quite a lot of passengers. I think there are quite a few who are physically able to undertake much work in connection with our pastoral and farming pursuits, but who are evading their responsibilities. I understand that the R.S.L. representatives in different country districts are taking a view opposite to that expressed by many members of the Opposition and are wondering why there are so many men still at large—so many young men still available for military work and not called up.

The whole matter is bristling with difficulties. The main difficulty, I think, is that the ones to whom the individual and collective problems are presented have not an understanding of the position. As stressed by the member for Wagin (Mr. Stubbs) this morning, the procedure for the release of men is quite wrong. The officer of a unit should not be the man to decide whether a member of his unit should be released. In fact, he is the very last man to sum up and decide that point. If an amendment is moved to bring about a board of reference, rather than a board of appeal, the board should have the power to make decisions and should have represented on it not merely the military and farming interests, but also a Government official from the department charged with the very big responsibility of furthering production in these days. I consider that the Leader of the Opposition, in the substance of his motion, was guilty of an oversight in that he did not include the pastoral industry. I consider the inclusion of the pastoral industry to be essential. The hon. gentleman in the course of his speech mentioned that industry, which showed that he had given the matter some thought; but obviously, in dealing with a motion of this nature, we do not wish to overlook so important an industry.

Mr. Sampson: Does not "pastoral" come under the heading of "farming"?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Distinctly not! I desire to advise the House that very recently I approached Lieut.-General Gordon Bennett with a proposal that he appoint two officers and that I appoint two to meet for the purpose of discussing matters which could, through him, become matters of policy in determining release of manpower. I said to the General that there appeared to me to be three possible ways of overcoming the

existing difficulty. The first one was by having an army labour corps selected from men now within the Army and added to by instalments, from time to time, of men trained in and suited to farming work. My second suggestion was that there should be a civil labour corps of men exempted from military activities, no matter whether those men were such as those I have just mentioned working under military control or men exempted from military activities and withdrawn from military ranks. My third alternative was that each individual case be examined and exemption granted if warranted.

Those three suggestions, I think, cover the general needs of the situation. Lieut.-General Gordon Bennett did agree, and allowed two of his colonels to confer with Mr. Stitfold, the Deputy Controller of Manpower, and Mr. Baron Hay, the Under Secretary for Agriculture; but with the exception of an agreement being reached on the point of the three-weeks exemption, which has been published, very little progress was made. I repeat that the crux of this situation rests in the fact that the military authorities dealing with the situation do not quite understand the nature of the problem. I consider that the closest association is necessary between military needs and civil needs: otherwise it will be highly difficult for military authorities to get along with that particular job. None of us will deny what has been often stated, that the man who is producing for the Army, enabling men to be fed in the field or wherever they may be taken, is a highly important unit of this nation at this moment, just as important as many of the units in military life.

Since that time I have discussed the matter with the military manpower authority who visited this State from Melbourne. The discussion took place yesterday, and I suggested to him that I should appoint a capable officer, an officer versed in all rural matters, who would act in conjunction with the military and our present Deputy Controller of Manpower. The military manpower authority has taken that suggestion with him, and I think it may be agreed to; but I consider that it would be well if the Leader of the Opposition would agree to amend the motion by adding after the word "farming," in line 5, the words "and pastoral pursuits." Subsequently, I wish to move a further amendment, though

I understand that I may not be permitted to do so. If I cannot, I would like some member to move an amendment that in line 10, after the word "of," these words be inserted in lieu of the remaining words of the motion—"essential farming and pastoral operations and recommend the formation of a board of reference to consist of three members, one representing the military authorities, one the farming and pastoral industries, and one to be an officer of the Department of Agriculture, such board to have power to deal with applications for manpower release and make decisions thereon." If any member would move the second part of my amendment, I would resume my seat; but I am conscious that someone else may want to move amendments.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: The last part obviously wants amending; it is unfinished.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I submit that the last part of the amendment will overcome very many difficulties. I am seeking to set up some authority with power to make decisions. The roundabout way of sending letters such as those quoted by the member for Beverley (Mr. Mann) and the one that was not read by the member for Pingelly (Mr. Seward) is quite useless. One of those letters contained unnecessary comment, and obviously comment made by some person who does not understand the situation today. The letter quoted by the member for Beverley is not sensible. It is written by someone who has not the authority to assess the present position. Therefore it is highly necessary to include a trio of men in a board of reference which would have capacity as well as authority. The officer of the Department of Agriculture should have a very important place on such a board of reference. It is part of the work of the department to encourage production and to size up the relative importance of branches of endeavour; and I think we can pick an officer who will hold a very important place on such a board. I think I will take the risk of the second part of the amendment being moved. I now move an amendment—

That in line 5, after the word "farming," the words "and pastoral pursuits" be inserted.

MR. BOYLE (Avon—on amendment) [2.55]: I gave you notice, Mr. Speaker, during dinner of an amendment that I desired to move; but, unfortunately, the

Minister for Agriculture came in one line ahead of me. We agree practically on all points.

Mr. SPEAKER: If the Minister's amendment is agreed to, the place where the hon. member proposed to put his amendment will have disappeared.

Mr. BOYLE: That is so. Will you permit me to proceed?

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member can speak only to the amendment before the Chair.

Mr. BOYLE: May I give notice of a further amendment?

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes.

Mr. BOYLE: As I say, I practically agree with the Minister's amendment.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must address himself to the amendment before the Chair, which is that certain words be inserted.

Mr. BOYLE: I am suggesting that instead of an officer of the Department of Agriculture being appointed to the proposed board, a stipendiary magistrate shall be appointed chairman.

Amendment put and passed.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. A. H. Panton—Leederville) [2.58]: If I move an amendment now, I presume the member for Avon (Mr. Boyle) can move to amend my amendment.

Mr. SPEAKER: There is nothing to prevent him from doing that.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I move an amendment—

That all the words after "of" in line 10 be struck out, and the words, "essential farming and pastoral operations and recommend the formation of a board of reference to consist of three members, one representing the military authorities, one the farming and pastoral industries, and one to be an officer of the Department of Agriculture, such board to have power to deal with applications for manpower release and make decisions thereon" inserted in lieu.

MR. BOYLE (Avon—on amendment) [2.59]: I move—

That the amendment be amended by striking out the words "and one to be an officer of the Department of Agriculture."

If this be agreed to I shall move to insert in lieu the words "who will be appointed by the Minister for Agriculture and a stipendiary magistrate acting within his magisterial district as chairman." Quite fortuitously, I find myself in accord with

the Minister for Agriculture. Evidently we have both been thinking along the same lines in this particular instance.

The Minister for Agriculture: Strange!

Mr. BOYLE: Being in agreement with two-thirds of his amendment, we are a step forward towards a total agreement. I object to the appointment of an officer of the Department of Agriculture, who presumably would be chairman, for the reason that, rightly or wrongly, there is an antipathy amongst the farming community to officials of that department being placed in such a position. I can foresee that.

The Minister for Agriculture: I do not agree.

Mr. BOYLE: I make the assertion in view of knowledge I have. I do not say that it is correct in all cases, but the appointment of an official of the Department of Agriculture to a judicial position would place him in a most invidious position. We have stipendiary magistrates who are men of probity, with a knowledge of law and who can weigh evidence. I can say without hesitation that they have the confidence of the whole community. If a stipendiary magistrate were appointed as chairman, the Military Department would of necessity have an appointee. We know that normally the point of view of the military authorities is hard and fast. Without casting any aspersions on the proposed representative of the farming and pastoral industries, we can say that he would be actuated by a desire to look after the interests of the parent-farmer or the farmer's son. We must then have, as chairman, a man wholly unbiased, and I submit that a stipendiary magistrate should be placed in that position.

