

tive conclusion. I would earnestly suggest to the Government that some inquiry be made at the present stage into the true costs of both rail and road transport in this State.

On motion by Mr. Ackland, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 10.31 p.m.*

## Legislative Council

Wednesday, 29th August, 1951.

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

### ASSENT TO BILL.

Message from the Administrator received and read notifying assent to the Supply Bill (No. 1) £9,000,000.

### QUESTIONS.

#### AGRICULTURE.

*As to Separate Marketing of Medium-Strong Wheats.*

Hon. G. FRASER (for Hon. E. H. Gray) asked the Minister for Agriculture:

(1) What is being done to ensure that at the next harvest the new medium-strong wheats like Kondut, Gabo, Charter and Wongoondy will be marketed separately and supplied to local mills so that the growers may receive their real commercial value and the public be supplied with better bread?

(2) If there are difficulties to prevent such action, what steps are being taken to overcome them?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) A committee representing the flour-mill owners, bakers, Co-operative Bulk Handling, the Australian Wheat Board and the Department of Agriculture was appointed to investigate the possibilities of segregating and ensuring that the better quality wheats were railled to the flour millers. This committee has met on a number of occasions and given consideration to the matter, but unfortunately has not been able to submit a practical method of introducing and effecting a scheme acceptable to all parties.

(2) The matter is still under consideration. In the meantime, the practice of classifying the wheat at the different sidings according to quality, and as far as is practicable railling to the mills nominated by the flour millers, is being continued.

#### SUPERPHOSPHATE.

*As to Use of Ravensthorpe Pyrites at Albany Works.*

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON asked the Minister for Agriculture:

In view of the construction of super. works at Albany and the necessity of using pyrites owing to the shortage of sulphuric acid—

(1) What method does the Government propose to implement in the transportation of pyrites from Norseman to the Albany works?

(2) Has the Government taken any steps to ascertain the quantity of pyrites supplies from Ravensthorpe?

(3) In view of Ravensthorpe's closer proximity to Albany than that of Norseman to Albany, and because of the saving in transport costs, would consideration be given to developing the supply of pyrites from Ravensthorpe?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) At present the railways are the only means available to transport pyrites to Albany. Other avenues will be explored in the future.

(2) It is intended that boring will take place to ascertain the quantity and quality of pyrites at Ravensthorpe.

(3) If investigations referred to in answer (2) prove favourable, there is no doubt that consideration will be given to using Ravensthorpe pyrites at the Albany works.

#### INCREASE OF RENT (WAR RESTRICTIONS) ACT.

*As to Tenant Applicants for Fair Rent Determination.*

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT (for Hon. H. K. Watson) asked the Minister for Transport:

Concerning paragraph (iib) of Section 5 of the Increase of Rent (War Restrictions) Act, 1939-1950, what was the number of tenants who, refusing to agree to the 20 per cent. increase in rent authorised by the

said paragraph, applied to and obtained from the court a determination of a fair rent as provided for by the said paragraph?

The MINISTER replied:

The magistrate of the Local Court advises that no separate record is kept of applications made under this section. The only information that he can give is that very few of these were received.

### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

#### *Ninth Day.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

**HON. W. R. HALL** (North-East) [4.37]: I desire to take this opportunity of congratulating you, Sir, upon the extremely high honour which His Majesty the King has so graciously conferred on you. I sincerely believe that the honour was richly deserved, in that you have given great service and shown wonderful loyalty to this State, and I hope that you and Lady Seddon will be fortunate enough to live long and happily to enjoy that high honour.

I also wish to extend a cordial welcome to the two new members, Mr. Murray and Mr. Henning. I have no doubt that they will be a decided acquisition to this Chamber and, together with other members, I wish them a very enjoyable term of office and hope that everything augurs well for them in the future. I did not intend to speak to the Address-in-reply this year, because I had practically come to the conclusion, as a result of my experience over the last 13 years, that very little notice is taken of the matters raised by members during the Address-in-reply debate.

Hon. G. Fraser: Persistency has its reward sometimes.

Hon. W. R. HALL: A number of members have been very persistent in the past, but their endeavours have not been rewarded to the extent they would have liked them to be.

Hon. A. R. Jones: Mr. Gray got better wheat, anyway.

Hon. W. R. HALL: The reason I have risen to my feet is to stress the importance of the goldmining industry of Western Australia. I felt that I could not let the opportunity pass without making some reference to the condition of that industry, not only in Kalgoorlie and the surrounding districts, but also in all those townships where the people are relying upon a continuance of the industry for a livelihood. I am aware that the Government has made certain representations to the Commonwealth and that previous Governments have also done so; but, taking everything into consideration, I believe they have been only shadow-sparring and that something tangible ought to be done. There is not the slightest doubt that the industry is slipping very badly. We have only to look at Kalgoorlie for evidence of that; and those who go there frequently,

as Goldfields members do every fortnight, can appreciate what is happening. The business people, the workers, and the community as a whole are concerned about the future.

I have read that members of the International Monetary Fund intend to sit next month and, when they do, I sincerely hope that they will give full consideration to the condition of the industry. I feel that we are merely working for America—that the industry is existing only for America. In a statement in "The West Australian," probably six or seven months ago, in which some criticism was levelled at the United States regarding the dwindling of the gold reserve in Fort Knox, it was stated that so long as gold could be bought for 35 dollars an ounce, there was no need to worry. It is all very well to expect Western Australia to produce gold for 35 dollars an ounce.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: Do we get 35 dollars an ounce?

