

childish. Just imagine saying the papers cannot be brought here because there would be on the table 36 files which are in action all the time! But in the same breath the Minister says they are down at the Crown Law Department; it does not add up. I appeal to hon. members to assert their parliamentary rights in this matter. It is idle to say that the interests of the State are being jeopardised if we are allowed to see these papers. It is not often that I speak in the vein in which I propose to speak now, but I think it is necessary. Before there was a change of Government I had the responsibility of acting as a Minister of State. Nobody at any time during that period said I should not have access to Government papers because I might do something against the interests of the State. As a matter of fact, I took an oath of office.

It is stretching things a bit far now to say that an ex-Minister, and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, shall not be allowed to peruse papers because he might do something against the interests of the State. I ask members, is that a valid reason for withholding these papers? Of course it is not! I suggest that the Government ought to do the decent thing and offer to allow me to peruse the papers. If it makes that offer, I am prepared to withdraw the motion to have them tabled. That will not cause any dislocation in the slightest degree nor will it affect the contemplation of the matter by the Crown Law Department which for weeks has been trying to make up its mind whether it will do something or other. It could make up its mind straight away, seeing that it has had six weeks to think it over—if it intends to do something.

It is pretty certain that none of the files in which I would be interested will be required by the Crown Law Department. I am not interested in the question of whether the captain of the ship was negligent in allowing his vessel to run aground. I want to know why these houses are costing so much and whether the contracts were thrown to any Tom, Dick or Harry. I am interested to learn whether four or five commissions were paid. If that is common knowledge in Europe, why did we not know about it? These are matters upon which the papers may throw some light, and hence I am moving the motion.

On motion by the Minister for Housing, debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

The PREMIER (Hon. D. R. McLarty—Murray): I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till 2.30 p.m. tomorrow.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 10.23 p.m.

Legislative Council

Thursday, 18th September, 1952.

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

QUESTIONS.

HOUSING.

As to Stored Components of Pre-cut Homes.

Hon. G. BENNETTS asked the Minister for Transport:

(1) In view of the fact that a large number of pre-cut houses are stored in various centres, owing to lack of finance to enable their erection, will the Government consider disposing of such houses to the local governing bodies on a long-term payment basis?

(2) If the answer to No. (1) is in the negative, will the Government consider any other terms, as houses are urgently needed in the remote areas of the State?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) and (2) The Government is considering the disposal of a number of these houses to the State Housing Commission.

IRRIGATION.

As to Harvey No. 2 District, Work and Dismissals.

Hon. C. H. HENNING asked the Minister for Transport:

(1) What is the number of men dismissed by the Public Works Department in irrigation districts since the 1st July, 1952?

(2) What is the number of men employed on construction in Harvey No. 2 district, dismissed since the 1st July, 1952?

(3) How many new connections to farms have to be made to complete Harvey No. 2 scheme?

(4) What is the estimated cost of new connections for the year 1952-53?

(5) What is the estimated cost of the minimum modified scheme to permit water to be supplied, assuming it is a workable scheme that will allow for improvements to be made at a later date?

(6) What amount has been spent on construction in Harvey No. 2 district since the 1st July, 1952?

(7) How many farms have had land prepared in anticipation of the water being made available during the coming summer?

(8) Has it been possible to retain key men in anticipation of the resumption of work?

(9) Can any information be given as to when it is likely work will be resumed on a modified scheme?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) 19.

(2) 126.

(3) 28.

(4) £100,000 to complete at present-day costs.

(5) £65,000.

(6) £30,500

(7) This cannot be ascertained at short notice. The Benger area should not have expected water during the coming summer.

(8) A number of key men are being employed on maintenance work.

(9) No.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Twelfth Day.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. J. A. DIMMITT (Suburban) [4.35]: I would like to congratulate those members of this House who faced the electors last May and were returned to seats in the Legislative Council. I trust the new members will find their task an interesting one and that it will come up to their expectations and the opinions they had formed about parliamentary life and experience. As one of the senior members of this House who faced the electors at that time, I think I may be permitted to say, "Thank you" to all those members who offered their congratulations; and I say that on behalf of the other nine members and myself.

