

# Legislative Council,

Thursday, 2nd August, 1923.

	PAGE
Questions: Soldier Settlement ... ..	86
Group Settlement, costs ... ..	86
Sandalwood Industry ... ..	86
Wooroloo Sanatorium, migrant patients ...	86
Bill: Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act Amend- ment, 1s. ... ..	86
Address-in-reply, fourth day ... ..	86

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

## QUESTION—SOLDIER SETTLEMENT.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER (for Hon. H. Stewart) asked the Minister for Education: In connection with soldier settlement, what are the latest figures regarding—(a), number of applicants for land; (b), number granted land qualification certificates; (c) number of applications rejected; (d) number of applications deferred; (e), number of soldiers settled; (f), number to whom loans have been granted; (g), average expenditure per soldier settler?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: (a) 3,116; (b) 6,608; (c) 516; (d) 995; (e) 4,910; (f) 4,910; (g) £1,120, including expenditure on lands not yet settled.

## QUESTION—GROUP SETTLEMENT, COSTS, ETC.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER (for Hon. H. Stewart) asked the Minister for Education: 1, In what group settlements are settlers residing in their respective cottages on their own blocks? 2, For each of the group settlements referred to, (a) what is the cost per cottage; (b) what is the area of cleared land per respective settler; (c) what is the cost per acre of such cleared land; (d) what stock and plant have been supplied to each settler; (e) what is the total indebtedness per settler; (f) what steps are being taken to ensure production by settlers of agricultural produce which will enable them to make a living and meet their interest obligations?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: A return will be prepared setting out the information desired.

## QUESTION—SANDALWOOD INDUSTRY.

Hon. T. MOORE (for Hon. J. W. Hickey) asked the Minister for Education: 1, In view of the dissatisfaction existing in the sandalwood industry, will the Government make a definite statement as to their intentions in connection with the industry? 2, If so, when may the statement be expected.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: 1, As stated in the Assembly on the 1st instant, subject to a determination of the dollar exchange values, the Government intend to accept the most favourable tender for sandalwood pulling, operating as from the 1st September next, after which date all British born or naturalised British subjects who were holders of licenses at 30th June last will be registered and employed. 2, Answered by No. 1.

## QUESTION—WOOROLOO SANATORIUM, MIGRANT PATIENTS.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY asked the Minister for Education: 1, Is it a fact that there are migrant patients in the Wooroloo Sanatorium? 2, If so, how many?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: 1, Yes. 2, Two. One, an Imperial soldier who arrived in Western Australia on 16/10/1922, and was admitted to Wooroloo on 5/7/23. The other, a civilian case, arrived in Western Australia on 21/4/1923, and was admitted to Wooroloo a month later.

## BILL—PROTECTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS ACT AMENDMENT.

Introduced by Hon. J. Duffell and read a first time.

## ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

### Fourth Day.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

Hon. H. SEDDON (North-East) [4.36]: In supporting the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply, may I say how gratified all members, including myself, are to see that the prospects are so bright for the coming year. There is no doubt if we continue to have the beneficial rains which have fallen so far this year, we shall have a record harvest and the whole State will benefit accordingly. As to the Governor's Speech, one must express one's self in favour of many portions of it. There is ground for regret, however, that greater attention was not paid to certain interests which are as vital to the advancement of Western Australia as those which were stressed. While I cordially support the scheme of settlement for the South-West as being particularly adapted for the people from the Old Country, both regarding climatic conditions and the method of training, I cannot help regretting that some attention has not been paid to other portions of the State. We must recognise that Western Australia is a very large State, and one would be inclined to say that it is almost impossible for the affairs of such a State to be administered from one centre with that fairness and justice to all as would be possible in a smaller State such as Victoria. That is one of the strongest arguments of those who ad-