Another phase is this: No doubt hundreds of appeals will be lodged against the call-up and these will have to be heard within a very limited time. I can see no objection to the appointment of a stipendiary magistrate. For instance, take the central district, Northam! The magistrate there could reach any part of the district within a few hours. Other districts are not so fortunately situated. For instance, there may be difficulty in such a centre as Geraldton. The fact remains, however, that the appeals could be dealt with at the one time. The law has made provision for appeals by conscientious objectors. These appeals are taken by a stipendiary magistrate; there is no delay, and in about 80 per cent. of the cases the men are excused from military duties.

Mr. Raphael: Many of them become conscientious objectors with that end in view.

Mr. BOYLE: Yes. The case put forward by the Leader of the Opposition was not concerned with the conscientious objector; it was a matter of whether we were to continue our farming industry. We are not seeking in any way to evade responsibility for military service.

Mr. SPEAKER: I point out to the hon. member that he will have an opportunity to speak to the motion later.

Mr. BOYLE: Very well, Sir.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE

(Hon. F. J. S. Wise—Gascoyne—on amendment) [3.4]: I regret that the member for Avon (Mr. Boyle) has moved to delete these words. I expect I should be quite pleased to find that he is even to some extent in agreement with me; but I point out to the House that there is no more logical person to assess a position of manpower than one whose active life is associated each day with some avenue of farming pursuits. Not merely have such men the confidence of our farming community, but in my opinion they would be in a happier position more readily to assess the claims than would be a stipendiary magistrate. A magistrate would give an equally just and proper decision, but he would have to assemble the facts, and if in these cases the matter is one of urgency, as we all admit it is, an urgent and quick decision would be readily obtainable from a board of reference set up as I have suggested. It would delay matters to have to lodge claims and wait for an appointment for those claims to be heard. If the matter were not urgent, the hon. member would be absolutely right but, since it is, and since the facts are already assembled by the officer concerned, the hon. member should agree to the inclusion of these words.

HON. C. G. LATHAM (York—on amendment) [3.6]: I am sorry I am out of step with my colleague who represents the district next to mine. But the House should bear in mind that most of these applications would come from men in the Forces, and they would be dealt with more or less within the metropolitan area. There would probably be some from the North, or inland, but they would not be far from here, and the applications could be dealt with in the metropolitan area. I have

given a good deal of thought to the matter, because I do not want the military authorities to say the board is loaded against them. In this case it would be, because first there is a representative of the farming and pastoral industries, which are the same, despite the Minister's assertion that they are not, because the dictionary includes them both under the word "farming." There would be one man representing the industry and then there would be one who knows all about it, if an Agricultural Department officer is appointed, which I think would be quite satisfactory. I prefer the amendment as it stands to that suggested by the member for Avon (Mr. Boyle), because a stipendiary magistrate would look at the matter from the evidence submitted to him and not from the point of view of the industry, which is the point of view which I desire to have considered. He might be of the same opinion as the officer who wrote, in reply to the shearer, that shearing was not an important business.

These matters have to be dealt with expeditiously. In the event of a magistrate attending to the cases, if an application were made at Bruce Rock, we would have to wait for a month before the magistrate went there, because he has a circuit and has to attend at certain places on certain dates. If he does not, arrangements are made for some other magistrate to take his place. My main idea is to have these matters dealt with at once. Every hour that goes by is important. I support the Minister's amendment and I hope we can give effect to it, and that the authorities will accept it in the spirit in which it is proposed, understanding that it is designed to help not only the industry but also the Military Department.

Amendment on amendment put and negatived.

Amendment put and passed.

MR. TONKIN (North-East Fremantle) [3.10]: I am in accord with the object of the motion, but I disagree very much with the method by which that objective is sought to be achieved. I had no idea, prior to today, that this matter was to be discussed.

Hon. C. G. Latham: No one else had.

Mr. TONKIN: That confirms the point I am going to make. To my way of thinking, this matter is far too complicated to be decided so simply. The military authorities are charged with the responsibility

of obtaining, training, moulding, and equipping as large a fighting force as possible.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: And feeding them, too!

Mr. TONKIN: No, that is not their job. They are there to get men, to test them, to see they are physically fit, and then to train them, mould them, equip them, and have them ready as a fighting force.

Hon. C. G. Latham: And the most successful leader is the one who feeds his troops.

Mr. TONKIN: But someone else has to grow the food to feed them. What is the use of putting a military man on a manpower board? He says, "I want the men. I have to find a certain number to fill my quota this week. I have been told to get a certain number of men within certain age groups. I have sent out call-up notices, and I am responsible for seeing that that number, full strength, attends on Monday and goes into camp." When one starts to argue that such-and-such a man is a farmer and such-and-such a man is a butcher, the military man says, "That may be so; but I must have a certain number of soldiers." And in they go! Then an attempt is made to get some men released.

The military officer's job is to get his army to a certain strength, to keep it at that strength, to see that the men are equipped and are able to do the job entrusted to them. That is all he is concerned about. The people who are producing the food with which to feed the soldiers, and those who are getting the raw material to make the rifles and munitions that the soldiers will use have their jobs also. It is the Government's job to see that the whole economy works in a proper fashion. It is inevitable that there will be a great deal of dislocation and chaos. Some industries will have more than their share of manpower, for some reason or other, and some will have less, but the military authorities could not decide that question because they know nothing about it. That is a matter entirely for the Government. A survey by competent men—a complete and thorough survey—must be made to ascertain which industries have to be maintained at a certain level and which must, by the very nature of things, be allowed to languish for the time being. That is a job that the military authorities cannot undertake, because they know nothing about it.

The Premier: That is what they are doing.

The Minister for Agriculture : They are making the decision to take the men.

Mr. TONKIN : Of course they are. This matter has been worrying the Commonwealth Government for months. Not only is there difficulty in the rural industries, but there is also difficulty in the mining industry, and as between the services, as members will see, for I shall give them information from some newspaper cuttings. On the 27th April of this year a statement was made in Canberra with regard to potato-growing, as follows :—

Regulations have been gazetted for the formation of an Australian potato committee.

Further on the article states—

Control of the potato industry has become necessary because of its importance as an article of food, and the unsatisfactory production position which has existed for several years. It is intended to increase Australian production by 50 per cent.

The military authorities did not say that, nor are they concerned about that. All they do is to send men to the market to buy potatoes when they are there. It is the Government's job to see that there are available sufficient men and sufficient fertilisers to step up that production by 50 per cent. Regard has to be given to that side of production. We have this statement from Canberra on the 29th April, reported in the "West Australian" of the 30th April, headed "War and Industry. Men on Essential Work. Question of Exemption."

The Army did not wish to filch men from skilled essential industries but sometimes this understanding has resulted from a variety of causes, said the Minister for Labour (Mr. Ward) yesterday. He was commenting on complaints by the Minister for Aircraft Production (Mr. Cameron) that skilled men were being taken from the aircraft industry for the Army.

So, there is even trouble between the services where the Army calls up men already engaged in aircraft production. In the "West Australian" of the 5th May, on the same question, we have this heading, "Rural Industries. Provision of Manpower. A Difficult Problem." The report states—

The problem of determining to what extent primary production will be allowed to continue in Australia is complicated by the arrival of Allied Forces here and the prospect of still greater numbers to come. This is the view of the Minister for War Organisation of Industry (Mr. Dedman) who said today that provision of manpower for rural industries was continually under review, but it was a very

difficult problem. He was referring to statements that manpower in rural industries had been cut more than those industries could possibly bear.

