

Thursday, 15th August, 1946.

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

Ninth Day.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. L. B. BOLTON (Metropolitan)
[4.33]: My first duty and my pleasure is to offer to you, Sir, my sincere congratulations upon your having attained the position of President of this Chamber of which you have for so many years been a member and which you have served so faithfully and well as *Chairman of Committees*. With other members, I sincerely hope you will be blessed with good health to carry out the duties of your office. I also desire to pay a tribute to our former President, Sir John Kirwan. If any man has been an ornament to the Parliament of this State, that man is he. He has been President during the whole time I have been in the House—a matter of 16 years—and at all times occupied that position as it should be—with dignity and decorum, with kindness to members and with attention to his duties. He has filled the office in a manner that one would expect but which is not always observed, from all one can read, in some other Parliaments. I also desire to congratulate Mr. Seddon on his appointment as *Chairman of Committees*. With others, I regret very much his serious illness, and I hope he will be restored to health at an early date in order that he may take up his new duties.

I must offer, too, my very sincere congratulations to the Chief Secretary on his appointment as Agent General. I was very delighted when I heard the first intimation that Mr. Kitson was likely to be appointed to the position. I am perfectly sincere when I say I know few men in this State who are better fitted than Mr. Kitson to hold that position. Ministers who sit in another place have opportunities to see something of the State and learn something of many of the

measures that go through Parliament. But Mr. Kitson has been in the position, since he has held the office of Chief Secretary, of having to know not merely something, but rather everything about the measures that have come before this House. Since he arrived in Australia he has had experience in many directions, including agriculture. Perhaps he was not too successful in his agricultural experience but that experience will be of benefit to the State when he arrives in London and takes up his new position. I hope he will enjoy good health in London. I am certain he will be a credit to the State as he has been a credit to the Government which he represents in this Chamber.

I offer my congratulations also to the newly elected members—Messrs. Bennetts, Forrest and Simpson. We were all impressed with their maiden speeches and I think we have gained, as regards the strength of the House, by their presence, although we have a very kindly feeling—I know I have—towards any member who has lost his seat. There is always that feeling in such cases that it is just too bad; but it cannot be helped. The experience will come to most of us some day, although perhaps some of us may avoid it by getting out before we are pushed out. I congratulate the new members on their election and on their maiden efforts on the Address-in-reply.

I do not desire to speak at any great length, though there are one or two matters I wish to touch upon. Many items in the Lieut.-Governor's Speech have been referred to by other members and I do not propose to go over the same ground. There is sufficient material in the Speech to provide every member with something to talk about. It has certainly provided the Government with something to talk about, and I think it might be termed an excellent programme. This is the last opportunity during this Parliament that the Government will have of presenting the Speech. As a matter of fact, I hope it will be the last opportunity it will have of doing so for a long time, and that the next motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply will be moved by a member of the other side.

The Chief Secretary: I thought you were more kindly disposed.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: It may be. However, I noticed in the Speech several things, including the hardy annual of death to this very

necessary Chamber. I suppose that will meet with the same fate as has previously overtaken it; at least, we hope so. But, according to the Press reports, we will have an opportunity to discuss that more fully at a later stage, so I will leave it at that for the present. I also noticed with pleasure that factory employment for the year ended the 30th June, 1945, reached an all-time record. As one deeply interested in industry, I was particularly pleased to see that those figures had reached 29,146, and that the estimated wages paid—over £8,000,000—was also a record. I think every member of this Chamber will join me in expressing the hope that those records will be beaten again during the coming year.

Secondary industries financially assisted by the Government, we are told, continue to make marked progress, and inquiries are continually being made by Eastern States manufacturers desirous of extending their activities to this State. That is one of the points on which I desire to offer a few opinions and, if I can, to enlighten the House in some directions. As a still active member of the Chamber of Manufactures, and one deeply interested in industry, I offer my congratulations to the Minister and those associated with him in their work to secure new industries for our State. I notice, too, that on his recent visit to the Eastern States—as reported in Tuesday's issue of "The West Australian,"—the Minister says he found that there is a great possibility of establishing a large new secondary industry in Western Australia. The parties have been negotiating for some time and some progress has been made.

