

sented to local governing bodies a considerable problem. In fair play to local governing bodies, the clause should be voted down. Associated Banks when in possession cannot hide behind a clause such as this. Then why should the proposed bank be entitled to do so?

Progress reported.

*House adjourned at 10.50 p.m.*

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## Legislative Council,

*Thursday, 2nd November, 1944.*

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

### QUESTION—RAILWAYS.

*Port Hedland-Marble Bar Line.*

Hon. A. THOMSON asked the Chief Secretary:

(i) What is the annual amount lost each year on the Port Hedland-Marble Bar railway?

(ii) What is the total accumulated loss on this railway since it was constructed?

(iii) Is it the intention of the State Government to apply to the Commonwealth Government to recoup the Railway Department for the annual loss sustained in keeping the Port Hedland-Marble Bar railway open?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(i) 1935, £11,193; 1936, £9,104; 1937, £13,233; 1938, £10,008; 1939, £18,822; 1940, £14,705; 1941, £18,505; 1942, £20,087; 1943, £20,617; 1944, £12,658.

(ii) £454,075.

(iii) This matter is under consideration.

### BILL—HEALTH ACT AMENDMENT.

*In Committee.*

Resumed from the previous day. Hon. V. Hamersley in the Chair: the Honorary Minister in charge of the Bill.

The CHAIRMAN: Progress was reported on Clause 15.

Clause 15, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

### BILL—LAND ALIENATION RESTRICTION.

*Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 25th October.

HON. L. CRAIG (South-West) [4.36]: I am not going to oppose the Bill, though I think it is unnecessary. Had I been the Minister for Lands, I think I would have resented the Bill. All it proposes to do is to prevent Crown lands from being sold to anybody but a soldier, except with the written consent of the Minister. I take it that the Government has that policy in view now. It has indicated from time to time that land is to be held for soldiers, and requiring the written authority of the Minister is only saddling him with more work. I cannot see any use for the Bill, but it has gone through the Lower House and there seems to be no real objection to it. By passing it, we are merely adding to our legislation a little unnecessarily. After securing the adjournment of the debate, I looked through the Bill very carefully and, as a result, I do not intend to oppose it.

HON. W. J. MANN (South-West): I was hopeful that we would be given a little more justification for the introduction of this Bill. I am perfectly in accord with the idea of reserving Crown lands for a period for returned soldiers and sailors—not only those who have been abroad, but also those who have served in the Forces in any capacity. We need to be very careful how we deal with some of these matters; otherwise there will be quite a lot of heartburning amongst people who will be disadvantaged. But for the fact that it is proposed the Bill shall not continue in force after 1946, I would strenuously oppose it, because there are heaps of young men coming along—sons of farmers and men in all walks of life—who will have to be catered for in the matter of land selection.

Hon. L. Craig: And sons of soldiers, too.

Hon. W. J. MANN: I do not see any reason for the Bill; it seems to be playing-up to somebody. However, because of the idea behind it that the land shall be reserved only for a period, I intend to support the measure. Here and now, I say

that if I am spared and still retain a seat in this House when the legislation is due to expire by effluxion of time, my future attitude towards it will certainly depend upon circumstances. To my mind, the Bill represents an unwise step at present. I believe the desired objective could be better attained in another way. I shall support the second reading of the Bill without any great enthusiasm.

**HON. A. THOMSON** (South East—in reply): I am pleased that the two members who have spoken on the Bill this afternoon have indicated that they will support the measure. When I moved the second reading, I quoted a letter received from the Kent Road Board, and informed the House that quite a number of requests for legislation along these lines had been received from branches of the Returned Soldiers' League in the Great Southern district. What applies in that part of the State applies equally to Crown lands in other areas. The issue involved gave rise to strong feelings in various parts of the South-East Province, particularly among the parents of lads who were away at the war and who had no hope in the circumstances of lodging applications for holdings. I believe that up to the present moment no definite scheme for enabling returned soldiers to go on the land is in existence, although the matter was discussed by the Premier when he was last at Canberra.

In these days, many people are looking for investments for their spare money, and in the purchase of farms they see a safe way of avoiding spending it in the form of taxation or in other directions. The member for Katanning, who sponsored the Bill in the Legislative Assembly, introduced the legislation at the request of many interested in this matter, and when the Bill was considered in Committee in that House, the Minister for Lands effected some amendments. There are quite a number of vacant blocks and abandoned Agricultural Bank properties in the South-West Province and elsewhere, and it surely would be preferable for men who have seen active service to have an opportunity to obtain holdings rather than that should be enjoyed by people of, say, foreign extraction. I thank the House for the manner in which the Bill has been received. It represents an honest endeavour to conserve the interests of men who are at

present serving oversea and elsewhere on behalf of the nation.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

*In Committee.*

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment and the report adopted.

