

River it cannot travel fast because the rails are very light between Margaret River and Flinders Bay. A better proposition than this bus service would be for the Government to renew the rails from Boyanup south. We have a fast service now, on one day a week, to Nannup.

I recently travelled from Perth to Nannup and we could have run ahead of schedule. At certain times we actually were ahead of schedule, but then we had to pull up for quite a while. At one station we waited for about 20 minutes and when I asked why I was told that it was because we were ahead of time. When we arrived at Nannup I reckoned up the times and came to the conclusion that, providing the rails were all right, another three-quarters of an hour could be cut off from the time table. The Government should try to improve these rails. I just want to mention the water schemes for the lower wheat belt areas. In the South-West we have districts where we can collect water, and if it is possible to send it up into the lower wheat belt areas we should do so. We have in those areas good land which only needs water. If we could get only sufficient water there for the civilians and the stock, it would be a great benefit and would, I feel certain, be a payable proposition for the whole State.

On motion by Mr. Telfer, debate adjourned.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT.

Balancing of State's 1945-46 Budget.

THE PREMIER (Hon. F. J. S. Wise—Gasecoyne): With your permission, Sir, I would like to make the following statement:—Late this afternoon I received a telegram, despatched from Canberra, which I think will interest the House as it is of vital importance to Western Australia. The telegram is as follows:—

Cabinet today approved payment under section 6 States Grant (Income Tax Reimbursement) Act 1912 amount recommended by Grants Commission in respect of your State, namely £912,559 (Stop) Arrangements being made for early payment. (Signed) Prime Minister.

I thought it appropriate to make the announcement in this Chamber on that matter which is so important to Western Australia.

As has been mentioned in the House, the claim was made, by this State, to the Grants Commission, acting under Section 6 of the Taxation Reimbursement Act. What it means is that that sum will balance the budget of last year for Western Australia without any loan borrowings, and therefore without a very lengthy charge on the taxpayers of the State. I thought the matter of sufficient importance to ask privilege to make the statement.

House adjourned at 9 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Wednesday, 7th August, 1946.

	Page
Question: Legislative Council, as to plural voting at elections	139
Address-in reply, fifth day	140

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

QUESTION.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

As to Plural Voting at Elections.

Hon. A. THOMSON asked the Chief Secretary:

As regards plural voting at Legislative Council elections, will the Minister inform the House as to the number of electors who have more than one vote, and the number of such votes, and for which provinces?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

To obtain the information requested would entail an exhaustive search by two clerks of the whole of the State electoral index, containing approximately 380,000 cards, and it is estimated would take from 10 to 14 days.

In addition, the Electoral Department staff is full engaged on preparatory work on the Legislative Assembly rolls, and to make

the search referred to would require the appointment for about a fortnight of two additional assistants.

It is not considered that the volume of work necessary to answer the question is warranted.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Fifth Day.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. C. H. SIMPSON (Central) [4.35]: In my initial address to this august assembly I must confess to a certain amount of diffidence. As to this natural feeling of nervousness, my friends tell me that the first seven years are the worst, and that after that it is all right. Of the 10 members who were returned at the recent elections, three of us are new to this House. We are what might be called "babes from the wood." We feel everything to be rather strange and new, but for my part I realise that the customs of the House are a very necessary part of its procedure and are part of the time honoured traditions of the House. I wish to say how grateful I am for the many gestures of welcome that I have received from all parts of the House. Those gestures of goodwill have been made irrespective of any party label with which the hon. member concerned may have been affiliated. I wish also to say how much I appreciate the courtesy and efficiency with which the staff have attended to any wants that I may have expressed.

I would like at this stage to extend to you, Mr. President, congratulations on your election to the high office that you occupy. I desire to congratulate the hon. member who has been elected Chairman of Committees, and to congratulate Mr. Kitson on his appointment to the high office of Agent General of the State. We know his ability and we feel sure that by him the requirements of Western Australia will be well served. I desire, at the outset, also to pay a tribute to Mr. Moore, who was the member for the Central Province, and owing to whose retirement I was able to nominate for the vacant seat. Mr. Moore and I have been friends for years and have been associated on a number of local activities. During that time we came to hold each other in mutual regard. In poli-

tics we do not always see eye to eye, and I certainly did not agree with the strictures that Mr. Moore passed on this House, but, at the same time, I feel that we shall come into contact quite a bit more, and I have no doubt that the friendship that exists between us will endure to the end.

I have been honoured by being elected as a member for the Central Province in this Council. The polling on this occasion was the highest in the history of that province and the second highest, for this election, in this State. If that has any significance—and I consider it has—I think it may be said that the electors are becoming more politically-minded.

Hon. A. Thomson: It is about time they did.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: They are awakening to a sense of their political responsibilities.

Hon. C. B. Williams: When you put women in it the men will all vote properly.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: As members are aware, the Central Province is a huge slice of territory. It cuts across the centre of Western Australia from east to west, and extends from the Indian Ocean to the South Australian border. Unlike some of the provinces down this way, it has a wide range of interests and a great diversity of local activities. Geraldton is its capital and natural port and has, of course, the activities normal to any harbour and port. From there we operate a fishing industry, not large, but still it does contribute something towards the wealth of the country. In the coastal area we have market gardening. We have the industries associated with the raising of fat lambs, pigs and poultry, and some dairying. Further inland we merge into the farming areas proper. Further in again we have the pastoral holdings and last, but not least, we contribute a bit towards the mining industry.