I do not know whether I am correct in stating—I hope I am—that this refers to the manufacture of agricultural machinery and spare parts in this State. If so, I congratulate the Minister and hope that this will be brought about. It is something that has been wanted and which was nearly brought about on previous occasions. I sincerely hope that this time the Government will be successful in inducing some reputable and up-to-date agricultural machinery firm to operate in our own State. Thousands of pounds are paid by the farming community and others in freight on machinery from the East. That is all wrong, because we are in the open market with our produce, competing with the Eastern States farmers, and the money

that is paid away in freight should be saved for Western Australia. I am certain, also, that we would have the additional benefit of quicker deliveries. This should apply also to spare parts, in connection with which the position has been most difficult over the last few months, not due to the manufacturers but, in many instances, to the lack of shipping space to bring the parts for the various machines necessary on our farms. I have waited for months—as much as ten months—for spare parts for some of my implements. That is wrong, and is not to the advantage of the farming community.

The power position has caused me some worry. I realise that a motion for a Select Committee to inquire into the recent power breakdown has been moved in another place, and the mover proposes to ask certain questions, or to suggest that they be asked, but I am also cognisant of the attitude that the Minister took when such an inquiry was recently mooted. I am convinced that that Select Committee will not be appointed. I believe, from the attitude of the Minister, that the motion will be defeated, and so I feel perfectly justified in putting before this House a few facts that I have, particularly—if I may say so—as I was very closely associated with the unfortunate occurrence of the power breakdown. As we all know, the breakdown of a few weeks ago cost industry and labour many thousands of pounds, to say nothing of the inconvenience to the general public. It is only those in industry who appreciated the loss and inconvenience and fully realised just how serious the effect was. I am not going to suggest where the blame lies or to throw mud or bricks at anyone.

I am going to try to offer a few suggestions that may awaken the Government to the position in the event of the same thing happening again. In his speech, Sir Hal Colebatch related the facts leading up to the installation of the present plant, and I do not propose to comment on that. I only say that I know his information is correct, and it seems a great pity that this State should be in its present position as regards power. In view of that, if I were personally asked my opinion of the cause and where the blame lay, I would say it is due to the short-sighted policy of the Government. No Government having—as this Government has—practically a monopoly of the power required for industry and its own instrumen-

talities, should have allowed such a state of affairs to develop. No private enterprise would have allowed itself to get into that position if it were not that it was relying on the Government.

In my opinion, the Government led us into this tragedy, and it is now up to it to see that such a situation does not again develop. We understand that the new power station being built at South Fremantle will be ready in about three years, but if I know anything of matters of this kind when undertaken by Governments, four or five years will, I am sorry to say, be nearer the mark. Provision is being made there for an additional 50,000 kilowatts. The first thing the Government should do—if it has not already done so, and it should have done so in view of what has happened recently—is to repeat that order; to order another 50,000 kilowatts. I understand that provision is being made for that in the South Fremantle plant, and, from what we are told by the Minister for Industrial Development, and from what we know personally, I believe that almost before that plant is installed it will be overloaded. That plant will almost certainly be overloaded by the time it is installed.

Take the present plant at East Perth: I have no accurate knowledge, but I believe the intention is to convert the plant from 40 to 50 cycles. What will happen while that is being done? How can we hope to cope with present requirements as well as those in view? I have it on good authority that industries in this State are advancing so rapidly that at least an additional 4,000 or 5,000 kilowatts will be required every year for the next four or five years. I want to know what provision the Government is making to ensure that industry can carry on during that period.

It is all very well to encourage the establishment and development of industries and I would be the last one to discourage them, as I think the Chief Secretary will concede, particularly the establishment of new industries, but what on earth is the use of our going along the line of seeking new industries when we have not the power to give them to enable them to carry on? If we are going to supply new industries at the expense of existing industries, if we are to be rationed, as unfortunately we were during the recent breakdown, then I say it would be better to hold off starting new in-

dustries until we are in a position to supply the requisite power. I repeat that the Government led us into this tragedy, and it is for the Government to get us out or to take steps to ensure that we do not get into similar trouble again. The Government holds a monopoly and should ensure that sufficient power is available for the new industries being started as well as for those in existence, and for any extension to existing industries likely to be made in the near future.

We also have to bear in mind that Government instrumentalities are very heavy users of electric power. I have been unable to obtain exact figures, but if the whole of the Government instrumentalities were pooled, it would be found that quite a large proportion of the available power is consumed by them. This leads me to the point that the Government should, at an early date, instal auxiliary power plants for its own instrumentalities. During the recent breakdown all the smaller industries did their best to obtain auxiliary plants to help them over the period when current was short. I consider that it is the duty of the Government to do this and to do it immediately. Auxiliary power should be provided for all Government instrumentalities so that when there is a breakdown such as we had recently, industry will be able to continue its operations as usual.

