

PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS

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**QUESTION: STATE CHILDREN AND CHARITIES.
Legislative Assembly, 2 August 1921, Hansard, p. 33**

Mrs COWAN asked the Premier:

1. Is there any reason for withholding the final report of the State Children Department Royal Commission?
2. If not, will he lay the Report on the Table?

The Premier replied:

1. No.
2. The report was laid on the Table during last session

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**QUESTION: STOCK AT NORTHERN PORTS.
Legislative Assembly, 11 August 1921, Hansard, p. 185.**

Mrs COWAN asked the Premier : In view of the high ruling prices of meat and the large number of stock available in the northern ports (some 60,000 to 70,000 in the Port Hedland district alone), can the Government offer any assistance or propose any scheme whereby the stock may be brought to market?

The Premier [James Mitchell] replied: I will make full inquiry into the position.

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**QUESTION: ESPERANCE RAILWAY AND JETTY.
Legislative Assembly, 11 August 1921, Hansard, p. 185.**

Mrs COWAN asked the Premier: What were the reasons for placing on the Estimates last year the sum of £40,000 for the construction of a jetty at Esperance Bay, and some \$20,000 towards the construction of the railway when the matter had been in abeyance for years, and when our financial condition is at so low an ebb?

The Premier replied:

- (a) No financial provision was made on last year's Estimates for construction of the jetty at Esperance Bay.

- (b) The resolution passed by the Legislative Assembly on 27 February 1918, - 'That in the opinion of this House the first railway to be constructed in pursuance of the programme of railway construction authorised by Parliament should be the Esperance-Northwood line', made it incumbent on the Government to proceed with this railway before the construction of others could be considered.

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**QUESTION: ROTTNEST ISLAND, ACCOMMODATION.
Legislative Assembly, 25 August 1921, Hansard, p. 423-424.**

Mrs COWAN asked the Colonial Secretary:

1. How many bungalows and flats were allotted to applicants for accommodation for the Rottnest season 1921-22 before the applications closed on the 3rd August?
2. How many personal friends and relations and relations of the officers in charge were allocated bungalows or flats.
3. To whom were the bungalows and flats allotted?
4. How many of the successful applicants for this year were also extended the same privilege last year, and in the years 1918-1919?
5. In view of the policy of the Board of Control to give preference to country and goldfields applicants, what is the proportion of successful town and country applicants?
6. Is a date stamp placed on application when received?
7. If too many applications are received, by what method are the allotments made?

The Colonial Secretary replied:

1. None.
2. None.
3. Bungalows-Locke, Lappin, Richards, Couper, Campbell, Chandler, Smith, Ranford, Millington, Owston, Toms, Rae, France, Ashby, McDonald, Mountain, Moore, Glew, Norman, Moore, Powell, Nossiter, Vincent, Smith, Connaughton, Membery, Nicholls, Young, Cowden, Lutz, Black, Polan, Simpson, Hale, Thiel, Brodribb. Flats-Parker, Broom, Sloss, Canning, Humphries, Ford, Nankivell, Chidlow, Royce, Harrison, Cullen, Blythe, Herbert, Bennett, Bailey, Rhodes.
4. With the exception of seven all these persons have been tenants of the Board at one period or another during the tourist seasons of 1918-19 and 1919-20.
5. Seventeen applications were received from the country and goldfields, and all were allotted the dates applied to.
6. No.
7. The Allotment is made by the Board.

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**QUESTION: SPEAKER'S GALLERY: PRIVILEGES OF WOMEN.
Legislative Assembly, 20 September 1921, Hansard, p. 821.**

Mr Speaker: The member for West Perth (Mrs Cowan) has given notice of a question to the Speaker, which will be answered without delay, and which will not appear on the Notice paper her first question is-

With respect to the admission of strangers to the Speaker's gallery, is a member of this House entitled to extend this privilege to women as well as men?

To that question I may answer that it has never been done, and I do not know that it has been done in any of the Parliaments of the Commonwealth.

Mr McCallum: Yes, it has.

Mr Speaker: If it has been done it has been done without my knowledge. The second part of the question says:-

If this not apply to women, under which Standing Order is the position governed?

