

Mr. GRAYDEN: There is one other matter I desire to say in conclusion, and it is that I am very pleased indeed to have the privilege, of which I am very proud, of being associated with my colleagues on the Government side of the House.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: The seeming political corkscrew has spoken.

Mr. Marshall: Did he not stand as an independent once?

MR. MAY (Collie) [5.36]: At the outset I desire to offer you, Mr. Speaker, my congratulations upon your appointment to your high office. I trust that during the period you occupy the Chair, while I have a seat in this Chamber I shall do, and say, nothing to cause you any alarm or concern. I am deeply conscious of the fact that I follow in the footsteps of a man who set a very high standard in public life. It has been very pleasing to me, on being elected to this House and mixing with my fellow members, to note the love and affection that all had for my predecessor. I trust I shall do nothing to lower the standard set by the former member for Collie. In common with the member for Murchison, I regret that the portfolio of Mines is not held by a Minister in this Chamber. However, I feel in the circumstances that we must accept the position as we find it. In the Lieut.-Governor's Speech reference is made to the forthcoming season and the anticipation of a successful harvest is mentioned. I am pleased to note that.

In view of the fact that we may anticipate a bumper harvest I shall deal with a basic requirement associated with a prosperous season. I refer to the question of coal supplies. In view of the emergency that arose about two years ago, it was decided that the open-cut system should be adopted in conjunction with deep coalmining. I am of the opinion that the open-cut as against deep-mining method should be regarded purely as an emergency measure. Coal that is easily obtained close to the surface is of a very immature nature and is often mixed with foreign matter such as gravel, which makes the use of open-cut coal very undesirable, particularly from the point of view of the consumer. Therefore I say that the open-cut method should be regarded only in the light of an emergency measure.

This brings me to the point regarding the development of the coalmines at Collie. I regret to have to admit that, for a very long period, more attention has been paid to winning coal quickly than to the future life and development of the mines, and I deem it my duty to direct the attention of the Government to the position at Collie. The matter, I feel, needs investigation and would, if attended to, have a far more beneficial effect than anything else on the output of coal.

I wish to say a few words regarding the distribution of coal. Under the National Emergency Regulations, it was considered advisable—and I think it was—to set up a committee charged with the duty of ensuring a proper distribution of the coal that was available. The committee was set up by the Commonwealth. During the period of the war it might have been very desirable for the Commonwealth to take that action, but now, two years after the close of the war and at a time when we are on the road to rehabilitation, I feel that the distribution of the output at Collie should devolve upon the State authorities. I shall give my reasons for this belief.

On the 26th June last, a conference of goldmining and coalmining interests was held at Kalgoorlie with the object of ascertaining what the Goldfields' requirements of coal were and whether the Goldfields people were prepared to use it. The conference assembled and one of the first questions asked by the Goldfields people was why the supply of coal had been stopped. I admit quite candidly that the coal representatives had no idea that the 500 or 600 tons of coal that had been sent to Kalgoorlie had been stopped. I made further inquiries and found that the reason why Kalgoorlie had not received its quota, as it had been receiving over a long period, was that the bunkering trade at Fremantle had to be supplied. I do not contend for a moment that shipping is not of vast importance. It is, but I maintain also that the future prosperity of the coalmining industry is also important.

I refer to the time just before the recent war when the Collie miners were working only two or three shifts a week. They were not getting enough to live on. This was due to the fact that the shipping companies in those days were using Newcastle coal. At present, however, they are not able to get Newcastle coal so easily, and conse-

quently they have sought supplies of Collie coal. I see no reason why the internal market for Collie coal should be sacrificed to people who are prepared to turn our industry down immediately they can get coal from other places. That is one reason why I have brought up the question of the distribution of coal. It is time that representatives of this State, if there is to be a direction of the distribution, undertook that duty. So far as the subject of distribution is concerned, I shall leave it at that.

One important question is that of the increased output of coal. The output has increased to almost 800,000 tons a year, and it is possible in the event of our being able to supply the requirements of the Goldfields and other industries that the yearly output will rise to 1,000,000 tons. I feel sure that this is a condition of affairs that every member is very desirous of seeing attained. For the present, however, there is no possibility of increasing the output of coal at Collie, unless we are able to put more men into the industry, and there is no chance of getting more men in the industry until we are able to provide them with homes.