Hon. W. R. HALL: I am quoting what was stated in the newspaper. Even the increase in price granted some time ago was not sufficient to do much good. I am satisfied that, under existing conditions, our gold price will have to be increased to about £25 an ounce in order to boost up the industry and restore it to the prosperity it enjoyed some years ago. Residents of mining towns are moving to the metropolitan area. That is why the housing problem in the metropolis is so acute, and this must continue so long as the industry is not given the consideration it so badly needs.

I was disappointed at not hearing more of what happened at the conference with the Commonwealth Treasurer, Sir Arthur Fadden, a few days ago: I refer to the deputation of which the Minister for Mines was leader. Evidently the matter will be shelved for the time being, just as has happened in the past; but that is not going to get the industry anywhere at all. If it is not intended to see that the price of gold is raised, the Commonwealth should be prepared to pay the industry a bonus on the basis that was instituted some years ago. That would be one way of doing justice to those who are battling to keep the industry in existence. Members will realise how serious the position is when I mention that the Big Bell Mine, situated 400 miles from Perth, has been kept going on a return of 3.7 dwts. per ton. They will also realise how close we are sailing to the wind. There is a population of 1,500 to 2,000 people being maintained by that one mine. The powers that be should give serious attention to these facts; otherwise, places such as this will become ghost towns like Murrin Murrin and Laverton. The sooner something tangible is done, the better it will be for the State and the Commonwealth as a whole. I can only express the hope that definite action will be taken very soon.

While the deputation that waited on the Commonwealth Treasurer was doubtless composed of very able representatives, it would have been a good gesture had the prospectors been given representation. There are some big mines that have good resources and could make the grade of ore reach a standard to enable them to continue operating, although the adoption of that course would undoubtedly shorten the life of those mines, but there are many others that really need assistance. The prospectors also require assistance, and I regret that they were not given representation on the deputation. It is too late now to indulge in regrets, but I believe that they feel very strongly about this oversight, and I suppose they will make representations in another way.

I wish to bring to the notice of members the matter of roads. Recently I asked some questions of the Minister for Transport as to what it was proposed to do regarding the section of the Great Eastern Highway between Southern Cross and Woolgoolga. Members are well aware that that road is being used by a lot of overland vehicular traffic and has to stand up to much heavy traffic by wheat trucks operating between Merredin and Perth. Although I do not profess to be a great authority on roads, I have been traversing that highway long enough—for 32 or 33 years—to know what is going to happen, and I can visualise the hundreds of thousands of pounds it will cost the Government to restore that road to good order.

Even the bituminised part between Merredin and Perth is in such a shocking state in places that it will cost thousands of pounds to effect repairs, because the surfacing is not thick enough to stand up to the wear and tear caused by the heavy wheat trucks. The Minister stated, in reply to my question, that there had been no reports of the road being impassable. If one gets bogged on a road and has to remain there all night, surely that means that the road is impassable! There is only one word for it.

Hon. H. Hearn: Or impossible.

Hon. W. R. HALL: Impossible as well. I contacted the Main Roads Board and explained just where the road was so bad for a distance of 10 or 14 miles. I was told that a grader would be put on the road pronto—that is, without delay. I happen to travel that road fairly regularly, and I was on it again within a fortnight, but there was no grader. A month went by and there was still no grader, and there was not one at the end of six weeks; but just a week before Parliament opened, a grader appeared. It took about two months to arrive. It is no good the department telling me anything about the road, because I know too much about it to be contradicted. I know the machinery that is on it, who is on it, and the men working there, and I do not get bogged on it.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: Yet you say it is impassable.

Hon. W. R. HALL: It is to many people. If the hon. member knew anything about driving a motorcar, and was well acquainted with his roads, he would not get bogged. But there is always the poor unfortunate who does not know a road very well—it is a case of "horses for courses"—and he is likely to be left there all night. I have been harping about this road for a considerable time. I made a statement concerning it in 1938. It has been proposed that the bituminisation will be completed in 1953, but I think that must mean 1963.

If the Government would only grade regularly every two months the portion that is not bituminised, the road would be kept in fairly good order; but no, the attitude of the department seems to be to let it go until the corrugations get so deep that a motorist is likely to lose himself in them. Furthermore, it means that the vehicle-owner is likely to sustain repair bills. He pays a heavy license fee for the use of the road and should not have to suffer these things. Tyres are expensive, and maintenance costs 15s. an hour for labour, plus. After all, the motorist is entitled to a little bit of consideration. In some parts of the Great Eastern Highway that have been allowed to deteriorate the wheels sink so deep that the gravel rubs the engine sump and dents it. That happened to mine.

Hon. R. M. Forrest: That is happening every day up North.

Hon. W. R. HALL: I would not be surprised if the department is liable in these circumstances. If a road is left in such a condition that it will cause damage to a vehicle, the department may be liable if damage does occur, because the owner pays a license for the right to drive his vehicle along the road. I shall now deal with a subject I do not profess to know much about. I recently called for the files in connection with a case of natives assaulting the acting superintendent of the Cosmo Newbery mission station, situated about 60 or 70 miles from Laver-ton. I noticed that the Administrator, in his Speech, said, "The humanitarian interest by the public in natives is gaining impetus." Well, I would like to know where. This particular case resulted in police court proceedings because of natives assaulting the acting superintendent, and, apparently, vice versa. It was a sordid case right through.

We have a problem to face today because the natives, in some instances, are being treated so shabbily. I am always sympathetic towards the natives, although I know there are some—one has only to read the reports in "The West Australian" to be aware of it—who come before the police court quite frequently. By the same token, there are good and bad in all

walks of life, and these people are only human flesh and blood. Some of them are getting a pretty raw deal. The police are supposed to be protectors of aborigines. In some instances, it is true, they represent the natives in court. On the other hand, there are times when they prosecute them. That does not seem right to me.

