

which the Senate is elected on the same franchise as the House of Representatives. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Leslie, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 6.10 p.m.*

## Legislative Council.

*Wednesday, 14th August, 1946.*

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

### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

*Eighth Day.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

**HON. E. M. HEENAN** (North-East) [4.33]: May I at the outset join with other members in extending congratulations to you, Sir, and to Mr. Kitson and Mr. Seddon on their respective appointments and to the three new members on their election to this House. Your elevation to the Presidency, Sir, is the reward of hard work over a long life, and I hope you will be blessed with good health to carry out the high duties of your office. Mr. Kitson's appointment as Agent-General has, so far as I am aware, not found one critic, and this may fairly be regarded as some indication of the high esteem in which he is held by all sections of the people. I am sure he will create an excellent impression in England and prove a fitting successor to Mr. Troy. I do not believe that any higher tribute than that could be paid to him.

The appointment of Mr. Seddon as Chairman of Committees is also well merited and I know that I am expressing the hope of his colleagues for the North-East Province when I say that we wish him a speedy and

complete recovery from his present serious illness. I feel confident that the House has suffered no loss by the election of Messrs Bennetts, Forrest and Simpson. We have all been greatly impressed by the maiden speeches of those gentlemen and I congratulate them upon the able way in which they have stated the case for the people outback. Whilst Mr. Forrest and Mr. Simpson were not known to me previously, Mr. Bennetts has been well-known to me for many years, and I assure members that his election to Parliament is the culmination of long years of splendid service to the community on the Goldfields. He is conscientious and hard-working, and those qualities will make him a valuable member of this Chamber.

The Lieut.-Governor's Speech strikes a very optimistic note, and both in regard to what has been accomplished and the plans that are in hand, the Government deserves congratulation. If ever our State has fallen on its feet, that time is now, and any impartial critic must agree that the Government realises this and is doing everything in its power to cope with the situation.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: We only want the workers to agree.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: There are many difficulties ahead, but difficulties are the inevitable consequence of the sacrifices forced upon us by the war effort. Housing is a typical example, but to my mind the Speech shows that everything possible is being done to meet the difficulty. There is no easy, quick solution of the problem; it is world-wide, but I am pleased to note that the Government is concentrating on the provision of building materials, while the appointment of Mr. Wallwork to make an examination of the whole set-up is to be commended. If his work in this direction has the good results that it had in the coal industry, it will be a matter of general satisfaction.

Hon. C. B. Williams: I do not think he has done anything much about the Collie miners. They have always been good workers.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: The goldmining industry seems to be on the verge of a great revival and, in all my years on the Eastern Goldfields, I have never known the people

as a whole to be more confident and optimistic than they are at present. From Laverton in the north to Norseman in the south, and from Edjudina in the east to Southern Cross in the west, one hears glowing accounts of new mines awaiting development, of options being taken and of new finds having been made. Judging by what I have seen and been told, it seems certain that this wonderful industry, which has already produced gold to the value of over £270,000,000, will continue to play a vital part in the welfare and development of our State. It may be timely to recall that only last month the gold yield in Western Australia amounted to over £500,000 in value. This increase is sure to be progressive when the industry gets properly under way. Its prospective value as a means of providing employment in the difficult days ahead can hardly be estimated.

The Government is to be commended for what it is doing to assist the goldmining industry. The geological surveys of the various fields have already borne fruit in the Coolgardie district, where newly found mines are being opened up, and the surveys will in future be of incalculable value to prospectors and other gold seekers. The recent increase in assistance of 30s. a week given to men without means who desire to go prospecting is a step in the right direction, although I hope that before long it will be possible to raise the amount to something in keeping with the basic wage. Prospectors have always been and will always remain an integral part of the industry. They have been responsible for finding practically every mine, and they are the men who put up with the greatest hardships and generally get the least for their pains. Financial aid and other assistance given to these men will always be repaid directly or indirectly, because these are the men who will find the new mines and cause the growth of new townships.

Reference has already been made to the incidence of what is termed the Commonwealth gold tax, as it affects Western Australia. I hope that some early relief from this tax will be granted. Like all other industries, mining in the future will have to contend with rising costs of production and care has to be taken that this will not mean that large low-grade propositions are rendered unworkable. During the war years, over £3,500,000 was taken from Western

Australia per medium of this tax and only about one-fifth of it was returned in the form of assistance to prospectors and low-grade producers. The tax affects this State particularly because mining is our largest industry. It is an industry that will be this State's greatest means of progress and stability in the uncertain future. Anything that is a handicap to its welfare and prosperity should therefore be abolished.

It is pleasing to know that as a result of representations made to the Government by members for the district, the Commissioner of Railways is to visit Laverton this month with a view to investigating the need for a weekly train service. This district has vast potentialities from the mining point of view; but with one train a fortnight, its development is at present frustrated. What is needed is a fast Diesel coach for passenger traffic, and I hope that when such coaches are available one will be placed on this line.

There remains a grave need for additional housing, better schools and hospital facilities on the Goldfields; but I am pleased to know from the Lieut.-Governor's Speech that these matters may receive early attention. There is likely to be a large increase in population on the Goldfields; and in spite of some degree of uncertainty about mining towns, families must be encouraged to live in them, and they must be given proof that all the amenities of life are not confined to people who dwell in cities.

One piece of legislation that vitally affects miners and their dependants is the Workers' Compensation Act. The amendments passed last year were a great improvement to the Act, but I express the hope that before this session ends the Act will be further improved by increasing the death payment to £1,000. At present it is £750. I have always maintained that this sum is quite inadequate compensation for a widow and family whose breadwinner loses his life in the industry.