We have heard this afternoon something about homes and I have no desire to enter into any debate on that subject. During the past year 307 men were given work in the mines and 301 of those employees left the industry on account of inability to find accommodation for themselves and their dependants. Therefore, in spite of the very acute position regarding housing in other parts of the State, I strongly urge the Government to do all in its power to provide more homes in Collie in order that the output of the mines might be increased to meet the requirements of the State.

I know that Collie has been given a No. 1 building priority and under that priority we have been getting houses built at the rate of one a month. At least two weddings take place every week in Collie, and therefore I do not see how we can hope to make up the leeway or keep up with the pace set by the number of marriages. I earnestly implore the Government to try to do something about the matter. If there is anything that the local governing bodies can do, or that I can do, to assist the Government to remedy the position, we shall be happy to do it.

Recently the State Electricity Commission took possession of some leases near Collie. I understand that the Commission intends to obtain its own coal supplies; but so far I have been unable to discover that it has made any great effort to take steps to provide its own coal requirements. I know the Commission is boring on its leases, but the boring is proceeding at a very slow rate. I would very much like to see some impetus given to the efforts of the Commission to obtain its own coal supplies. I would also like to refer to the consumption of our native coal on the Goldfields and to emphasise that we should do everything in our power to supply that demand. If we do not, it is quite on the cards that the demand will be met by the supply of fuel from without the State.

I feel I shall have the support of members when I say that, if it is at all possible to supply the Goldfields with our native fuel, we should take the earliest opportunity to assist in supplying that need. We can only do so by obtaining an increased output, employing more men in the industry and providing them with homes to live in. I wish to dwell on another aspect very briefly. The Minister for Mines has expressed his intention to grant additional leases in the coal-bearing country at Collie. Would it not be possible to give other companies an opportunity, if they so desire, to take up leases and put down their own mines, as thereby they would help to overcome the present acute shortage of coal supplies? I desire also to touch upon the railway position at Collie and the requirements of the Railway Department there.

I draw the attention of the Minister for Railways to several requirements. He has already expressed himself as willing to be most helpful and I am sure we shall have his assistance after I have explained a few items. First, the railway assembly yards at Collie are totally inadequate to cope with the goods and services that are being dealt with at the station today. There is not one line in the assembly yard with sufficient room to enable a whole train to be set up. This entails extra shunting. The position has been made worse now that the Garratt engines are again in service. Their increased load has aggravated the position at the assembly yards. I do not know when

the Collie railway station was built, but it seems to me it must have been many years ago; it is more like a rabbit warren than a railway station. With the amount of traffic passing through Collie and the shunting that goes on continuously day and night, it is high time the Commissioner of Railways gave some thought and consideration to reorganising the whole set-up of the assembly yards and the relative conveniences.

Something should be done whereby the trains can be assembled much quicker and much more simply than that is being done now. At present the assembly yards are faced on one side by Harvey-st. and on the other by Lefroy-st. Both these streets carry a tremendous amount of traffic day and night and have become positive death traps to the general public, owing to the continuous shunting over the two roads both day and night. Innumerable accidents have occurred there, and that is not to be wondered at when one realises the amount of shunting and the amount of traffic at the Collie station.

I suggest to the Minister for his consideration that he should at least close the shunting yards and take the shunting further west to the other side of Harvey-st., where there is no crossing and no danger to the public. There is ample room for the goods sheds at that site, and an island platform station could be erected. The site of the present assembly yards could be beautified by planting lawns and trees. This might be an inducement for the visitors who come to Collie to stay there a little while. I make that suggestion to the Minister for Railways in all sincerity. It would be interesting to know how much lost time occurs in the course of the year over both those crossings through the public being held up during shunting operations. I hope the Minister will give some attention to the settlement of this matter which I would ask him to believe is long overdue.

I want to say a word to the Minister for Works in regard to water supply. A most remarkable thing is that although in Collie we have plenty of water—so much that we could supply the whole State—the inhabitants are always short of it. During the summer months I am not able to obtain sufficient to water my garden. Our trouble is due entirely to the piping leading from

the dam to Collie. I am sure the Minister will look into that matter, which I think has already been brought under his notice. I hope he will act immediately so that the residents can have a supply of water through the reticulation service during the coming summer.

I would also draw the attention of the Minister for Works to our roads. God knows that Collie is isolated enough! It takes two hours to get from Brunswick Junction to Collie by train, and if one does it in that time one is lucky. Visitors only need to go there once and they say, "Never again!" Collie is situated in the heart of the forest country; and because the Forests Department has most of the land tied up and does not pay any rates, we have what I suppose is one of the poorest road boards in Western Australia, which does not get nearly sufficient revenue to maintain the roads that are used in the district. I would ask the Minister to give kindly consideration to that matter. It will be brought to his notice shortly and I feel sure he will be most ready to do something about it.