In a province so large and with so many interests, one group may be said to have its own special needs which are probably not related to those of another group. There is a very wide range of what might be called local needs, but in going around I have found that there was one group of needs common to all, and this may be listed as

education, which seemed to be No. 1 priority everywhere. There was the question of hospitalisation, with special regard to the need for a regional hospital. There was the question of water supplies. In some areas this had been solved; in the newer areas, that need still awaits solution. There was the question of road maintenance, and very acute it was in many parts of the province. There was a general feeling that the railway service should be brought more up to date and should provide more adequately than its plant and equipment are capable of doing at present. In some cases there was the undoubted need for improved postal and telephone facilities.

I have spent 55 of my 58 years in the country, so I can fairly be said to have a country outlook. A man from the country realises that he is a very important part in the State's economy. A man from the country, especially a primary producer, will say that but for him the cities could not exist. He provides 50 per cent. of the population. If he has a good year and prospers, then the city also prospers. If conditions are bad in the country, the city reacts similarly. The man from the country does think that more consideration should be given to his needs and wants than appears to be the case at present. He feels that, as he is the vitally important element in the economy of the State, there should be brought to him those amenities which the man in the city enjoys. If they cost a little more money, he considers it would be money well spent and that the extra expenditure is only what is due to him and what he deserves.

Correspondence that has reached me in regard to education has pointed out the need in some instances of supplying teachers for schools. In one instance, the school was meeting in an open garage; there was no suitable accommodation. In other instances, the school buildings, out of necessity during the war years, had been allowed to fall into disrepair and there was a general need for that matter to receive urgent attention. It is realised, of course, that all those things take money, but we must remember that the world as a whole is becoming more education-minded, and Australia, which is better off than most countries, should not allow itself to lag behind in the matter of bringing the standard of our education to a point at least comparable with that of other countries.

The people I have spoken to take the view that it is not so much a matter for the State to find the money for this purpose; it should be part of the Federal programme, and the Commonwealth should be asked to provide money in the shape of a special grant for meeting the need for the added education that everyone agrees is so desirable. We speak about a 40-hour week. I shall say a little more about this later, but while I for one do not agree that the present is an opportune time to adopt such an idea, it is possible that later on when we catch up the lag in production, the shorter working week may be brought about. This makes it all the more necessary for our standard of education to be raised so that the extra leisure that we shall then enjoy may be usefully and profitably employed.

One item that I think should be included in the school curriculum is education in civics. I believe that without importing any political bias into such instruction, children in advanced classes could be taught the place of Australia in the Commonwealth of Nations known as the British Empire. They should be taught the relationship between the Dominions and the Mother Country, and the place that the Crown occupies as a link between the Mother Country and the Dominions. There should be a better understanding on the part of growing children of the functions of the Commonwealth and State Parliaments. Instruction should be imparted as to the functions and administration of the courts of law, the functions of the police, and the purpose and functions, say, of a road board. The idea could be impressed on children of the value of community property and it should be instilled into their minds that all property that is destroyed is a loss to the community, even though that loss may fall on the shoulders of one individual.

Country folk complain that, though the University of Western Australia is the only free institution of the kind in the Empire, that is true in relation to metropolitan students but is not true in the same degree as far as country children are concerned. A country child attending the University has to pay for board and lodging in town, and this makes its education proportionately more expensive. I think that is reflected in the relative attendances of metropolitan and country students at our University, the ratio

being nearly four to one. Country folk consider that under a scheme that contemplates the spending of more money, which they think should be provided by the Commonwealth Government, some provision should be made for assisting country children to enjoy the advantages of a University education on the same level as that enjoyed by children living in the metropolitan area.

Another point I have been asked to mention is the need for amending the Education Act. The Act deprives scholars who have won scholarships of any monetary benefit if their parents are earning £7 or more per week. They are of opinion that in view of the generally rising costs, this standard is too low; in fact, they think it should be abolished altogether. Most of the hospitals in my province, in common with those in other districts of the State, have had their troubles in the matter of procuring efficient nursing staff. The general opinion is that there should be a review of the wages and conditions applying to the nursing profession and that the conditions of employment should be made attractive enough to encourage a greater intake of trainees. That, together with the nurses who are being released from the Army, would, we think, in time overcome the present grave disability.

Moving around amongst the farming section of the community we found quite a lot of grouses. It is said that the farmer is never satisfied. I found the main grievance to be the tax burden, which affects not only the farmer, but every individual in the community. Farmers also complained of the shortage of machinery, which is perhaps unavoidable, but they complained more particularly of the continuance of what they consider to be unnecessary Government restrictions and controls, which they deem to be avoidable. One farmer said to me, "I have been asked to cultivate extra ground and grow more wheat to assist the food for Britain appeal. I am most sympathetic towards that appeal; but in my case it means that I have to set aside extra ground, buy extra seed and super., purchase extra machinery and employ extra labour in order to give effect to that request. If a bad season occurred, I would lose the lot and the point of view of others would be that I had made a gamble and overplayed my hand. If, however, I made a success, if the season were good, the Government would take a

great proportion of my increased earnings by way of taxation. So far as I am concerned, it would be a case of heads they win, tails I lose."