I am very pleased to note that a Bill will be introduced this session to deal with the vexed problem of starting-price betting. It has reached a stage where something must be done; and we, as members of Parliament, can no longer avoid our responsibility in this regard. I am not one to encourage the growth of gambling, with all its attendant miseries and evils, but the existing situation is a tragic farce and cries aloud for

some wise solution. If it is impossible to stamp out starting-price betting, to my mind the only sensible thing to do is to regulate it in some way. In this regard we are fortunate in having the experience of other States to guide us. I have pleasure in supporting the motion.

**HON. W. R. HALL** (North-East) [4.45]: First of all I would like to associate myself with the remarks made by other speakers and congratulate you, Sir, on being elevated to the position of President of this Council. I also desire to congratulate the new Chairman of Committees, Mr. Seddon. I understand that at present he is ill, but I hope that next week he will be back with us to take up the position he is so capable of filling. I would like to congratulate the Chief Secretary. I think the Government has made a very wise choice in selecting him to be Agent General for Western Australia in England. The Chief Secretary came from the Old Country, and no doubt his knowledge of England and the knowledge he has gained of Western Australia will be of advantage to this State when he takes up his new office. I extend a hearty welcome to the three new members. I listened to the speeches they made and have no doubt they will be an acquisition to this Chamber. They made very good maiden speeches.

Hon. C. B. Williams: I would not like them all in our constituency.

Hon. W. R. HALL: I do not know that they would do any harm there either, so long as the hon. member was not there! I did not intend to speak on the Address-in-reply. I have been here for eight years and have spoken to the motion on almost every occasion, but I find that the Government—I gather I am allowed to criticise so long as my criticism is fair—takes little notice of what is said by members during this debate. However, I feel that I cannot allow that to deter me. I have a few comments to make affecting my constituents and I intend to take this opportunity to submit them for the information of the Government.

Hon. C. B. Williams: It is nice to have six years ahead of you, isn't it?

Hon. W. R. HALL: The first matter to which I wish to refer concerns the Workers' Homes Board and the position of housing on the Goldfields. I am going to be brief. I want to reiterate what I have said in years

gone by. I cannot let the occasion pass without referring to what I have previously said and hoping that something will be done. The Goldfields people are in a very bad way in the matter of securing permits to build and obtaining permits for building materials. Not so long ago I had occasion to make application to the board on behalf of a person who lived 45 miles from Kalgoorlie at a place called Grant's Patch and was reluctantly compelled to come to Kalgoorlie and rehabilitate himself there because the Ora Banda mine had closed down. This man, who was married, pulled down his house and carted it on his own truck to Kalgoorlie. He rented a house there in the interim, but when he wanted a permit to re-erect his house, which he had brought from 45 miles away, the Workers' Homes Board would not grant it.

Hon. C. B. Williams: You stick to that. It was in my province.

Hon. W. R. HALL: I will stick to anything I say. I do not want the hon. member to back me up in that regard. The man of whom I speak is now in my province, but the hon. member is mixing up the two. The man who came from Grant's Patch was in Mr. Williams's province, but is now in mine. I hope that is quite clear. I think the Workers' Homes Board should have granted that man a permit, because he had to pay rent while the house that he had pulled down was lying on a vacant block next door. That is not a fair thing. I only hope that if the Bill to extend building control for another 12 months is brought forward this session, the Goldfields and country districts will be made exempt from the necessity of obtaining permits.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Otherwise you will invoke the Legislative Council to defeat it; is that your idea?

Hon. W. R. HALL: Another matter that has been the subject of discussion in the past is that of the starting-price bookmaker. It was mentioned a few moments ago by Mr. Heenan. I know, from the Lieut.-Governor's Speech, that it is the intention of the Government this session to bring down a Bill for the control of betting. How farcical is the situation at present when the police have to charge a man with obstruction, under the Traffic Act, in order to bring more money into Consolidated Revenue for the Government!

Hon. C. B. Williams: You are chairman of the Kalgoorlie Road Board. Why do you approve of the police doing it?

Hon. W. R. HALL: The local authorities outside a 25-mile radius from the metropolitan area are the controllers of their own traffic. They are the ones who should have the control of traffic and of obstruction charges, if any are to be laid. The Traffic Act says that the police may take action, and this makes it optional on their part. Road boards generally do not want them to do it, and I notice that they do not make any other charges in relation to traffic outside the 25-mile radius. As regards the Kalgoorlie Road Board, I desire police control of traffic for that board, and for the Goldfields, but some local authorities do not want it.

Hon. C. B. Williams: But not for the S.P. bookmakers.

Hon. W. R. HALL: When we see men who are dummies having to face the police courts every Monday morning, and being fined anything up to £70, and when we know full well that they are not the real culprits, it seems farcical.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Do you call them dummies? They are "stooges."

Hon. W. R. HALL: "Dummies" is the term applied to them. I do not believe it right that the present situation should exist, because any young man—and there are a lot of young men who are charged and who act as dummies—if ever he applies for a Government job, is met first with the question, "Have you ever been convicted?" That conviction stands against him for life, and it is for that reason that I do not like to see men going before the courts on Monday mornings on S.P. charges, in place of the real S.P. bookmakers who should be there in their stead. I am in favour of bringing down legislation to control betting, particularly for the country districts and the Goldfields. In Laverton, Leonora, Gwalia, Menzies and down to Kalgoorlie, and even in your own constituency, Mr. President, nearly all the residents feel the urge to have a bet. I think most Australians desire to have a little gamble.

Hon. A. L. Loton: They like to speculate.

