

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.*Seventh Day.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. A. L. LOTON (South-East) [4.35]: I would first like to refer to the necessity for the rehabilitation of the rural industry. No section of the people has suffered more during the war than the agricultural community. In the early years of the war farmers, their sons and skilled farm workers were enlisted into the Forces regardless of the food production that would be necessary in the years to follow. Then the drift citywards began. City life had an appeal with its better working hours, big wages and amenities that many country people had not heard of. The drift continued. The proposed award for rural workers will have a detrimental effect on the whole industry. In the past employer and employee have, in many cases, worked in the closest harmony year after year. If the new award is enforced we will find that the employee will simply work his award hours per week, and then finish.

In both the pastoral and farming industries very much of the work is of a seasonal nature so that the regular employment of workers will cease. Men will be employed mainly for the rush periods. Some means will have to be devised to find employment for these men during the off seasons. I cannot see any other way out of it because of the high rates imposed. We have, during the war, gained some idea of what high rates mean, and of what the effect of the Harvester Award will be. It is impossible for the industry to pay such rates, and we shall go from bad to worse. When Japan entered the war Nauru Island soon came under its domination, and Australia's position as a producer of foodstuffs was seriously threatened. Superphosphate is the lifeblood of the industry in this State. I cannot understand why, when the Pacific campaign was started, one of the first moves was not to re-take Nauru Island. I do not claim to be a war strategist, but I cannot understand why that island was not re-taken. Instead of that, we have been importing phosphatic rock from Africa over longer sea lanes, and it is a rock of poorer quality.

As we hope to settle a large number of returned men on the land it will be necessary for some of the amenities of the city

to be brought within reach of the country people. Adequate water supplies, electricity and telephone facilities should be available to every country dweller. That can be done and, I think, it will be done before very long. We have proposals to spend huge sums of money on the unification of railways and a big water scheme from Collie. That money might be utilised to better advantage by making the country more attractive before starting on those schemes. We must have population before we can hope to make a success of any of these ventures. With population, success will naturally follow. Western Australia seems to be lagging behind South Australia in its preparations for land settlement. Recently in our neighbouring State the Government acquired 24,000 acres in Eyre's Peninsula and has plans for the development of 275,000 acres on Kangaroo Island and 45,000 acres in the south-eastern portion of the State. In South Australia the scheme seems to be well under way, but I am still awaiting details of land settlement proposals in this State. The other day a question was asked in this House to ascertain whether the papers relating to that matter could be laid on the Table. Perhaps after the next Premier's Conference we shall be able to hear something definite.

If it is our desire to trade with foreign countries and with our sister Dominions it will be necessary for us to supply them with raw materials. This portion of the Commonwealth is a producer of raw materials. We have the space and the climate, although, unfortunately, in many parts we have not the necessary water supplies. In a year such as the present, with its heavy rainfall, huge quantities could be stored. We have heard of the great productivity of the North-West, and I refer in particular to the Carnarvon district. I believe the productive capacity of the northern parts of this State is tremendous. Materials are available there in unlimited quantities, and I am sure that if we go about it in the right way we shall witness great progress in that respect. We must not be selfish in our methods and we cannot afford to say to other countries that we will supply certain products only if they supply others that we require. We must make raw materials available to them.

During the course of his speech on the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply Mr. Thomson spoke about educational requirements, and I endorse all that he said. In the rehabilitation of our rural areas education will play a very prominent part. The young men who are returning from oversea in order to go on the land will be particularly interested in ascertaining what educational facilities will be available. I noticed from a report in the Press the other day that at the next Premiers' Conference the Commonwealth Government is to be asked for a grant of £10,000,000 for the provision of educational facilities in the various States. I trust that Western Australia will be given a liberal share in the allocation of those funds and that any money so obtained will not jeopardise the vote provided by the State Government for educational purposes. We certainly must have more high schools with boarding facilities as part and parcel of the institution. We must have larger primary schools and the provision of buses to convey the children to and from school daily. The establishment of domestic science and manual training centres is also necessary. Most decidedly, if we can provide millions in time of war for the purposes of destruction, we can find millions in peacetime to educate the people. Today the cry of the country districts is: "Educate or perish."

HON. C. B. WILLIAMS (South) [4.44]: I had no intention of speaking at this stage of the debate, but it seems that members are in no hurry to participate. I take great pleasure in the knowledge that a Labour Government has been elected to power in Great Britain or, should I say, in England. After all, it is unfortunately not Great Britain in these days. That, however, is no fault of the descendants of the people of England—or Great Britain as it formerly was. We have seen how the people in various parts of the British Empire rallied to the banner—in Australia, Canada, South Africa and the various Dependancies. The same applied to America. As a matter of fact, we are all descendants, more or less, from the British race, and it was certainly America that came to our assistance in the period of our greatest danger.

The Prime Minister of England at the time, Mr. Churchill, made a definite statement on that point. I read the report in "The West Australian," which does not throw many bouquets at the Labour Party. However, that paper published a report in which the Prime Minister was credited with the statement that for the moment Australia had to be forgotten until the bigger undertakings in Europe were cleared up, after which Britain would come to the aid of the Commonwealth. That was to be done after the war in Europe had been concluded. Thank goodness, the Prime Minister of Australia at the time did not wait for that to occur, but turned to America and said, "We want assistance at once." We were rendered that assistance immediately. It is hard for me to say it, but it is true. After all, Great Britain could not carry the burden of all the fighting in Europe and elsewhere as well. It does not matter who were the politicians responsible for the state of affairs that developed. The fact remains that we secured assistance from America, and I care not who claims otherwise.

Americans themselves are more or less descendants of the British race and, at any rate, they speak the British language. They may cut across words, and their vernacular is sharper than our own. The fact remains that we can understand them just as we can understand the person who is born in the north of Queensland. The war has definitely gone in our favour and this may be due largely to the fact that the American people are so versatile. They seem to be a peculiar breed in some respects, but they certainly have it in their favour that where there is a gully to be traversed it is bridged very quickly. Australia can learn much from America in that respect. Here if we want the price fixed for a pair of boots the proposal has to go to Canberra, and perhaps the price may be fixed in a matter of weeks or of months. The Americans certainly cut right across the red tape idea.

Australia has been very free from any threat of war and in Western Australia particularly we have always had enough to eat, and have not had to go short of many articles, except that we could not spend so much money on a good suit of clothes and so forth. If I may digress from my main