A fairly general complaint in that portion of the province I represent which is devoted to wheatgrowing, concerned the wheat stabilisation scheme, which the farmers claim does not give them an initial advance equal to the cost of production. Figures have been worked out in this State which reliably compute the cost of production of a bushel of wheat at 5s. 6d. The port price of 5s. 2d., when the charges between the railing point and the port are deducted, means that the farmer gets 4s. 1d. for his wheat at the point of delivery. While it is granted that there may be an extra moiety from surplus proceeds to come back to the farmers, the majority are of the opinion that the stabilised price should in the first instance at least cover the cost of production. There is a grievance, too, in regard to the Commonwealth Government's proposed action to include the 1945-46 wheat crop in the scheme. The opinion is—I do not know how far it is legally true—that the law cannot and should not be made retrospective. Pastoralists to a great degree have been allowed to make their own selling arrangements for wool; but we must remember that the pastoral industry, possibly more than any other, is dependent entirely on world prices for its products and it is not relieved in any way on account of the increased cost of actually producing the product. There is a feeling of hostility, too, to the Commonwealth Government's action in taking the £7,000,000 surplus proceeds from the wool realisation for the purpose of research. The growers consider that money is theirs and that they should at least have some say in its distribution.

I turn now to the mining section of my province. Gold occupies a very important place in the industrial economy of this State. It contributes nearly one-third of the total value of our State economy and gold producers believe that they should receive every aid and that they should also receive every relief from restriction in order that the industry may be allowed to reach its full measure of production. They demand a review of the Federal gold tax. That tax was the only selective tax in Australia and it

bore more heavily on Western Australia than on any other State—

Hon. C. B. Williams: Obviously.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON:—simply because Western Australia produces nearly three-quarters of the gold that is mined in Australia. We may hold the theory that gold in itself has a doubtful value; but actually it is the most negotiable asset we have, and if—as I believe is the case—we are committed to signing the Bretton Woods Agreement at the end of this year, part of the guarantee of our status in that agreement resides in the fact that we have to put up a certain amount of gold as a backing for our membership. Another point that gold producers raise is the need for a free market for gold. They consider that when we take into account the importance of the industry to the economy of Western Australia and the need for expanding it and for helping the producer himself—who has certainly been under a great disability during the war period—every means should be adopted to give assistance to him. They think that a free market for gold would guarantee to him the greatest possible return for his product.

Another thing which gold producers think would help the goldmining industry is some relief in regard to the Federal law restricting capital issues. Many small mining holdings are subsidised by the share capital provided by those investors who are willing to risk their money; and until there is a return to this method of financing such projects, there cannot be that expansion in the smaller propositions in the industry that we feel should be encouraged. Another point in connection with mining—this applies to the Central Province; I do not know whether it applies to other provinces or not—is that during the war machinery was lent by the mines to the Commonwealth Government for more urgent use. The Big Bell mine supplied an engine on loan, which was shipped to Darwin. It was not uncrated during the three years it was there. Some months ago—I think, last October—the Big Bell mine was asked by the State Government to resume operations so that more men could be employed. I believe that engine is now back, but it was held up for an unconscionably long time and did affect the ability of the management to put into employment a considerable number of men.

At Reedys something of the same kind occurred. Machinery was sent from there to King Island and was used in the scheelite industry. So far as I know that machinery has not been returned. On that mine there are 80 huts empty. These could accommodate single men who could return and be re-employed by the mine if it had its full equipment. If other cases exist identical with this one it is obvious that these men who are probably at present in the city would, if they could go back to the country, do something to relieve the congestion and the acute housing shortage in the city. We think that the goldmining industry, which at present is at about two-thirds of its pre-war development, could—and should—be stepped up from about £9,000,000 to about £15,000,000 per annum if these restrictions were removed, and if those concerned were given the encouragement and assistance which I think, and they think, they deserve.

In the Speech there is also reference to native affairs. I believe a report was tabled today on the administration of the Native Affairs Department, but naturally I have not yet had time to look at it. I presume the question will come up for discussion later in the session when I hope to speak on it. His Excellency's Speech does however, refer to the increased expenditure on the Department of Native Affairs. In my view that expenditure could be greatly increased. This native question is probably more acute in the Central Province than it is in any other portion of the State. There seems to be an idea—I am sympathetic with it myself in principle—that we have an obligation to the native to build up his status, but if that obligation exists I think it should be an Australia-wide obligation, and not one that should rest on the shoulders of Western Australians alone.

We have in Western Australia about half the native population of the Commonwealth. We have about one-sixteenth of the white population, and yet the policy we are asked to adopt, one of a moral obligation towards the native, is dictated in a large measure by Australians generally, by Eastern Staters, by those who live in that portion of the country and have had very little contact with natives and know very little of their background; yet they are asking those on the spot who do know all about it to do certain things. The problem of the natives

is a many-sided one. I think if we obtained a Federal grant of considerably greater proportions than the money which is now being expended, something could be done to solve the problem. A very comprehensive report on native affairs was prepared some 12 years ago by an impartial and independent investigator in the person of Mr. H. D. Moseley. The general position in regard to natives has changed little if at all since then. Certainly the character and temperament of the native are substantially the same now as was the case then.

In some parts of the country, particularly on the stations, the native is leading a useful life. He is more or less in continual employment which very closely approaches the natural conditions under which he would ordinarily live. He does good work and commands the respect of his employer. Probably in that occupation he is happier and is better cared for than he is anywhere else in the State. It is a common thing on a station for a native to be employed, possibly usefully employed, only for four months of the year. He has his wife with him, and sometimes his family. These people are kept by the station-owner throughout the whole year and from year to year. They are given their food and clothing free.