Hon. W. R. HALL: In the past we have brought down legislation that has resulted in driving S.P. men into their shops one

day and outside the next. They do not know where they are with all the running in and out; they put me in mind of rabbits. Why not let the Government face the position and bring down legislation that will save all this trouble? It looks to me as though S.P. betting will go on as long as any of us here are on this planet, and for a long while after.

I come now to the action of the A.B.C. in fostering S.P. betting. Practically from the time broadcasting begins on Saturdays the wireless sets blare out a description of the races in Melbourne and Sydney, and from practically every racecourse in Australia. In doing that, the A.B.C., or the Commonwealth Government, or the responsible department, is facilitating the making of bets on those races. If a man is caught at starting-price bookmaking in a shop and is fined, he loses his telephone. Was there ever anything so ridiculous? The A.B.C. broadcasts descriptions of races and the race results, the prices, the jockeys, and everything else; yet if a man is caught on S.P. betting, his telephone is taken away.

Hon. C. B. Williams: It is illegal for him to bet over the telephone.

Hon. W. R. HALL: If the hon. member gives me a chance, I will try to make my point. I dare say all members who represent country areas have had the experience that I am about to mention. The farmer comes in every Saturday afternoon to the nearest town, just as the miners do from north of Kalgoorlie. They come into town on Saturday afternoons, have a couple of drinks and put a few shillings on a horse. It is difficult to take that little pleasure away from them after they have enjoyed it for so many years. At Kalgoorlie, for instance, there is only one race day per fortnight, the races being held on Wednesday afternoons. The men who have to work shifts on Wednesday mornings and Wednesday afternoons have no opportunity of attending the racecourse, because of the day and afternoon shifts on that day, and their only alternative is to go along to an S.P. shop—

Hon. C. B. Williams: There are none there.

Hon. W. R. HALL: —and have a bet, if they so desire. Would it not be better that a Bill to control betting should be brought down so that people may have a bet if they so desire without causing all the trouble

that is seen in our police courts every Monday morning? Reverting to the telephone question, I point out that S.P. betting in the main affects the working classes. It does not affect the man in a job who has a telephone alongside him. He merely rings up his bet and the money goes on without any trouble to anyone or any obstruction of traffic. He can go his way quite happily. I daresay that if members of either House want to have a bet they put their money on in the same manner.

Hon. C. B. Williams: If they have any brains they do not bet at all.

Hon. W. R. HALL: The magistrates as well as the police are placed in an unenviable position. They have a job to do. Although I have nothing to say as to the manner in which they do it, I feel we would be lacking in our duty if we refrained from passing legislation that will allow betting to be done under certain control. I understand there is no difference between the S.P. bookmaker and the man who is surrounded by a four-square fence on a race-course; that they are in the same category so far as betting is concerned. If that is so, as I am led to believe, I fail to see why any differentiation between them should be made. If it is good enough for the S.P. man to be picked up in the street every Saturday—

Hon. F. E. Gibson: In his turn.

Hon. W. R. HALL: There is a lot in that. If it is good enough for some S.P. men to be picked up in the street every Saturday, it is good enough for the other fellow too.

Hon. C. B. Williams: In his turn.

Hon. W. R. HALL: Why give protection to one set of bookmakers? I am led to understand that they are no more entitled in law to lay the odds than are those who are charged with obstructing the traffic. I saw a person being arrested in Kalgoorlie last Saturday week on a charge of obstructing traffic. Two policemen came along. I think the man knew beforehand that he was going to be arrested. He was standing between two cars, and there was only one man with him. The policemen came up on each side of him and issued a marching order and the man went off between them to the police station.

Hon. C. B. Williams: What happened then? Did the game go on? Of course it did!

Hon. W. R. HALL: I do not know whether the game went on or not. I am merely informing the House of what happened when this man was arrested by the police on a charge of obstructing the traffic. There was no more obstruction of traffic than there is in my standing up here this afternoon. I hope the Government will bring down a Bill to control betting and that members will give it very serious consideration. Whatever happens betting will never be stamped out. As one member said, if an Australian has the urge to gamble nothing will stop him. It would be in the interests of all concerned if members gave the proposed Bill very earnest consideration. I shall now refer to another matter. I have travelled on the Great Eastern Highway since I was 18 years of age, and wish to bring under the notice of the Government the deplorable condition of the road from the end of the bitumen section 200 miles up the line to Coolgardie.

Hon. C. B. Williams: It is nearly time something was done seeing that there are 13 members supporting the Government.

Hon. W. R. HALL: I visit Kalgoorlie at least once a fortnight. That is in my province. There are times when it is necessary to go in the car and there are other times when one cannot get a berth on the train. A member of Parliament is just as much entitled to go to Kalgoorlie by car if he desires as to go by train. Indeed, it costs him more to go by car so that he does not take a car for nothing. The road is in a deplorable state. The pot holes in it are very bad. I made a statement in 1938—at that time we did not know that war was imminent—to the effect that before the bitumen section reached Kalgoorlie there would be aeroplanes flying between Perth and that town, and that is the position today. Unless the Government takes steps to have the road connected up from No. 5 Pumping Station to Coolgardie its condition will become worse and worse.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Unless the Labour members for the district take action.

Hon. W. R. HALL: If there are many men out of employment in the future the Government could take up sections of the

road every 20 miles and complete it provided that bitumen supplies are available, so that the people of the Goldfields might have a good road, for which no doubt they would pay dearly. It is also due to the people of Perth that they, too, should be able to get through to Kalgoorlie in comfort! I wish the Government to know that even the bitumen road which has been down for some years is lifting up, and if it is not soon seen to it will cost hundreds of thousands of pounds to replace.

Hon. G. Bennetts: Do you mean between Norseman and Coolgardie?