The particular case at Cosmo Newbery has affected me to such an extent that I feel some of the people in charge of the natives are quite undesirable. They should be screened, before being appointed, to make sure that they will at least start off on the level. In the case I am speaking of, one person has come in for a certain amount of criticism, and I cannot understand why the department did not screen him before allowing him to hold such a responsible position.

According to the report, a rifle was used, pointed, lifted or carried, but there were no bullets in it. In this case further action should have been taken, but it seems to have been dropped. The natives, of course, have suffered, which generally happens. From various reports I have had from people at Laverton who were concerned in the incident, and from information I have received from reliable sources, I believe there was something radically wrong. Action should have been taken against the person concerned, but he was not taken before the Court. However, the episode is now closed.

One thing that does raise my anger is that too many of us are prepared to belittle the natives, while at the same time we agree to accept foreign coloured people at our university, though I do not know whether they receive free tuition there. We should not kick the natives all the time. The native problem is the white man's pigeon, because he has been the cause of most of the trouble. We have heard of natives going to Kulikup to play two-up. Who taught them that game? They did not know anything about it until they were taught by the white people. I was not aware that the natives were two-up players, but apparently they used to go there every week-end, so they must have learnt a bit about the game. I finish on this subject by saying that I hope the Commissioner of Native Affairs will in future see that those employed by his department are screened before appointment so that we will not have similar happenings to those which recently occurred at Cosmo Newbery.

During the last few months I had the pleasure of accompanying the Minister for Mines on a trip to Wiluna. I have taken the opportunity of thanking him for that pleasurable journey and I reiterate my previous remarks to him. The trip was an eye-opener to me, and the Minister is to be thanked for the courtesy which he extended to my colleagues and myself in issuing us with an invitation to accompany him. I saw portions of my province—which also come under your jurisdiction,

Sir—that I have not seen before and would not have seen unless I had been a member of that Ministerial party. I enjoyed every minute of it.

Hon. H. Hearn: I guess you did.

Hon. W. R. HALL: Yes, but not in the way the hon. member is thinking I would enjoy it. It was almost a teetotal trip.

Hon. H. L. Roche: What about the rest of the party?

Hon. W. R. HALL: It was for the rest of the party, too. But the whole trip was an education to me. We were feted at every stopping place and the Minister had an extremely busy time receiving deputations. Most of the complaints voiced by the deputations concerned the same troubles. I would have something to say about them, but I know full well that the Minister has most likely dealt with them. Therefore, I will not delve into the pros and cons of the complaints made except to comment on the question of increased railway freights.

Everywhere we went complaints were made about increased freights. People in Big Bell used to pay 1s. 6d. freight for 35 lb. of produce—such as greengrocery or something of a like nature—but since the freights were increased, it costs 3s. 5d. to transport the same quantity of goods. I am sure the Minister realises what the people in the outback areas are up against, and he more or less convinced the people who comprised the deputations that increased freights were necessary because of increased costs throughout the railway service. I do not intend to say any more about that aspect, because it does not look, at the moment, as if anything will be done or that the policy of the Government will somersault on this question.

The people in outback centres such as Mt. Magnet, Big Bell, Cue and Meekatharra are crying out for a better railway refreshment service on the long two-day trip to Wiluna. They are also asking for improved refrigeration facilities. There is need for a refrigerator van or vans for perishables. I was in Big Bell some time ago, and during my stay some fish arrived from Geraldton. My nostrils told me that the fish was not too good, and it is quite obvious that there is a need for refrigerated vans for the carriage of perishables to the hinterland. The people in those areas are entitled to more consideration than they are receiving today. The people in Big Bell, and other centres, are very worried as to what may happen at any time, with regard to low-grade ore. They suffer disabilities and disadvantages which make life pretty hard for them.

Some months ago, I made a request to the National Fitness Council for some material so that a Mr. Baker—a physical training expert at Big Bell—could train the younger people in his district. The National Fitness Council have dilly-dallied around for a considerable period and have done nothing whatever about my request.

I wonder how far the people who comprise this council go in trying to help some of the youth of the outback? Sometimes I wonder if the National Fitness Council does anything to warrant its existence. There are all sorts of amenities in the metropolitan area which are not available to people in the outback parts of the State, and surely some consideration could be given to the young people in our outer areas so that their leisure hours may be better employed.

The question of dental facilities in the outback areas is one that is causing concern. The people at Mt. Magnet and Big Bell tell me that they seldom see a dental van in their district. It costs up to £30 for a child to travel to Geraldton from Big Bell—accompanied by its mother—in order to have a single tooth taken out. There are no dental facilities in Big Bell; and it is absolutely essential that a child requiring dental attention in Geraldton should be accompanied by its mother or father. It is ridiculous to think that people in those areas should have to incur an expenditure of up to £30 so that a child can have one tooth removed. Surely the dental van, or some other facility, can be provided in these parts of the State. There are many dentists in Kalgoorlie and Perth; but in a town like Big Bell, which has a population of 1,500 to 2,000 people, there is not a dentist available. Surely some form of assistance could be given to enable us to look after the health of our younger children. I sincerely hope that the Government will take cognisance of my remarks and see whether something cannot be done to give the people in the outback parts of my province the consideration they so richly deserve.

As I told the Minister, a lot of people are getting sick and tired of remaining in those outback places. They have told me all their troubles, and they take the view that some of the folk who have migrated to Australia from foreign countries should be sent up there to carry out their two-year contract. In most cases, migrants who are sent there, stop for two years and then return to the metropolitan area, while our own people have to stay where they are.