vocate the subdivision of Western Australia into smaller States. That fact is recognised by the present Government, inasmuch as we have a Minister appointed to administer one particular part, namely, the North-West. It would be beneficial were we to follow that practice in other directions so that we could have Ministers appointed specially to deal with other parts of Western Australia. There is every ground for believing that it would be a good thing to appoint a Minister to deal with the wheat belt. That is a district which has interests restricted to that portion of the State. There is also very strong ground indeed for advocating the appointment of a Minister to control the goldfields. After all, that is a district which has its own peculiar problems to be dealt with, and one acquainted with all the circumstances connected with, and having local knowledge of, the circumstances, could give better attention to that portion of the State. The adoption of such a course would make for a better balanced policy all round. At the present time we are confronted with the problem of unemployment. That is largely due to the fact that we have concentrated on one particular form of State activities; I refer to agriculture. I have no fault to find with the Government fostering agriculture, for we recognise that industry as one of the most stable and desirable of industries to foster, but if we do not develop other interests as well, we will be confronted with those peculiar problems which arise in agricultural countries. Agriculture makes a demand for labour at certain seasons of the year. That is characteristic of all agricultural countries. For instance, that applies to Canada, where thousands of labourers pass over to take in the harvest. In the Argentine and all other agricultural communities, there is a demand for agricultural labourers at certain times, and when there is comparative slackness the workers are thrown on the labour market. We have that state of affairs in Western Australia. That is recognised by the Government, who take steps to provide employment, during the slack periods, by the expenditure of loan moneys. It is a policy that could well be extended. It might be extended to include secondary industries. It could be provided that secondary industries established here should arrange their programme of production on a short-term period, and that could be taken advantage of to absorb the surplus labour which is now unemployed. That principle has been adopted in certain countries. It was adopted in the American motor car industry. There they planned a campaign on a six months basis of high speed production during that time, and they were able to take the labour offering during the slack period, when the labour market was congested. Those men were released at the end of that period and were absorbed in other avenues of employment then offering. We can apply the same principle to the public

works here and to the development of our secondary industries. Mining is one industry specially adapted to that principle. The best time for prospecting is that period when other industries are slack. When prospectors go out in the winter months, they find plenty of water and feed for their horses; thus the winter months have proved to be the best period for prospecting. However, at the present time parties go out practically indiscriminately and they have to put up with a considerable amount of hardship owing to the drying up of the water supplies and the perishing of feed. I refer to that as an opportunity for the Government to extend their operations regarding the mining industry and make their arrangements on a seasonal basis, which will tend to absorb our unemployed.

Hon. J. Cornell: The State has three parties now and as many as apply for assistance can get it.

Hon. H. SEDDON: That is so, but there is scope for a scheme of prospecting on a basis pre-arranged annually. The basis would be arranged by the Geological Department, who would select certain districts, and prescribe the work to be done under supervision there. Such a scheme, worked year by year, would be of considerable advantage to all concerned and it would provide information for future reference by the Geological Department.

Hon. J. Nicholson: That would depend upon the people available and fit to take up that class of work.

Hon. H. SEDDON: There are many unemployed who could do manual work under the supervision of a trained prospector working on a plan formulated by the geologists.

Hon. J. Cornell: Your argument indicates full time prospectors being paid by the State.

Hon. H. SEDDON: Not altogether. There are men available to undertake prospecting on a basis of that description even at the present time, and these men would be able to do very good work.

Hon. J. Duffell: All the men of the party would not necessarily be prospectors?

Hon. H. SEDDON: The man in charge of the party would have to be a prospector.

Hon. J. Duffell: And he would have under his men less experienced than himself?

Hon. H. SEDDON: Yes.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Who is to find the money?

Hon. H. SEDDON: Money is being found for prospecting at present, and I think we could get beneficial results in the way of a tabulation of information in the department for those who desired to go out prospecting later on. There is a revival of interest in mining and we should do our best to foster it. There are opportunities ahead of the mining industry and, if the Government show a determination to foster it by providing all possible information, their action will make a good impression. Therefore I am sorry to see such brief reference in the Governor's Speech to the industry. I do not think that the reference there made represents by any means the full activities the Minister has undertaken.