Hon. W. R. HALL: That is in the South Province. Members should know the requirements of their own provinces. I have spoken before about the turned-down miners on the Goldfields. It seems to me that mine is like a voice crying in the wilderness when I ask that some consideration should be given to these people by the Government, or by those who are representing the Government on the Mine Workers' Relief Board. These unfortunate men require an increase in their weekly payments. I have stressed this matter before, and the sad position in which these men find themselves. They know their days are numbered, yet they have had no increase in the rate that is allowed to them. The rate has been the same for a number of years.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Quite correct!

Hon. W. R. HALL: They are men who have done their duty by the country, and because of the position in which they find themselves today they are entitled to the first thoughts of the Government and of those who are responsible for giving them their weekly payments. Those payments should certainly be increased.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: The trouble lies with the Commonwealth.

Hon. C. B. Williams: The trouble lies with the Government. If it would put in a chairman instead of a magistrate it would get somewhere.

Hon. W. R. HALL: I wish to bring another matter under the notice of the Government. The present Minister for Mines and Railways has done a wonderful job, and if he keeps on as he is going we shall all be better off. I heard him make a statement in the Kalgoorlie Town Hall 18 months ago to the

effect that he would give the general public of Western Australia transport, whether by road, bus, plane or railways. He is keeping his word. We are not so isolated on the Goldfields and on the Northern Goldfields now as we were before the present Minister took control.

Hon. C. B. Williams: You will be expelled all right!

Hon. W. R. HALL: Because he has permitted a daily plane service to be inaugurated between Perth and Kalgoorlie he has done something which will prove a boon to the Goldfields people. The service will give businessmen on the Goldfields an opportunity to fly to Perth and back in the one day, and will also provide an opportunity for Perth people to go to Kalgoorlie and back in the one day, and at the same time will enable emergency cases to be dealt with expeditiously. One thing is causing me some concern in this connection. I moved a motion in favour of a daily aeroplane service between the Goldfields and Perth. My opinion was that we should progress with the times, and that even if we were not air-minded ourselves our children would be. The Goldfields were entitled to progress just as much as any other part of the State. What worries me is the effect the service may have on the railways. As a result of this daily service the Railway Department may lose its first-class passengers because there is very little difference between the cost of a first-class fare—only a pound or so—and the fare by plane.

Hon. C. B. Williams: But it is 3 hours against 20.

Hon. W. R. HALL: Let members recollect that on numerous occasions such as during the holiday season people have had to queue up on the Kalgoorlie railway station, and at Christmas time men, women and children have had to stand all night there. That shows that we are not progressing in the way we should, otherwise those things would not be allowed to happen as they do year after year. I warn the Railway Department that if it wants to hold the passenger traffic it will have to give a better service to those it is its duty to cater for. If it does that, it will be able to hold the traffic. If the department does not give an adequate service to the people on the Goldfields, the aeroplane service will be the means of bringing the railways down to the

rank of a mixed goods traffic proposition before long. This does not prevent me from saying that we should progress with the times. Our children will be air-minded even if we are not. The plane has come to stay. I hope the railway authorities will endeavour to handle the Christmastide situation better than it has done in the past.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Do you agree with the uniform gauge or do you want the 3ft. 6in. gauge?

Hon. W. R. HALL: I travelled recently to the Eastern States and am satisfied with the way the Western Australian railways are run. So long as they give the public a good service there will be nothing to complain of. I am only looking at the matter from the point of view of the Government and that is why I brought up the point I have already made. Although there are other topics on which I desire to speak, I shall content myself with supporting the motion. I did not intend to take up so much time of the House because I have come to the conclusion that very little happens in connection with requests put forward to the Government on the Address-in-reply, but I felt I could not let this occasion pass.

HON. G. B. WOOD (East) [5.15]: I do not intend to detain the House very long, mainly because, judging from "The West Australian," there is a lot of important business to come before us. Nevertheless, the debate on the Address-in-reply is an excellent opportunity to air a few grievances which have come under my notice during the year and to make some suggestions to the Government. With other members, I join in congratulations to our new members. I also congratulate you, Sir, on your appointment to the high office of President of this Chamber. I desire to pay a warm tribute to our late President, who occupied the position for about 20 years—a record. He was a born President, kind and just. He was extremely kind and reasonable to new members; and it is a great advantage for a new member to sit under a sympathetic President.

My first complaint relates to the taking away of the Italian prisoners-of-war from the farms and putting them into concentration camps, particularly one concentration camp at Northam. My opinion is that that step was an insane one for the Common-

wealth Government to authorise, particularly at the time it was taken. I know to my sorrow, as do many farmers around me, what that step means. We had trained those prisoners-of-war to our way of working and to our way of thinking. We had weeded out the undesirables. Many of the prisoners were taught to drive teams of horses and tractors; those who could not do that work were able to do what we call the odd jobs about the farm and thus enabled the farmer to drive the team or work the tractor.

Yet we found that at the beginning of seeding—a most important seeding, in my opinion, in view of the Government's request that every effort should be made to produce food—these prisoners-of-war were taken away and put into a camp at Northam. That was in April last. Possibly they are still in the camp. That action on the part of the Commonwealth Government not only caused great hardship to the farmers but involved the taxpayers in the expense of feeding the prisoners while the latter were in idleness and discontented. So far as I know, none of the prisoners ran away from the farms, as they were too happy there. Some of them did not like work very much, but others did and carried out their labours contentedly. I understand some 40 of the prisoners are now in various parts of Western Australia. I cannot understand the failure of the State Government in not taking more action than it did. True, the Minister for Agriculture wrote to Mr. Dedman, or whoever is in charge of the matter, and made a protest; but the Commonwealth Government replied that that was its policy and consequently that was the end of the matter. I believe the State Government should have been more emphatic in its protests.

