

Mr. HUTCHINSON: I do not know. But before completing the section regarding British Commonwealth reciprocation, I feel we could make in the Bill special exception in respect of the British merchant navy and all Australian companies. For the major part, the ships of Australian companies are manned by Australians, and those men and women, as Australians, pay their taxes, and yet we find that they still have to pay double what people in other industries have to pay for hospital treatment. So if we could exclude, under the provisions of this Bill, Australian and British shipping companies we would be getting somewhere.

Now let us take the case of foreign countries, and take, for example, an Australian ship en route to the United States. On the voyage, one of the Australian seamen becomes ill, or is injured in some way. He would be taken ashore, placed in a hospital and the full charges would have to be paid by the Australian company. So members can see my reason for saying that there should be some reciprocity in this question, and the same treatment should be accorded foreign seamen as is accorded our seamen when they are in foreign countries. Foreign companies should be charged full hospital costs for any of their injured seamen, and with that in mind I have had an amendment framed which I think will fit the situation and iron out the wickedness of this provision as far as it applies to Australian and British companies. I reluctantly support the second reading and I lodge a strong protest against two such provisions being placed in the one Bill. It is not in the best interests of good legislation and I trust that such a practice will occur less frequently in this Chamber in the future.

On motion by Hon. J. B. Sleeman, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 10.33 p.m.*

## Legislative Council

Wednesday, 16th September, 1953.

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

### QUESTIONS.

#### ROYAL PERTH HOSPITAL.

##### *As to Bank Negotiations for Loan.*

Hon. H. HEARN asked the Chief Secretary:

(1) Is it true that late last year the Hospital Board of Western Australia approached its bankers, the Commonwealth Bank of Australia, for a loan of £300,000 to assist the early completion of the hospital building programme?

(2) Is it true that the Commonwealth Bank declined to grant the loan?

(3) Is it a fact that the Hospital Board approached the Bank of New South Wales for a loan of £300,000 and this bank eight months ago agreed to make that amount available for the completion of the hospital?

(4) Is it true that after this bank had made £300,000 available, the present Government refused its approval of the loan on the plea that Labour policy would only guarantee accommodation at Government banks, where such was practicable?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Yes.

(3) Yes. The proposal of the Bank of New South Wales was for re-payment within four years. The proposal declined by the Commonwealth Bank was for a period of 10 years.

(4) No. The Commonwealth Bank readily agreed to supply funds upon the terms sought by the Bank of New South Wales.

### ROYAL VISIT.

*As to Arrangements for Eastern Goldfields.*

Hon. G. BENNETTS asked the Chief Secretary:

As much discontent is being expressed on the Goldfields with regard to the Royal visit—one complaint being that the Mayor of Boulder has only five minutes in which to receive Her Majesty—will the Government review the programme, with a view to reverting to the original intention of allowing Her Majesty two hours in which to visit the various centres, instead of 1½ hours as at present?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

Her Majesty will come to Western Australia after a strenuous programme of nearly two months in the middle of the Australian summer. On the day she visits the Goldfields she will spend seven hours in the air between Adelaide and Perth at a time when flying conditions could be extremely unpleasant, and after arrival in Perth she will be engaged for 1½ hours on the official reception and the Royal progress.

In the mid-day heat Her Majesty will spend one hour at Kalgoorlie and Boulder. Twenty-five minutes have been allotted to a reception on the Kalgoorlie Oval where provision has also been made for ex-servicemen, schoolchildren and other organised bodies from Boulder to see the visitors. At the Boulder Town Hall Her Majesty will hear and reply to an address of welcome and the mayor will present councillors and their wives. This is the same programme as arranged for the City of Fremantle. The people of the Goldfields will have more opportunity of seeing Her Majesty than those of almost all other country centres, and I feel sure that, knowing the circumstances, they will not wish her to be subjected to any greater strain on what will be a most exacting day.

### NATIVE WELFARE.

*As to Tabling Annual Reports.*

Hon. L. C. DIVER (for Hon. A. L. Loton) asked the Chief Secretary:

(1) Is he aware that the latest printed annual report of the Commissioner of Native Affairs available to members is dated the 30th June, 1951?