Turning now to the Governor's Speech, at page six there appears a very small paragraph which I shall take the liberty of reading. It is as follows:—

The decision of the Anglo-Iranian Oil interests to establish a large refinery at Kwinana, and the offer by the Broken Hill Proprietary Company to erect a steel works in the same locality, are of major importance to the State. It is confidently anticipated that further essential industries will follow.

I suggest that is a very bashful understatement. I do not know whether the public of Western Australia have yet realised the importance of this development,

and I feel the McLarty-Watts Government has not been given sufficient credit for its effort which culminated in the decision of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Coy. to establish a refinery on the western sea-board.

I would like to draw the attention of members to some of the background in regard to this proposed oil refinery. Some of the executives of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Coy. came to Western Australia with a view to seeing whether there was a suitable site available for their purpose. They examined several sites and left Western Australia with the firm conviction that there was no place suitable in this State for their purpose. At this stage the then Director of Public Works, Mr. Russell Dumas, conceived the idea of presenting a proposal for the establishment of a refinery at Henderson's Naval Base. He put the proposition up to his Minister, Hon. D. Brand, who became intensely enthusiastic about the scheme. I understand the Minister put the position to Cabinet and Cabinet readily agreed that he and the director should go to Melbourne and interview the executives of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Coy., who had been to Western Australia and who had left again firmly convinced that we had nothing suitable to offer.

The Minister and the Director of Works told a very convincing story to the executives of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Coy. with the result that they interested the latter to such an extent that they returned to Western Australia to investigate the proposition as outlined by the Minister and the director. The sequel to those efforts is that we shall have commenced in the very near future probably the biggest single project, achieved in one movement, that has ever been launched in Australia.

Members will agree that £40,000,000 is a lot of money to invest in any project. Whilst B.H.P. may have made a greater investment than that, negotiations with that company have extended over a number of years, representing not merely one single effort as was the case with the Anglo-Iranian Oil Coy. So due credit should be given to the Government, the Minister for Works and the Director of Works for what has taken place and what will take place as a result of their efforts.

I stated that I did not know that the public realised just how important this movement is. I think it might quite easily represent the beginning of a new era of industrial development in the history of Western Australia, because we may be sure that related industries will be grouped around so important an undertaking as an oil refinery. Already we have had indications of this as the small paragraph in the Governor's Speech states that the Broken Hill Pty. Coy., had offered to come here and establish portion of a steel works,

which I feel sure will eventually grow into something, perhaps not as extensive as the Anglo-Iranian Coy's. undertaking, but much larger than the £3,000,000 project mentioned in the Governor's Speech. Great credit is due to those who propounded the scheme and convinced the Anglo-Iranian Coy's. officials that the suggestion was worth investigating.

Last night Mr. Roche made some reference to secondary industry development. Whilst I endorse much of what he said regarding the absolute necessity for the development of primary industry, I cannot agree entirely with his remarks. He stated, amongst other things, that we shall have to call a halt to "this type of development", referring to the development of secondary industries. He said he was convinced that, for the time being at all events, we cannot afford to develop both primary and secondary industries, and added that we could not have a further development of secondary industries if we were going to achieve any worthwhile development of primary industry. With those contentions, I cannot agree. I admit that there is an absolute necessity for the further development of primary industry and for encouragement to be given to new settlers to take up land and develop it.

Hon. A. L. Loton: To make it worthwhile to take up the land.

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: My opinion is that these two developments can take place simultaneously, because I believe that a well-balanced economy needs a parallel development of both primary and secondary industries. The hon. member also stated that the Government was doing little to encourage the growing of food-stuffs that are so badly needed. Recently I had an opportunity to travel from Manjimup to Albany and thence via the Porongorups, and saw the development of land clearing at Rocky Gully, the tremendous development that is taking place at Mt. Many Peaks, and the development at Mt. Stirling.