I make this suggestion to the Government: The prisoners are still in the camp and we believe they will be there for quite a long time. About 350 of them have left for Italy, but it will be some time before the remainder leave. The State Government should make further representations to the Commonwealth Government to allow the prisoners to work on the harvesting, particularly in the areas within a certain distance of Northam where most of the hay is grown. Judging by the season there will not be very much hay to garner; but practically no labour is offering today at the farms. Perhaps the unions have something

to do with it. Perhaps they said to the Government, "You have to make way for somebody else to do the work on the farms." I do not know whether that is so, but the fact remains that no labour is offering to-day on the farms. It is a sorry spectacle; these prisoners are willing to return to the farms to work, and goodness knows what it is costing to feed them while they are in camp. The farmers paid £2 a week to the Commonwealth Government for each prisoner.

I want something done about the State Transport Co-ordination Act. During last winter farmers had their tractors held up owing to lack of fuel oil, for the simple reason that the railways could not transport it. This caused considerable hardship. To the credit of the Transport Board, it did relax the regulations last May when it was asked to do so, but why should we drift into that unhappy state of affairs? Why should a farmer's tractor be held up for a week or two weeks, and why should he be forced to make representations through his member of Parliament or through his road board to get the regulations relaxed? We know perfectly well that the railways cannot handle this oil. I do not know why, but the fact remains that they cannot, and that has been proved.

In all good faith I suggest to the Minister controlling transport that he allow the road trucks to have an open go at the beginning of the season, so that that position will not arise again. I received a telegram, about last May, stating that there was not a drum of crude oil—tractor oil—in the Wongan Hills district and that every person concerned was crying out for it. I went to the Transport Board, which fixed the matter up. But why should the position arise?

Next, I desire to refer briefly to native affairs. In the report of the department we find that the Commonwealth Government paid to this State on behalf of our aborigines the sum of £49,549 for child endowment. I shall now make a statement which I know will not be very popular. I believe that the average native was treated very badly in regard to child endowment. To encourage any person, whether a native or not, to dodge work and live on a community is not doing him a good service. Since the introduction of child endowment the natives have traded on it. We find it very

much harder to get them to work; they are breeding much quicker, whether married or not, and they have money to throw up in the air at the two-up school. At York only two months ago 40 natives were outside the sports ground playing two-up and I venture to say that half the money was child endowment money.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: That is their national game.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: Someone drew the attention of the sergeant of police to the matter and he stopped the game. Hundreds of other natives were there as well. When the sergeant said, "I am going to stop you," one old gin said, "You won't let us gamble, so we will drink instead." Most of the money the natives were gambling with on that day was not earned by honest work. I believe the Government has power to collect the child endowment. According to the report of the department, a considerable amount of the money is paid to missions and Government institutions. Personally, I believe that all the child endowment should be paid either to missions or to the Government. It should be put into a trust fund and doled out to the natives who deserve it. I do not believe the Department of Native Affairs understands the position. I quote the following short paragraph from the department's report:—

Even though there may be some criticism about cases of abuse in the expenditure of child endowment moneys, the fact remains that child endowment to natives means £49,000 of Commonwealth money to the State, and so far as natives are concerned the money reaches business and trade circles and this is a good thing for the State's industries.

So it is, but surely we should have some better objective than that. I suggest to the Government that this money could be paid perhaps to local committees or to some central committee which could act on the advice of the local sergeant of police. By adopting such a method we could be sure that only the natives who honestly deserve the child endowment money would receive it. Many of these natives will not work so long as they can obtain this money.

I would also draw the attention of the Government to the appalling condition of the native camps, particularly those at York. I do not know whether an officer of the Department of Native Affairs ever inspects these camps. I spent some time in the



North-West, and I know that the myalls and humpies in the North-West are very much better than the camps we see in the vicinity of some of our country towns. I saw one mob of natives living in a tent—there were six of them. That tent was their only shelter throughout the wet winter. The £49,000 endowment money would be far better spent in providing natives with decent camps on reserves outside the towns. It would be very well spent indeed. I would not make the suggestion that this money should not be used for the welfare of the blacks, but I do say that it could be better spent than it is at present.

Hon. H. Tuckey: Are the York natives permanent residents there?

Hon. G. B. WOOD: Yes, there seems to be a gang that stays there. A number come up from Brookton for the races, but there is quite a large population of natives around York at the moment, and their living conditions are appalling.

Dealing briefly with wheat matters, I am not going to dwell on the wheat stabilisation measures, about which we will have an opportunity to talk later. But I have had some figures that were given to me which show that Western Australia has not had quite a fair deal from the Commonwealth Government in regard to wheat licenses over the years. These figures are rather interesting and show that in New South Wales the average wheat acreage before the war—taken over the five years preceding the war—was 4,168,000 acres, and in 1946 licenses were granted for 5,978,000 acres, or an increase of 1,810,000 acres. Victoria increased its area under wheat by 947,000 acres. South Australia was given a decrease of 262,000 acres—why, I do not know. Western Australia, with which we are concerned, had its licenses decreased by 799,000 acres. I do not know why that occurred, but it is something that the State Government could take up. It could find out why we were penalised to that extent. Queensland had an increase of 206,000 acres. Last year, when speaking on the Address-in-reply, I had a little bit to say about the Price Fixing Commissioner in relation to the lowering of the fixed price of rabbits and of out-of-season vegetables at York.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: Do you grow rabbits?

Hon. G. B. WOOD: No.