(2) Will he endeavour to ensure that later printed reports of this department are made available to members in the near future?

(3) Before members are expected to give consideration to any Government legislation on native affairs will the Minister

ensure that the report of this department for the year ended the 30th June, 1953, is available to members?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Yes. The report for the year ended the 30th June, 1952, a typewritten copy of which was tabled on the 11th August, is in the hands of the Government Printer and will be made available to members as soon as it is ready.

(3) Every endeavour will be made to have the report for the year ended the 30th June, 1953, printed before the proposed native welfare legislation is introduced, but because the report in turn incorporates reports from each of the department's district officers and every mission in the State, a number of which have not yet been received, this might not be practicable. However, a typewritten copy will be made available as early as possible.

### WATER SUPPLIES.

*(a) As to Survey of Rock Catchments.*

Hon. L. C. DIVER (for Hon. N. E. Baxter) asked the Chief Secretary:

(1) How many rock catchment areas in the eastern and north-eastern wheat-belts have been surveyed during the past 18 months?

(2) Has the survey of the catchments completed to date indicated that many of these can be used successfully for water supplies?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(1) Six.

(2) Investigations following survey are not yet complete. A brief report is available for inspection by the hon. member if he so desires.

*(b) As to Appeals Against Rate Assessments.*

Hon. A. R. JONES (for Hon. N. E. Baxter) asked the Chief Secretary:

(1) Will he ascertain whether the Minister for Works and Water Supplies intends to hear, during the next six months, appeals lodged by ratepayers, as early as March, 1953, against water rate assessments?

(2) If the answer is in the affirmative, can the Minister give the House any idea as to when the appeals are likely to be heard?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Sixty-three cases are listed for hearing and these will be finalised before the end of November, 1953.

**HOUSING.***(a) As to Land Held by Commission, Maylands.*

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH asked the Chief Secretary:

(1) Does the State Housing Commission possess any land in the Maylands Legislative Assembly electorate, under—

- (a) the State Housing Act; or
- (b) the War Service Homes Act?

(2) If so, in either case where is the land situated?

(3) For what purposes is it intended to use this land?

(4) If the answer to (1) is in the negative, does the State Housing Commission intend to acquire any land in the Legislative Assembly electorate of Maylands in the future?

(5) If so, for what purposes is it intended to use this land?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

- (1) (a) No.
- (b) No.

(2) and (3) Answered by (1).

(4) An approach has been made to the Railways Commission for the return of six lots to the State Housing Commission if these are no longer required by the Railways Commission.

(5) Not determined.

*(b) As to Location of Railway Department Land.*

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH (without notice) asked the Chief Secretary:

Would he be kind enough at the next sitting of the House to advise me where the land that the State Housing Commission has requested the Railway Department to make available is situated and what the area is?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

I will convey the hon. member's question to the Minister for Housing and see whether the information can be made available.

*(c) As to Medina Homes, Cost and Rental.*

Hon. L. C. DIVER (for Hon. N. E. Baxter) asked the Chief Secretary:

(1) How many houses have been completed and occupied in Medina townsite?

(2) What was the average cost of the completed houses?

(3) What is the average rental of the occupied houses?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(1) Number completed, 144. Number occupied not known, since houses leased to Australasian Petroleum Refinery, Ltd., are occupied under arrangements between the company and its tenants.

(2) £2,550.

(3) £2 17s. 3d. The rentals of the houses made available to Australasian Petroleum Refinery Ltd. do not include factors for rates, taxes, maintenance, etc., which are the responsibility of the company.

*(d) As to Queen's Park Project, Capital Cost.*

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH asked the Chief Secretary:

(1) What is the estimated capital cost which will be involved in the State Housing Commission venture at Queen's Park?

(2) Will it be necessary to lay any large water mains to serve this area?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(1) This is not possible to state until estimates are prepared and tenders close.

(2) Arrangements have been made with the Metropolitan Water Supply Department to service with suitable water mains.

