

not a member of the staff of that department that is not uncertain of the future. When officers of the public service are placed in that position, it is not a good thing for the service.

My experience of the public servants in this State is all to their advantage. I consider that it is a much maligned service. I shall uphold the good name of these officers so long as I find they are doing the work for the State they are doing today. If there are some corrupt practices in the service, those concerned would be in such a minority that it would not be worth considering, and why should we drag the public service as a whole through the mire if one or two of the employees do not measure up to the required standard?

The Premier: Is the hon. member replying to the member for Moore?

Mr. BOVELL: I am making a statement about the turmoil that I feel exists in the Forests Department at present.

The Premier: It sounded a bit as if you were replying to the member for Moore.

Mr. BOVELL: My speech was prepared long before the member for Moore spoke this afternoon. I had had no indication of what he intended to say. The member for Moore made certain allegations today and, if he is called upon to disclose the names of the persons concerned, I know that he will do so. He will not cast a slur upon the whole of the public service as the Minister for Housing could be accused of having done. I feel that the action of the Minister for Forests in regard to the appointment of the advisory committee and the calling for applications for the position of Conservator, when we have as Conservator Dr. T. N. Stoate, the most highly qualified forest officer in Australia, is, to say the least, upsetting to every officer of the department.

The Minister for Housing: You are doing your very best to promote that, of course.

Mr. BOVELL: I wish to leave this suggestion for the Minister's consideration. If Dr. Stoate is to go, let us have an officer to take his place that has served a lifetime with the department. When I was sitting on the Government side of the House, I heard members of the Labour Party criticising the Government I supported for what they described as appointing imports to high public offices. It is imperative for the good of the public service to give those officers who have devoted their lives to the work an opportunity to fill the highest executive post, provided they have the qualifications.

There are men in the department who have high qualifications, though not so high as those possessed by the present Conservator, but if the Minister or the Government has decided that Dr. Stoate's services are no longer required, that is the

business of the Government and neither I nor any member can do much about it, but I do ask that consideration be given to the appointment of an officer who has given his whole life to the work provided the department is not going to be jeopardised in any way by making such an appointment. I implore your assistance in this matter, Mr. Speaker, and hope that you will impress upon the Government the need for retaining stability within the public service that those officers who commenced their life's work in the service should be given an opportunity to fill the highest positions.

The Minister for Housing: As you did with the Railways Commission.

MR. RHATIGAN (Kimberley) [8.27]: First of all, I should like to pay a tribute to my predecessor, the late Hon. A. A. M. Coverley, who represented Kimberley in this Chamber for 29 years. During that period, he worked untiringly in the interests of the people of the North. As Minister for Native Affairs, he took a personal interest in the native question and his knowledge of it was second to none. By all who knew Mr. Coverley, he was respected. All sections irrespective of their political creed respected him and his decease is a sad blow, not only to the Kimberleys but also to the State, and I am very proud to be the successor to such a man.

I wish to thank the electors of Kimberley for the confidence reposed in me by electing me to represent them in this House. It will be my earnest endeavour to justify that confidence and follow as nearly as possible in the footsteps of Mr. Coverley. To you, Mr. Speaker, and to members and officials of the House, I wish to express my gratitude for the manner in which I have been received and for the advice that has been so readily given me.

Innumerable words have been spoken and written as to how to develop and populate the Kimberleys. May I add a few suggestions. First of all, I would propose a revision of the Land Act. The present pastoral properties should be divided into holdings of not more than a quarter of a million acres. Practically all the properties in East Kimberley are cattle stations consisting of a million acres. The staff on such a station usually ranges from two to three white employees and 10 to 15 native stockboys. A herd of cattle consists of 15,000 to 25,000 head. The fencing in most instances is confined to a horse and bull paddock. No effort has been made to segregate the herds and to prevent inbreeding.

On the majority of the properties more bores are required and additional fencing, and in many instances no effort has been made to open up the back country of properties. Reliance has been placed on river waters and springs, with the re-

sult that the river frontages are now completely eaten out. I know of one big company in the East Kimberleys whose station manager has no authority whatsoever even to maintain existing fences and yards. It is necessary for him to obtain authority from the branch office, which is situated in a capital city in the Eastern States. If the sum required exceeds a certain amount, the matter has to be referred to London and permission secured from the shareholders there, who in all probability have not seen the property and possibly have not even seen Western Australia, and have no interest in the matter apart from the proceeds they derive from the place. Can such properties be adequately managed and developed under such circumstances? I say they certainly cannot.

In the West Kimberleys the situation is somewhat different. There we have a mixture of sheep and cattle stations and some improvements have been effected. The country outback has been opened up to a larger degree than has been the case in the East Kimberleys. Unfortunately, the Fitzroy Crossing area is at present experiencing the worst drought in its history. There are families in the North who are anxious to take up a few acres of land and engage in agricultural pursuits, but because of the provisions of the Land Act there is little chance of their being able to do so unless the pastoralist agrees to give them a few acres.