The standing orders do not control the Speaker's gallery. Tradition has handed down the Speaker's gallery to the Speaker and he allows members to take privileged guests to seats in the Speaker's gallery. The member for West Perth is on the same footing as any other hon. Member. No member is privileged to ask a lady to take a seat in the Speaker's gallery. On the other hand, the member for West Perth has the right to take gentlemen to the Speaker's gallery.

Mrs Cowan: Am I in order in moving that your ruling be disagreed with?

Mr Speaker: I have not given a ruling; I have simply told the hon. Member what is the position. If the house decides otherwise I cannot help it. The Speaker's gallery has been handed down to the Speaker and is controlled by him, and I am doing what previous Speakers have done.

Mr Corboy: I would like to ask, Mr Speaker, without notice, if you will extend the same privilege to ladies as is extended to gentlemen.

Mr Speaker: I have already answered that question.

Mr Corboy: I am asking if you will extend the same privileges.

Mr Speaker: I answer, "No".

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**QUESTION: STATE CHILDREN DEPARTMENT.
Legislative Assembly, 21 September 1921, Hansard, p. 858.**

Mrs COWAN asked the Colonial Secretary: In view of the widespread interest being taken not only in this State, but in the Eastern States and in New Zealand, as the result of inquiries made on behalf of Western Australia by the member for North Perth, and the former member for South Fremantle, into the management of State Children Departments in those places, will the Government cause to be printed a limited number of copies of the interim report of the select committee appointed by this House, and the report by the Royal Commission subsequently appointed by the Government to inquire into the management of the State Children of Western Australia?

The Colonial Secretary replied: Yes.

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**QUESTION: HOSPITAL FOR THE INSANE,
Accommodation for Patients.
Legislative Assembly, 21 September 1921, Hansard, p. 859.**

Mrs COWAN asked the Colonial Secretary :

1. Is there any truth in the rumour that the Government contemplate affording additional accommodation, or providing new buildings for the insane, and that the site which has been favourably reported upon is at Jandakot?
2. Why has not better use been made of the property acquired at Whitby Falls, where a considerable area of good land could be made productive ?
3. In view of the reported over-crowding of the institution at Claremont, would it not be possible to (a) convert the carpenter's shop and the tailor's shop, where at present two men are employed, into wards, and thus provide accommodation for about 40 patients, and (b) remove the six nurses who are present in occupation of the isolation ward available for about 30 patients.
4. Is the institution at Claremont actually overcrowded ?
5. If not, are there any empty beds there, and if so how many?

The Colonial Secretary replied:

1. Yes.
2. Full use is being made of Whitby. There is no considerable area of good land there.
3. (a) No; the buildings are unsuitable and they are required for the purpose for which they are now being utilised;

(b) there are 20 nurses sleeping in the isolation block and no other accommodation is available for them.
4. Yes. The institution was designed for 727: there are now in residence 1,082; ten day-rooms have been turned into dormitories.
5. Answered by No. 4.

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**QUESTION: HOSPITAL FOR THE INSANE,
The Hospital Dairy.
Legislative Assembly, 21 September 1921, Hansard, p. 859.**

Mrs COWAN asked the Colonial Secretary:

1. Is it correct that the milk produced at the Claremont hospital dairy is mostly sold to outside hospitals, and that the patients at Claremont are given concentrated milk?
2. If this dairy has been run at a loss, what was the loss last year, and what has been the total loss to date?
3. Would it not be more profitable to remove the dairy to Whitby, increase the herd, and place it under capable management?

The Colonial Secretary replied:

1. Yes; between 50 and 60 gallons of milk produced at the dairy is supplied to Claremont Hospital for the Insane, and about five gallons of concentrated milk is used.
2. The loss last year was £623; total loss since inception of the dairy in 1912, £898.
3. No; Whitby could not carry the herd; the dairy is at present under capable management.

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**QUESTION: HOTEL METROPOLE, SEWERAGE.
Legislative Assembly, 27 September 1921, Hansard, p. 1039**

Mrs COWAN asked the Minister for Works:

1. Why is the Hotel Metropole permitted to remain unsewered when owners of other premises are compelled to connect their premises with the sewerage system?
2. Will he in the interests of public health, issue instructions that the necessary connections be made?
3. If not, why not?