There is a lot of sense in the complaints that have been voiced, because children in the outback areas have to be educated just the same as children who live in the larger towns. Many of the schools in the country districts take children up to a certain standard only, and that standard is invariably lower than is required. I know of one family which has left Big Bell and gone to Geraldton. The son had reached the highest standard in the local school, and his parents wanted him to attend the high school. The mother and father desired the son to be near them, so the father procured a job in Geraldton and the family shifted so that the son could attend the high school in that town.

People in those areas have a right to expect some consideration in matters of that kind. One can go along to any suburb of the metropolitan area and see the schools that are provided. There is a beautiful new school erected at Floreat Park, and I say, "Good luck to the people in that district." But one has only to look at the schools in country areas to realise the difference. There is a school at Murrin Murrin which is nothing but a shanty. When a storm comes along in the summertime, the children are likely to be washed away. It is not fair to expect our youngsters to be taught in such places as that. The position of most of the people in those areas is very insecure, and they really do not know what can be done about it.

There is one other point I wanted to bring forward, and that concerns the pastoralists in the Meekatharra district. The Minister will remember these cases, because some of the pastoralists concerned made it quite plain that they wanted assistance to restock their holdings with sheep. Owing to the drought, many of those pastoralists are in a pretty bad way. I have little knowledge of that portion of my province, as I have only recently had it attached to my other districts.

I have received several complaints concerning this restocking; and, from what these pastoralists tell me, we will soon be in a position where it will be not a question of how much we pay for our meat but whether we will be able to get it. How are we going to feed the population unless something is done to help these pastoralists who wish to restock their properties? How they are going to keep going, unless something is done, I do not know. Many of those men have sufficient land to feed more sheep, and the Government should endeavour to provide financial assistance, even if it means that the pastoralists have to refund the money after a certain period.

Hon. A. L. Loton: Where will the stock come from?

Hon. W. R. HALL: I do not know. As I told the hon. member, I have insufficient knowledge of this subject to speak with authority about it. I suppose there is a definite shortage throughout the State; but, judging from the way these pastoralists were speaking, not only the people in Meekatharra, but also the people throughout Western Australia, will be short of meat. One has only to go into a butcher's shop to buy a lb. of steak or a lb. of chops to realise what it costs. Maybe it does not worry the men very much, but it certainly concerns the women. The men on those pastoral properties know what they are talking about because unfortunately they have lost a lot of their sheep through drought. Therefore, I hope the Government will give some consideration to this question. I have much pleasure in supporting the motion.

**HON. H. L. ROCHE** (South) [5.15]: I would like to take this first public opportunity I have had of tendering to you, Mr. President, the congratulations I have already extended privately on the honour that has been conferred on you by His Majesty, and to express the hope that you may long be spared to enjoy that honour. I would also like to congratulate the two new members in this House and to voice the hope that they will have a long period of service comparable with that of their predecessors in the seats which they hold. If they can measure up to the standard of public service rendered by the late Hon. W. J. Mann and Hon. H. Tuckey to those whom they represent, then the people of the South-West Province will be well served during their tenure of office in this House.

In supporting the Address-in-reply, I had hoped largely to confine my remarks to what, to my mind, is becoming a very vexed and urgent problem, namely, the half-caste native population in the southern areas of this State. It is surprising to me that, after four years, the present administration has not taken any action to rectify the position it found in respect of the native population. It is also surprising that the present Administration and its supporters who represent the areas that are vitally concerned, and who are aware of the deterioration in those areas, have not helped to improve matters.

Other members as well as I have repeatedly raised this issue in this House. Most of the road boards in the Great Southern have referred to it in recent years, both by direct communication with members of the Government and private members and through conferences that have been held; and I hope that, before the session concludes, the Government will find the time and sufficient interest in this subject to give us legislation designed to better the administration of native affairs. I have heard the present Native Affairs Department referred to as "Muddled Affairs Department." That may be correct, but I would like to add that it also appears to be something of an obstruction; and, as it is sufficiently expensive in performing its duties at the moment, it would appear to be redundant. It may not be the fault of the present incumbents in that department or of those responsible. In that case it is the responsibility of the Government of the day.

We have to get away from the drift that is taking place in this urgent social problem which is building up for Western Australia. I have said before, and I repeat now, that merely to express our sympathy for the native—and most of us that know him have that sympathy for him, though we may have differing ideas of the approaches that should be made in this matter—and sympathise with him because of ill-treatment in the past, and the lack of future he may have, is insuf-

ficient. To bewail his lot and weep on his shoulder is a handicap to the native or half-caste. It may suit the sentimentalist sob-sisters in this country who know nothing of the actual conditions or background of the native, if he has one; but it is a great handicap and the approach is not the correct one. The present Commissioner for Native Affairs has lately shown, I am afraid, a disposition to join with the sentimentalists, and he is somewhat inclined to look around and place the responsibility for the ineffectiveness of his department on the shoulders of other people.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: You do not know him at all.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: I have only met the gentleman once, and I must confess that on that occasion I formed rather a high opinion of him. Though this sympathy may be all right, the trouble is that it is mostly placed in the wrong direction; and the native is persuaded that he is always being ill-treated, which creates an outlook and attitude of mind among the half-caste population that every white man's hand is against him and that, in consequence, his hand must be against all white men amongst whom he may live.