I consider that the Government deserves much credit for what it is doing to encourage new settlers. True, the encouragement at present is being given for soldier settlement; we must deal with the settlement and rehabilitation of ex-servicemen before we can undertake development for the settlement of civilians. I was interested to note that, in those three areas, there are 57,000 acres of totally cleared land, 14,000 acres of partly cleared land and 35,000 acres of land laid down in permanent pasture. So there is a total of 106,000 acres of new land that is undergoing development. In addition, the Government has purchased large estates in various parts and subdivided them for the settlement of soldiers. Thus the Governments, both State and Federal, are certainly doing something to encourage the greater

production of food—food that is so urgently required by the increasing population of the world.

Hon. G. Bennetts: There is land at Esperance, too, that could be usefully employed for settlement.

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: Now I wish to refer to the speech by Mr. Strickland. During the debate on the Address-in-reply last year, he and I crossed swords regarding the air-beef scheme. I am always disappointed to find Mr. Strickland opposed to aerial transportation, because I am convinced that air-beef is playing an important part in the provision of food-stuffs.

Hon. H. C. Strickland: With the people's money.

Hon. H. Hearn: The same applies to railways.

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: The people have to provide the money for every enterprise, be it a governmental activity, the activity of a private company or of a private individual. The people have to pay for every service rendered to them. I repeat that I was disappointed to find him criticising the air-beef scheme. I wonder what would have happened in the country around the Glenroy and Mt. House stations and adjacent properties this year had the air-beef scheme not been in existence.

Hon. H. C. Strickland: What has been done over the past 60 years?

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: There has been a great stretch of drought-stricken country between those stations and the Wyndham Meat Works over which many of the cattle slaughtered at Glenroy would never have been able to travel. That cannot be denied. Consequently, this year more than ever, the slaughtering of cattle near the pastures on which they normally graze has proved a success, and I go further and say it has proved a boon.

All said and done, apart from other aspects, there are two in particular. One is that this food goes to England where the people are badly in need of meat. The other is that the export of this beef is providing much needed sterling in England. It is also, of course, providing an outlet for the cattle of those people living adjacent to Glenroy. Therefore I feel glad that all people do not agree with Mr. Strickland because still another slaughtering place is to be established by air-beef, I believe at Hall's Creek. I consider that the air-beef scheme has come to stay and that it will continue to play an important part in the production of meat in this country.

Hon. H. C. Strickland: How could it produce meat?

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: Its operations will have the effect of inducing the people of the North to breed more stock, because there will be a ready market available to

them right alongside their holdings. Mr. Strickland criticised air transport in the North generally and was very critical of the way in which air passengers and freight were catered for by the operators that run air services through the area he represents.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: They want cleaning up.

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: I do not know whether the hon. member lived in the North-West before air services came into being.

Hon. H. C. Strickland: I did.

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: I was not in the North-West before the inauguration of the air services, but I travelled through that country a great deal in the period between 1922 and 1939. I have been through the Kimberleys on two occasions and up as far as Broome on ten or eleven occasions, and so I claim to know the North-West from the viewpoint of a visitor. I have never heard anything but praise and thankfulness expressed for the air services in the North-West; they make life much more tolerable for residents in those areas than it was previously.

Hon. H. C. Strickland: The complaint is about the high cost.

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: Air transport is a costly business, and the further one travels by air the more one has to pay, just as with any other form of transport, but I would remind members of the high price of fuel in northern centres compared with the price in the metropolitan area. Mr. Strickland complained also about the shipping service, and told how there used to be a rush by various State and oversea vessels to pick up passengers and freight offering at the ports. If we could get rid of the wretched Navigation Act—which is a Commonwealth Act that I believe was introduced by a Government of the party to which the hon. member belongs—we could again have the Blue Funnel liners and Dutch vessels picking up goods and passengers at our North-West ports, thus giving a great deal better service along that coast than can be provided by the State steamers alone.

Hon. H. C. Strickland: They pick up wool, sheep and so on.

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: That is so, but they do not pick up passengers and general cargo in the manner mentioned by the hon. member last night. I am as great an advocate for air transport and the air-beef scheme as the hon. member is against them.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: But not in preference to road transport?

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: I think air transport should run parallel with road and steamer services.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: Our complaint is that air transport is receiving preference over road transport.