I pay tribute to the work of the Electricity Commission. I was closely associated with Messrs. Dumas, Edmondson and Taylor, and without doubt those gentlemen did everything in their power to assist industry, while industry in turn assisted them in the effort to ration, as far as possible, the power available for various users in the metropolitan area.

The proposed change-over from 40 to 50 cycles is going to be a very serious matter and will have the effect not only of impeding progress, but almost of stopping quite a lot of industries. It is the duty of the Government to see that this is avoided. It has been suggested that by rationing and by arranging shift-work we may overcome the difficulty, perhaps better than we did during the recent shortage of current, but I remind the Government that those firms which were unfortunate enough to have to change from day to night operations were at a great disadvantage by reason of the additional

cost of shift-work. Shift-work usually carries an increase of wages of anything from five to 15 per cent. This immediately means increased cost of production. There is also the feature that men naturally prefer to work by day rather than by night. If certain firms were rationed and compelled to work by night, those using the largest amount of current would be the ones to suffer, and workers would be inclined to leave the factories that were operating by night if they could secure employment in day-working factories.

These are the points that are causing grave concern in industrial circles in this State, particularly in the metropolitan area. I have been asked to impress upon the Government the necessity of taking these matters seriously to heart and endeavouring to allay the fears that are haunting industry generally. Another point that may not be generally appreciated, though I think it was mentioned in the Press, is that the Commission does not know from day to day when further trouble may be experienced with the present plant. The total installed capacity at the East Perth Power House is 57,000 kilowatts, but owing to the shutting down of one or other of the units for repairs, this capacity cannot always be relied upon. I understand that the peak load is in the vicinity of 51,000 to 52,000 kilowatts, so members will realise on what thin ice we are skating.

If we now require that amount of current and are going to increase the draw by developing new industries—I regret having to utter a note of caution against the establishment of new industries—what are we going to do to provide them with power? The present plant is almost fully loaded now. At the Midland Junction workshops a new furnace is being installed which, when put into operation at an early date, will draw 1,000 to 1,500 kilowatts, and it is estimated that the development of our own industries will lead to a draw of another 4,000 or 5,000 kilowatts. In less than 12 months we shall be overloaded. That is the position which industry is facing today. We are told to carry on and to extend. We know the amount of current that will be drawn by others, but what will be the position in 12 months or two years' time? This is reckoning on the present plant at East Perth being

kept in operation during the whole of that time.

The outlook is anything but bright from the industrial angle. If there is one thing needed in this State to help it to make progress it is the development of our secondary industries. Our primary industries have proved themselves. We stand high in that direction both in quantity and in quality. The secondary industries go hand-in-hand with the primary, and we must not neglect them. I earnestly, seriously and sincerely ask the Government to give these matters its very prompt consideration with a view to doing something definite. I understand that the Commission has been scouring Australia for additional plant for East Perth, but I believe it is almost impossible to secure anything satisfactory. Many of the larger firms have endeavoured to secure plants or auxiliary plants to tide them over any industrial trouble, but it is a very expensive matter. It would be a serious blow to industry if many of our factories had to do this. In my own business I use approximately 100 kilowatts, and it would cost me between £7,000 and £8,000 to put in a plant to generate that amount of power.

Hon. L. Craig: You could not get the plant.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: If I could get it, that is what it would cost me. That applies in the case of an industry like mine which employs about 150 hands, but the same thing would apply to many industries. It is out of the question to ask private enterprise to provide for itself in this direction. The Government has undertaken the task and has secured a monopoly, and it is its duty to see the task through and that industry is not placed in the position it was in a few weeks ago. That is all I have to say regarding the industrial position, but I do hope I have convinced the Minister how serious from our angle it is. I am sure he will bring this matter under the notice of the Government.

Generally speaking, I support the zoning by-laws of the Perth City Council. I wish to make it clear that I am totally opposed to any encroachment on the Esplanade or river front between Mill-street and Barrack-street, or anywhere. It will be remembered that some three or four years ago there was a suggestion on the part of the Government that a trolley-bus barn should be built there. An outcry arose not only from the Perth

City Council but also from the business community and the ratepayers concerned. I believe the Government would not have been game to go on with the work. The war then came, and it was found necessary to utilise part of the Esplanade or water front for the building of huts for trainees. What I am looking forward to is the removal of these huts so that we may build a beautiful waterfront, extending from Crawley to the Causeway. This is one of the most beautiful spots not only in Western Australia but in the Commonwealth. Perth has been aptly named "the city beautiful." Surely we are not going to allow some unsightly car-barn or other buildings of a like nature to be constructed anywhere on that waterfront. Whilst I represent the Metropolitan Province, in which this part of the city is situated, I will fight tooth and nail against it and endeavour to see that that foreshore is not defaced as has been suggested.