With regard to the record of the Collie miners, all through the war, as everyone knows, they stuck to their guns under conditions, which at times, were most revolting. They worked every holiday and Sunday whenever called upon, and I believe that for coalmining they hold the world's record. I want also to refer to decentralisation. I feel that when any company desires to establish itself in the country it should receive every encouragement from the Government. Recently it was decided to install and equip a wireless station some four or five miles from Collie, but I understand that so far the Government has not seen fit to grant the company the freehold of the 20 acres of land on which that station is to be built. As a matter of fact, the mast has already been erected. Whenever private enterprise desires to establish itself in a country district it should be given every opportunity to do so. We cannot expect people who have money and who are desirous of inaugurating some enterprise to go into the country unless they receive some encouragement in the way I have suggested.

Last Saturday afternoon I took the opportunity to visit the location of the recent subsidence some eight miles from Collie. There was not much said in the paper re-

garding the catastrophe that occurred there and I want briefly to give members some idea of what took place. The subsidence occurred $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles from the Cardiff mine. I want members to imagine an area of approximately one acre suddenly disappearing to a depth of 100 feet. The jarrah trees growing on that particular acre of ground vanished. They cannot be seen now. That will give some idea of the fall-in that occurred at the Cardiff mine. It is estimated that approximately 1,000,000 tons of earth have entered the old workings of that mine. Just two hours before the subsidence occurred, 12 men were working under the very spot where it took place. We can imagine how lucky it is that there was not a dreadful catastrophe involving loss of life and desolation in many Collie homes! This is the biggest fall-in that has happened in the district. We have had them in the past, but they have been much smaller. This is something to be dreaded.

By the immediate action of the management and the men, the river was diverted so that it would not flow into the fall-in. A good job has been done and so far the water is still flowing away from that area. The amount of water and slurry that has entered the pit has covered an area, underground, of approximately 30 acres. Fortunately this has occurred in an old section of the mine which was worked out some years ago, with the exception of the pillars, and I think, and the general opinion is, that the fall-in has occurred as a result of extracting the pillars which has consequently prevented any support being afforded to the roof of the particular part of the mine. I am quoting this case to show members that coalmining is not all it is cracked up to be. Goldmining has its risks also, but in the treacherous nature of the country around Collie the work of the coalminers becomes very dangerous and calls for a good deal of skill and courage.

I have already said that the Collie miners hold a good record for their work, and I feel sure that whenever there is an opportunity to make their lot brighter, all members, particularly those of the present Government, will do all they can to that end. They will give them every protection and consideration. The State urgently needs the coal, and I feel it is the duty of all of us to give to the men working in this dangerous environment every consideration and

amenity possible. I hope the Government will do all in its power to give them these things which they deserve for working most of their life in the bowels of the earth, and away from God's sunlight. It is almost dark when they go to work and when they come home, and it is always dark when they are underground. They work under rotten conditions, and I earnestly make the plea that the Government will, whenever possible, afford them every consideration.

MR. ACKLAND (Irwin-Moore) [6.12]: May I join those who have gone before me in congratulating you, Sir, on being elected to the Speakership? As a new member, it is only natural that the first business of the House should be of particular interest to me, and it was with great pleasure that I observed you receive the unanimous endorsement of all members of this Assembly, irrespective of party. It was good to hear the kindly and eulogistic references made both by the Premier and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition when they congratulated you, one of whom was speaking on behalf of the two parties comprising the Government, and the other on behalf of the Western Australian Labour Party. I would also like to congratulate my friend, the member for York, on receiving the appointment of Chairman of Committees. I have for many years worked in close association with him in an industrial organisation, and I know that he will stand up very well indeed to the duties which will fall to him in his new position. I would like to go further and offer my sincere congratulations to the Premier and the team that has been elected to work with him. We have already seen their capacity for hard work. They have not spared themselves for one minute since taking over their departments.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. ACKLAND: Before tea I reached the point where I wished to congratulate the Ministry, and I stated that they had the capacity for work. I am of the opinion that, no matter how large or small the undertaking may be—there are three essentials to success. The first is a capacity for hard work, the second is sincerity of purpose, while the third is a considerable measure of commonsense. In this Ministry we have all three in abundance and, when we have add-