I know of my own knowledge that in the event of sickness, a station-owner will travel hundreds of miles to ensure that the native, his wife, or his sick children, have all the amenities of medical and hospital treatment. From the Road Board Association at Cue a request was made that a Select Committee be appointed completely to study the native question. I am greatly in sympathy with that idea. As I have said before, it is a matter concerning which the Commonwealth Government should be asked to provide substantial assistance. I think some inquiry and report of the kind suggested would lead to that very necessary aid being forthcoming. In that area I can say there is a growing resentment against the administration of the Native Affairs Department. There is a feeling that natives under the present system are being encouraged to infiltrate into the towns. They live in those towns and in some instances have taken up a whole street. One has to see the houses they live in and the street and their general condition to realise the filth and squalor of their surroundings. Their children go to the local schools and that in turn creates a problem.

Where there are only a few native pupils in the school with a substantially greater proportion of whites, the problem does not seem to be acute. There are, however, other towns which have up to 40 per cent. of the scholars attending school who are either full-bloods or half-caste aboriginal children. I assure you, Mr. President, that some of these children represent a problem. They go to school filthy and dirty. The teacher sends them home again. At home the parents have no idea of cleanliness, and either the children are not cleaned and sent back to school or else the mother considers they are clean and returns them to school. The result is that the teacher himself or herself has to take those children in hand and clean them so that they can sit at the same desks as the white scholars. One teacher said to me, "We have these native children for five hours a day; the parents have them for 19 hours a day, plus weekends, plus holidays, and plus walkabouts."

Another thing that happens in connection with native scholars is this: Their standard of intelligence is a great deal below that of white children. That means possibly in the lower classes there are a number of scholars older than the infant children there. Whilst they have not been educated or have not the intelligence to get into the higher classes, they have a knowledge natural to their years so far as the facts of life are concerned, and are not desirable companions for the younger children. One mother said to me, "I do not like my children going to school and associating with blacks with lousy heads, running noses and sore eyes." Those who have had experience of native blight can appreciate her strictures on the subject.

In one town an Anglican clergyman took his three children away from the State school and sent them to a convent school because the latter would not admit native children. In the same town the Parents and Citizens' Association asked the Director of Education to have the natives segregated into a separate classroom which existed. That only meant the department providing one extra teacher. It was pointed out that this step would result in much better educational advantages for both the natives and the whites. The suggestion was rejected, not because there was no teacher available but because it was said to be contrary to the policy of the department.

I have said before that I am not opposed to raising the status of the native, but I do not think it should be done at the expense of the white children. It is all very well to say we should upbuild the native and raise his standard, but what about lowering the standard of the white children? These people have, I think, some measure of justification for their view that they are being used as guinea pigs, to test out the efficiency of the theory held by armchair idealists who have not experienced these indignities which only persons intimately associated with these areas can appreciate.

According to the Speech it is the intention of the Government to bring forward a Bill to regulate betting. That is probably going to be a ticklish measure. It has been well said that we cannot make people good by an Act of Parliament. We have only to remember the experience of well-meaning people in America when they introduced the Volstead Amendment to prohibit the consumption of liquor, and the disastrous results which attended the introduction of that measure and its final repeal. We have only to remember those instances to realise that if we embark on a similar course of action here we will only be causing trouble. I know of two or three starting-price operators who are amongst the finest men of my acquaintance. I have met a fair cross-section of S.P. bettors who are just average men and good honest workers, such as would be found in any sphere of life. The view they take is that while it may be wrong in principle to gamble they see the Government lottery which is being conducted every week, they hear the national broadcasting stations putting the betting news over the air every Saturday, and other days in the week, and they know that people can go on a race-course and bet as much as they like. They must therefore be excused if they think there is nothing wrong about the whole thing.

Possibly one factor has not been taken into account. Underneath this urge to indulge in betting there is, I think, a psychological background. It is difficult to generalise regarding the matter and certainly if we take the people of Australia—the long and the short, the dark and the fair, the fat and the thin, the intelligent and the unintelligent—it is hard to say that one person or one section of the citi-

zens conforms to a type. Notwithstanding that, I think that there is one distinct quality about the Australian which seems to be his tendency to "have a fly" and indulge in a gamble. I think that derives from our origin. Practically everyone who came to Australia in the early days must have had an urge for adventure or those people would not have come here. That urge for adventure must have been present or the early pioneers would not have gone outback and developed the far distant areas. I think it is this urge for adventure that impels men to take chances.

It has been said that the Australian soldier was good because he was a fatalist. I do not agree with that suggestion, but I agree that the Australian soldier was quite prepared to sum up a situation and take a calculated chance. He would take that chance and more often than not he came through. If we bear in mind that psychological background with respect to betting, I think that somehow or in some way we should try to divert that urge into more useful channels. As Sir Hal Colebatch has already said, the remedy for this evil is probably the development of a higher standard of education and I think that in time that end may be achieved.

Another matter I would like to mention is referred to in His Excellency's Speech. I allude to the question of immigration, which I assume is one of the topics that will be discussed later on in the session. It is a very big problem. I consider that in itself it is probably the most important of the items listed in the Speech. The Central Province has a special interest in the question of immigration because with it is vitally bound up the problem of defence. Geraldton is the natural port of the Central Province. It has harbour and port facilities. It is connected with the metropolis by two lines of railway. It is an ideal point for enemy attack. Sir Hal Colebatch on one occasion said that there are four primary needs of a nation, namely, people, defence against invasion, capital for development and markets for its exportable goods. I notice that Sir Hal put people first, but here we require all four.

