

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

- (1) (a) Kangaroos are declared vermin in the following districts:—

Red Kangaroos and Euros.

Ashburton.
Black Range.
Cue.
Gascoyne-Minilya.
Meekatharra.
Mt. Magnet.
Murchison.
Roebourne-Tableland.
Upper Gascoyne.
West Kimberley.
Wiluna.
Halls Creek.
Kalgoorlie.
Laverton.
Leonora.
Broome.
Menzies.
Wyndham.
Marble Bar.
Yalgoo.
Nullagine.
Port Hedland.
Mt. Marshall.

Grey Kangaroos.

Wagin.
Dumbleyung.
Moora.
Lake Grace.
Wongan-Ballidu.
Mingenew.
Mt. Marshall.
Kondinin.

- (b) Licences are not required to destroy red kangaroos or euros in any part of the State. Nor is royalty payable on the skins. Licences to destroy grey kangaroos are not required in any area in which they are declared vermin, or outside the South-West Land Division.
- (c) Licences may be issued for the shooting of grey kangaroos in any area.

- (2) Yes. Royalty is payable only on grey skins shot in the South-West Land Division except where declared vermin.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Third Day.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. G. C. MacKINNON (South-West) [440]: This is a moment which I have anticipated with some terror. As one hon. member said the other day, members have all been through it; and the fact that they lived beyond the day of their maiden speech has given me courage.

I take this opportunity of thanking all members and the staff for the many kindnesses shown to me since I have been here.

I am very conscious of the fact that there is much to learn before one can become an effective representative. I feel that this, perhaps, applies more so in my case following as I do Hon. L. Craig who served the State in this House with such great distinction for 22 years. However, it is obvious that up to date all members have aimed to be helpful, and for that I am very grateful indeed. I would like to congratulate those members who have been re-elected to this House, and particularly the two new members, Mr. Mattiske and Mr. Jeffery.

May I also express my sympathy to the relatives and friends of the late Mr. Don Barker. It was my loss that I never knew him. I did know the late Mr. Harry Hearn. Indeed, it was after speaking very forcefully on my behalf that he passed away, probably in my arms. I feel that the cheerful, often jocular, and always genuine and shrewd advice of the late Mr. Hearn will be missed. He was a man whom it was easy to like.

In the Lieut.-Governor's Speech reference was made several times to the North-West of this State and to the opportunities which exist for the development and progress of this State as a whole. From any point of view, parochial or national, I feel nobody would deny this; but nevertheless it is to be hoped that no Government will forget that developmental needs do exist throughout the length and breadth of the State, and many parts which, although quite thickly populated in comparison, are in reality barely scratched.

The South-West Province which I represent is a good example of this. There are needs still existing, both for development and consolidation. It was not so very long ago that the South-West was dependent almost entirely upon the timber industry. Winning, hand-hewing and sometimes milling of timber was virtually the sole economic basis of the South-West. Although this does not exist today, the South-West can be claimed to be the most diversified section of the State in its pursuits. Nevertheless, timber still plays a very important economic role.

It is unfortunate that during and since the war the demand of this State on the timber industry of the South-West was so great that virtually all the output was required for building within the State, and has been used for that purpose. Export markets which were previously available to us have, to some extent, been lost. Purchasers interested in our timber had to look elsewhere for supplies, but markets once lost are often difficult to regain.

At present there is, as members are well aware, a recession in the building industry in this State. Indeed, the Government has made some mention of the fact and has expressed concern about the industry and the employees in it. Any recession in the building industry at this stage is very quickly

reflected in the milling of timber throughout the South-West corner of the State. Stockpiling can proceed for a time, but is severely limited by both storage capacity and economic pressures.

If the plans envisaged by the Government for easing the recession in the building industry do, in fact, assist it, then of course that will be reflected immediately in the well-being of the timber industry. However, it is to be hoped that the Government will appreciate the necessity for healthy export markets for our timber, and will take what steps are necessary to see that the markets are obtained and retained so that we can remove this particular facet of activity from being almost entirely dependent on works within this State.