**WESTERN AUSTRALIAN TRANSPORT BOARD.***(a) As to Visit to Country Centres.*

Hon. A. R. JONES (for Hon. L. A. Logan) asked the Chief Secretary:

(1) Did the Chairman and two officers of the Transport Board recently visit centres in the Midland Province?

(2) If so, were centres visited other than those in the Midland Province?

(3) What are the names of all the centres visited?

(4) For what purpose were the visits made?

(5) Was the pending Royal Commission and matters likely to be covered in that inquiry mentioned and discussed during these visits?

(6) If so, why?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(1) The chairman and members of the Transport Board accompanied by two officers carried out a general inspection during the week ended the 4th September, travelling to Geraldton by the Perth-Geraldton Road and returning via Morawa, Perenjori and Dalwallinu. Local Authorities at the different centres were visited, according to appointments made on the 6th August last, prior to any suggestion of a Royal Commission.

(2) All centres visited are in the Midland Province.

(3) Moora, Carnamah, Three Springs, Mingenew, Dongara, Geraldton, Nanson, Northampton, Mullewa, Morawa, Perenjori and Dalwallinu.

(4) It is the board's policy to visit country districts as opportunity arises to keep itself conversant with local transport conditions and to give local governing bodies the opportunity of personal discussion with the members of the board on transport matters. The occasion referred to was one of such visits.

(5) During conversation, casual mention was made of allegations in Parliament concerning the rostering of super-phosphate loading, but the subject was not discussed.

(6) As stated in No. (5), the subject was not discussed.

(b) *As to Cartage of Eggs from Narrogin.*

Hon. L. C. DIVER (for Hon. A. L. Loton) asked the Chief Secretary:

(1) Is it a fact—

(a) that the Transport Board has refused a road license for the cartage of surplus eggs from Narrogin;

(b) that the additional cost by rail will be over £1,200 more than that paid for road conveyance;

(c) that the average cost per 30 dozen case of eggs and empty returns is 2s. 4.11d.?

(2) Is the anticipated cost by rail transport (on today's charges) for the same consignment and returns of empties 4s. 5.47d.?

(3) If the figures outlined are approximately correct, does not the Government agree that producers in country districts are being penalised?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(1) (a) Yes.

(b) The cost of rail transport would be higher than that of road transport but the total figure would depend upon the quantities involved.

(c) The Western Australian Egg Marketing Board has claimed to be able to operate at this rate.

(2) Rail charges, including handling and sheeting and return of empties, amount to approximately 3s. 10½d. per case. Cost of terminal cartage would be additional to this.

(3) Railway freight schedules are arranged on a basis calculated to benefit producers generally. As rates for some commodities are higher than others, it is possible for road operators to undercut rail freights but only when they are able to confine their work to selected "high freight" items.

### PAPERS—FORESTS.

*As to Applications for Position of Conservator.*

Debate resumed from the previous day on the following motion by Hon. J. Murray:—

That all files and papers relating to the calling of applications for the position of Conservator of Forests be laid on the Table of the House for a period of fourteen days.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. G. Fraser—West) [4.45]: In speaking on this motion, I do not intend to go into the

whole ramifications entered upon by the hon. member who submitted the motion, because it deals merely with the calling of applications in connection with the appointment of the Conservator of Forests. Consequently, there cannot be a discussion of the timber industry on a motion of this description.

The present Conservator of Forests was appointed some years ago for a seven-year term, which expired on the last day of January of this year. The previous Government made no subsequent appointment and consequently the present Conservator has carried on pending such appointment. An application was received from the present Conservator for an increase in salary. This was considered by the present Government, which agreed to an additional £400 per annum being paid, and gave instructions for the calling of applications for the position. That was necessary because the present Conservator's term expired on the 31st January.

The point I would like members to consider before casting a vote on the motion is that applications for this position closed last Saturday week and those received are now being considered by the Public Service Commissioner. In those circumstances it would be highly improper for the papers in connection with those applications to be laid on the Table at this stage. I want it to be realised that if members agree to that being done, a precedent will be set and there will be the possibility that on all future occasions someone will move for papers relating to applications for positions to be tabled at a time when such applications are under consideration. That would be a very dangerous precedent for any House to establish.