I want members to realise, and I would like the Government representatives in this House to realise that these people are becoming a fertile field for those subversive elements I have already met in the northern areas of this State. If I am not mistaken, that same trend is developing in the southern areas of the State. We cannot continue to neglect the problem much longer without having it assume proportions which may well-nigh become unmanageable. I think that, when speaking on the Address-in-reply, Mr. Parker, in his enthusiasm for the present Commissioner or for the half-caste population of the southern areas of this State, cast an unwarranted and foul aspersion on the present residents of the Gnowangerup Road Board. I think the hon. gentleman, on reflection—

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: I do not recall it.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE:—might be inclined to agree with me when I say that his reference to the residents—that is, the present residents of the Gnowangerup district—being the sires of the half-caste children in that district was grossly unfair. I think he would also agree that that particularly black and unsavoury page of native history in this State is now a thing of the past. Today the half-caste breeds with the half-caste; and that is in no small measure due to the vigilance of the country policeman, who seems to get very little credit from those who could give it to him for the work he does in the prevention of illicit associations between white men and coloured people.

As I have said, these associations are now well-nigh negligible. Admittedly, on rare occasions we do hear that this has

taken place, but in its proportion it is not worthy of serious consideration when considering the matter as a whole. It is the half-caste population arising from marriage and intercourse between half-castes themselves that is constituting the major problem. It would be as fair for us to designate some of the responsibility to the residents of Mount-st. or Pepper-mint Grove, or any of the other select suburbs of the metropolitan area, of being the sires of the half-caste population of this State, as to choose the residents of the Gnowangerup road board area or any other district.

That stage of native history is a thing of the past; and if it is not closed, it is of such small proportion, thanks to the police in the country districts, that we do not have to take it into serious account. Whatever the hon. gentleman may think the position was in the years that have passed, he is certainly not as well-informed now as he was then. It is unfounded and ill-considered statements such as his which are misleading some people who quite honestly and quite sincerely want to see something done to better conditions for our native and half-caste population. The hon. gentleman said that the Gnowangerup Road Board refused to have Nissen huts erected near its district. That, of course, does not make sense. The Gnowangerup Road Board has no jurisdiction near its district.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: I said "in."

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: If the hon. member will pardon me, I think this can be confirmed from an irrefutable source, if he would care to look it up. I will concede that Mr. Parker meant to say "in the Gnowangerup district." The Gnowangerup Road Board has had no application from the Native Affairs Department to erect a building of any sort. It has no power to refuse the Native Affairs Department or any other department or individual the right to erect a dwelling outside its townsite areas, and these are subject only to compliance with the regulations of the Health Department.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: I was referring to the Ongerup townsite.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: The Health Department regulations are not made by the Gnowangerup Road Board. The Gnowangerup, Borden and Ongerup townsite areas are under the jurisdiction of the Gnowangerup Road Board. They are very limited in area, all three of them; and if the Native Affairs Department wishes to erect Nissen huts, or any other sort of building, in the Ongerup townsite and have seven half-caste families there within 15 chains of the school, then it can resume land for that purpose as it is required. As that would be outside the townsite area, it would be outside the application of the Gnowangerup Road Board building regulations. That board is adopting the attitude that within its townsite it

will not allow substandard buildings, whether for white men, black men, yellow men or any other kind of men; and I do not think any reasonable person can criticise the board on that score. I have indicated to members how the department, if it really wished to do so, could make provision for Nissen huts.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: I told you they did not want a separate settlement.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: That is probably one of those things on which we differ. Such a policy of establishing Nissen huts in Ongerup would undoubtedly result in concentrating there the majority of the 300 natives in the Gnowangerup area; because once a few families are established like that, all the other half-castes in the district, or the great majority of them, will congregate in the same spot, and in that area there are some 200-odd white people.

Hon. H. K. Watson: What is the area?

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: It is 10 to 15 miles square, or perhaps a bit more. This proposal really throws on the folk in that district the responsibility of trying to assimilate the great majority of the coloured population in the whole Gnowangerup Road Board area, with the nearest policeman 50 miles away at Gnowangerup, and the nearest official of the Native Affairs Department at Narrogin, 150 miles distant. The hon. gentleman also referred to hovels of tin within half a mile of Gnowangerup, and apparently used that point as a criticism of the Gnowangerup Road Board for not allowing Nissen huts to be built at Gnowangerup.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: I referred to Katanning, I think.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: The hon. member is wrong there.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: And Ongerup.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: Those hovels of tin to which the hon. member referred, and which are within half a mile of the Gnowangerup township, are not under the jurisdiction of the Gnowangerup Road Board but are outside the townsite area. So, except in respect of the administration of the Health Act, the road board has no control.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Surely the road board does not control the Gnowangerup townsite only!

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: In building, yes. Did the hon. member not know that?

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: No, I did not.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: That is so with all road boards.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Surely they have to look after the health of the people.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: Those hovels of tin are on private property which is not subject to the building bylaws. That private property, deplorable as the hovels on it may be, is owned and controlled by the United Aborigines Mission.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: I was not referring to that place at all.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: Let the hon. member read his remarks! Such criticism of these hovels of tin as may be voiced should be directed to the mission, which is amongst those very earnest sympathisers with the natives to whom I referred a little while ago. I really think, in all seriousness, that if we must put the cart before the horse, before we can educate, direct and control these people into our way of life we must proceed with assimilation. If people like the hon. member and those connected with the Council of Churches would be prepared to take some of these half-castes into their own families for a few years, we might very soon and very effectively reach that desirable degree of assimilation.