As I mentioned before, the South-West is no longer entirely dependent on the timber industry, as it was in the early part of the century; and there is no other section of the State which has such a diversity of pursuits. Every facet of temperate-climate agriculture has its followers. Intense culture varies from the growth of tobacco in the south to the growing of flowers in the northern part of the province, for sale on the Perth market. There is fruit growing in the many varieties, there is grazing, there are all types of dairy farming, and there is fat-stock raising. In the livestock field one can find everything from breeders of racehorses to those engaged in fattening pigs.

There is one branch of cattle farming which I would like to mention. I know that members are fully aware of the peculiar difficulties that some dairy farmers in the South-West experience. In previous copies of Hansard I notice that fairly extensive mention has been made of this subject, particularly with regard to butterfat producers. It is not my intention to go through all those difficulties. However, there is one matter I would mention.

Earlier this year, in company with Mr. Willmott, I was fortunate enough to attend two meetings—one at Margaret River and one at Northcliffe—where a scheme was put forward for assistance to dairy farmers. I would commend the people responsible for working out that scheme. As explained to two very interested gatherings, in both those places, it was an extremely well-thought-out programme.

The provisions and objectives in the scheme as explained to us would appear to be one of the best-based proposals that has ever been put up. It would take a considerable amount of time to explain the scheme in complete detail, and I have no intention of doing that. However, members who are interested in ascertaining the full particulars of the plan will find that the responsible Minister will be only too glad to supply the information.

At both meetings it was stated without reserve that the State had the money for an immediate commencement of the programme in two restricted areas—one being to the south of Margaret River, with definite boundaries; and the other near Northcliffe. For the purpose of starting this scheme, both districts had marked advantages. The obvious difficulty that this particular scheme sets out to correct was present in both localities.

I mentioned a moment ago that, as explained, it was a good plan. There is only one way to test any plan, and that is to try it. It was stated without reserve that the Government had the money to commence in those two trial areas, and I earnestly recommend that that action be taken; for, however good a plan might be, there will always be odd troubles to be ironed out, and by trying out the scheme in those two restricted areas, those troubles could be found and eliminated.

It was stated that the ultimate desire was to extend this scheme throughout the more heavily-timbered country. The need for the scheme basically is to breach the gap between the actual value of land and the cost of putting it into production. Farmers present today will readily grasp the need for this in that heavier country. To extend the scheme more widely than was stated at those two meetings would require extra funds; and it would seem reasonable to suppose that at any Federal-State conference at which Ministers were seeking further funds to extend this scheme, their hand would be greatly strengthened if they could point to two areas in which the plan was a working fact, and where it was showing that it was truly good. I therefore recommend that the Government proceed with the plan as explained at that meeting.

The other agricultural pursuit in the South-West Province which is finding itself in very troubled waters is that of apple growing in the district of Bridgetown. As members have probably read in the paper, growers are suffering from a pest known as codlin moth. Admittedly this is the 17th outbreak that has occurred in the State, and that may allay some alarm. But never before has any part of this State suffered from such a severe infestation of the pest as on this occasion. It is thought that the moth has had three years in which to breed and spread, and the infestation has become much more widespread than at any previous time, and much more deeply embedded.

The Agricultural Department has the matter very well in hand. The officers are very active; and the Fruitgrowers' Association, in conjunction with the department, is working very well to do what can be done to stamp out the pest. However, there are many growers who feel that the full implication and danger of this outbreak to Western Australia has not been realised. Should this effort to control

or eradicate it fail, there is a very real fear that the entire apple-growing industry will be in economic jeopardy. There is quite a definite reason for that.

The economy of any orchard district in comparison with any other orchard district is dependent on the return per tree from the particular area. In Western Australia, for various reasons, our average return per tree is near enough to 1½ bushels, in comparison with a general return in most exporting countries of about 4 bushels. The figure is nearly three times as great elsewhere. So on a per tree yield our economic basis in this State is much lower.