Undoubtedly Western Australia possesses the greatest capacity for the absorption of population compared with any of the other

States of the Commonwealth. It is only by building up our population to a point where we can talk to the Eastern States with the power and authority of votes behind us that we will be able to get fair political treatment from those centres of power that at present are dominating our lives and our politics. Nelson T. Johnson, who was for some years Minister Plenipotentiary for America in Australia, visited Western Australia some time ago and went round the South-West. Later he said he visualised a development there over a period of years that would build up the population and give us cities like Los Angeles. I do not know if members know what the population of Los Angeles is; if not, I can tell them that it is 1,500,000, or more than three times that of the whole of Western Australia. Mr. Johnson is a capable, intelligent man. I do not think he would make such a statement merely for the sake of being nice and to please those who were listening to him. I believe he gave it as his considered opinion of our possibilities—not that we want cities of such a magnitude as he suggested.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Hear, hear!

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: Our policy should be one of decentralisation. However, that was the expression of the views of a competent outsider, one who was able to appreciate our possibilities and needs and one who was capable of assessing the population we could absorb.

In conclusion there is one point I would like to stress. I refer to the need that exists for unity of outlook and purpose in tackling the tasks that lie ahead. In Australia we have now the greatest opportunity for expansion and development that we have ever had. While there are some activities that must engage our first attention, such as the rehabilitation of our soldiers and members of the other Armed Forces who went abroad to fight for us and who have now to be re-established in our economy, there is also the question of building up our population and expanding our economy to take advantage of the opportunities that are now presented to us. There is a fairly vocal section of the community talking about shorter hours—they talk about a 40-hour week—and about improved working conditions. Those improvements might be quite desirable and logical if we had full supplies of goods on

our shelves and reserve stocks of various requirements readily available. That, however, is far from the position today. In fact, Australia is similarly situated to the man who has just recovered from a very serious illness, during which the whole of his energies and activities were engaged in fighting his ailment and getting well. When he is well again he has to pick up the threads of his life where he dropped them. He has to pay his doctor and his nurse; he has to pick up the lag that inevitably occurs in such a case when the normal activities of the man have ceased.

That is our position today and it is foolish to claim that we are in a better position than that in which we actually are. There is a lag that we have to pick up and make good. We have to work harder and we must apply all our energies to the task if we are to fulfil the ideal of a nation properly provided for, with plenty of goods in reserve. This is not just political talk; it is sheer economic necessity. Until we realise that we have to pick up that lag, we will never get our feet firmly planted on the road to recovery and we will never put our house in order.

HON. G. BENNETTS (South) [5.25]: Like Mr. Simpson, I, too, am new to the House, and I must confess to being rather nervous seeing that I have no knowledge of the Standing Orders or the rules of debate. No doubt we three new members will duly fall into line and we will soon get to know what is required of us. For my part, I am glad to find that among the members are some I have known for a long period. I am sure that we will prove to be of assistance to each other during the course of the session.

First of all, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, upon your elevation to your present high and honourable position. Having known you for so long, I feel sure you will be able to fulfil the duties of President with success equal to that of your predecessor in office. I also extend my congratulations to the newly-appointed Chairman of Committees. It is certainly gratifying to me to enter this Chamber to find that two goldfielders are occupying the two highest offices in the Chamber.

Hon. C. B. Williams: You should keep that to yourself a bit!

Hon. G. BENNETTS: I also extend my congratulations to the Chief Secretary. I know of his great ability and I feel confident that when he proceeds to London and finds himself beside another man who has been busy in establishing a record for Australia, a man who is looked upon throughout the world as an outstanding figure—I refer to Dr. Evatt—those two gentlemen will do much to maintain the high prestige of Australia not only in Great Britain but in foreign countries as well. On behalf of the people of the South Province, I wish to pay a tribute to their past member, Sir John Kirwan. He and I were pioneers of the Goldfields 50 years ago, and we have worked together on many committees. We have worked together on the Dads' Association, the Red Cross Society and dozens of other organisations. I can assure members that Sir John is looked upon as a great citizen of Western Australia, one who has worked not for his party alone but for the State in general. On behalf of the electors of the South Province, I desire to place on record their appreciation of his services to Western Australia.

During his remarks, Mr. Simpson dealt with a number of important matters to which I intended to refer. Included among them was the subject of education. Nowadays, people are looking for something new in educational methods. On the other hand, in the big province I represent, which extends from Ravensthorpe to the border of South Australia and back to Kalgoorlie, there are many places between Esperance and Norseman in the mallee districts where there are no schools at all. In some instances, the number of children available is not sufficient to admit of the Education Department providing schools, and the young people there have to participate in the correspondence courses. In many instances, the families are not financially strong enough to afford an adequate education for the children, and much of the young people's time is taken up by labour on the land, with the result that they suffer a corresponding loss from the standpoint of education.

I would like the Government to consider the provision of rural schools whereby children could be brought from outlying centres to central schools established in various parts of the outback country. Today there is a

home at Esperance where Goldfields children are accommodated for holidays and the enjoyment of the fresh sea air. I was wondering whether later on the Government, probably by the provision of a small subsidy, could enable the children to be sent from the mallee districts to Esperance where they could be accommodated in the home and receive some education while at the same time benefiting from the change of air, particularly as that could be done at a time when the premises were not required by the children from the Goldfields. The way in which some of the people are living in the outback districts is a crying shame; they are rearing big families and are handicapped in all directions.

Hon. C. B. Williams: They have nothing else to do.

Hon. G. BENNETTS: I have reared seven children myself on earnings just above the basic wage. I know the hardships suffered by the people in the back country. When my parents went to the Goldfields, we were taken there by team and my mother had five little children to care for. Such were the hardships suffered by the pioneers. We must look for something better; we must do the best we possibly can for our people. The rural schools will no doubt make a difference in the lives of the children and consideration must be given to their establishment.