I wish to offer a few words in regard to transport. My congratulations are extended to the Minister for Railways on his foresight in appreciating the fact that people want faster transport than railway trains. The railways will always retain their usefulness but not as regards passenger traffic. It is very pleasing to observe that the Minister is imbued with the idea of getting his passengers from the city to the country and vice versa a little quicker than they can go with the ordinary trains of today. I note also that there is a move for a general re-organisation of the transport system. I suggest, as I did when speaking on this subject last session, that in framing its policy the Government should call in one or two people other than Government appointees to discuss this very big question.

Surely those people who have invested millions of pounds—I am not exaggerating when I say millions—in transport plant and equipment are entitled to some consideration. I appeal to the Government to appoint to the transport board or commission one or more outside members who would be able to give very desirable advice to the Government in any scheme for re-organisation that it has in view. It has to be remembered that private enterprise was the means of opening up the suburbs and outer suburbs of this and other cities in the State in a manner that could not have been done by the Government.

It is all wrong that there should be any thought of scrapping these companies and taking over the whole business, which has been well conducted and has given satisfaction to the public. I appeal to the Government to give these companies and their operations every consideration. I am certain that if it will appoint, as I have suggested, some persons other than Government officials to watch their interests—it is only fair that that should be done—we shall be able to build up our transport system for the benefit of the people and the State generally.

I have a great deal of sympathy with the Police Traffic Department. It has a very difficult job to perform and it is deserving of a lot of sympathy. I believe that the cause of most of the serious accidents today is entirely due to a lack of courtesy on the road. I am a constant motorist and drive many miles every month not only in the city but in the country. I am appalled by the lack of courtesy on the part of many drivers. That applies particularly to drivers of big trucks. My travels take me, and have done for many years, along the main Geraldton road. I assure members I am sincere when I say that I hardly make a trip when my nerves are not very badly frayed by some narrow escapes of my own or from seeing the narrow escapes of other people. I suggest that the remedy is a much heavier fine for reckless, careless, and particularly drunken driving. The public will be behind the Government if it sees that such a policy is carried out.

We have been appalled at times by paltry fines of as little as £1 imposed for drunken driving. Such a case happened only recently. The magistrate said he took a serious view of the offence but in view of the man's good character he would fine him £1 without depriving him of his license. I have no desire to be hard on anyone, but I think that sort of thing is encouraging a man under the influence of liquor to take a risk and drive to the danger of the public. Such a man can hardly help being reckless or careless when in that condition. I appeal to the Government to empower the police, if they have not the power at present, to instruct magistrates if possible to see that such men are fined heavily and made to pay for their mistakes.

It was pleasing to note that the Government intends to amend the Act to permit of the licensing of vehicles to be taken out at

the time of purchase. I have advocated that for many years. Most of us drive cars and know what it means to get our licenses renewed about the end of June. This reform has been wanted for a long time and I am pleased that the Government intends to amend the Act in that direction. Angle-parking is a matter which is claiming a lot of attention today. That is something I have advocated for many years. On the appointment of every new traffic inspector for the last 10 or 15 years I have usually made it my business to introduce myself to him. One never knows!

Hon. G. Fraser: They are handy to know.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: I have always suggested at such interviews that the department should recommend to the Government that a by-law should be framed permitting angle-parking in St. George's-terrace. I was rather appalled to notice that in another place a motion had been moved to disallow the angle-parking by-law. I admit that angle-parking has its disadvantages, but it also has its advantages.

Hon. V. Hamersley: It has.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: Speaking from my own point of view, if I have an appointment in the city, a meeting, or a luncheon to attend, I am naturally anxious to get there as quickly as possible, and, as a busy businessman, I usually leave it to the last minute. I drive along the Terrace looking for a place, and I find one almost immediately. I leave my car and am able to keep my appointment. When I have concluded my engagement, or finished my lunch, I am not in such a hurry. Most of the complaints are to the effect that it takes a long time to get away, and that the motorist impedes traffic when backing out. Those disadvantages are as nothing compared with the advantage of getting quickly into a parking place and being able to get on with one's business. I hope the motion moved in another place will be defeated. Some members may not agree with me in this, but I am speaking from my own experience and of what I have seen in the city. I do not know of any serious accidents that have occurred through angle-parking. I think it is a boon to the motorists, generally.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Are you allowed to park for more than 15 minutes?