To a marked extent, we have overcome that by our freedom from diseases in the past. Sprayings in this State are amazingly low, and we have been able to compete with other apple-growing areas. The whole industry is predominantly an exporting industry, and therefore has some bearing on our trade balances. In times of economic difficulty such as the present, this is no small consideration.

However, if the attempt at the complete eradication of this pest fails, there will be many orchards that will be faced with an additional five to 12 sprayings per year. If it happens that the pest becomes widespread throughout the State—it is not beyond the realms of possibility—many orchards will go out of existence altogether, and those that remain in operation will have to be run under very strict economic control and, as I have indicated, will be faced with an additional five to 12 sprayings per year. It will be clearly understood that the obtaining of even sufficient saline water to do that job would be enough in all conscience, without the added expense of chemicals, machinery and labour. It does present a problem.

There is one aspect which is causing some concern. One of the rules is that all fruit from a quarantined area shall be packed in predetermined sheds. Many growers of very wide experience are doubtful of the ability of those sheds to pack the capacity of fruit they may be called upon to handle. If the season should be a good one—and it shows a lot of promise—that could be a very real danger. Growers in the whole district of Bridgetown are facing heartbreaking losses with courage and determination, and it is to be hoped that those losses will not be aggravated by failure to supply adequate packing facilities, or the inspectors that will be necessary to check the fruit.

Good fruit at reasonable prices is of vital importance to any people and the significance of a healthy export market such as this one has been with regard to credits needs no stressing in these days. It is therefore to be hoped that the Government will maintain a vigilant attitude in this matter and do all it can to foster the co-operation that exists at present between the departmental officers and the Fruit-growers' Association.

There is one other matter I wish to discuss regarding the South-West; and if I approached this day with terror, I approach this subject with utter trepidation. I am speaking of a primary industry which has been and which is in a sorely troubled condition indeed. I refer to the coal position at Collie.

One of the greatest difficulties in approaching this problem is that it is one which it is virtually impossible to discuss. I do not care to whom one goes to talk about it—within two minutes the discussion has developed into a blame-laying session. One side blames the other. It is a question of deep mines against open cuts, and of open cuts against deep mines; and all blame Governments, no matter what colour they may be. The matter is being discussed here, there and everywhere, and it is a problem which is of vital importance to this State.

I know very little of the more serious problems that members here are called upon to discuss; but I feel that, apart from the difficulties of our railway system, this is the most urgent matter in the State today. Collie and coal mean many things to many people. The importance of the question is perhaps easier understood if we translate it into terms of electric light and realise that, every time one pushes a switch, whether the lamp glows or not depends upon whether power is being generated from Collie coal; and therefore many of the State's industries depend on that coal.

Coal is of vital importance, and one hears put forward scores of solutions of the problem. Apparently anyone can solve it. Over the last three years the difficulty has been fully appreciated by the Government, which realises that it is a matter of marked urgency; and yet, with all the expert advice which has been available to be drawn upon, and all the thought which the Government has given to the question, it has not produced any real solution of Collie's problems. It is therefore obvious that street-side solutions are no answer, either. It is a very prickly question; but the time has come when the nettle must be firmly grasped, and I believe a lead must come from this place.

Everybody seems to be taking part in the effort to solve the problem of Collie; and in today's "Daily News" we see the heading, "A Controversy Comes to Perth," following which we read—

The deep mine versus open cut controversy at Collie came to Perth last night. Four association and union executive members who are also Trades Union Industrial Council delegates came in delegation to a meeting of the T.U.I.C.

This is a problem which must not be left to any particular section of interests to solve; rather must it be dealt with as

a national matter of national urgency. Since the war we have been almost entirely dependent upon Collie coal for our power fuel supplies. We had to get coal at virtually any cost and the cost-plus system was introduced. That system has been condemned by virtually everybody, and I do not think anyone would argue that point. But the fact remains that it was introduced in many industries as a wartime measure, although it has been realised that it was something which had to go by the board.