The Minister for Works replied:

1. The Hotel Metropole was connected with the sewerage scheme of metropolitan area on 20th May 1913.
2. and 3 Answered by No. 1.

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**QUESTION: KING EDWARD HOSPITAL, EMPLOYEE.
Legislative Assembly, 27 September 1921, Hansard, p. 1039.**

Mrs COWAN asked the Colonial Secretary:

1. Has he seen the paragraph in the "Australian" newspaper of the 23 September stating that a male adult (an Imperial soldier) is employed at the King Edward Hospital doing casual work at 7s per week?
2. Is this statement correct?

The Premier (for the Colonial Secretary) replied:

1. No,
2. Yes. This man agreed to accept one shilling per diem at the King Edward Memorial Hospital as an alternative to re-entering the Old Men's Home, where he had previously been an inmate. He is physically unable to do much work.

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QUESTION: ESPLANADE FAIR GROUNDS.
Legislative Assembly, 29 September 1921, Hansard, p. 2240-2241.

Mrs COWAN asked the Premier:

1. Is it correct that the portion of the foreshore known as 'Carnival Square' has been leased to a private citizen named Mr Martin?
2. If it is the Government's policy to lease part of the esplanade, why were no tenders publicly called for ?
3. For what length of time has the lease been granted, and at what weekly or other rental?
4. Is it a fact that Mr Martin, as a sole lessee, can use the ground to organise and run any entertainment, should he so desire, for his own personal profit?
5. Is it the Premier's intention to lay all the papers in connection with this matter on the Table of the House?
6. Did he authorise the lease, seeing that his department has the authority to deal with all public reserves and gardens?

The Premier replied:

1. No. The grounds have been rented to the Ugly Men's Association and Silver Chain League for their fixtures, and for the balance of the summer to Mr Martin.
2. A number of offers were received and considered during the year past but owing to impossible demands by the applicants fell through.
3. Till the end of next summer at a rental from time to time, and for three further terms at increased rates if occupied.
4. As tenant he may conduct any entertainment which the law allows.
5. Yes.
6. The arrangement was made by the State Gardens Board for the purpose of obtaining revenue which is used to improve the foreshore. The improvements already made have proved of great convenience to the public.

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**QUESTION: HOSPITAL FOR THE INSANE,
ROYAL COMMISSION.
Legislative Assembly, 4 October 1921, Hansard, p.1056.**

Mr RICHARDSON (for Mrs Cowan) asked the Colonial Secretary:

1. In view of the fact that there are 363 women and children in the Claremont Hospital for the Insane, has it been definitely decided that no woman is to be included in the personnel of the Royal Commission of inquiry?
2. If so why?

The Colonial Secretary replied:

1. The Commission has been appointed, and the Government see no reason to alter or add to the personnel.
2. Answered by No. 1.

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**QUESTION: OIL PROSPECTING AREAS.
Legislative Assembly, 19 October 1921, Hansard, p. 1328.**

Mrs. COWAN asked the Minister for Mines:

1. Has he seen the map published in the last issue of the *Sunday Times* which discloses that the whole of the State has been taken up for oil prospecting purposes?
2. Was it contemplated when the Mining Act Amendment Act was passed last year that such enormous tracts of country should be taken up by single individuals?
3. Is £5 per annum the total revenue that the State is deriving from the granting of each of these enormous leases?
4. Apart from Freney and Oakes and one or two other names of leaseholders that are known to be genuine, will he inform the House:
 - (a) who the other licensees are;
 - (b) what proof he has of their *bona fide* and, whether it is true, as many of them have declared, that they have taken up these areas for speculative purposes only?
5. If all the applicants are bona fide, how will, say, A.J. Mellor, who holds a lease in the most inaccessible part of the State, be able to comply with the conditions to commence and continue the search for oil within 30 days?