In speaking to the motion, the mover introduced quite a lot of matter concerning which nothing will be found on the files which it is requested should be tabled. Many people have expressed anxiety about this matter, but let me tell members what has occurred. The subject was raised in another place, and while the Minister there was not prepared to table the papers, he made an offer to the members making inquiries and any others interested to inspect them at his office. Yet not one has availed himself of that opportunity! I repeat that offer now to members of this Chamber. Anyone who wants to delve into this case may go to the Minister's office and see not only these papers, but any others connected with this matter. There is nothing to hide.

Hon. L. C. Diver: Then why the opposition?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Does the hon. member think it right that while the Public Service Commissioner is inquiring into these applications and before a decision has been made, the papers should be placed on the Table and be open to

inspection by members, and that the information contained therein should then be available to the public? That is not right and it is not fair to any of the applicants for the position.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: The motion does not ask for the applications to be tabled.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It asks that all files and papers relating to the calling of applications be tabled.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: It refers to the calling of applications and not to the tabling of applications.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It is all on the file. The term of the present Conservator expired at the end of January last; and in view of the fact that a salary increase of £400 for the position has been agreed to, what would the hon. member have done if he had been the Minister? Would he not have called for applications to give anyone an opportunity of applying for the position? Was not the Minister responsible for getting the best man available for the job? There is nothing to say that the present Conservator will not be reappointed, and I repeat that it would be highly improper for the papers to be tabled at this stage.

If the hon. member is interested, it is open to him to view the file, but I believe that members are not so much concerned with protecting the present Conservator as with giving all possible publicity to this matter. At no stage has the Minister for Housing made any accusations or said a word against the present Conservator of Forests. He did make certain statements in another place in answer to questions asked him by members there and he gave some information and quoted from the file some statements made by his predecessor in office. I hope the motion will be defeated.

HON. J. MURRAY (South-West—in reply) [4.53]: I do not intend to speak at length, Mr. President, but the Chief Secretary has suggested that if the motion is agreed to the applications of those who may have applied for the position of Conservator of Forests will be tabled, whereas in fact there is nothing in my motion to suggest that I asked for that. I have asked that the files and papers in connection with the calling of applications for the position be tabled and that should be quite clear.

The Chief Secretary also said that the papers are now under consideration by the Public Service Commissioner. As the Forests Act lays down clearly that the position of Conservator of Forests is subject to appointment by the Governor—in other words Executive Council—if applications are under review by the Public Service Commissioner the position is actually being brought into a lower grade. I do

not think the Chief Secretary has put forward any valid reason why the papers should not be tabled.

Question put and a division taken with the following result:—

|              |      |      |      |      |    |
|--------------|------|------|------|------|----|
| Ayes         | .... | .... | .... | .... | 14 |
| Noes         | .... | .... | .... | .... | 8  |
| Majority for |      |      |      |      | 6  |

**Ayes.**

|                       |                      |
|-----------------------|----------------------|
| Hon. L. Craig         | Hon. A. R. Jones     |
| Hon. L. C. Diver      | Hon. J. Murray       |
| Hon. Sir Frank Gibson | Hon. H. S. W. Parker |
| Hon. A. F. Griffith   | Hon. J. McL. Thomson |
| Hon. H. Hearn         | Hon. H. K. Watson    |
| Hon. C. H. Henning    | Hon. F. R. Welsh     |
| Hon. J. G. Hialop     | Hon. J. Cunningham   |
|                       | (Teller.)            |

**Noes.**

|                   |                       |
|-------------------|-----------------------|
| Hon. G. Bennetts  | Hon. W. R. Hall       |
| Hon. R. J. Boylen | Hon. F. R. H. Lavery  |
| Hon. E. M. Davies | Hon. H. C. Strickland |
| Hon. G. Fraser    | Hon. C. W. D. Barker  |
|                   | (Teller.)             |

Question thus passed.

**ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.**

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. G. Fraser—West): I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till Tuesday, the 22nd September.

Question put and passed.

*House adjourned at 5 p.m.*