The whole question was complicated by the fact that, as a strategic necessity, open cuts were developed in Collie, thus creating competition between the deep mines and the open cuts. The matter was further complicated by the development of the Muja leases with their fantastic deposits of coal. In Western Australia, we have still to import a great deal of power fuel and so Collie is of considerable strategic importance. Those who argue along those lines will claim that the coalfields must be kept open actively and in a usable condition.

Those who argue in favour of the Muja leases will point out that the maximum consumption of coal in this State in any year was near enough to 1,000,000 tons, and that these leases are believed to contain 100,000,000 tons of coal, which would be 100 years' supply at a rate equal to our maximum annual consumption. Others again will point out that the developments in the field of nuclear energy might mean that coal could become a depreciating national asset.

These are all complicating factors in a State problem, because Collie is a very important town, situated in the centre of some exceedingly rich country. The question is one on which I implore this House to give some lead to a confused and bedevilled district. Collie has fluctuated between a condition bordering on despair and the hope that something will happen.

The problem is not one to be left alone in the hope that it will solve itself, as it cannot be solved by some magic potion; rather is it one which will have to be faced up to by some committee or group of people approaching it on a completely national basis, and not as a party political plaything.

As I have said, Collie is situated in excellent agricultural country and someone might say, "Let us extend our agriculture in that area." But if we try to do that, we immediately come up against a stone wall, as Collie is located in the middle of a large forest reserve. Much of the land surrounding Collie is not particularly suited to forest growth, and perhaps should be opened to agriculture, but for the fact that it is a natural water conservation area, and if we were to farm any of the land we would have to farm the gullies and valleys through which the water flows.

It is thought that superphosphate in solution flowing into dams induces the growth of algae in water pipes. Experiments are proceeding to ascertain whether that is so, and the indications are that it is. The authorities, therefore, are not anxious to encourage the use of superphosphate in catchment areas. Stock can graze on conservation areas, but the problem there is that they cut away the ground and cause erosion. If we clear the ground we remove much of the cover. By removing the top cover we allow greater evaporation; and if we remove the pasture cover there is more silt, which fills the dams and pollutes the water, thus bringing us up against a further stone wall when talking of agricultural development.

Secondary industries at Collie would be the ideal, as coal and water are available there in abundance, together with a diminishing labour need on the coalfields themselves. The obvious secondary industry would be the treatment of coal for its by-products, but, again, we are dealing with a water conservation area. Nearly all industries need copious supplies of water, which is used over and over again; and each time it passes through the process it carries with it more chemical impurities, affecting both the taste and smell. Those impurities gradually accumulate in the water, and there again we have the problem of pollution. The area of the State most suited to the conservation of water, with adequate rainfall and a terrain suited to the establishment of dams is also that best suited for intense agricultural pursuits.

As our need for further dams and reservoirs increases, we will find that a greater number of large tracts of country must be set aside for water conservation and catchment areas, which will therefore be removed from other forms of activity. The problems of the Collie district have been tackled by the townspeople, who are endeavouring to do everything possible for their own district. It is obvious that in a young, active, virile and developing State we must constantly come up against problems. The problems are of various types; those which the people vitally concerned can, through their own endeavours, attempt to correct; and others which are beyond the capacity and intentions of the local people. I fear that the problem of Collie belongs to the latter group; and if I have proved that point, in dealing with the numerous facets of this vital question, I hope we will be able to initiate here some activity which will give a lead in the right direction.

In too many respects there are people who today turn too often and too quickly to the Government for assistance. In Collie's problem, however, although there is a committee which has been most active in its investigations, those concerned have found themselves up against a solid stone wall. This question is one in which the

partisan views of the individual must be forgotten, and one which must be tackled from a State point of view, as it is important not only to the South-West but also to the State and to Australia as a whole from the strategic angle. With a strong hope that action will be taken in this regard, I commend the problem with which I have dealt to the earnest study of this House. I support the motion.