The Commonwealth Minister is, therefore, fully aware of the position of rural industries. He says it is a difficult problem. Later the report goes on—

The first question which had to be decided was the scale on which the Government thought primary production ought to be continued assuming that one could make a decision on the scale of production required to meet all circumstances.

On the 5th May, following on the same subject, we have this heading, "Primary Products. Australia's Need. Problem of Processing"—and members will realise that just as it is important to grow the produce so it is important to preserve it if it cannot be all consumed at once in order that it may be available later. Certain processing has therefore to be carried out, and it needs manpower. This report is from Melbourne, the 5th May, and is as follows :—

An officer of the Department of Supply said today that no primary products would be exported from Australia this year until full provision has been made for the Australian and Allied fighting services and the civilian population. Main raw materials, he said, were in over supply. At present there were considerable surpluses of sugar, rice, meat and wheat and the principal problem that had to be faced was that of processing or converting these products into foodstuffs that could be stored.

Under date, Canberra, the 6th May, again on the same problem, we have this heading in the "West Australian," "Manpower Problem. Sowing of Crops. Temporary Release from A.I.F." The report is as follows :—

Under certain conditions seasonal leave for the sowing of crops will be granted to A.I.F. personnel drawn from rural districts. The Minister for the Army (Mr. Forde) said that maximum leave would be three weeks and that it would be without pay. Leave would be granted at the discretion of the commanding officer.

Mr. Patrick : That makes it a military affair.

Mr. TONKIN : The report continues—

Officers, N.C.O.'s and specialists would not be granted leave. Other ranks who had not completed three months' training also would be ineligible for leave. Those granted leave would be required to pay travelling costs and could be recalled at 24 hours' notice. No leave would be granted which would take a man beyond the State of his present station unless it was possible for him to rejoin his unit within 24 hours.

Further on, under the same date, we have the heading, "Rural Industries Relief" and this report—

Men will be released from the Army immediately to give relief to manpower shortage in the wheat, fruit-picking, dairying, wool and other industries, it was announced in the House of Representatives today by the Minister for Labour (Mr. Ward). In replying to Mr. Wilson (Ind., Vic.), Mr. Ward said that the relief would be temporary pending a review of manpower as it affects the rural industry generally.

Finally, we have the leading article in the "West Australian" of the 7th May. This, very pointedly, directs our attention to what the problem is—

An officer of the Department of Supply in Melbourne said on Tuesday that no primary products would be exported from Australia this year until full provision had been made for the Australian and Allied fighting services and the civilian population. That is reasonable enough; nor can any complaint be made of the emphasis made by the Prime Minister (Mr. Curtin) on that function of the newly constituted Allied Supply Council which is to ascertain the minimum essential needs for the maintenance of the civil population in Australia. Military needs must come first, and so long as civilians can obtain at fair prices a sufficiency of nourishing foods it will be no great hardship to adjust consumer tastes to whatever commodities happen to be available.

Later on—

Australia's primary industries, after 2½ years of war, are now in such a chaotic state that they demand drastic rationalisation.

I submit that that is the problem. It would not be reasonable to allow any authority to exempt persons who apply for exemptions from the Army to go to work on uneconomic farms. The whole question has to be considered. That would simply be a waste both ways. The industry as a whole has to be regarded. It is somebody's job in this nation, surely, to see that the number of men required in the various departments of production, whether they be in rural industry or in secondary industry, are available. Then it is a matter of evidence and fact to decide whether a person should be exempted or not, but it would not follow that every man who worked on a farm should be exempted because the farmer said he required his labour and could not carry on without it.

The Premier: We quite agree.

Mr. Watts: Who said it should be so?

Mr. TONKIN: I am suggesting the military authorities would not know anything about that.

Mr. Patrick: You are placing the military man in charge of it.

Mr. TONKIN: I did not say anything of the sort.

Mr. Patrick: One of the cuttings from which you have read stated that.

Mr. TONKIN: There is even difficulty at the present time in the manning of tin mines. The people in Tasmania complain that there is a shortage of manpower in those mines, yet tin is a commodity most urgently required in Australia's war production. Is it not clear to members that if there is a shortage of manpower in such an industry as tin mining, and if there is a difficulty as between services, where the Air Force is taking men engaged in munition work and the Army is taking men engaged in aircraft production, that the whole thing must be dealt with by a competent body and some policy laid down? We should not have a small committee here and a small committee there to decide what are the needs of this and that industry, nor should it be a committee consisting of military men who, I submit, know nothing at all about the matter. The only thing a military man knows anything about is that he requires a certain number of men to keep his unit up to strength; that the law limits him to a certain pool or reservoir, and all the military officer can do is to issue call-up notices to men within the stipulated age groups. The responsibility of the Army authorities is to get their required numbers, and they will do their best to do that.

Mr. Seward: Would they not be able to advise the appeal committee of any change in the military requirements?

Mr. TONKIN: They are there to see that they get their numbers. The representative of the military, at every sitting of the committee, I suggest would say, "I require a certain number of men and am not getting them, and I must have them. Therefore I will take them and argue the point afterwards." What I object to is having a committee which permits the military authorities to decide this question, because it is a question about which they know nothing. They require a certain number of men and are not concerned about any argument as to a man being needed on a farm. This does not mean a thing to a representative of the military. He says, "I want so many men by Monday to fill up this battalion, company or unit and keep it up to strength. I have certain

limits laid down by the Government. I am confined to those limits and must get the men."

But it is for the Government to decide, just as it imposes the age limits, the extent of the present pool available to the military. Then the military could make its call-ups from that pool. If cases of hardship occurred, appeals could be made. At present all sorts of extraordinary things are occurring. I know of an instance of the R.A.A.F. having taken men away from munition production into the Air Force to wash spark plugs with petrol. They say they have a perfect right to do it. According to the cuttings I have quoted, the Minister for Aircraft Production mentioned the case of a man having been taken from aircraft production and put in as a mess steward in the R.A.A.F. The Minister himself quoted that case.

The Minister for Mines: It is possible, too.

Mr. TONKIN: Of course it is. If those difficulties are occurring as between the services and Ministers, something better is required to deal with the situation. My view is that having regard to the fact that the Commonwealth Government is aware of the difficulties, the Premier should direct the Prime Minister's attention to the very grave position confronting our industries through lack of a proper and reasonable authority to decide this question. The Premier should ask the Prime Minister to investigate the matter thoroughly with a view to doing the right thing. It should be brought home to him that the military men are not the ones to decide this question because they will look at it from one angle only. When they make their decisions, they adhere to the law and to regulations with the utmost rigidity. I have never yet discovered a military man who showed any imagination when called upon to decide a question if he had regulations bearing upon the matter. He reads the regulations and says, "The regulations state so-and-so. I will stick to them."

The regulations so far as the call-up is concerned are that in a certain degree of priority men shall be called up within certain age groups. They are called up, and then somebody says, "Tom Jones, who has been called up, should not go into camp because he is required on the farm." Apart from that, his case is on all-fours with that of Bill Smith. The military

authorities cannot make a proper decision on the case because they know nothing about outside circumstances. They will call up men in accordance with the regulations issued by the Government.

On various occasions I have made representations to get men exempted from service because I considered they had strong cases for exemption—cases in line with those envisaged in the motion now before the House. I have been told by the military officer, "I have to get a certain number of men. I sent out so many call-up notices. I have had so many returned through the dead-letter office, thus reducing the number available. I have been advised that some of the persons called up have died or have gone elsewhere. Clearly, unless all these men come along, I shall be short in my numbers. If I am not short, I will reconsider the application you are making for exemption. If I cannot get my numbers, you have no hope." This indicates that the question is decided upon the needs of the military officer so far as his unit is concerned. If he gets his number, he is prepared to consider other questions.