Hon. G. Fraser: They grow themselves.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: That is quite right. This year, I am happy to say that the Price Fixing Commissioner has—but not through anything I have said—seen the error of his ways. Instead of allowing 1s. 3d. a pair for rabbits to the trappers, he now allows 2s. a pair. I made a prophecy last year that if the price allowed by the Commissioner to the trappers were 1s. 6d. a pair—which I said it should be—we would have no rabbits. That position has come about today. It is very hard to get a rabbit in the country. I believe that is the solution of the difficulty. Not only has the increased price saved the farmers an immense amount of money and time, which they have not got, but it has saved their flocks from toxic paralysis which, no matter how careful one may be, they contract. Today it is very hard to go out and get a rabbit for the dogs. I put that down almost entirely to the price that the trappers have been allowed to receive.

Hon. V. Hamersley: The Commonwealth Government has a tax on them.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: Yes. I hope that the present position will continue. If a person down here is prepared to pay 1s. 6d. or 2s. for a rabbit, then let him pay it! People in Perth look on rabbit as a luxury. They do not have to eat it if they do not wish to.

Hon. V. Hamersley: They get it without coupons.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: Yes. I saw a few months ago where a butcher, or a dealer, charged 6d. more than he should have for a rabbit and he was fined £5 as a result. I wish now to deal with the matter of the out-of-season vegetables at York. A greater price has been allowed to the people who produce them, and it is to their considerable benefit, and also to the benefit of the people in Perth, who are able to buy these vegetables which cannot be produced here in the orthodox way. I want to urge the Government to do something for those vegetable growers—about 40 of them—at York, who are growing celery, lettuce and cauliflowers out of season. When I say that, I mean at a time when they cannot be grown at Wanneroo and other places near the metropolitan area. This is a fine industry that is being built up, but the growers are hampered through lack of water. It is not a very big thing that I

want the Government to do for them; it is only a matter of putting in a few large pipes. This industry means a tremendous amount to the tradespeople, the motor people and others at York. Certainly the growers are foreigners, but far-reaching benefits accrue from the industry. I hope the Government will see its way clear to giving better water facilities.

One other item I wish to touch on is that of the Disposals Commission and the disposal of Army vehicles. A most extraordinary position has been allowed to develop by the Government—particularly as it is a Labour Government! I am going to deal with armoured cars and scout cars. These vehicles were sold to dealers—people who were not in the motor business at all. They were allowed to make a rake-off of 100 per cent. on each vehicle, and they made more than 100 per cent. on the Bren gun carriers. I, as a farmer, or as a representative of a road board, could not go to the Disposals Commission and say, "I want a Bren gun carrier." I would be told to go to a dealer at Collie, Perth or somewhere else. Instead of a road board being able to buy a Bren gun carrier for £34 10s. it has to go to a dealer and pay £75; for an armoured car it has to pay £120 instead of £60, and for a scout car £98 10s. as against £50.

If these dealers were in this business in the same way as are Sydney Atkinson Ltd., Attwood Motors and others, I would not have so much objection because they were, perhaps, debarred from selling trucks as they could not get them, but to allow these dealers, who have nothing to do with the motor trade except to sell spare parts, to acquire all these vehicles and sell them at such a huge profit is highly undesirable and wrong. I would not expect the Disposals Commission to accept terms, but I believe that a farmer or anyone else should be able to come along with his money and say, "I want a truck," and be allowed to have one instead of these people getting such a big rake-off. I have nothing against these people. I say, "Good luck," to them, but there is no excuse for the Government. I know one firm that made £12,000 or £15,000 out of this business, and its representative never went near Nungarin where the vehicles were. A person would go to the firm with

a cheque for £120 and would then be sent to Nungarin where he would get the truck, and he would have no choice.

When he mentioned the matter of road making machinery last night, Mr. Forrest raised an important question that has been concerning many of us recently. I am perturbed about how we are going to repair our roads in the future. I am talking now as a member of a road board. Wages have gone up tremendously, while the capacity or the willingness of employees to work has gone down to a large extent. I believe the only solution of the problem is the use of road making machinery, and I am sorry to say that the machinery I have in mind is beyond the capacity of most road boards to purchase.

I do not know what the Government can do about it, but I believe that money could be found—perhaps from the petrol tax, which has not been spent—to subsidise road boards to enable them to purchase road making material. I understand that the Allied Works Council has, in the Eastern States, some of the machines that I have in mind. I make the suggestion to the Government that some of these large machines should be brought to Western Australia and let to the road boards in order to do this desirable work. We have had two particularly wet years, with the result that some of our gravel roads are in an appalling condition. I do not see how we are going to repair them by the ordinary pick and shovel method. I have much pleasure in supporting the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply.

**HON. H. S. W. PARKER** (Metropolitan-Suburban) [5.43]: May I join with other members in congratulating you, Sir, on your elevation to the office of President. I think it is a matter for rejoicing by every member of the House that your health has permitted you to accept that office, and I trust you will long continue to enjoy good health and retain your present position. Also, may I be permitted to congratulate the Chief Secretary on his appointment. We have certainly started this session in a happy way as a result of the excellent appointments that have been made. I feel sure that the education—if I may put it that way—that the Chief Secretary has had in this House will stand him in good stead in the office

he is about to occupy, and I am certain that he will fill it to the great satisfaction of the people of Western Australia.

I trust that Mr. Seddon will return, in good health, to occupy the position that you, Sir, have filled so ably for so long. I hope that he will be able to follow in your footsteps, although you have set a very high standard. But I feel sure that he will, with the assistance of members, enjoy himself in the position that you left vacant. It seems to me that we are very fortunate in having such excellent new members elected to the Chamber. I am sure they will help us to understand the difficulties experienced in various parts of Western Australia. They come from the far north and, so to speak, from the far south, and also from the central part of the State. New blood is a very good thing, but at the same time I am not at all anxious that there shall be too much new blood introduced as a result of the next elections.