#### **MOTION—HEALTH AND HOSPITAL ADMINISTRATION.**

*As to Inquiry by Royal Commission.*

Debate resumed from the previous day on the following motion by Hon. J. G. Hislop—

That this House desires to draw the attention of the Government to the urgent necessity for a Royal Commission, on which there is professional medical representation, to be appointed to—

- (i) investigate the administration of the Health Act;
- (ii) investigate the condition and administration of hospitals and the conditions under which nurses are trained as well as the training they receive;
- (iii) make recommendations for the necessary measures to be adopted during the war for the adequate hospital accommodation and treatment of all forms of sickness; and
- (iv) formulate plans for the post-war finance and provision of hospital accommodation, such plans to include the administration of hospital and nursing services.

**HON. SIR HAL COLEBATCH** (Metropolitan [4.47]): In supporting the motion, I do not intend to enter for one moment into the controversy that has developed between Dr. Hislop, the Western Australian member of the British Medical Association, and the Minister for Health. I prefer rather to discuss the question of the circumstances in which the appointment of a Royal Commission may be justified and may be calculated to benefit the people of this State. At the outset I would say that whether or not a Royal Commission would do good would depend almost entirely upon the man appointed as the Commissioner. I trust that if such an appointment is made, it will be made from outside the State. I do not know whether I would be justified in going so far as to say that it might be preferable if the man to be appointed were obtained from outside Australia altogether.

To my mind, the benefit we will derive from the appointment of a Royal Commission is that we will bring into the country

new knowledge. For that reason I hope that the appointment will be made from outside Western Australia. On that ground I am strongly in favour of the appointment of Royal Commissions whenever emergencies arise that seem to justify it. I always strongly supported Mr. Miles in his contention that we should have a Royal Commission on our coal mining industry, and I am still confident that such an appointment, providing it was a competent man from outside who would bring fresh knowledge to his task, would benefit Western Australia to the extent of not thousands, or hundreds of thousands, but probably millions of pounds in the long run.

Take the case of our goldmining industry. For a long time we had chiefly men with local knowledge, excellent men in every possible way. Then outsiders were brought in. I do not think they were one whit better than what may be called the local men, but they did bring in knowledge from outside, details of the latest developments in mining operations, and they contributed very considerably to the great improvement which took place in our mining industry. I consider that Victoria did a good deed for the people of that State and of the other Australian States when it brought in a Commissioner of Railways from abroad.

Just recently the Government has sent the manager of the Electricity Department oversea in connection with new steps that are contemplated in relation to electric power. I have a very vivid recollection of the last increase in our electric power system, and I sympathised deeply with Mr. Taylor, for whom I have the very highest regard, in the difficult position in which he found himself. I hope those difficulties will be resolved in a manner advantageous to the State. At the time, however, it did seem to me that if before any action was decided upon, outside expert advice had been brought in, that advice would have been worth far more than was paid for it, whatever the cost. In the present development as regards electricity and the new steps in regard to electric power, I hope the Government has fortified itself with the best advice obtainable, no matter where the Government had to go for it. I do not want to suggest for a moment that the outsider is a better man than the local man. I would not like that idea to go abroad at all. But the outsider

does bring in new knowledge, and that is what is wanted.

About 25 years ago a great deal of criticism was levelled at our Education Department. It was directed chiefly at me as Minister and at the Director of Education, the charge against us being that we were spending too much money, whereas both of us were convinced that we were spending too little. Eventually a Royal Commission was suggested. I discussed the matter with Mr. Cecil Andrews, and it at once became evident that he was far too big a man to resent anyone being brought in. What he said was, "By all means if he can find any faults, let him tell us what they are; and if he can give us any advice, let us have it." We made inquiries, and were advised that the best man we could obtain in Australia was the Director of Education in New South Wales. Mr. Muteb, the then Minister for Education in that State, very kindly lent the Director, and he came over here, made exhaustive inquiries, and delivered a report. The report was in some respects critical of the department, in other respects complimentary. But from start to finish it was of very great use. It brought in new knowledge. I have known more or less all the Directors of Education we have had in Western Australia for the last 50 years and neither before nor since have we had a man of equal erudition and of superior administrative capacity to that possessed by Cecil Andrews. But he welcomed investigation. He welcomed somebody brought in to tell him of something he did not know, or to point out some fault which he had overlooked.