It does not do him justice, and the impression created in the other States as well as in Western Australia by this slight reference is not a favourable one. Had there been more extended reference to the activities of the department, it would have been better for the industry. Deep mining offers a very wide opportunity for the development of the industry in this State. Apart from the mines on the Golden Mile and one or two others elsewhere, none of the mines in this State have been worked to any great depth. At Coolgardie a number of the mines were very rich on the surface, but when the water level was reached, the inflow proved so great that it could not be coped with. Values, too, decreased with depth; a poor zone was encountered. In those cases where companies were strong enough to carry on through the poor zone, values have improved. As instances of this I might mention the Great Fingal, the Sons of Gwalia, and the mines on the Golden Mile. Once the poor zone had been passed through, the companies were able to carry on profitably. Possibly something might be done to encourage companies to take up some of these old mines, which were so rich on the surface, and develop them at depth. I know that such a policy commends itself to the Minister. I bring it under notice of members here because it seems to be a means of restoring optimism, without which the industry cannot progress.

Hon. J. Cornell: The Mines Department give thousands of pounds by way of subsidy to-day. How much further do you want them to go?

Hon. H. SEDDON: When it comes to shaft sinking, a considerable amount of assistance could be given to aid the development of some of these abandoned mines. It might pay to have an assay survey made of some of the abandoned mines with a view to determining what has been left in them. Many mines were abandoned in the early days because costs were so high. If some of these mines were re-spectected, it might now be possible to work them profitably.

Hon. H. Stewart: A good many have been tried; I myself sampled a few.

Hon. H. SEDDON: Quite so, but many of them might repay investigation.

Hon. J. Cornell: The trouble is that private individuals will not put their capital into mining.

Hon. H. SEDDON: Mr. Cornell's reference to the need for capital shows that we must establish confidence in mining. In the past there have been floated many mining concerns that have not proved beneficial to the industry. I commend the Minister on the action he has taken when an attempt has been made to boost a show unfairly; he has had an investigation made and has published the reports for the benefit of those interested. This is a step in the right direction. If we can convince mining investors that the department will not permit them to be victimised by false reports, and that they will get a fair deal, we shall be doing much to restore confidence in the industry. This,

in turn, will lead to more capital being made available for mining development.

Hon. J. Cornell: The Minister ought to go a little further and put a few of those concerned inside.

Hon. H. SEDDON: Such a step as that might not be undesirable. There have been instances of people having been misled and ruthlessly robbed, and much harm has resulted. The boom of two or three years ago was responsible for many people losing their money; they were ruthlessly exploited. If the money then subscribed had been wisely expended, it would have given a considerable fillip to the industry.

Hon. J. Duffell: What about low-grade propositions?

Hon. H. SEDDON: They require a large amount of capital and the wisest management. There are opportunities in Western Australia for developing big low-grade propositions. There are mines on the Eastern Goldfields belt which, if costs could only be reduced by a few shillings, would provide employment for a large number of people. Capital is needed, however, and before that capital can be obtained, confidence must be restored. I should like to see the Government adopt an aggressive policy with regard to mining. One great advantage is that the wealth won from mining goes into circulation regularly—money won from agriculture comes in only at certain seasons—and proves most useful to carry us over a slack time. I support the motion, and conclude with the hope that this year will witness a substantial advance in this most important industry.

On motion by Hon. C. F. Baxter, debate adjourned.

#### ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. J. Ewing—South-West) [4.52]: I move—

*That the House at its rising adjourn till Wednesday, the 8th August.*

Hon. J. A. GREIG (South-East): I should like to move an amendment that we adjourn till Tuesday week. The horse parade will keep most members away on Wednesday next, and, as we have no Bills to go on with, it would hardly be reasonable to expect country members to attend for one day's sitting.