There are very few matters that I wish to place before members. The transport problem in the suburbs is very difficult. I appreciate that it is due to a large extent to the fact that new vehicles are not available. I understand—I do not know if I have been rightly informed—that during the session we are likely to discuss a measure the object of which will be to bring about an amalgamation of all the transport services and place them under one Minister. If that is the position, I think such a move will be of great advantage. If that is the object, I trust the Minister who will be in control of the transport services or even the present Transport Board will investigate more deeply the problem relating to suburban traffic. It is impossible to get a seat in a bus unless one waits for some time at the head of a queue. Certainly one must get there early and wait near the top if one is to secure a seat.

There is no doubt that the buses at present are dangerously over-crowded and, moreover, they are apparently in a dangerous mechanical condition, judging by the noises and rattles that one hears as they proceed along the road. If the Government can do anything to assist the bus companies to procure new vehicles, I trust it will be done promptly. Competition seems to be of great importance when it comes to the provision of transport. Comparatively little difficulty

is experienced in journeying by bus from Perth to Fremantle. On that route there are two lines in competition and not only are those buses in competition but they have to contend with the trolley buses as far as Claremont and with the train service right through to Fremantle.

I suggest to the Transport Board that it should force the companies to take some of the buses off the present routes in order to provide feeder services until—and even after—more buses are available. I speak particularly of the Mosman Park bus, which goes as far as Richardson-street at Claremont, turns round the river, and makes its way through to the rope works. If there were feeder buses from, say, the Mosman Park railway station to the Swanbourne railway station, one could board a bus or trolley bus or train, go to the Swanbourne station or the Richardson-street crossing, get into a feeder bus and so reach home quickly. It might mean paying something extra but one could select a time for travelling when there would be no overcrowding. As it is now, there is a bus at 4.30 p.m. and the next goes at 5.10 p.m. From then until 6.10 p.m., when the last peak-period bus leaves, one could not even get a "Daily News" squeezed into the bus. Conditions at present are most dangerous. We find people standing on the step and, on top of that, the conditions under which they travel are most unhealthy. In fact, the existing conditions are wrong in every possible way. No-one could have any possible ground for complaint respecting the crowded buses if there were the alternative of going by train or trolley bus, which latter form of conveyance is crowded only between 5 and 5.30 p.m. From then onwards the traffic on the trolley buses eases off considerably.

Much of the present difficulty could be obviated if we had feeder services. In fact, I suggest that the Transport Board should insist upon the companies running a feeder, or shuttle service, running through Mosman Park and then feeding the railways or trolley buses. It may be said that there are no buses available with which to carry out that suggestion. I claim there are ample buses available for the purpose. Recently, with a number of other people, I waited for 20 minutes in the pouring rain simply because the Mosman Park bus was late. Every

person in the queue was wet through. I had on an overcoat, and when I reached home I had to change every garment I had on, even to my underclothes. It is certainly wrong that steps have not been taken to provide shelters for those awaiting transport. There are most suitable sites near the river where the buses could stand. It seems to me entirely and absolutely wrong that we should have bus stands in the middle of St. George's-terrace.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: I hope you are not suggesting that we use the Esplanade or the river frontage for a bus stand.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I certainly think we should not use the present stand in St. George's-terrace for the buses. The vehicles should be made to circulate and not stop. That is how it is done in London, where the buses do not stop at a terminal point. For my part, I do not see why we should not use some of the area referred to—not the Esplanade, but the site west of it where the R.A.A.F. used to be located.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: I think it is wrong.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: Certainly, there should be properly constructed places where people could wait to board buses and the buildings should not be ramshackle. I hope the Transport Board will do something to investigate thoroughly the manner in which people have to travel by bus during peak periods. I suggest that the bus companies be not permitted to charge full fares for passengers who are required to stand during the journey. If only half fares were charged in those circumstances, the bus companies would get a move on and would quickly procure additional buses. I have spoken to directors of these companies and I feel sure that they do not appreciate the position. I have not seen any inspector of the Transport Board making investigations to ascertain what is happening.

I suggest that what is required is more competition. On one occasion I had to wait in Thomas-street for a bus, and when it came along it calmly went past, so I had to continue waiting in the rain. Another man came along a little while afterwards, and I said to him, "Do not the buses stop here?" He replied, "The 5.50 bus does not stop at all. It is not allowed to do so." I asked him why that was so, and he replied, "The buses are always filled in Perth." I re-

marked that the one that had just passed had not been full, so that was not correct. His reply to that was, "The buses do not stop anywhere along the road at this hour." That surely is a matter for the Transport Board to deal with.

I was very pleased to hear Mr. Fraser refer to the conditions at the Titles Office. There is no doubt that that office is frightfully congested, and people who have business to do there have to wait a long while merely because of the lack of staff. I quite appreciate that it is not easy to secure men for that office, seeing that the officials have to be well trained. I will say that although the staff at the Titles Office has to put up with great difficulties, one encounters only extreme courtesy in transacting business there. The officers will do the work required of them promptly enough if only one can get a word in their ear. A worse place than the Titles Office, from the standpoint of congestion, is the Stamp Office. One would think that the Government would be only too pleased to grab all the money that was available, but if any member chose to wait outside the Mines Department offices at any time of the day, he would notice a queue of people waiting to have documents stamped. That sort of thing should be avoided.

Hon. G. Fraser: The officers there can get through their work much more quickly than is possible at the Titles Office.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: It all depends. Sometimes, if the business to be dealt with is complicated, it takes the commissioner quite a long time to assess the stamp duty payable.