The mining district occupies a big part of my province and I am greatly concerned about the mines getting into full production again. We know that large quantities of mining machinery were taken away during the war. I was acting on various committees at the time with the representatives of the Prime Minister and the Chamber of Mines. We all knew how vital it was for this machinery to be sent to various parts of the world for the protection of Australia and we agreed that the country's protection came first. That machinery was taken oversea and to various parts of Australia, where it was placed on foundations. Time will be required to dismantle it and, with the scarcity of shipping, some time may elapse before it is returned. However, we hope the machinery will be returned at an early date and again be available in order

that our mines may be in full production again. All these things, however, cannot be done overnight.

A great disadvantage in the mallee country, as on the Goldfields, is shortage of water. A good railway service and an adequate water supply are vital in our outback districts. At Norseman people are paying 10s. for 1,000 gallons of water. They consider that charge outrageous to people living in and developing our back country. I notice in the Speech that the Government has started to enlarge the Stirling and other dams, and this should help to overcome the shortage in our outback districts. I take it that the country people will benefit from the extra storage of water. I also notice in the Speech that the Government has initiated a programme for new locomotives and rolling-stock. This work is of paramount importance.

Speaking as a railwayman of 35 years' experience, I say without fear of successful contradiction that the new type of rolling-stock, wagons and so on, will prove of the greatest assistance to people in the outback districts, especially to farmers, who have been short of trucks for the transport of their commodities. There has been a shortage of trucks in my district for the transport of firewood and mining timber; but the greatest bugbear to the people of the Goldfields is the shortage of passenger cars. For the past two or three years, Goldfields residents have been queueing up all night in order to get accommodation to proceed to the coast. The Government has under construction a new type of car that will be a credit to the State; in fact, it will be outstanding in the Commonwealth. I myself have seen the car which has been built for inspection by engineers and others with a view to their making suggestions for its improvement. We must overcome the slowness of train travel.

The journey from Kalgoorlie to Perth now takes longer than it did 35 years ago. When I was a conductor then, we left Kalgoorlie at 5 o'clock in the afternoon and reached Perth at 9.20 a.m.; today, the train does not reach Perth until 10.20 a.m., a difference of one hour. Since air transport to the Goldfields has been inaugurated first-class passenger traffic has dropped considerably. We must therefore consider

the expenditure of additional money to brighten up the railway system. In my opinion, what is required on the Kalgoorlie line is a Diesel train that could leave Kalgoorlie at 8 o'clock in the evening and reach Perth, I should say, at 9 o'clock in the morning. The present train occupies 17 hours in running and its average speed is about 20 miles an hour.

Better facilities should be provided for second-class passengers on that line. People with families cannot afford to travel first class, and some of the second-class corridor carriages have not got doors and are therefore open to the weather, with the result that women and children are forced to sit in draughty compartments. Our Commissioner has recently been in the Eastern States and with his years of experience he should be able, as a result of his visit, to make suggestions to the Minister for a heating system to be installed in the trains. The local governing bodies on the Goldfields have for years been trying to get better conditions on the trains, but the Commissioner on all occasions has failed to give those bodies a favourable reply. We have not been successful in securing a revision of the freight charges for which we asked. Surely the people in the outlying districts are entitled to some consideration in this respect.

Mothers travelling with their families are unable to get hot water for the children's food. Nearly always the second-class passengers must wait until the first-class passengers have had their meal. I was on the train the other night and there was not sufficient food for the second-class passengers. I am continually receiving requests—I have one in my pocket at the moment—for Diesel coaches on the Esperance to Kalgoorlie line. The letter which I have states that 20 hours are occupied on the run from Coolgardie to Esperance. That is on what is called the mixed train; but there is a "flier" once a week and people would rather wait a week in Esperance to travel on that train. The provision of Diesel coaches on that line would not only afford better facilities for the people, which they are entitled to, but would make for decentralisation.

I have been going about the city of Perth recently and everywhere I went I found that every amenity was provided for the citizens.

dweller—picture shows, dances, beaches, swimming pools, and so on. People in the outback districts, particularly the women-folk, have only a camp or a little hut. During the day the husband can talk to his fellow workmen, but for the woman there is nothing. We should try to get community centres. There are certain railway camps each with accommodation for six to eight men. Two of these gangs could be put into a centre and then perhaps a school could be provided which could be used for the amusement of the parents of the children at night-time. The womenfolk would certainly then have more company. I hope the Government will do something in that direction.

Every consideration must be extended to the prospector. It is as a result of his efforts that mining communities spring up throughout the Goldfields. At present there are many returned soldiers prospecting the outback country. I saw some at Widgiemooltha the other day. They said they were doing well and thought there would be at least 600 men in the district by Christmas. These people require houses; but the prices which the Workers' Homes Board is charging are considered too high. What the outback people require is a small type of house costing in the vicinity of £400 or £500. I understand the board has only one application from Norseman for a workers' home; the people there consider the price too high. Yet there are people at Norseman living on verandahs. That is not right, especially when they have little children.

We are all aware that the slowness in proceeding with the erection of houses is due to the shortage of manpower in the timber-mills and that that shortage is caused by the absence of amenities at the mills. Consequently the timber is not available for building purposes. I would like to see more houses built in country districts. During my walks about the city I have seen many homes in course of erection. In the past 10 years only 10 houses have been erected in Boulder and 10 in Kalgoorlie, and naturally the Goldfields people are feeling somewhat hostile about the matter.