The Minister for Mines replied:

1. The map published by the *Sunday Times* shows areas applied for, which embrace the whole of the State, but several of these applications have not yet been dealt with. See further reply to question No. 2.
2. Yes. Large areas are necessary when making investigations regarding the possibility of the occurrence of oil, and such areas are only available under a license to prospect. The policy of the Department, however, is to limit the area where it is reasonably accessible and as an instance it is not intended to grant the application as applied for and shown on the map referred to as O.P.A. 31 and O.P.A. 36, each of which will require to be divided into at least six separate areas. As a further instance of this policy will the hon. Member compare the sizes of the licenses granted in the South-West which is easily accessible, with those in the balance of the State, which is not so accessible. Further, as a precaution against the shepherding of large areas, the conditions of the license under Regulation 25b, paragraph (c), provide for 'cancellation by the Minister, or to amendment of the description of the occupied land by reduction of the area thereof by the Minister upon application by any person for a license to occupy any portion of the land occupied by a licensee if prospecting thereon by the licensee is not being carried out to the satisfaction of the Minister'.
3. Yes. This is only a registration fee and is not intended as a method of obtaining revenue, our anxiety being in the direction of enabling and assisting in the discovery of oil. When such is found in payable quantities a lease must be taken

up in lieu of the permit, and the provision as to payment of royalty when oil is discovered will satisfy our anxiety in regard to revenue.

4. I am unable to answer this question in the form it is submitted by the hon. Member for it infers that some of the applicants are not genuine. So far as I am able to ascertain all the applicants are genuine, and, as proof of their *bona fides*, are required to enter a bond of £50 as security for the due performance by the licensee or his transferee of the conditions of the license. With respect to query (a) in the question under reply, the applicants are as shown on the map referred to.
5. I am not in a position to state when or how Mr. A. J. Mellor or any other licensee proposes to commence and to continue the search for oil. Section 7 of the Mining Act Amendment Act of 1920 grants me discretionary power to extend the time beyond the 30 days mentioned in the question.

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**QUESTION: AVON VALLEY LANDS UNUSED.
Legislative Assembly, 19 October 1921, Hansard, p. 328.**

Mrs COWAN asked the Premier:

1. Has he seen the suggestions by Mr Surveyor Lefroy regarding the acquisition of a considerable area of land in the Avon Valley, which is not being put to practical use?
2. Is it his intention to lay a upon the Table of the House the report furnished by Mr Lefroy who conducted the classification on that large area, which is within seven miles of a railway, and a summary of whose recommendations is contained in the report of the Surveyor General presented to this house on 27th September?

The Premier replied:

1. Yes.
2. I will lay papers on the House.

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**QUESTION: HOSPITAL FOR THE INSANE, ROYAL
COMMISSION, Case of F. Cunningham
The Legislative Assembly, 30 November 1921, Hansard,
p. 1998.**

Mrs COWAN asked the Colonial Secretary: Can he instruct the Royal Commission now sitting to inquire into the case of F. Cunningham, who alleges that he is now fully detained in the asylum?

The Colonial Secretary replied: I have no power to instruct the Royal Commission.

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**QUESTION: JUVENILE GAMBLING, Carnival Square,
Charitable Appeals.
Legislative Assembly, 7 December 1921, Hansard, p. 2185-
2186.**

Mrs COWAN asked the Colonial Secretary:

1. Is he aware that gambling is said to be freely indulged in by young people and children per medium of spinning jennies, etc, in the various charitable appeals held from time to time in Carnival Square?
2. Can he not do anything to prevent this state of things from occurring?

The Colonial Secretary replied:

1. No.
2. If I find that children gamble in the way suggested, I will certainly take steps to prevent a continuance of it.

Attitude of Education Department.

Mrs COWAN asked the Premier:

1. Is it a fact that the Education Department permitted metropolitan State Schools to extend their patronage and take part in gambling per medium of spinning jennies, etc. at the various charitable appeals held from time to time in Carnival Square?
2. If so, is it the intention of the Government to see that the laws against gambling are properly enforced, and to instruct the Commissioner of Police to take action against those offending?

The Premier replied:

1. No.
2. Answered by No. 1.

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QUESTION: LOTTERIES AND SWEEPS
Legislative Assembly, 9 August 1922, Hansard, p. 151.