But the cases that would be put forward on behalf of the rural industries would be cases of merit in themselves, not to be judged by the standard whether the military authorities have their particular needs, but to be judged by the standard whether the industry is in such a position that it requires the retention of those men. The military authorities will not look at the question from that angle; they will consider it from that angle only if their numbers for that call-up are assured, in which case they will probably postpone the call-up of certain individuals until the next call-up in two or three months' time. When that time comes, the individual will find himself in the same position as before. In a number of instances men have obtained exemption once or twice, and have eventually been called up at a time when the need for them to remain in their jobs was greater than when they obtained exemption in the first instance. This occurs because the view of the military authorities is that the first essential is to bring their units up to strength. I submit that they will not consider any other angle until they have safeguarded themselves on that point.

If that is the position—and I maintain that it is—it is of no use having military men on such a tribunal. The policy must

be laid down by the Government, and it should be someone else's job to decide whether the application comes within the stipulation of the regulations. For some time I have realised that this matter must be attended to. It is just as vital that food-stuffs be produced and supplies maintained as it is that men be trained and kept in the Army—just as vital, neither more nor less. It is certainly not less vital that certain metals be produced because, unless we get the requisite raw materials, we cannot have equipment produced to keep the army in the field, and it is useless to have an army in the field that is ill-equipped and not properly fed.

Thus the whole problem has to be regarded in a proper light and a balance struck and the right thing done by all the services. I say it is not a question of first of all getting the units up to strength irrespective of what happens elsewhere. The problem must be considered as one indivisible whole, and due regard paid to the production side, the equipment side and the training side. I think the House will pass the motion, but whatever happens, we should not lay too great a stress upon the authority that we desire to see set up. Let us drive home to the Commonwealth Government that these industries must receive consideration and that the whole of the say should not be left to the military authorities. If we do that and the Commonwealth agrees, we shall get somewhere.

[Mr. J. Hegney took the Chair.]

MR. WITHERS (Bunbury) [3.35]: I wish to add a few words in support of this motion. I regret to see in it the words "Release of men for this purpose." That is the stage which we have reached owing to the activities of the past, according to the member for North-East Fremantle (Mr. Tonkin). If we do not carry the motion we shall not be making even a start towards endeavouring to overcome something that has taken place. I feel in full sympathy with all other members and with every other person wanting to see the Army up to its full strength, fully equipped, and properly fed. In the past it has been a question of getting Army strength, irrespective of interference with any industry. I shall not say much regarding the A.I.F., the men who volunteered for active service; but I know that after their enlistment we

had in my district and also throughout the South-West what are called garrisons, made up of men possibly too old for service overseas. Those men gave their services at week-ends, in Sunday parades and drill, and also during the week, when they could be called at any time. Collie has a local garrison of over 500 men, but those men are still functioning in industry.

In the case of Bunbury, the entire garrison has been removed for home defence somewhere on the coast. Those men from the farms in the South-West were, like the men of Collie, prepared to undertake home defence if it should be needed. When they were formed into a group and put into camp, this step was taken irrespective of whether they were essential to their own industry of farming. They simply had to go into camp. I could quote instances where dairy farmers were taken from their farms and for that reason had to let their herds go dry. After that they were allowed to return to their farms, which under such conditions were practically useless to them. Action should have been taken to ensure that those men would not be removed from their dairy farms. Some of our best and most prosperous farmers are selling out for lack of manpower, and their cattle are going elsewhere. I know that a legislator in another Chamber has even dispensed with his sheep. It had taken him 20 years to build up a stud flock, and he could not get manpower even sufficient to look after sheep—the least laborious job in ordinary circumstances. He had to sacrifice his whole flock because he could not secure assistance. For that reason I do not like the word "relief" appearing in the motion. The Bunbury garrison men, who were farmers and workers of various sorts in the South-West, if they had been allowed to remain in garrison, could have discharged their military duties by drilling on Sundays and on week nights. For the purpose of service they could have been called together within half an hour at any time, as there are bitumen roads throughout the area, besides other transport facilities, and telephones also are available. The time has arrived when it is essential to do something to prevent a recurrence of the case of the Bunbury garrison.

I have experience also of orchardists, men who have pioneered the district, grown old on their holdings, and handed them over to their sons. Now the sons have

been taken to garrison, and the old men are left to run the properties. Some of them are upwards of 70 years of age, and find it practically impossible to carry on. A woman who had been left on her husband's property by reason of his being sent on garrison duty, came here to see me the other day. The wife said she and her husband were practically broke, their fruit having been destroyed by black cockatoos. If an orchardist decides today that he will pick certain fruit for marketing tomorrow, he may find, when he comes to pick it, that none of it is fit for sale. If, on the other hand, someone had been available to frighten away the cockatoos and pick the fruit, those men would still be on their properties. Such cases occur in my district day by day. I have known Benger Swamp ever since it has been in existence.

Members: Oh!

Mr. WITHERS: Well, ever since it has been under cultivation. Trouble has always been encountered there because the season is very short. The farmers have to get on to the land immediately it is hard enough to get on, and plant the crop. If they get another inch of rain next week, there will be reason to doubt whether they will get a crop at all. If there are heavy rains at the latter end of April and the beginning of May, the farmers there have to resort to what is called bandicooting. In any case, it is essential to have as many men as possible available to get the crops off quickly. To harvest crops of the description grown there takes a deal of manpower. I was very pleased to hear the Minister for Lands state that he has been making other labour available for the purpose of redeeming valuable crops at Benger.

I am in agreement with the suggestion to include the farming and pastoral industries in the motion as being essential. Some industries possibly are not as essential as others; and if we confine the motion to industries that are absolutely essential, the military authorities will not have anything to complain of. Even at the present time we are not able to provision our troops by reason of actions taken by military authorities, according to the member for North-East Fremantle (Mr. Tonkin). Let us have an alteration such as described in the amendment, which represents an endeavour to keep up the production necessary for the feeding of our troops. I am pleased that the motion has

been amended and I say that with all due respect to the Leader of the Opposition.

It is wise to include a representative of the Agricultural Department, because that officer is in a position to know not only the manpower requirements of given districts, but will also have a very good idea as to whether an application is genuine. I think the choice of such a representative would be better than the selection of a magistrate. I merely rose to support the motion because I appreciate the position. As I indicated before, men have pioneered the South-West and have handed on their farms to their sons. Now the sons, in turn, have had to hand the farms back to their aged parents, and the old men cannot carry on without assistance.

MR. W. HEGNEY (Pilbara) .[3.46]: Many phases of the problem have been traversed since the debate was initiated this morning, and I shall deal with one aspect only, one suggested as a result of the amendment submitted by the Minister for Agriculture. In the first place, I disagree somewhat with the views enunciated by the member for North-East Fremantle (Mr. Tonkin), particularly when he said that the production side of the problem represented no concern of the Defence Department. I remind that hon. member that when any industrial upheaval of a serious nature has developed, in which the defence of the nation was affected, action has been taken by the military authorities. During the last war the military authorities were obliged to release men from service in order that production could be maintained. That applied throughout the Commonwealth.

The old axiom that an army marches on its stomach still holds good. Should those engaged in primary production decide that the growing of foodstuffs did not pay them and, as a result, they left their farms in a body, the Defence Department would take steps to so organise the industry that the necessary supplies of foodstuffs would be forthcoming in order to keep the soldiers physically fit. The technique associated with present-day military operations is somewhat different from that which obtained in wars a hundred years ago. For that reason I consider the suggestion advanced by the Minister for Agriculture regarding the organisation of a corps of men formerly

engaged in agricultural operations who could be used for essential seasonal operations as occasion warranted, is well worthy of serious consideration. No doubt it will be said that Regulation 54 or Regulation 88 will not allow that to be done, but I suggest that regulations of that description should be carried out in a proper spirit and should not be applied in a hidebound manner.