Failing that, I see no alternative—and the people in my area with whom I have discussed the problem see no alternative—but some form of control or direction of these unfortunates either on community farms or, as I mentioned when speaking on the Address-in-reply last year, on some housing settlement where they may elect to live, and where they would work and send their children to school. To give members a fair appreciation of the attitude of the Gnowangerup Road Board, and at the same time place on record what I regard as a very constructive and commonsense approach to this problem from people who have it at their back door, who are face to face with it every day of their lives, and who know the practical side of the problem, I would claim the patience of the House while I read a letter written by the vice-chairman of the Gnowangerup Road Board on this matter. It was addressed to the editor of "The West Australian" and was written by the vice-chairman on behalf of the Board. It is as follows:—

I wish to comment on the observations of the Commissioner of Native Affairs in respect to the Gnowangerup Road Board's attitude to the housing of natives in town sites and its statements and proposals relating to the amelioration, etc., of the natives. If all is as well as the Commissioner implies, he has made out an excellent case for the repeal of the Aborigines Act and the abolition of the Department of Native Affairs.

The board has consistently advocated the establishment of farm type institutions which will facilitate organisation and guidance of the people, and if properly administered, will promote an educational and environ-

mental background which will assist their ultimate assimilation into the community. The Commissioner states such institutions have proved unsuccessful in the past. This may be so, but it is necessary to dig deep into the reasons why they have proved unsuccessful before the idea is condemned. The whole setup in the past may have been wrong.

If Fairbridge Farm can be such a wonderful success and give hope and a chance of a new life to so many hundreds, and bring them from one end of the world to the other to do it, surely the same can be done for the many natives we have who are in need of just the same help and guidance as the Fairbridge Farm boys and girls.

It is not a matter of segregation—it is one of education in the broadest sense of the word—just to teach them to read and write and turn them back to camp life will only make the situation worse than it is now—if that is possible.

Many of us who live in the midst of this problem and see it from day to day can see no other solution to it than something along these lines, but, if any one else knows of a better plan, now is the time to put it into practice.

If the Air Force needs a man to fly a plane, they find it necessary to put him into camp for many months and give him a very strict training. If we expect a native to live and act like a white man, he will also need training, and what is more important, guidance for many years after he has been trained, as the tendency will long be to drift back to the old life, and the more successful ones will find they have a host of not so successful friends to contend with. From accounts in the Press lately, Albert Namatjira, the painter, is having to face this aspect of the problem now.

The question of amelioration of the natives is one which needs an urgent and practical approach in which provision for the fundamental needs of the people should be the first consideration.

I have claimed the tolerance of the House to read that letter because I think it illustrates that the Gnowangerup Road Board is not hostile to these people. It appreciates the impossible conditions under which they live; but it also appreciates, as most of us do in those areas, the total ineffectiveness of the administration, as at present functioning, to provide any cure for those conditions.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: The Ongerup people are prepared to help.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: To the extent of what?



Hon. H. S. W. Parker: To the extent of having Nissen huts in their townsite in separate parts of the townsite.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: At the Gnowangerup school there are the children of seven native families and of six white families. The white families have reached the stage where they are somewhat desperate and dispirited regarding the outlook. They see the preponderance of natives in that area and do not know what is the best thing to do. Consequently, at the moment they are inclined to grasp at any straw.

I do not wish to raise this question in any sense of bickering or disputation with members here or with anyone else. I think we can agree—those of us who take an interest in the matter, including Mr. Parker, the Commissioner, and those who do not see eye to eye—that we are all anxious to have something done. We are all possessed of sufficient public spirit to be concerned not only about the future of the half-castes, or of the white people who may have them in their midst at the moment, but also for the future position in regard to this matter in Western Australia as a whole, if the social, economic and educational situation of the half-castes in settled areas is not dealt with soon. I would appeal to the representatives of the Cabinet in this House to see whether they cannot so actuate the Government that some move will be made, before this session concludes, designed to bring about an improvement in the administration of native affairs and in the condition of the half-caste population.

I understand that at a later date in the session we will have an opportunity to debate two measures which I consider are of immense interest to Western Australia, and of particular importance to members of this House representing, as they do, the responsible vote in the community. I refer to the legislation dealing with rent control and the Housing Commission. Beyond saying at this stage that I think both those pieces of legislation would be better dead, I will not waste the time of the House.

I wish to congratulate Mr. Watson on his remarks, during which he illustrated very nicely to certain members of the judiciary within just what limits their duties lie. I must confess to some surprise that a higher authority had not anticipated Mr. Watson in that regard. At present, we are facing difficult times; and the whole of our economy, including both public and private spending, having been geared to the phenomenal price of wool, should be prepared in the near future to take a severe jolt. Each of us has his own way of meeting such situations privately, but it would serve the country well if the Government had closer regard to public expenditure.

We have now reached the stage where, in relation to such expenditure, especially in regard to public works of various kinds,

neither Ministers, nor departmental heads, nor anyone else in the different departments seems to care a tinker's benediction what a job costs or how much money is involved. The recent Premiers' Conference has reduced our loan allocation by 25 per cent.; but if the Government in this State made every endeavour—even by the provision of some new machinery if necessary—to get a bit better value for the money spent, that 25 per cent. reduction need not reduce the volume of our public works one iota. I do not think any of us has seen the occasion when public expenditure was more irresponsible than it now is. I do not say "irresponsible" in the sense that the works are not required or desirable, but in the sense that no one seems to have any concern at all for how much money is spent on them.

Hon. J. McI. Thomson: Do you think a public works standing committee would rectify that?