Mrs COWAN asked the Colonial Secretary:

1. Has his attention been drawn to an advertisement in the personal columns of the *West Australian* of the 3rd and 4th instant reading: 'Victoria Park Boys' Club Fund, Melbourne Cup sweep. By permission. Tickets 1s., obtainable at principal hotels'.
2. Has permission been obtained from him or his department to conduct this sweep?
3. If not, will he make inquiries as to who gave permission?
4. Has permission been given within the last few months to any industrial or religious body to conduct lotteries or sweeps?
5. If lotteries and sweeps are illegal, by what authority and in what circumstances can permission be given?

The Minister for Agriculture (for the Colonial Secretary) replied:

1. Yes.
2. No.
3. Permission was given by the Commissioner of Police.
4. Yes.
5. Cabinet decided in April last that if the law was enforced in the case of raffles, sweeps, and art unions promoted in aid of charitable and other worthy objects, with the approval and support of a large section of the public, it would mean the closing up of many channels of benevolence, and departing from a rule followed by all previous Governments. It was considered, however, that such movements should be regulated and the Commissioner of Police was entrusted with the carrying out of Cabinet's decision.

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**QUESTION: SEWERAGE, WEST PERTH.
Legislative Assembly, 9 August 1922, Hansard, p. 151.**

Mrs COWAN asked the Minister for Works:

1. When do the Government intend to extend the sewerage system to that portion of West Perth which has not yet been connected with the system?
2. Will he explain whether there is any reason for this important work not being carried out?

The Minister for Works replied:

1. The proposal is under consideration.
2. The portion of West Perth referred to cannot be connected with the existing system, and must wait until the scheme for taking in Subiaco is decided upon. The cost would be about £200,000, and household connections would cost at least £250,000 extra.

Mr Wilson: A mere bagatelle.

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**QUESTION: FORESTS COMMISSION.
Legislative Assembly, 9 August 1922, Hansard, p. 151**

Mrs COWAN asked the Premier:

1. Can he give an idea as to how much longer the deliberations of the Forests Commission are likely to last?
2. Was it intended, when this Commission was appointed, that its ramifications should be as wide as the evidence published in the newspapers indicates, namely, the investigations of the leasing to the Kurrawang Firewood Company of a portion of the Government railways and also the value of spark arresters and nullifiers?
3. Will he inform the House what the Commission has cost to date?

The Premier replied:

1. The Commission expects to conclude the taking of evidence within one month, after which the report will have to be prepared.
2. The Commission was empowered to inquire into the administration of the Forests Act, 1918, generally. I am advised by the Chairman that the evidence taken was within the scope of the powers vested in the commission.
3. £18s.8d.

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QUESTION: RAILWAYS, OVERHEAD BRIDGE, MELBOURNE ROAD.

Legislative Assembly, 13 September 1922, Hansard, p. 718.

Mrs COWAN asked the Minister for Railways:

1. Is he aware of the great inconvenience, and possible danger to life, caused to the public by the absence of an overhead bridge at Melbourne-road railway crossing?
2. Is there any possibility of such a requirement being provided for the use of citizens?
3. If so when is it likely to be proceeded with?

The Minister for Railways replied:

1. Some inconvenience necessarily occurs at all railway crossings which are provided with gates.
2. Yes.
3. When funds are available.

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**QUESTION: FORESTS COMMISSION, REPORT
Legislative Assembly, 5 October 1922, Hansard, p. 1004.**

Mrs COWAN asked the Premier:

1. Has the Forests Commission which was appointed in December of last year completed its labours?
2. If so, has he received the report ?
3. If not, has he any idea whether it will be presented before the close of the present session?
4. Will he request that it be presented at an early date, so that members may have an opportunity of analysing it before the Forests Department estimates are considered?

The Minister for Works (for the Premier) replied:

1. I am advised that the report is nearing completion.
2. Answered by No. 1.
3. and 4. The Commissioners expect to present their report shortly.