HON. G. BENNETTS (South-East) [5.13]: I wish first of all to congratulate Mr. MacKinnon on an excellent maiden speech, and I am sure he will be able to contribute much to the debates in this Chamber. I desire also to congratulate Mr. Jeffery on the speech he made on the opening day. Next I wish to welcome Mr. Mattiske who, I am sure, will be an asset to this House. I hope that in the years to come those three new members will contribute a great deal to the debates in this Chamber and to the welfare of the State.

To the families of the late Harry Hearn and the late Don Barker I wish to offer my sympathy. Those two members were with us in this House for a long time and their presence will be missed. I always remember Harry Hearn as a big business man. I used to call him that, and he referred to me as "the little business man". The House will be the poorer because those two men and Mr. Craig are no longer with us. Mr. Craig was considered to be one of the most outstanding and sincere members of this House, and I am sure we will greatly miss his contributions to debates.

There are a number of matters which I wish to mention. I would like particularly to touch on the speech made by Sir Charles Latham yesterday. He talked about water supply and the hard work that was put into the scheme to take water to Kalgoorlie. When talking on that matter, he struck a note in my memory, because I was there long before the water scheme was inaugurated, and I know of the hardships that were endured in conveying that water main to the Goldfields. It was responsible for bringing people into the mining area which, in turn, was responsible for the development of the State and the placing of Perth and the metropolitan area in a sound financial position ever since.

I also remember Dr. Hislop on many occasions mentioning—just as Sir Charles has—that not much notice was taken of members who spoke to the debate on the Address-in-reply. They pointed out that nothing much was done about it. Dr. Hislop suggested that a committee should be set up in this House to pick out the salient points members put forward and perhaps work on them with a view to some action being taken. I am sure that an all-party committee would be a good thing.

There are a number of subjects that members mention which are of benefit to the State. Not all members are able to get around and know everything about their electorates. For instance, the district I represent covers an area of 570,000 square miles, and it takes a long time to get around it. By the time one has finished touring the district, it is time to start again; and when one adds to that the attention one has to pay to one's mail, it will be appreciated that it is a full-time job.

Another very important factor relative to the Goldfields was the opening up of the railways in September, 1896. The scenes that took place then are, I believe, to be re-enacted in September of this year. Those railways, like others, were put there to develop the outback part of the State. They were not expected to pay for themselves; their main purpose was to develop the country and open up the remote areas. Today an attempt is being made to try to make them pay for themselves by increasing railway freights and railway fares. I should imagine that the Goldfields is one of the most hard-hit of areas when it comes to charges being increased. Charges for water and so on have been increased all the time without a corresponding increase in the price of gold. This has meant an amalgamation in the mining industry which, in turn, has brought about unemployment.

Only the other day I was speaking to a mine manager, and we were discussing the fact that there was to be a reduction of manpower in several of the mines. I do know that at Bullfinch 30 men were dismissed because of over-staffing. It will be seen, therefore, that unemployment is growing. I have worked underground in these mines, and I know that by increasing the cost of production we are by-passing certain grades of ore in those mines. We are closing up certain levels which, of course, will never be reopened because of the great deal of money that would be required.

The Lake View & Star is one of the mines that is using a tremendous amount of oil, and I would like to point out that the freight on oil from Esperance to that mine is £7 10s. a ton. If we are to increase our rail freights, I would suggest that the telescopic system is the best; and I trust that the Government will continue along those lines. I hope there will be ways and means which will enable us to overcome any further increases in charges for oil or anything else relative to the mining industry.

Hon. H. K. Watson: You would prefer a microscopic rate rather than a telescopic rate.

Hon. G. BENNETTS: I like to get the best I can for the people on the Goldfields. The Government has done a wonderful job, and I give it special credit.