Rural hospitals are required in the outback districts and I notice that it is the Government's policy to provide them. They are especially needed for maternity cases. Owing to the slow transport service to which I have referred, people in the outback dis-

tricts are concerned about the lack of hospital accommodation. Anything we do in the way of provision of hospitals and schools will encourage people to settle in the country and rear families. We urgently need population and our best immigrant is the Australian-born child. It has been proved in this war that they are outstanding. The Australian soldier was placed on all fronts of all battlefields. We should encourage an increase in population even by going to the trouble and expense of giving amenities to these young parents, because by so doing, we would achieve something worth while. We would also keep them away from the many vices which might tempt them today.

Much of what I wanted to say has been said by other members, so I have little more to add. I am very interested in the question of T.B. in cattle in outback places. We have appointed a board in Kalgoorlie to deal with this matter, and I think that the subject will come before Parliament at an early date when members will have an opportunity of speaking on it. I think there is need for more testing of stock to prevent disease. In conclusion I would like to comment on Mr. Baxter's remarks in congratulating the new members. He will find that I will be a law-abiding citizen who will be of assistance to the people of Western Australia.

HON. J. A. DIMMITT (Metropolitan-Suburban) [5.47]: I desire to add my congratulations to those already expressed to you, Sir, on your elevation to the Presidency. It is a well-earned and richly-deserved honour. I also desire to congratulate Mr. Seddon on his election to the Chairmanship of Committees. I know that both you, Sir, and Mr. Seddon, will each do a good job in your respective offices. I trust that Mr. Seddon will soon be restored to health so that he may fulfil the duties attaching to his new position.

May I also compliment the Chief Secretary on his appointment to the Agent Generalship of Western Australia in London. We, who know him so well, fully realise his sterling qualities and are conscious of the wisdom of the Government's choice. We know that the high prestige which Western Australia enjoys in London will be safe in the hands of Mr. Kitson, but we are going to miss him in this Chamber. With all due respect to the

other members of his party, we realise that the Government will have a difficult task in appointing a successor—although I hope that between this session and the next that responsibility will be removed from the present Government so that it will be relieved of that embarrassment, anyhow. But whether a non-Labour or a Labour Government has the appointment of a new Leader in the Legislative Council, it will have a hard job to find one of equal ability to that of Mr. Kitson.

In moving the adoption of the Address-in-reply, Mr. Fraser laid special emphasis on the prices charged by contractors for homes which they were constructing for the public. He said that homes for which £1,000 was required could and should be sold for £900. In other words he suggests that the contractor is making a normal profit plus £100. That, in effect, is accusing the contractor of exploiting the public. I went to some trouble to discuss this matter with a contractor who is building 12 houses, some for private ownership and others under the Workers' Homes Board plan. He assured me that he considers himself extremely fortunate if he makes five per cent. net profit on the buildings he is constructing.

Hon. G. Fraser: Contractors are like lawyers, you know.

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: I have taken, as being authentic, the prices submitted by the Government in reply to my questions, and I give credit for the same honesty to the contractor as I gave to the Public Works Department, which supplied me with these figures yesterday.

Hon. G. Fraser: You can get a difference of £300 in the quotes of four different contractors for the one building.

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: I think Mr. Fraser is wrong, and I will say why. The figures supplied yesterday by the Housing Division of the Public Works Department show that there are certain costs for certain types of houses. These costs are comparable with the prices which have been arranged between the Master Builders' Association, the Builders' Guild and the Workers' Homes Board. The prices that were placed on the Table—that is, the costs of the buildings constructed by the Public Works Department under the day labour scheme—are within .05 of one per cent. to two per cent.

of these arranged prices. That indicates that the profit margin of the contractor is a very low one, and the profit margin revealed by these figures clearly indicates that Mr. Fraser's statement is a good deal wider of the real position.

Hon. G. Fraser: My remarks happen to disclose the actual facts.

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: I challenge them and an investigation of the figures supplied by the Public Works Department and those agreed upon by the builders and the Workers' Homes Board clearly indicate that the position is not exactly as Mr. Fraser has described it. I am sorry that circumstances are a little different, because when Mr. Fraser made his comments we had an audience of probably 500 people in the gallery, whereas tonight we have an audience of two lonely Pressmen. Nevertheless, I hope that some members of the public will read "Hansard" and see the reply to his rather challenging remarks.

It is pleasing to note in the Speech that the Government anticipates that shortly it will be allotting some of the dairy farm under the War Service Land Settlement Scheme. It is greatly to be regretted that the whole of this scheme is so belated. Many people who applied for blocks, and were desirous of becoming rural workers, have experienced a sense of frustration, and, as a result of long delays, have been compelled to seek employment elsewhere. Many who would have played a part in decentralisation, and made good settlers, have been forced to take employment in the metropolitan area. This simply adds to the congestion in the city and defeats the object of decentralisation.

The Lieut.-Governor's Speech indicates that the Government is fully seized with the importance of increasing the State's population, and that the question of immigration is receiving careful consideration. I am glad to know that the question of immigration is being dealt with because recently I had the opportunity of reading the report of the Immigration Advisory Committee which was submitted to the Commonwealth Parliament. One is struck, when reading that report, with the importance of immigration, and there is much food for thought as a result of perusing this interesting document. One thing that surprises me is that more publicity has not been given to this

report. After all, the populating of Australia means much to us. Our continued existence depends upon a large increase in our population. Our survival actually is dependent upon it. Western Australia, as the most sparsely populated portion of the Commonwealth, has a greater need in this regard than other States. Statistics show that although we are still a very young country our rate of natural increase has started on a downward trend.