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**QUESTION: WHEAT FOR HOME GRISTING.
Legislative Assembly, 7 December 1922, Hansard, p. 666.**

Mrs COWAN asked the Minister for Agriculture:

1. Does he know that prime wheat for home gristing is almost unobtainable by householders at present?
2. Is he aware that, to make use of the only quality on sale, it is necessary to spend it out first and pick the foreign matter from it by hand?
3. Can he suggest how the really prime article can be obtained, or inform consumers whether the Wheat Board will inquire into the scarcity at present existing?

The Minister for Agriculture replied:

1. No. Marketable wheat, i.e. wheat of fair average quality standard of the State always contains a small percentage of foreign matter.
2. Specially cleaned wheat is obtainable from flour mills where the demand warrants the expense.
3. There is sufficient wheat on hand, including supplies already at mills, to meet local requirements till the new season's wheat is harvested.

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QUESTION: ELECTORAL, COMPULSORY VOTING
Legislative Assembly, 9 January 1923, Hansard, p. 2453.

Mrs COWAN asked the Premier:

1. Whether the Electoral Department is in a possession of information relating to compulsory voting in other parts of the world?
2. If so-particularly in view of the apathy displayed at the recent Federal Elections-will the Government cause to be prepared a brief return showing the results that have been attained in those countries where that system of voting is in force?
3. If it is possible to secure this return, will the Government have it made available before consideration of the Electoral Districts Bill is resumed?

The Premier replied:

- 1 Yes, except in regard to new States created by the war.
2. Yes and the information, in round figures, in regard to the percentage of votes cast is as follows:-Queensland , increased from 60 to 90 per cent.; Belgium increased from 60 to 94 per cent.; Austria, increased in from 55 to 80 per cent.; Spain increased from 50 to 76 per cent.: five Cantons in Switzerland, increased from 60 to 80 per cent. It should be explained that the low percentage in regard to Spain is due to the illiteracy of the population in certain provinces.
3. See reply to No.2.

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**QUESTION: GROUP SETTLEMENTS, Medical Care and
Maternity Cases
Legislative Assembly, 20 September 1923, Hansard,
p. 780-781.**

Mrs COWAN asked the Premier:

1. Have the Government done anything to provided any kind of medical care for the group settlements?
2. Is it not possible to place this most necessary matter in the hands of the Medical Department to deal with?
3. If not, why not?
4. Have arrangements been made at any of the group settlements to enable maternity cases to receive proper care and attention?
5. If not, why not?
6. Is the Premier aware that the Busselton hospital midwifery ward is closed and there is no private midwifery hospital in the town to take midwifery cases.
7. When was the Busselton midwifery ward closed, and for what reason?
8. What arrangements are now being made to handle midwifery cases?
9. Is the Premier aware that correspondence addressed to Busselton hospital on the 7th August asking what medical attention is given there had not been replied to on the 7th September, and probably has not been replied to yet?
10. Would it not be possible to provide one shack at each group where maternity cases could at least be given privacy?
11. Is the Premier aware that otherwise women must remain in huts which are like one room, and which husband and children must share for sleeping and eating: that these huts are in many instances without windows, and that nothing has been done to make them fly-proof?
12. Has any attempt been made by the Government to secure the services of any trained midwife who may happen to reside on a group settlement, or provide in any way for the needs of expectant mothers.

The Premier replied:

1. Yes.
2. It is in the hands of the Medical Department.
3. Answered by No. 2.

4. No; but provision has been made at Busselton, and consideration is being given to the establishment of a hospital at Margaret River.
5. Answered by No.4.
6. No maternity ward has ever been established in connection with the Busselton hospital. A private maternity hospital was recently closed, but a new building with accommodation for four cases has been registered. 7, Answered by No.6.
8. In addition to the private maternity hospital, the Government have approved of plans for a maternity ward as determined by the local hospital committee.
9. No.
10. No. A small hospital will be erected at Margaret River.
11. No. The temporary homes that I have seen are comfortable, clean and well kept. Group settlers are self-respecting people.
12. No. Group settlers are in the same position as ordinary settlers so far as medical attention is concerned. There are Government or assisted hospitals in many centres, including Jarnadup, Busselton-the head-quarters of group settlement in those districts. Peel estate groups are near to Fremantle. A subsidised doctor is in practice at Margaret River, who will be available for group settlers and old residents.

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