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: I would say that air transport has made possible in the North-West many things that would not have been possible without it. I come now to the question of traffic control, and I do not think Western Australia, and particularly the metropolitan area, has any reason for pride in that regard. I would suggest that some of the essential aspects of control of the components of road traffic in any city are—

- (a) The development of roads and footpaths on planned lines involving—
- (b) Selection of arterial roads.
- (c) By-passing of congested areas.
- (d) Selection of routes for public transport.
- (e) Selection of types of public transport, i.e., buses and/or trams, and size of vehicles.
- (f) Parking of private and public vehicles, including taxis.
- (g) Bus terminals and shelters and/or "through" routes.
- (h) Control of public service vehicles, goods vehicles, private cars, motor cycles, horse-drawn vehicles, pedal cyclists and pedestrians.

Each of those factors represents only one aspect of the problem of traffic control, and one of our difficulties in reaching a solution is that our control of traffic is divided. We have the municipality of Perth, suburban municipalities, and the various road boards in the metropolitan area, as well as the Railways Commission, the Commissioner of Police, the Transport Board, the Town Planning Board and the Transport Advisory Committee, each of which has limited powers of control. This means that there is a certain amount of overlapping and very little co-operation in the overall picture. In country districts, each road board decides on its own policy of traffic control, and the natural result of all this is that, as the various authorities generally represent sectional interests, it is hard to get co-operation or correlate the various interests.

It is almost impossible, in the circumstances, to view the problem in its broadest aspect. The Perth City Council may decide to widen or truncate a road to suit a new bus route, but the Transport Board may then decide upon an entirely different route. Following that, perhaps the Transport Advisory Committee or the Town Planning Board may suggest the resumption of some unused railway land for the purpose of making a bus terminal, but the Railways Commission can veto that, and then the Police Traffic Branch may decide on the gazettal of a new bus route, but unless they get the concurrence

of the Perth City Council and the Transport Board, the matter does not reach any conclusion. We have seen the controversy that took place over an area just outside Parliament House. The House Committee applied to have a certain area set apart for the parking of members' cars, and the Police Traffic Branch granted the request, but there was a great deal of discussion and adverse criticism of the action of the Traffic Department when the matter came before the City Council.

I do not know whether members are aware of it or not, but trams and trolley-buses for many years were not recognised as vehicles under the traffic regulations. That was a curious anomaly which gave rise to considerable difficulty. We have all seen where local authorities have resurfaced roads but where that portion of the road coming under the Tramway Department has been cut up and full of pot-holes. We have also had the spectacle of Government-owned transport being totally unable to lift the number of passengers offering at peak periods, and the Transport Board refusing private bus operators permission to help relieve the situation by picking up the excess passengers.

With all this divided control and the consequent lack of co-operation between the various authorities, it is no wonder that our traffic problem is becoming worse year by year. We will shortly be receiving a report that is in course of compilation by the Deputy Director of Works, and the Superintendent of the Police Traffic Branch. I do not know what the report will contain, but I am sure members will look forward with interest to its being tabled in this House. I am convinced that the solution of this problem lies in the appointment of a statutory body with absolute control over all aspects of our traffic and its future needs.

The appointment of such a body is important, and we should make sure that it is composed of the right type of men, with broad vision, skilled knowledge and ample experience. I would go further and say that such a board should have vested in it legislative authority to implement its decisions. The principles of town planning and traffic control are so closely related and interwoven that if we are to get effective results, there must be close liaison between the two authorities concerned. I hope the Government will cause the fullest inquiry to be made into the feasibility of incorporating into its town planning administration a competent traffic engineering section.

Hon. G. Fraser: Would that not be the best body to which to give the supreme power?

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: It might be. As long as there is set up a body with those powers, I think we will be able to solve many problems that are now accentuated

by the division of control among various authorities, none of which has sufficient power to do a complete job. If such a body is established in the future I think this State will be able to be regarded as a model in matters relating to traffic control, whereas today Western Australia is an example of the ineffectiveness of divided control. I support the motion.

On motion by Hon. A. L. Loton, debate adjourned.

BILL—CHILD WELFARE ACT AMENDMENT.

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

House adjourned at 5.4 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Thursday, 18th September, 1952.

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 2.30 p.m., and read prayers.