As regards Dr. Atkinson, I may say that I was Minister for Health during Dr. Atkinson's occupancy of office, and that I have always had for him the very highest regard for both his professional capacity and his administrative abilities. But Dr. Atkinson has gone from us after a long period of service, and it does seem to me that when a permanent head retires after a long period of service it is a very suitable time to have a stocktaking of the department. The appointment of Dr. Park from Tasmania meant the bringing in of new knowledge, the bringing in of a man from outside. I have not discussed this matter with Dr. Hislop, but I think it probable that if the newly appointed Commissioner

had been willing to remain in office there would have been no occasion for this debate. We did get a new man who brought in new interests and was getting on all right. If he could be persuaded to stay, then my own view of the appointment of a Royal Commission would be decided by what the Commissioner himself thought. If he was satisfied that he could get along with his job, that everything was all right, and that there was no occasion to bring in another man, then I would not have been in favour of a Royal Commission; but if Dr. Park goes, it will cast a sort of slur on the department.

We have to remember that our Government is spending an enormous amount of money. I have not looked into the matter, but I am inclined to think I should be correct in saying that in proportion to the number of people our Government spends more money than any other Government in the world. I am referring to peacetime conditions, of course. That being the case, the public is inclined to think that it is not getting enough return for its money. And not only that, but I think the public is entitled to feel that in the spending of that money proper priority is given and that first things are put first. We cannot get away from the fact that at the present time there is a very strong feeling that first things are not put first in matters such as education, health, treatment of natives. The amount spent and the work done in those directions do not assure the public that the enormous expenditure of the Government every year is justified.

People are entitled, I think, to expect that they shall get out of this enormous expenditure, much of what they desire. When all is said and done those are the things upon which the people's well-being, health and happiness chiefly depend. That is all I have to say, but I suggest to the Government that if Dr. Park persists in resigning, and if this motion is carried as I hope it will be, the Government will be taking a very risky step if it does not appoint a Royal Commission. In that case the Government will not be merely disregarding a resolution of this House, but it will be flying in the face of public opinion, and that is a thing no Government can afford to do. I shall support the motion.

**HON. A. THOMSON** (South-East): The public of Western Australia owes a debt of

gratitude to Dr. Hislop for having ventilated so many questions in connection with the administration of the Health Department and our hospitals. I support the motion for the reason that I am afraid many of the Government departments have got into a rut or groove. The importation of a Royal Commissioner, as suggested by Sir Hal Colebatch, having an independent mind and being free from any local influence, might result in much good being achieved. I support the motion for another reason. As a Parliament we are alleged to be the custodians of the public purse, and to be in control of all expenditure and of the general administration of the country. That is an absolute fallacy. The private member has no more to do with those questions than has any person outside Parliament. Whatever the Government, with its majority, decides, whether the minority think it is right or wrong, is carried into effect.

We recall one of Dickens's characters who was always bringing King Charles's head into various discussions. Frequently during the last 30 years I have pointed out the need for the appointment of a works committee or finance committee, made up of representatives of both Houses, so that various questions could be delved into and a check kept upon the administration. Such committees have been formed in the Commonwealth Parliament. I notice that the Minister for Health quoted the views of a senator who maintained that our hospitals were quite as good as, if not better than, those in any other part of Australia. I am not going to enter into a controversy on that question. If a standing committee of both Houses of Parliament were in existence, its members would be in a position to make inspections and verify reports made in such cases as those referred to by Dr. Hislop.

I have no doubt it can be proved that there are many disabilities and shortcomings associated with our hospitals that require reconsideration. In Dr. Hislop we have a gentleman who knows his job. He has pointed out to the House and the people that there are many shortcomings in the general administration of the health activities in this State. We are under a debt of gratitude to him for having the courage to indicate how the position may be improved. The hon. member has given quite a number of good reasons why an inquiry should be

held. He desires, for instance, that a Royal Commission should—

Make recommendations for the necessary measures to be adopted during the war for the adequate hospital accommodation and treatment of all forms of sickness, and

Formulate plans for the post-war finance and provision of hospital accommodation, such plans to include the administration of hospital and nursing services.