The PRESIDENT: I would remind the hon. member that it is very unusual to take the business out of the hands of the Minister, who is responsible for the work of the House. I am sure the Minister will meet the hon. member as far as he can, but in this instance, it may not be possible to do so.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. J. Ewing—South-West—in reply): As the President, who will be absent from the city, cannot return until Wednesday next, I think we might reasonably extend to him the courtesy of adjourning over Tuesday, but I

cannot agree to an adjournment for a week because so little business has been done. Much as I would like to meet the hon. member's wishes, I should not feel justified in doing so on this occasion.

Question put and passed.

*House adjourned at 4.54 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly,

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	PAGE
Questions: Police recruits ... ..	89
Migration, State control of officers ... ..	89
Hospital for Insane, extension ... ..	89
Kendenup settlers ... ..	89
Wheat <i>ex</i> Narrogin ... ..	89
Geraldton harbour works ... ..	89
Address-in-reply, third day ... ..	89

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

### QUESTION—POLICE RECRUITS.

Mr. CORBOY (for Mr. Munsie) asked the Minister controlling Police: 1, Is it a fact that a recruit, or recruits, for the police force have been employed painting and calsominating the Perth Police Station within the past six months? 2, If so, is it the intention of the Government to continue this practice?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: 1, Yes. 2, When necessary for hygienic purposes. The police regulations provide that members of the force are engaged not only for police duties, but for fatigue or any other work they may be ordered to do.

### QUESTION—MIGRATION, STATE CONTROL OF OFFICERS.

Mr. J. THOMSON asked the Premier: In view of the general dissatisfaction regarding the selection of migrants to this State, will he confer with the Prime Minister when he passes through Fremantle on his way to the Empire Conference, and point out to him (Mr. Bruce) the urgency and the distinct advantage it would be to this State if we returned to the old system of having our migration officers under the direct control of the Agent General for Western Australia?

The PREMIER replied: No. We have our own migration officers at Australia House.

### QUESTION—HOSPITAL FOR THE INSANE.

Mr. J. THOMSON asked the Colonial Secretary: 1, Is it a fact that the Government propose to build at Point Resolution an extension of the Hospital for the Insane? 2, If so, before starting the building, will he allow this House to discuss the proposal?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: 1, The Government contemplate erecting a Mental Reception and Convalescent Home at Point Resolution. 2, Parliament will have an opportunity of discussing the proposal when a Bill to permit a portion of the Class A Reserve to be used for the purpose is before the House.

### QUESTION—KENDENUP SETTLERS.

Mr. HICKMOTT asked the Premier: 1, Has his attention been directed to a paragraph which appeared in this morning's "West Australian," describing the distress of settlers on the Kendenup estate? 2, If so, what action does he propose to take to relieve the situation?

The PREMIER replied: 1, No. 2, The Government have done all that is possible to help the people of Kendenup. £1,550 has been expended on relief works.

### QUESTION—WHEAT *ex* NARROGIN.

Mr. MONEY asked the Minister for Railways—What quantity of wheat has been: (a) Railed from and through Narrogin to Fremantle during the 12 months ending 30th June last? (b) From and through Narrogin to Bunbury during the same period?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: (a) The tonnage of wheat railed from and through Narrogin to Fremantle for the 12 months ended 30th June was 11,939. (b) From and through Narrogin to Bunbury during the same period the tonnage was 16,356.

### QUESTION—GERALDTON HARBOUR WORKS.

Mr. WILLCOCK (without notice) asked the Minister for Works: How many men are employed on the Geraldton harbour works at the present time?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: There are 22 actually in Geraldton, and 19 at the quarry. The number may fluctuate, according to requirements. A larger body of men will be put on as soon as we have our plans in order.

### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

*Third Day.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

The PREMIER (Hon. Sir James Mitchell—Northam) [4.38]: We listened last night to a speech from the Leader of the Opposition