Hon. W. R. Hall: The trouble is that more assessors are required.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: That is so. Now I come to a matter that I have referred to on many occasions and feel that I must mention once more. I allude to the necessity for a parliamentary drafting department. It is most important that we should have a staff—a competent and fully-trained staff at that—to draft regulations and parliamentary Bills, as occasion arises. Probably a majority of the members of this House never see anything but the Bills that are introduced here. On the other hand, a legal practitioner sees many of the regulations that are drafted, and laymen associated with various depart-

ments, road boards, health boards and so on, also have to peruse them. During the session, we have a mass of regulations tabled, and some are placed there almost daily.

To draft a regulation or a parliamentary Bill is no easy matter; it is an art on its own. To draft an ordinary legal document, such as an agreement or a conveyancing document, is an entirely different matter. In order properly to draft a regulation or a Bill for Parliament one requires to have undergone years of study and to exercise the greatest care, aided by a very complete knowledge of the law. At present, practically all the officers of the Crown Law Department are new. Law officers change very frequently and at present the Crown Solicitor is the only one who has been with the department for any great length of time. I understand, and believe, that those officers are indeed very capable; but it is impossible to appoint a man to a legal office of that kind and then say to him, "As a sideline, you can do this work of drafting regulations and Bills for Parliament." Work of that description is the most complicated form of legal practice that one can undertake.

I have discussed this question with some who have had to do the drafting work, and they have cordially agreed with me that it is a most difficult job. Furthermore, those officers are often asked to draft a Bill, practically speaking, at a moment's notice during the luncheon hour, when they are asked to set aside other work in the court or some urgent Crown Law undertaking in order that they may do the drafting. That is not fair. Should the Government experience difficulty in connection with Bills during the present session, it will be entirely its own fault because it has made no effort to build up a staff to follow on with work of this very special nature. It is quite easy to criticise the work of the Parliamentary Draftsman, but it is an extremely difficult matter to draft a Bill.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Do you mean that the Government does not pay enough money?

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: No. The point I am making is that work of this nature is entirely separate and apart from that associated with the drafting of ordinary legal documents and, in fact, is quite a different type altogether. The nearest I

can get to illustrating the difference is that if one wanted some very fine joinery work done, one would not give it to a bush carpenter, for he could not do it. He might know the principles without being capable of doing the work. That is the only simile I can think of at the moment. It is essential that we have a department—not a number of different individuals—to draw Bills and amendments—a parliamentary drafting department that would go on and on, and when one officer received promotion or left the Public Service, there would be somebody else with a knowledge of the work to carry on. This is most important for the general welfare of the community. Some members might think, "That sounds all right, but it is just another legal quibble," but I assure members that until we get such a department, laymen will continue to have many headaches and lawyers will be put in the way of making a lot of money because of the courts having to try to determine what is meant. If we had a competent drafting staff, much of the work of this Chamber in Committee would be saved.

Hon. C. B. Williams: There would be more confidence.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: Yes, and furthermore members would be able more clearly to understand what a Bill really meant. Very often we have to say that a Bill is intended to mean a certain thing whereas actually it does not. What we want is legislation drafted in such a way as to make the meaning perfectly clear and distinct. I trust that before next session, a start will be made to get a drafting department. This department should be attached either to the Crown Law Department or to Parliament House, but I think it should form a sub-department of the Crown Law Department.

We have been told that private members wishing to get Bills drafted will now consult a certain gentleman—a very capable gentleman—but I do not know whether he has ever had any experience in drafting legal documents. I know that he has been drafting wills, but the difference between drafting wills and drafting a Bill is as great as the difference between chalk and cheese. Next year we might be told to go to somebody else for drafting assistance. The Master of the Supreme Court, who has a job far removed from that of drafting, is

one of the draftsmen. The Solicitor General is far too busy to give attention to this work. He has to advise on all sorts of points that arise, but he may be advising one minute and drafting a Bill the next minute. I trust that the few matters I have mentioned will be given due consideration by the proper authorities. I support the motion.

On motion by Hon. L. B. Bolton, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 6.4 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly.

*Wednesday, 14th August, 1946.*

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

### QUESTIONS.

#### WOOL EXPORTS.

*As to Distribution of War-time Profit.*

Mr. WATTS asked the Minister for Agriculture:

1, Is the State Government aware of the amount held by the Commonwealth Govern-

ment (as distinct from the profit accruing as a result of the British Government's war-time purchase plan) from the profit made on fellmongered wools on tops exported to India, and any other transactions made with wool provided by Australian woolgrowers, stated to total in all more than £7,000,000?

2, If so, will he inform the House of the correct details of the various amounts and of the total involved?

3, Has the State Government made representations to the Commonwealth that this amount should be distributed to woolgrowers either in proportion to their contributions to the total production of the Commonwealth during the war or in any other manner?

4, If such representations have not been made, will they be made?

The MINISTER replied:

1 and 2, Authoritative information has not yet been received from the Commonwealth Government.

3, A request has been forwarded to the Prime Minister for definite information concerning proposals for the disposal of funds which have accumulated from the operations of the Central Wool Committee during the war.

4, Will be further considered when information referred to in No. 3 is received.

#### SOLDIER LAND SETTLEMENT.

*As to Concessional Reduction of Rents.*

Mr. WATTS asked the Minister for Lands:

1, Has the Government decided to extend to ex-Service personnel of the recent war the concessional reduction of 50 per cent. in respect of land rents as was done to ex-Servicemen of the 1914-18 war?

2, If so, is it proposed to introduce legislation this session?

3, Will the concession be extended to all ex-Service personnel, and will it cover leases already held as well as leases taken up since the war, or only the latter?

The MINISTER replied:

1, 2 and 3, This matter is at present under consideration and a statement will be made when a decision is arrived at.