Had an inquiry into these matters been held before, I doubt whether the present site of the Perth Hospital would have been the one selected. From the point of view of patients the outlook from that institution is a very dismal one, and those people who are sick in the institution can see only the manufacturing parts of the city when looking through the windows. Before the site had been decided upon an inquiry should have been made, but the Government of the day had the power to say where the hospital should go. I am only voicing my views on this question, whether I am right or wrong. A better site could have been selected, not from the point of view of its being centrally placed, but from the point of view of patients and other aspects. The building itself has cost a lot of money.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: For convalescents the building is very depressing.

Hon. A. THOMSON: Yes. I visited the hospital recently in order to see a friend. When I looked out of the window I was struck by the poorness of the outlook. I feel sure that the appointment of a Royal Commission must bring new ideas to bear on all these questions, and must be beneficial to the whole of the people. I am afraid that to a large extent the Health Department has got into a rut, whether through financial difficulties or through its having been necessary for it to adopt various expedients rather than to take the long view, I do not know.

On motion by Hon. W. J. Mann, debate adjourned.

## BILL—NATIVES (CITIZENSHIP RIGHTS).

### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. J. G. HISLOP (Metropolitan) [5.7]: I can see no reason for opposing the second reading of this Bill, but the only reason I have for voting for it is that the measure appears to be a step in the

right direction. That is as much as I can say for it. Personally, I do not think the Bill will ever apply to a full-blooded native, and thus the good it will do will be limited to half-castes. The Bill appeals to me as having much the flavour about it as had the advice of Marie Antoinette on her being informed that her people were without bread. She replied, "Give them cake!" What these people require is not the right to vote, but the means by which they can fit themselves to become worthy of the right to vote.

I am glad to see that members intend to consider the deletion of the clause which does not permit the native to return to his tribe or mission station. I also query the wisdom of the clause regarding diseases. It is possible that if he develops active leprosy, it may occur some years after his last association with lepers. Is there any need to deprive him of his rights as a citizen if he be unfortunate enough to contract syphilis, the white man's disease? This does not prevent the white man from having a vote. I am very much in favour of removing the word "syphilis" and inserting, before the word "leprosy," the word "active." Consider, for a moment, an individual with leprosy, who after years of treatment, has had the disease controlled! Is he to be deprived of the vote simply because he had had leprosy in an active form at some stage or other? I can recall a case of a half-caste girl in the leprosarium at Derby who was acting as a domestic servant in the manager's house. This girl spoke English quite well and fulfilled all the other qualifications of citizenship, but she had scars of leprosy and was regarded as being in the latent or healed stage.

Members must realise that this disease is very much akin to tuberculosis in its habits, and there are a number of white individuals who have contracted tuberculosis and developed resistance, and whose tuberculosis is now in a latent or quiescent stage. These white people still have the right to vote. Then again comes the question of granuloma and yaws. It is possible that the contraction of these diseases by a native suggests a return to tribal habits and customs, but these conditions can be cleared up by treatment. Therefore, why make a temporary disease the reason for disfranchisement? I would

personally be quite happy to delete the whole clause.

Think again for a moment! If we retain "syphilis," is it to be only a bar while the first or primary stage is evident, or will all natives be subject to a Wassermann test of their blood before being enrolled? The whole thing appears to me to be too difficult to control, and therefore, I suggest that the clause itself be deleted. If members would retain some of the diseases, then I would suggest as an alternative the word "active" being applied to leprosy and that be the only medical cause, because whilst in this active stage the individual will be forced to return to the leprosarium for treatment amongst some hundreds of other natives. At that time, the vote would be of little use or interest to him.

Other members have used this Bill to refer to the treatment of natives, and I trust, Mr. President, you will grant me the same liberty. I repeat that I believe this is a very poor method of starting to realise our responsibilities towards the original people of this land, and towards half-castes. There seem to me to be two factors, with entirely different problems in each. The first is the care of the aboriginal. We have had the report of Mr. Henry Moseley, but there is a further inquiry which I think could be made with benefit.

In the control of natives, it would appear that today, at any rate, there is little anthropological knowledge used. I understand that a former Commissioner of Native Affairs, Mr. Neville, was a trained anthropologist. There is a Chair of Anthropology in Sydney and there must be, therefore, in Australia, some individuals who have received training of this kind. Would it not be possible—this is merely a suggestion—to appoint one of these people, not in an administrative but in an advisory capacity, to give the Government advice mainly as to the methods of habitation, possibility of employment and attitude of the Department of Native Affairs towards the natives? I feel certain that someone with this knowledge could recommend some other means than locking up the two sexes in separate un-illuminated buildings, as we have heard.