I know of many men who are doing practically nothing in military camps today, yet their services would be of great value on farms. If those men could be released from military duties for the time being, the pay difficulty as between the Defence Department and private employers could be adjusted simply if the will to do so prevailed. The motion will mean the creation of still another board. I believe that 67 boards, quite apart from Parliamentary committees, have been set up since the inception of the war to deal with various aspects of defence and supply problems. In this instance, however, the board will be positive in character. It will be able to strike a reasonable balance between the needs of the Defence Department and those of primary industries. The member for North-East Fremantle said that the military authorities would not deviate one inch from their attitude that they must have every available man, but I would remind him of the position in connection with the Arbitration Court, which has been functioning for many years. In most major matters brought before that court the workers' representative usually disagrees with the views of the employers' representative, and the President of the Arbitration Court, who has had a legal training and is in a position to weigh the pros and cons, reaches the final decision. Taking the position that would be created if effect were given to the suggestion of the Minister, the military officer would submit his views, and the representative of the farming community would state the position as he saw it. Then the chairman, who, it is suggested, should be an officer of the Agricultural Department, would arrive at what he considered the proper decision.

I wish to deal briefly with the position regarding shearing operations. I was amazed to hear the member for Beverley (Mr. Mann) state that he held a letter from a military officer who said that shearing was

not regarded as an essential occupation. For some time past I, with others including representatives of the North-West, have been endeavouring to formulate a scheme for the organisation of the industry in the pastoral areas, and I am very pleased to state that we have reached what I think will be regarded as a satisfactory arrangement. The scheme will cover the north-western pastoral areas as well as those in districts lower south. If adopted, it will make for efficient working, with a minimum of manpower required. Unfortunately, for some years recurring droughts have militated against pastoral operations in northern parts, with the result that many thousands of sheep died from starvation. While flocks have been depleted, there are many sheep to be handled under existing conditions.

For some time past now, the practice has been for a team of shearers to be employed by a contractor and transported by truck through the northern areas for a run of the sheds. Frequently shearers were obliged, when one shed had cut out, to sit down for two or three weeks before another shed was ready to start operations. When there was no shortage of shearers, that position was to an extent tolerated. The delays were perhaps unavoidable, although the pastoralists endeavoured to organise their runs. Now, however, the contractors are naturally interested in getting as many sheds through as possible, and they endeavour to do that by contracting for the work early in the season. In the past the time spent by shearers in waiting for operations to commence represented an economic waste. The point I am making is that Mr. Murray has recommended to the Agricultural Bank Commissioners that shearing in the farming areas might very well be carried on in the months of April, May and June. I am not suggesting whether this is wise or not. The report in the "West Australian" states—

The Commissioners, who fully realise the serious difficulty which has to be faced in the coming shearing, and who recently received a petition from 25 of the banks' clients urging them to secure the release from military service of a man on whom they were all depending to shear their sheep, endorsed Mr. Murray's suggestion.

Mr. Murray is the Wool Adviser of the Department of Agriculture. I take it that the shearer mentioned would be a man with a two or three-stand plant. I would very

much appreciate if the Minister, when he replies, will say whether—

Hon. C. G. Latham: The Minister cannot speak a second time to the motion.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: If that is so, I shall try to ascertain the information from him privately. From inquiries I have made, I believe the shearing in the farming areas will proceed as hitherto. Of course, the Agricultural Bank may take steps to safeguard their clients from loss. The industry has been organised to a certain extent in the northern portion of the State. Shearers have been assured of a minimum loss of time. As a matter of fact, because of the good season, I do not think there will be any lost time between sheds. The average shearer who has been through the North is a good fast worker. I suggest—it is not often that I make suggestions to the farming community—that the farmers take steps to organise a series of runs on a proper basis. If that be done, it will to a large extent alleviate the position facing them.

Mr. Mann: The farmers are already organising their runs.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: I am pleased to hear that. As a rule, the average farmer, if he finds that his next door neighbour wishes to start shearing tomorrow, wants to start first.

Opposition members: No!

Mr. W. HEGNEY: Then he must have improved within the last year or two.

Mr. Seward: He has.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: Shearing is generally commenced at Kellerberrin in the last week of August. The shearers work southwards and eventually finish at Mt. Barker in November. My experience has been that the average farmer who has a few hundred sheep is very anxious to get his wool away within a certain time, otherwise he might suffer a monetary loss. If my suggestion is adopted, the farmers will have their shearing done in an expeditious manner by a minimum number of highly-qualified shearers. The officer who wrote the letter to the member for Beverley (Mr. Mann) exhibits gross incompetency and ignorance of the value and importance of the shearing industry, which of course is part of the wool-growing industry. Little does he know of the northern portion of the State and of the men who pioneered it. Those men are carrying on the industry today despite setbacks over which they have no control.

When the goldmining industry was at a low ebb, the wool and wheatgrowing industries proved to be the sheet anchor of the State. I do not believe for a moment that the officer mentioned reflects the opinion of the Federal Government; but, in the interests of the wool-growing industry, the matter referred to by the member for Beverley should be taken up with the Commonwealth authorities and the true position ascertained. I hope the Premier will lose no time in getting into touch with the Prime Minister and the members of the Federal Government. If no reply is received within a reasonable time, I hope the Premier will dispatch another urgent message in no unmeasured language requesting a reply of a definite nature. This manpower question is nearing the *nth* priority, let alone the third, and this House should insist that our primary industries, which mean so much to the State, receive the consideration to which they are justly entitled from the Federal Government. To my own knowledge, two or three urgent messages have been sent by representatives of this State to the Federal Government and a proper reply has not been received. Should the Premier not receive a satisfactory reply within a reasonable time, he will have the backing of this House if he puts his requests in the strongest possible language.

MR. RAPHAEL (Victoria Park) [4.2]: I have a few words to say in support of the motion. I would like to have included in it other callings besides farming.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Let us get this one first, as it is urgent. You might get yours later.

Mr. RAPHAEL: It would be interesting for members and the people of Western Australia to learn the number of enlistments in Western Australia as compared with the number in the Eastern States. It would be interesting also to learn the number of men of military age who are still free from the incubus of military duty.

The Premier: Do not say "incubus." Say "duty" or "responsibility."

Mr. RAPHAEL: No. I will not say "duty" or "responsibility." If all the other States of the Commonwealth were four-square with Western Australia and were contributing the same quota as we are, it would be different. Members of football teams in Melbourne should be called up for military duty in the same way as are our footballers,

instead of hiding under the pretence of doing munitions work. It is one big bluff. The footballers of Victoria all have jobs in munitions factories, and I make that statement with a true knowledge of what the position is. We have been informed by the Press that the football season in Victoria is to continue as usual, but we know as a positive fact that our clubs—

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Is the hon. member going to connect football with the motion?

MR. RAPHAEL: I assert definitely that I shall connect it with the manpower question and with the motion. As I say, the football teams of Victoria are going to continue their competitions, and they are composed of men of military age. In Western Australia, football will be carried on by boys belonging to police clubs. If men in Victoria can be exempted from military duty in order to play football, under the cloak of working in munitions factories, why cannot we be allowed sufficient men to carry on essential primary industries? What is the Federal Government doing about it? It must know the position. It must know that Western Australia is being treated unjustly not only from the military standpoint, but from every other angle.

MR. HUGHES: Why did you not ask Senator Fraser when he was at Victoria Park the other day?