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: I could not say.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Let us get back to a Labour Government. They are better administrators.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: The Labour Administration immediately preceding the present Government just did not have the money to spend, but I have always had the idea that Labour Governments were rather good spenders when they could get their hands on the necessary finance. Twelve months ago, the promise was made in another place that a Bill to amend the Licensing Act would be brought down. At that time there was talk of a referendum on the question of local option but, in the end, there was no amending legislation and no review of the position. The liquor trade in this State is in a deplorable condition. Institutions that should be rendering a service to the public have, in many cases, deteriorated badly, until they might just as well pour the beer into a trough for animals to lap up as dish it out in the way they do. Consideration for the travelling public is, in many instances, a thing of the past, although some hotels still maintain a reasonable standard. It is high time that Parliament had opportunity of dealing with the legislation that governs the present state of affairs in the liquor trade. I have pleasure in supporting the motion.

HON. J. McI. THOMSON (South) [5.50]: I, like other members, desire to congratulate you, Mr. President, on the honour which His Majesty the King has been pleased to bestow upon you, and I wish you a long life in which to enjoy it. I have pleasure also in extending a welcome to the two new members elected to this Chamber since the end of last session, though we are all saddened to recall the decease of the two members whose seats they have taken and whose counsel will be missed in the debates of this House.

I trust our two new members will carry on the traditions of those who went before them and will never have cause to regret being elected members of this Chamber. I desire also to associate myself with the remarks of members who have congratulated two of our officers on being elevated to their present responsible positions.

During the current debate, we have heard of many of the problems with which our State is confronted; and, no doubt, as those difficulties are overcome, others will take their place owing to the world conditions now prevailing. I wish first to deal with the question of superphosphate supplies, as it constitutes a serious problem for the Government. I congratulate the Government, the Minister for Agriculture and Senator Seward on their honest endeavour to overcome this difficulty and secure a better distribution for the coming season. We all know that there are still a number of anomalies in the allocation of superphosphate in this State, as some people are not receiving sufficient and others are no doubt obtaining more than they need. I have, however, sufficient confidence in the powers that be to believe that a more equitable distribution will be attained in the next allocation and that, through the exercise of sound common sense and co-operation, the anomalies will be eliminated.

Members are aware of the shortage of supplies of sulphur, upon which we depend for the manufacture of superphosphate. The position is such that we are now compelled to use locally obtained pyrites to supplement the supply of sulphur from oversea. I noticed with interest the other day that 800 tons of pyrites had been forwarded by rail from Norseman to Perth for use in the manufacture of fertiliser. I come from a town where a superphosphate works is at present being constructed, and I am therefore interested in the transportation of pyrites from Norseman to those works. I was pleased to receive from the Minister for Agriculture today the replies to the questions I asked yesterday, and am glad to know that consideration will be given to another source of supply of pyrites in closer proximity to the Albany works than is Norseman. The raiiling of pyrites from Norseman to Albany involves a distance of over 600 miles by the shortest route through Merredin and Narrogin and on to Albany.

It was with interest that I read recently about a move that is on foot to convene a meeting at Kulin to consider the advisability of applying to the Government to have a road constructed direct from Norseman to Hyden and on to Kondinin. Even if pyrites could be transported to Albany by that route, there would still be a distance of nearly 400 miles to be covered—through Kondinin, Lake Grace and the Porongorups—to Albany. I also went into the question of shipping pyrites from

Esperance to Albany, because no doubt shipping freights are considerably cheaper than rail or road freights. But even then, one has to remember that the pyrites would need to be railed from Norseman to Esperance before being shipped to Albany, involving, by that route, a distance of 225 miles of sea freight. Because of the cost of transporting the pyrites and the effect of that charge on the ultimate cost of the fertiliser, I think we should seriously consider the use of pyrites from the deposits at Ravensthorpe, which are considerably nearer the Albany works.

The haulage of pyrites by road from those deposits would involve a distance of 200 miles; but I was pleased to hear, the other evening, that there is reason to believe that in the not distant future, the "Kybra" may be put back on the south coast run. If that is done, that vessel could be used with good effect in transporting pyrites from Hopetoun to Albany, a distance of about 165 miles. In the time available, I have not been able to arrive at the cost of using pyrites from the Ravensthorpe deposits, but I hope the Minister will be able to enlighten members as to what saving could be expected in that regard. At the present stage of our industrial development, we must endeavour, as we have in the past, to ensure the greatest possible economy in the new works that are in hand. I must compliment the Government on having endeavoured to ensure the speedy completion of works in the south-eastern and southern parts of the State, and particularly in the Albany area.

I now wish to refer to water supplies. Various questions have been asked and answered in this House, including one this evening, bearing on an important water supply to the Great Southern area. It is of grave concern to those towns and bitterly disappointing to all concerned that the rate of progress of the scheme from Narrogin to Collie has not been more rapid. The reason, of course, is the lack of materials, which brings us back to production of urgently-required materials for all these necessary undertakings in this State. That applies not only to water supplies, but also to other building projects and general construction work upon which we have embarked. I trust that an improvement will be made in that direction and the rate of progress stepped up.

Increased production is dependent on the personal effort of all concerned; to the effort of the individual in his particular industry. We apparently do not realise that because of the attitude we have adopted towards work and towards production today, we are suffering considerably in regard to all undertakings which are for the benefit of the community as a whole. I hope a better state of affairs will be reached whereby we can increase production which would enable the extension of water schemes to other centres simultaneously with that to Collie; because if we are to wait for that scheme

to be completed before the water is discharged into Narrogin, and the towns north, south and east of Narrogin get the benefit of that undertaking, we will be waiting a considerable time. During the waiting period we are putting up with a serious shortage of water in those other areas.