I have visited Moore River, and members may recall that I spoke on this matter in connection with the Commonwealth Powers Bill, stating that my considered opinion was

that the care of the native was something we could not afford. I make the suggestion that the advice of an anthropologist should be sought, because we appear to have reached the stage of being destitute of thought in regard to the control of these affairs. As Mr. E. H. H. Hall pointed out yesterday, the money expended has been doubled in recent years, but from the letters which I have received from many whom I respect, it would not appear that this added expenditure has solved the problem. If the allegations contained in the letters which the hon. member read yesterday have even a semblance of truth, I would, if I were Minister, resign rather than continue in a department upon which so much shame has been heaped. If, however, the Minister has an adequate reply, I consider that action should be taken by the Government to prevent such allegations being repeated so continuously by so many people.

A good deal has been said about the absence of a school for the native children at Moore River. If I remember correctly, when I spoke about this before, I said that, in my opinion, it was not just to ask people, prepared to devote themselves to work amongst natives, to live in less harmonious surroundings than the average white person. I think this is partly the reason why a school presents a difficulty. I certainly would not be content to live in the quarters I have seen. And I trust that when school teachers are sent to Moore River their quarters will be made habitable; that they will be given all possible amenities and that when their leave is arranged it will be remembered that they work and live a long way from other white people and, therefore, deserve longer periods of recreational leave. I had thought, as I have stated previously, that this was a problem which we could not afford, but if we have doubled our expenditure and yet produced so little result, what is the trouble? I again make the suggestion regarding anthropological advice because I believe that results will be obtained if the people caring for the natives have the knowledge to look after them and the aptitude for caring for them.

I have seen native hospitals throughout the country and shuddered at most of them, but when I went to Derby I was most agreeably surprised to see the work that had been done by Mrs. Trigg, the amount of medical work that was being performed and

the investigations which, in a limited way, were being carried out. But above all I was impressed by the manner in which she spoke to the natives and further still by the manner in which they responded to her attentions. The second part of the problem is that of the half-caste. So far as I am aware I think we have completely shirked the responsibility of making any decision as to the status which these people are to occupy in the economic life of our country. We find people prepared to make statements about the unreliability of the character of these half-castes, but I have spoken to others who have lived amongst them and who have diverging views. The real position is that no one wants the half-caste; no one wants to mix with the half-caste and there is a very limited number of occupations open to him.

Hon. G. B. Wood: What about that of a farm hand? The farmers would welcome him, but he will not work.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: The result is that he wanders this country unwanted, and feeling, unwanted, in many cases with a marked inferiority complex which grows until in some it can be mistaken for a superiority complex. I have met men in the North who believe it would be possible in a place like Derby to build a half-caste town giving to half-castes the responsibility of caring for themselves under a commission. But we, in turn, have ourselves to blame because whilst we are not prepared to find a vocation for them, or even a location, we raised no protest when the Commonwealth Government decided to grant to all natives the 5s. per week child endowment. If members travel in the northern parts of our State they will find many who will tell them of half-castes who were once good workers but who now, with their large families, have migrated into the towns and there live on this amount with only occasional work.

I passed through a station a few weeks ago to find one white woman whom I have known for years, standing up to the strain of the immense amount of work involved. I am sorry to say that she was showing signs of that work and strain. Travelling on about 100 miles I came to a town where the colour question is becoming acute and where there is an area becoming known as the "black" part of the town. Conversing with the womenfolk I found they were incensed about this migration to the town, and the

local policeman expressed to me his growing anxiety about the ill-feeling; and yet we do nothing! I do trust that more constructive thought can be given to this problem than has been devoted to it in the past, and I hope this House does not rest until some decision has been reached or some assurance received that the work of caring for the natives is placed on a higher plane as is demanded by the growing public sense of duty towards these people.

In conclusion I do sincerely trust that the allegations read by Mr. E. H. H. Hall can be disproved. If there is even a semblance of truth in them I do trust that we can receive from the Government an assurance that our responsibility to these people will be carried out with increasing efficiency and that immediate steps will be taken to rectify all past mistakes in an attempt to treat these people in a humane and christian manner. I support the second reading.

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

*House adjourned at 5.23 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly.

*Thursday, 2nd November, 1944.*

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

### QUESTIONS (2).

#### RAILWAYS.

*As to Freights on Tobacco.*

Mr. KELLY asked the Minister for Railways:

(1) Is he aware that packages of tobacco are received by the Railways goods section at goods rate, and are then conveyed by Government motor vehicle, under the charge of a driver and escort, to the parcels section, rehandled by officers of this