MR. RAPHAEL: He could not see me. He seemed to see over my head, though I did speak to him on a couple of occasions.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. member should not be distracted by interjections.

MR. RAPHAEL: I am sorry. I was led astray. We have seen what has been happening. Certain men in the Federal Houses of Parliament who are of military age are going to be called up, and the members of Parliament are going to suffer the indignity of having to shave themselves. A man has been installed in Parliament House for that purpose all this time! Wool is an essential commodity for carrying on this war; it is as important as guns and gunpowder, because people must be clothed. In spite of that, men can be released from military duty to play football while others cannot be released to perform such an essential job as shearing. I hope that when the Premier submits this motion to the Federal authori-

ties, he will ask why men have been released to play football while farmers who are asked to grow 30,000 tons more vegetables for the use of the Army cannot obtain manpower to enable them to do so. I do not know whether they expect us to grow the extra produce in Parliament House grounds in the little 3 x 3 plot that has been established here!

Men are idling their time behind barbed wire when they could be doing a more important job. We have been told of a man marching up and down outside Pearce with a fixed bayonet. I do not think anybody could do very much harm if he got in there. The road is closed but access can be had to the grounds from the other side. There are many men in the Military and in the Air Force who are doing nothing at all. As I said to the Leader of the Opposition, by way of interjection, there are hundreds of men in Australia, as many as 5,000 or 6,000—over a brigade—who are idle, and they constitute wasted manpower on the Air Force Reserve list. They would be better occupied on farms doing cultivation work. If they cannot do that, why not put them into active work in the Army and release men from the Army who can do farm work?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: That is the question: Why?

MR. RAPHAEL: The reason is that there has been a military muddle from beginning to end. They have been trying to put a square bottle into a round hole. There are architects with the rank of captain who are probably purchasing cabbages at £4 a bag at the market, while cabbage merchants are supervising operations for the military. It is one continual muddle. One Government official, speaking to me, referred to the zebra farm in Francis-street. I did not see the point for a while but later I understood he was referring to the number of men there who have stripes. I support the motion.

MR. THORN (Toodyay) [4.10]: I would like to add a few words to this debate which up to date has been most interesting. This is one of the very difficult problems with which we are faced today. I feel confident that if the military authorities will listen seriously to this Chamber and accept the assistance we are so eager to render them in solving this very vexed question, the situation will be considerably relieved.

The Minister for Agriculture: Unfortunately they usually regard our advice as interference.

Mr. THORN: Unfortunately, they do! They do not seem to like us to voice our opinion but it would be as well if they were to understand that at present Parliament is in charge of affairs and not the Military. We are here to represent large sections of the community and we are quite entitled to express our opinion. This is a very difficult question for the Military authorities to handle, and they need all the assistance that can possibly be rendered to them by the citizens of this State. If there were a thorough combing of all sections of industry in this State, many thousands of men could be found who are not carrying on essential work.

The Minister for Agriculture: There should be a combing of the Military Department, too.

Mr. THORN: Yes. As a matter of fact, the Minister for the Army issued an instruction that all men of military age at military headquarters in each State should be transferred to active field units, but the instruction has not been carried out. We have headquarters today that are overrun with young men whose jobs, I feel sure, could be carried out by older men.

Mr. Warner: Whom do you blame for that?

Mr. THORN: That is difficult to say.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: That is not relevant to the motion.

Mr. THORN: That is so and I am not going to allow the member for Mt. Marshall to lead me off the track. A few moments ago when the Minister was speaking I made rather a crude interjection which I hope he did not misunderstand. He referred to the necessity for labour for marketing our potato crop. That is a serious and burning question. When I interjected that we haven't the stomach to handle the question, I was referring to those in control and that is the Federal Government. It is very embarrassing to those of us of the British race to learn of what is going on in the South-West today. I have heard the same as the Minister for Agriculture has heard, namely, that many aliens are demanding £2 a day for digging potatoes.

The Minister for Agriculture: Would you not like to see them on military pay?

Mr. THORN: Definitely. Enemy aliens have been released to assist their countrymen to get these potato crops in and to take them off. Yet we find that men of our own flesh and blood cannot secure labour to sow or harvest a crop. If we have the stamina I hope we have, we ought to form those people into labour battalions and make them do the work for our people, and not release them to assist their countrymen.

The Minister for Agriculture: Make them do work for the nation.

Mr. THORN: Yes. I had quite a long experience in Europe during the last war together with other members in this Chamber. I was in Europe for three years and I saw what went on there. When I see what we of the British race will allow to occur in this country, things that Germany and other nations would not tolerate for one moment, I am led to the conclusion that we are too considerate. We talk about having regard to international law and other aspects of warfare, but we are too soft altogether and I think it is a disgrace to us—though I do not know if that is the right word to use—that we should allow such a position to exist as obtains in the South-West.

I am sure we are all in earnest over this matter and are united in a desire to solve the manpower problem with which we are faced. I can quite understand the military man wanting to maintain the strength of his unit. He is imbued with the Army, and the Army is our defence. We are all grateful to it today for what it has done and what it will do for us. But we do not want to adopt the short-sighted policy of neglecting the production of foodstuffs with which to feed it. If the Army will accept this motion in the spirit in which it is put forward, and accept the assistance we can render to it, we can be helpful. There are difficulties. We can refer to our own districts. I have lived in the Swan district for the last 28 or 30 years. I took up land there before the last war and I have seen the district grow. I see things happening in my district which the Army has no chance of tracing. It has not the knowledge. I was Customs officer in that area for seven years under the Dried Fruits Act, before I entered this Chamber. I know what I am talking about. There are many happenings the military has no hope of tracing, but I can render assistance in that direction.

The Minister for Agriculture: What did they say in answer to a letter the member for Pingelly wrote them?

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

Mr. THORN: There was an officer who went oversea and who is imbued with the Army aspect and side of the situation. He made a mistake. I know he will not make it again. I do not like singling out one person, but I could tell this House of a very interesting little incident. I will give no indication as to who is the person in question beyond saying that he is connected with horseracing.

Mr. SPEAKER: Is he connected with this motion?

Mr. THORN: Yes, manpower. He has been warned to report for military service on two or three occasions, and each time he sees somebody and gets out of doing his military training.

Mr. Cross: By a medical certificate?

Mr. THORN: No. He simply sees the right person.

The Minister for Mines: What is his weight?

Mr. THORN: This is his weight: His wife sent a message to me in these terms, "I hope you will put his weight up so that he can do something useful for his country instead of playing poker all day and escaping military service when called upon." I have listened with great pleasure to the earnest discussion in this Chamber today and the endeavour to straighten out the difficult questions with which we are faced. I know the motion will be wholeheartedly supported.

MR. F. C. L. SMITH (Brown Hill-Ivanhoe) [4.19]: The primary industries are confronted with a problem in this State that should be resolved through a list of reserved occupations, and not through a proposal to withdraw from the Army some of those men who have already been called up for military service. It has nothing to do with the argument that we know there are in the Army men who, for the moment, are not engaged on very important military activities and who could, if they were released, be available for work in the primary industries. It is the duty of the authorities who control the army to maintain it at its fullest possible strength, and have it at all

times ready for action. That is the viewpoint the military authorities will take when this proposition is placed before them.

Mr. Mann: There is a limit to what the Army can do. You could not have 4,000,000 men under arms in Australia with no one to support them.

Mr. F. C. L. SMITH: I agree with the member for North-East Fremantle (Mr. Tonkin) that this is not a problem which has anything to do with the military authorities. I know too what will be their attitude towards this motion. During the progress of the war, and during the call-up of men for military service in this country before the manpower priorities were properly organised, certain men were called up from the mining industry—certain young men under 25 years of age. Representations were made to the military authorities to have them released so that they could be returned to the mining industry. Those men were released.