The question of sewerage is linked with the problem of greater water supplies. It is the desire and ambition of the people as a whole to have their towns served by a proper sewerage system. Without water, that is absolutely impossible. I consider that when we are able to embark upon these major undertakings in the various towns, we should make every endeavour to use the sewage to the utmost. I would like to see the Government proceed with the testing of lands that are already serviced with a scheme such as is operating at Katanning. At present, that town has a scheme serving the hotels and boarding houses and the effluent is discharged on to an area which I consider would offer to the Government an excellent opportunity of testing the suitability of sewage as a fertiliser.

In the Sydney "Bulletin" I recently read that a council in Scotland embarked upon a scheme costing £20,000 for the installation of a plant which dealt with this product and which has proved its worth and paid its way handsomely by the supply of manure to the farming community and to others who desire it. We all know the excellent value of manure, which returns to the ground those constituents taken out of it by plant growth. In the various towns where these sewerage schemes are in operation and in those centres which hope to have a scheme in the near future, I would like to see the sewage used for promoting the growth of crops and pastures.

There is an acute shortage of pinewood forests in our State, and we are all keenly aware of the shortage of hardwoods. We have no softwood timber being produced in any quantity, and I consider we would be serving a twofold purpose by making use of sewage in the growing of pine forests. At the moment it is being profitably used for fodder pastures and for the afforestation of pinelands.

It would be as well for us to consider our local governing authorities under whose guidance these things make their initial move. Reference has been made to the staffing of hospitals in country districts. This problem has given many country towns a serious headache in the past. The Government should take into account the reason why it is so difficult to obtain nursing staff in country areas. When we consider the remuneration that a nursing sister at the Hollywood Hospital receives and compare it with that received by a sister at a country hospital, it is no wonder that a nurse or sister prefers to work in an institution such as Hollywood

rather than go into the country where the salaries are lower and the amenities are fewer.

The Government must consider the rates that apply in the Eastern States and grant them to our own nursing staffs. I think that that would go a long way towards encouraging our nursing sisters to remain in the country districts; because we now find many of our girls either leaving for the Eastern States or relinquishing the profession altogether to engage in other industries. I honestly believe that the Government is doing everything in its power to ensure that the nurses are comfortably and adequately housed at the hospitals and to improve their amenities. Hospitals in the country have no doubt caused the Government serious concern because of the long delays occasioned in bringing buildings to completion. That applies not only to hospitals, but also to all other public buildings in the country. The cause of that, is the shortage of labour and the scarcity of material. We cannot get men to leave the city and go to country towns to engage in this work. Until we reach a stage where we have more skilled tradesmen available, this position in the country areas will continue. I wish to congratulate the Government upon its efforts in connection with Albany harbour reclamation scheme. I am, however, disappointed that the dredge is not working to full capacity.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: Can it be pepped up?

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: I consider it could be by more than one shift being worked, but that is a matter beyond the power of the Government. Three shifts could easily be worked on this dredge, and no doubt the result would be obvious. However, because of prevailing conditions, only one shift can be worked. I wish to commend the Government for letting the contract for the reclamation work to an Eastern States firm. This action will doubtless lead to the completion of the work earlier than would have been possible with the present setup.

Another matter to which I wish to refer is the proposed visit to the State of Their Majesties, the King and Queen, and Princess Margaret. That is something we can look forward to as loyal subjects of His Majesty. I am particularly pleased that he has seen fit to include Albany in his itinerary whilst on his way to the Eastern States, but he will be there for only a short time and, like Mr. Logan, I am very keen that country children should be taken—in this case, to Albany—in order that they may see the Royal party. Arrangements are already in hand to transport the children to Albany because, as they are citizens who are loyal subjects of the King, it is our duty to ensure that they have the opportunity of seeing Their Majesties. To that end it is proposed to take all the children south of Wagin to

Albany. It is expected that the children north of Wagin will proceed to Northam, where they will have the privilege of seeing Princess Margaret. I have much pleasure in supporting the motion.

On motion by Hon. A. R. Jones, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 6.15 p.m.*

## QUESTIONS.

### HOUSING.

#### *As to Applications for Small Unit Tenancy Homes.*

Mr. J. HEGNEY asked the Minister for Housing:

(1) How many small unit tenancy applications are current?

(2) When were applications first called for small unit tenancy homes?

(3) How many applicants have been provided with such homes to date?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Applications current as at 28/8/51—5,579.

(2) April, 1948.

(3) Two hundred and forty-seven have been provided with homes specially built for small unit families. In addition, a number of small unit families have been accommodated in standard type two-bedroom homes, but separate records of these have not been kept. With the present programme of local and imported pre-cut homes, it is hoped to make an increased allocation of two-bedroom homes to small unit families.

### EDUCATION.

#### *As to Purchase of School Site, Belmont.*

Mr. J. HEGNEY asked the Minister for Education:

(1) Has the Education Department bought a school-site at the corner of Acton Avenue and Campbell-st., Belmont?

(2) What is the area of the site?

(3) What was the date of purchase?

(4) Is the site to be used for a high school or primary school?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) 8 acres 2 roods 21.5 perches.

(3) The 24th May, 1951.

(4) For a primary school.

### SWAN RIVER.

#### *As to Analyses of Waters.*

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN asked the Minister for Health:

What were the results of the analyses made of the waters of the Swan River at different points over the last two years?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied:

The results of the analyses referred to have been gathered and co-ordinated on plan and graphs in the Drawing Office of the Public Works Department and arrangements have been made for an inspection of these at a time and date to be arranged with the Engineer in Charge.

## Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, 29th August, 1951.

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