If one reviews the incidence of the old-age pension one finds that the number of old-age pensioners, in proportion to the total population of the Commonwealth, is steadily increasing, so that each year more and more people become eligible for this pension. So, within measurable distance, Australia appears to be faced with a downward trend in population, and if we continue in that way we will, in a hundred years' time, have less population than at present. That position will come about unless we get some substantial reinforcements from overseas. These downward trends are not easily arrested. Statisticians estimate that the population of Great Britain, at the present rate, will, in 50 years' time, be 50 per cent. less than it is today. It, therefore, looks as if the natural source of supply of immigrants to Australia is not particularly bright. The supply of immigrants from the Old Country is likely to be very small, although I feel sure that our new Agent General will send, from England, as many immigrants as possible.

Hon. C. B. Williams: How many has he in his family? He should be a good advertisement in that way.

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: I do not know his marital state. There is just one other matter in regard to immigration and that is that the public should get out of its mind the idea that every fresh arrival in Australia is a competitor either in wages or in trade. Actually every fresh arrival is a consumer of our products, and we should not overlook the fact that every fresh arrival becomes a sharer in our public debt and a contributor to the taxing machine. Now, whilst so many overseas countries are in a disturbed state with their populations homeless, is the time, if we wish to attract immigrants, to establish a strong immigration policy.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Where are they going to get homes in Western Australia?

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: We will build the homes if we can get the people. We can send them out in the country districts, where homes are available, and not keep them in the city.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Hear, hear!

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: The Government should bear in mind that, when we have devised means of attracting immigrants, we must then devise means for holding them so that we can escape some of our previous experiences. Western Australia has much to gain from a sound immigration policy and it is worthwhile concentrating our best brains and our best energies on a good immigration scheme. I notice in the Speech that the Government intends to inaugurate a campaign against tuberculosis. I do not know whether members have taken the opportunity of viewing the exhibition of x-ray pictures and diagrams now being displayed at Trinity Hall, St. George's Terrace. But a very interesting exhibition is being shown there by the Anti-Tuberculosis Committee. It is well worth the while of every member to view that exhibition.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Every member of the public should support it.

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: I think every member of the public should go along and see how great a scourge tuberculosis is in this community. According to the statistics, three times as many people die from the effects of tuberculosis as die of all other communicable diseases. I understand that in New South Wales the Government has some mobile units, equipped with x-ray apparatus, going round the country districts and examining the public, so that every person in New South Wales will eventually be tested for signs of tuberculosis and preventive measures taken where necessary. I hope that this Government has some similar plan in mind, and that members will take the opportunity of visiting the exhibition I have mentioned.

The Lieut.-Governor's Speech also referred to other public health matters such as the dental and medical examination of children in the schools. The Government is apparently seized with the need for improving the medical facilities in this State, but I still think it has treated the Legislative Council in a cavalier fashion, in totally disregarding two motions passed by the House in suc-

cessive sessions for the appointment of a Royal Commission to investigate medical facilities, hospitalisation and the nursing profession. I am sure that an inquiry along the lines suggested by those motions would have given the Government a fund of information that would have proved of material help and guidance in its future activities in matters of public health.

I hope the Government will realise its ambition and be able to raise the school-leaving age. There are many other matters related to education that need some attention. I appreciate the difficulty of building schools, owing to the shortage of materials and the urgent need for homes, but there are many smaller matters that could easily be attended to. At the East Victoria Park school the sewing mistress is endeavouring to teach children their sewing exercises and lessons in rooms that have no electric light. During last month the children and the teacher were struggling to sew materials in light that was totally inadequate, yet the cost of installing electric light in those rooms would be comparatively small.

Hon. C. B. Williams: No wonder we lost the Victoria Park election!

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: That may be one of the reasons for it. It is really a bad thing, because the teacher with whom I discussed the matter suffered from severe headaches and eyestrain as the result of those lessons, and I am sure some of the children are having their sight permanently impaired, all for the want of the expenditure of a small amount of money. I think material and workmen are available for such matters as that. The unscientifically constructed desks are in need of replacement by more up-to-date types. Among the suburban schools that I visit from time to time I find many blackboards placed in bad positions and not lit to advantage as they could be with artificial light.

Hon. C. B. Williams: You are a member of Parliament, not a schoolmaster.

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: I am very much interested in the welfare of the children of this State.

Hon. C. B. Williams: The schoolmasters should know their duty.

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: There are many small matters that should be dealt with to

improve the conditions in our State schools matters that would not cost a great deal of money. The sanitary conveniences could be dealt with, to the advantage of the health of the children. What is perhaps soon to be regarded as a hardy annual is again referred to in the Lieut.-Governor's Speech—that is, some legislation to deal with the Legislative Council. I shall oppose any suggestion of a referendum being held on the same day as an election for the Legislative Assembly. I hope the Government will not reduce our political outlook to the same low standard as prevails in Commonwealth circles. I shall certainly oppose any suggestion of a referendum being held on the same day as a Legislative Assembly election. I think the Lieut.-Governor's Speech was exceedingly well delivered by the Commissioner and I have pleasure in supporting the Address-in-reply.

On motion by Hon. J. G. Hislop, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 6.7 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 7th August, 1946.

	Pa
Questions: Public Service, as to accumulated long service leave	1
Rural Relief Fund Act, as to consultation with Commonwealth for writing off amounts	1
Water supplies, as to Pingrup dam, cost, etc.	1
Sewerage, as to extension to new homes, Claremont electorate	1
Perth Hospital, as to completion and accommodation	1
Land settlement, as to forestry area rights	1
State Shipping Service, as to reduction of fares and freights, etc.	1
Address-in-reply, sixth day	1

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