Subsequently when the manpower priorities were fixed and the place of the mining industry in these priorities was established, the military authorities began to call up further men. The age limit for skilled workers, for instance, was raised from 25 to 30 years. They did not, however, call up the men who had been returned as a result of representations. They told the member for Hannans and myself that their attitude towards the position was this, that if any of these younger men, who were now back in the mining industry, wanted to re-enlist, they would have to bring with them a letter from their employers saying that they (the employers) were willing to release them, because the military authorities were not going to have these men bouncing backwards and forwards from industry to military and from military to industry.

Mr. Rodoreda: Why not?

Mr. F. C. L. SMITH: That is the attitude they adopted. I did not ask them why.

Mr. Rodoreda: That is the point—why not?

Mr. F. C. L. SMITH: I have already said why not. I think it is a reasonable attitude for the military authorities to adopt. Their job is to build up the Army in this country to its fullest possible strength and maintain it at all times ready for action. That is why not! A contrast between the conduct of the war in Great Britain on this occasion and in 1914-18 finds its greatest emphasis in the control of manpower. The authorities

have established a Ministry of Labour for the purpose of controlling and co-ordinating manpower. During the 1914-18 war, all the military authorities were opposed to the controlling of manpower. Lord Kitchener was definitely against men being maintained in so-called reserved occupations when they could be used for military purposes. So also was General Foch, who expressed the military attitude of that day, which, to a great extent, is the military attitude of today.

But the need for workers in essential services is appreciated in Great Britain today and, for the purpose of controlling it and ensuring that the necessary workers will be retained to essential industries, a long list of reserved occupations has been compiled and a huge organisation of provincial committees, with a central advisory committee, has been built up to advise the Ministry of Labour. The whole problem could be handled in the same way in this country. It should be organised by the central Government.

Mr. Hughes: We have a list of reserved occupations.

Mr. F. C. L. SMITH: I know we have, and the motion emphasises that it is not operating effectively. Perhaps it would be more advisable for us to make a recommendation to the Commonwealth Government that farming should be included in the list of reserved occupations, if it is not already there. I do not know whether it is or not. This problem is one that rightly belongs to the central authority, and should be controlled by it through a system of provincial committees and a central advisory committee responsible to a Ministry of Labour.

I can see what would happen if the proposal put forward here today were given effect. If the military authorities agreed to it—I doubt very much whether they would—and if, after it was established, several applications were granted, the proposed committee would be snowed-up with applications. From the north to the south of this country, in connection with the pastoral industry and the agricultural industry, there would be application from each and every part for the release of manpower from the Army in order to afford assistance in various phases of primary production, and so the whole scheme as proposed here would ultimately become impracticable. Some members might consider it a step in the right direction. It is a step, and a very small step: it is a step

that the Commonwealth Government should take if it finds that the manpower priorities are not working effectively.

MR. RODOREDA (Roebourne) [4.30]: I find myself very much in agreement with the motion as amended. One speaker referred to the importance of wool in the war effort. From what I can see, the great use of wool in the war effort is to pull it over the people's eyes. All the arguments advanced by the member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe (Mr. F. C. L. Smith) only emphasised the necessity for a motion of this description. He said the military authorities would not agree to it. Of course they would not. We are not asking them to agree to it. The motion asks the Prime Minister to put it into effect, not to ask the military authorities to agree to it. On that basis the hon. member was unsound.

We are not asking the military authorities to decide this issue; we are suggesting that one military representative be appointed on a board of three, and I fail to see how that can be construed into meaning that we are asking the military authorities to decide it. It appears to me that the whole thing boils down to the outstanding fact that there is very little co-operation whatever between the military chiefs and the civilian departments. This is not a war that the Army alone is fighting. This is not a war such as Waterloo, where the nation employed 10,000 mercenaries, or paid soldiers, to fight its battle, saying, "This does not affect us, but if you get beaten, we shall send you a few more men."

Hon. N. Keenan: Waterloo was fought by militia troops.

Mr. RODOREDA: Perhaps I am wrong in mentioning Waterloo, but that certainly was the position in some of the other wars. Those wars were not a matter for the civilian population. On this occasion, however, the civilians are just as much involved as the military forces, and the civilian effort is more important than any effort the military can make. What is the use of having an army in the field if there are not enough civilians to provide it with equipment and food?

There is a point in Australia beyond which we cannot go, numerically, as regards the defence forces. The Commonwealth Government, or someone in authority, has to decide where that point is. If we over-

step the mark, our whole system must break down. I do not know where the mark is; I have not the facts; but the matter has to be determined before we can say that this industry or that must have exemption. A nation of 7,000,000 people can put into the field and support a certain number of soldiers. That is what the motion boils down to, and the question has to be decided promptly by somebody. From my observation, I have formed the opinion that there are too many men in the fighting forces now.

Mr. Seward: We certainly would have need of them if we had had anything like the number of casualties sustained in the 1914-18 war.

Mr. RODOREDA: It would be impossible to have too many men in the fighting forces if we had the civilian population to feed them, but the relationship between these two sections has to be fixed by somebody. Otherwise there will be utter chaos. It is not a bit of use having an army so large that the civilian population cannot support it. That way we can expect only disaster. We might as well be beaten in a battle as be beaten through lack of equipment or food.

Mr. Cross: We have had too much of that already.

Mr. RODOREDA: That is the great question which, to my mind, is involved in this motion. The result of passing the motion may be the inauguration of a thorough investigation of the whole position. I presume that the Commonwealth has promised to raise a certain number of men in order to help the United States forces and, if it is found that too many have been promised, the Commonwealth will have to retract. I notice that in England men have been taken out of the Army and put back into coal production. England went too far with enlistments, and a similar position seems to have arisen in Australia. I cannot speak for the whole Commonwealth, but my personal observations lead me to believe that such is the position in this State. I need not stress the importance of manpower for shearing and other seasonal farming pursuits; various members have done that already; but I point out the need for running a fine-tooth comb through the Army personnel itself. For instance, I see no reason whatever why officers should have batmen. However, the trouble is that our criticisms get no further than this Chamber; the game cannot be beaten.

The military authorities practically control the censorship. No other criticism than such as is agreeable to the military authorities is allowed to be published here. The civilian population is seething with discontent about the way in which our Army is organised and run. Every group of people conversing gives instances of what its members know concerning this aspect. But are such criticisms published? Criticism published in English papers, and cabled out to us, is far severer than any local criticism of our military authorities. We have no criticism whatever of the organisation of our Army. As members of Parliament and as civilians alike, we are deeply interested in the subject. We are paying for the war effort. Our lives are affected by it. But if civilians endeavour to be helpful they are told: "You have no right to offer suggestions. We are the Army. We are the people." In wartime the Army controls the nation. All we look for is the utmost possible efficiency.

To get back to the question of batmen! Why should Australian clerks and businessmen coming from all sections of life, accustomed to do everything for themselves, be given a servant when they get into the Army? They are not different men when in the Army, but simply civilians in uniform. In that respect there is enormous waste of men. The higher officers may require someone to shine their boots for them, but I fail to see why every tinpot lieutenant should have a servant to shine his boots and a chauffeur to drive him around. Why should there be elaborate officers' messes with stewards who have passed the test of serving a seven-course dinner before they are appointed? Why should the officers have a mess at all? Why cannot they make shift with a cafeteria? The country is short of men to dig potatoes, to gather the harvest, shear the sheep and milk the cows, while the Army must have stewards running around serving meals to officers.