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: I understand not. I think the greatest drawback to angle-parking is the fact that quite a number of motorists think that because this system has been introduced in the Terrace, they can park their cars there all day. But that is quite wrong because I have seen the traffic constables take the numbers of cars, and I suppose many drivers have been prosecuted for leaving their vehicles longer than 15 minutes. Another danger—but this is contrary to the by-law—is brought about by large, and even medium-sized trucks, overlapping the space allotted when angle-parking. If the Traffic Department watches that point and deals with certain offenders then angle-parking will be a success.

While I am dealing with the Traffic Department, I think it is to be commended for endeavouring to uphold many of the by-laws, even though some of them may appear at times to be a little irritating. I do complain, however, that the department does not sufficiently follow up its actions. There was a drive, for three or four days or a week, to stop people jay-walking and then it was forgotten for a month. If the department followed up these activities it would have a better chance of educating the people more fully in the requirements of the by-laws.

The housing position has been discussed by many members, and anything that I might say would be only a repetition of their remarks. I am mostly concerned about the shortage of timber generally, not necessarily for housing. There is a tremendous shortage of timber for all purposes. Members may be surprised to know that in my particular industry it is almost impossible to get sufficient timber to build the vehicles that we have in hand. A question was asked in this House about the quantity of timber exported from the State. The figures given show that in the vicinity of 23 to 25 per cent. of our timber production is exported. If that is so I am convinced that it is altogether too much. We should study ourselves first. While we have our present export markets and further ones to exploit—and we must not drop them entirely—charity begins at home and every possible endeavour should be made to retain sufficient timber in this State for our require-

ments. I have pleasure in supporting the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply.

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

House adjourned at 5.20 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 15th August, 1946.

	PAGE
Questions: Comprehensive water scheme, as to investigation by Commonwealth	307
North-West—(a) as to concessional freights on fruit	307
(b) as to medical officer for Port Hedland	307
Dock, as to Albany v. Fremantle as site	308
Bills: Railway (Hopetoun-Ravensthorpe) Discontinuance, 2A., Com. report	308
Transfer of Land Act Amendment, 2A., Com. report	309
Medical Act Amendment, 2A.	310
Feeding Stuffs Act Amendment (No. 1), Order discharged	311
Bulk Handling Act Amendment, 2A., Com. report	311
Factories and Shops Act Amendment, 2A.	311

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

QUESTIONS.

COMPREHENSIVE WATER SCHEME.

As to Investigation by Commonwealth.

Mr. SEWARD asked the Minister for Water Supplies:

1, Does he know whether it is the intention of the Commonwealth Government to send the investigating committee appointed, or to be appointed by it, to inquire into all aspects of the comprehensive water scheme to this State, to hear evidence from farmers and others within the area to be served by the scheme?

2, If he does not know, will he ascertain at the earliest moment whether it is so intended?

3, In the event of its not being intended to send the committee over here for the purpose stated, and in view of the increasing opposition amongst farmers to the present proposals applying to the southern scheme,

will he make representations to the Commonwealth Government to the effect that the committee be sent over here to hear evidence from those concerned with that scheme?

4, If the Commonwealth Government will not agree to its committee being sent over here to conduct such investigation, will he arrange for the local committee as announced in "The West Australian" of the 14th inst. to visit the area concerned in the southern scheme, and the drier excluded areas to the east and south-east of it for the purpose of hearing evidence as to the needs for the agricultural portion of the scheme?

5, If he is not agreeable to doing this, will he explain his reason for not doing so?

The MINISTER replied:

1, No.

2, Yes.

3, 4, 5, See answer to 2.

NORTH-WEST.

(a) As to Concessional Freights on Fruit.

Mr. W. HEGNEY asked the Minister for the North-West:

1, Is it the intention of the Government to revive the practice of conveying fruit at a concessional freight rate by rail and sea to residents of the northern portion of the State?

2, If the reply to the above question is "yes," will he outline particulars of proposed concession?

3, What is the approximate date upon which such practice will commence?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied:

1, Yes.

2, Arrangements have been made for a concessional flat rate of 5s. per case of fruit from grower to purchaser. Such charge will include rail and shipping freight, also wharfage and handling charges.

3, The concession will be available as soon as a schedule of regular sailing dates can be arranged and made public.

(b) As to Medical Officer for Port Hedland.

Mr. W. HEGNEY asked the Minister for Health:

What action has been taken by the Public Health Department in connection with the appointment of a suitable medical officer for Port Hedland?