There are other matters calling for attention. A man joins the transport section of the Army and through his own ability and efforts works up to become an officer. His familiarity with transport entitles him to that position. But as soon as ever he becomes an officer, a chauffeur is appointed to drive him around; and frequently the officer travels in fear of his life because of the inefficiency of his chauffeur. However,

it is military tradition for an officer to be driven by a chauffeur; an officer would lose caste if he drove himself. Here we have room for an investigation to be applied to the military for the purpose of securing more manpower for the job of fighting and for the job of producing foodstuffs. The Minister for Agriculture mentioned that there were a few interned Chinese digging potatoes, but that it had not yet been possible to get the interned Koepangers released. I hear that only portion of the interned Chinese are employed as stated. What has happened to the rest of them? I have heard it whispered about the precincts of Perth that these other Chinese are acting as servants in officers' houses. Would they not be doing better if they were digging potatoes?

Mr. McDonald: I do not think the allegation is correct.

Hon. C. G. Latham: It is not so in the Australian Army.

Mr. RODOREDA: Something must have happened to those other Chinese. Let a North-West station owner with 14 or 15 people to cook for come down here and ask for one of those Chinese. Will he get one? Not on your life!

Hon. C. G. Latham: I think that is prohibited.

Mr. RODOREDA: It is prohibited, but it goes on. We want all those Chinese down in the country assisting in production. I object to their being employed as servants instead of doing something useful for the State. I want the Koepangers down here to work, too. They would be glad to have the work.

These are a few comments into which the Federal Government might inquire. I do not see why the old English Army traditions should hold here in Australia, especially when we find ourselves in such a spot as we are in now, and when every man's services are vitally needed. I hope the motion will go forward in its present form, and that every effort will be made to keep the matter alive with the Federal Government. That Government is the body which should act—not the military. It is up to the Federal Government to do what is required.

MR. MARSHALL (Murchison) [4.44]: I did not intend to make a contribution to this debate; but having listened to the member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe (Mr. F. C. L.

Smith) and the member for North-East Fremantle (Mr. Tonkin) I feel obliged to offer at least some observations on the question. Not that I am altogether enamoured of the motion as amended, because I do not think it goes far enough. It is true that there are in the Army men who could be utilised to greater advantage outside the Army. If this motion, as amended, is carried and proves acceptable to the Federal Government, action may be taken to release some of those men. If the member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe and the member for North-East Fremantle had shown conclusively that the services of all the men who have been absorbed into the Army were being utilised to the fullest advantage for the defence of this country, there might have been something in the contentions they advanced. Men taken into the Army should be educated in the various aspects of defence, and the two members I mentioned implied that effect was given to that to the extent of 100 per cent. Their arguments were based solely on that premise, namely, that the men had to be trained and that the obligation resting upon the military authorities was to secure their respective quotas to 100 per cent. That was to be done so that the men would be fully trained and well equipped ready to fight when the occasion arose.

With that contention we can agree, but I suggest to those members that that is not what is happening. Not one member of this Chamber will say that it is happening. While the Army seeks to absorb the maximum manpower available, when the men are secured their services are not utilised to the best possible advantage. A big percentage of men in khaki are not being educated and equipped for the active defence of the nation. Their admission to the Army will ultimately work great injury to the Army itself. I agree with the member for Roebourne (Mr. Rodoreda) in his contentions, and the words of Napoleon should never be forgotten when he said that "an army fights on its stomach."

Hon. N. Keenan: No, marches on its stomach.

The Minister for Mines: At any rate not too many of the men march now.

Mr. MARSHALL: Modern methods of warfare have overcome that phase. If the Army's requirements for foodstuffs fall short, or the supply of necessary equipment is too slow, then we have not an efficient

Fighting Force, no matter how well trained the men may be. So the issue involved in the motion is equally as vital as the actual creation of a Fighting Force. One member stated that the problem involved represents the prerogative and responsibility of the Federal Government, but I remind him that the war has been in progress for over two years. During that time two or three different Governments have wielded power in the Federal arena, yet none has overcome this particular difficulty. What are we to do? Are we to remain silent, content to watch what is going on? Are we to witness ultimately what was seen in England recently? Not until the people of the Motherland were threatened with an almost entire absence of vegetables for either the Army or for civilians, did the authorities mentioned by the member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe realise what had been done. From information I recently received from the Old Land, it would appear that much activity is displayed now in producing necessary foodstuffs in England. Members will appreciate the point I am making.

When the task was left solely to the Federal authorities they failed dismally effectively to carry out the task. In the Motherland many mistakes were made before the job was adequately tackled. I am inclined to support the motion as amended although it does not convey all I desire. We know that the military authorities will do their utmost to avoid their intentions or desires being interfered with in any way, but the time is coming when Parliament must have a say—not with regard to the actual training of our men, irrespective of whether they be in the Army, Navy or Air Force, nor should we desire to participate in the control of the movement of any section of our Armed Forces. Parliament must see to it that when the public is asked to make sacrifices in order that the nation may put forward its maximum war effort, those in authority will also manifest within the orbit of their respective functions a similar desire to make sacrifices and a willingness to maintain efficiency.

It will be of little avail for the military authorities to rest under the delusion that they can follow the old customs and traditions of the Imperial Army, and, as the member for Roebourne mentioned, have servants at their beck and call so that they can scarcely move without a coterie of atten-

dants. They need not think they can indulge in such practices and enjoy a plenitude of all they require, while at the same time they ask the people to tighten their belts and deprive themselves of necessary foodstuffs and clothing. The people will not tolerate that.

There is too much hypocrisy about the whole thing. I am of the opinion that, due to the procedure under military control, it is not possible to secure any reform from within the Army, and nothing in that direction can be obtained until some person not subject to military control is vested with some authority. In the Army no one individual dare complain or report a grievance for fear of victimisation or severity of treatment. Under such conditions it is quite possible for the higher officers to surround themselves with all sorts of comforts and conveniences, and none of the subordinates who know the waste entailed in consequence dare mention such abuses. Some authority must be set up that will be able to say to the military people, "You do unto others as you would expect to be done to you." I agree with the member who said that there is much manpower in the Army that could be more efficiently utilised, sufficient, I venture to say, if properly used outside the Army, to produce the required foodstuffs and equipment efficiently and expeditiously.

In the Army those men are doing practically valueless work, as in many instances they are acting merely as servants or flunkies. The old military traditions of years gone by must be discarded. We cannot allow our troops to go short of food. The Federal Government has failed dismally to control the position, as the member for North-East Fremantle (Mr. Tonkin) has shown quite clearly. What is the result as it affects this State? Again I point out that we are far removed from the seat of the Federal Government, the members of which know little about our State. They do not realise that what is suitable for States with larger populations is impracticable when applied to Western Australia. Therefore, I agree that something along the lines of this motion is urgently required.

Recently it came to my knowledge that the military authorities applied for women to take up positions as cooks. Exactly what section of the Army they were to cook for I do not know, but

I assume they were not to cook for the rank and file. I am told that many of these applicants, experienced cooks, were sent to Melbourne to finish their training, and that after 10 or 15 days there they would return to Western Australia to take up their duties. These rumours would never be spread unless there was some truth in them. Here members will note an extravagant use of labour, while at the same time young women whose fathers are in the Army and young wives whose husbands are also in the Army, are doing the drudgery of herding and milking cows from morning till night, and they are asked to do it because Australia is in danger. And they are doing it! I think

those in authority in the Fighting Forces should be asked to make similar sacrifices in the execution of their duty.

Question, as amended, put and passed.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

THE PREMIER (Hon. J. C. Willcock—Geraldton) [4.58]: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn to a date to be fixed by Mr. Speaker.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 4.59 p.m.