Land along the river frontages is the most suitable for agricultural purposes, but pastoralists are reluctant to part with even a few acres of that land despite the fact that it is not much use to them since it is barren and devoid of feed, simply because there has been concentration on the river frontages as watering points for cattle, instead of the outback land being opened up. After all is said and done, the land belongs to the nation, and not to a few shareholders who in the majority of cases are absentee owners.

It is pleasing to know from the Governor's Speech that it is the Government's intention to provide another vessel of the "Kabbarli" type for the North-West coast. I strongly urge the Government to make every effort to raise the necessary finance to secure a vessel of the "Koolinda" type as that appears to be much more serviceable for the North-West coast. The shipping service is undoubtedly the lifeblood of the North and I hope the time is not far distant when we will see at least a fortnightly service to Wyndham such as operated before the last war. At present the passenger accommodation on the North-West ships is totally inadequate and residents of the North who wish to come south are not always sure of getting a passage both ways. The cost of travelling by air is so high that it is beyond the reach of the workers. We have read in the Press and it has been mentioned in

this Chamber that there is a possibility of building up the tourist trade by the provision of another couple of ships, but in the first place the privilege of travelling must be given to North-West residents.

Another improvement which would be of benefit to the North would be the extension of the activities of the Rural and Industries Bank. I presume that, like every other department, that bank is at present "broke," but let us hope the day will come when it will have some money to lend. I understand that at present its activities do not extend beyond Carnarvon, but I suggest that they should be extended to the Kimberleys in order to assist the few small settlers we have in that area.

To retain the present families in the North, consideration must be given to increases in the away-from-home allowance for children attending boarding schools in the south. Also there should be further concessions in fares of students travelling to and from school. There is no school in the North for children wishing to proceed beyond the sixth standard so it is essential for them to come south—or, in the case of Wyndham, to go to Alice Springs—for further education. On this matter I can speak from personal experience. The cost of educating two children by sending them away from Broome was £500 per year, which is beyond any workman's pocket in the North. We are granted one free trip per year but if children are to be sent one way to school by air, the cost is £52 for two from Broome and increases proportionately.

A good deal of improvement has been made to main roads in the North, but in comparison with what remains to be done before the roads can be even termed tracks, it is a mere fleabite. We have had one main roads engineer stationed in Carnarvon who has been responsible for that portion of the district north of the 26th parallel up to the Northern Territory border. It is humanly impossible for any one person to be responsible for such a large area and I strongly urge the Government to place a second engineer somewhere in the North, in Broome or north of Broome, to control that portion of the road between the 20th parallel and the Northern Territory border.

Taxation is crippling the North and I strongly urge the Government to make every effort to persuade the Commonwealth to see reason and grant taxation concessions. I advocate complete exemption for the first £1,000 earned and concessions to industry provided that the amount of the concession is put back into the industry. The pearling industry is being badly hit by taxation. It does not receive the same concessions as do primary producers. If those engaged in that industry were given substantial concessions for a period of 12 months or two years, I think that the present fleet of 22 boats

would be doubled. It is to be borne in mind that the pearling industry is one of the biggest dollar earners in Australia.

I was glad to see from the Governor's Speech that it is the intention to introduce legislation in connection with native welfare. The present Act is outmoded and obsolete. I would ask the Government to give serious consideration to the building of houses for the coloured people of the North. I am speaking of the North because I know it so thoroughly. The coloured people there are doing a good job in certain industries. The only thing we hear of them is generally condemnation; we never hear anything to their credit. But I would like to point out that in the Broome power house, for instance, the staff of three consists of coloured people. One has a diesel ticket. He came south and recorded a very high pass. As a matter of fact, I think he obtained the highest marks in his particular school.

In connection with the pearling industry, four boats are now under construction in Broome. The work is under the supervision of one white man, but all the carpentry is being done by coloured people, who learnt their trade at the Beagle Bay Mission. Then there are natives working in the Public Works Department in Derby and Broome, and also on the main roads and on the wharves. The domestic staff and nurses in the Broome hospital, too, are coloured people, and there are native girls working on the Derby hospital.

Another matter to which I would like consideration given is the provision of a technical training school in the North so that both whites and natives would be able to learn a trade. At present when young people reach a certain age, after having completed their schooling, there is no avenue of employment open to them unless they have a trade. Assistance should also be given to people compelled to come south for medical attention. I know of two persons, one in Broome and one in Derby, who were not able to receive the required treatment in those towns last year and had to be flown to Perth for special attention. In one case, a doctor, and in the other case a nurse, accompanied the patient and the patients were billed for the fares of the doctor and nurse as well as their own, in addition to the cost of medical attention in Perth. The total ran into a few hundred pounds and absorbed the whole of the workers' savings for years past. It would be a small matter for the Government to give assistance in such cases, which do not occur very often.

I have heard members opposite complaining about the increase in water rates, particularly in Mt. Lawley. Although I have been a resident of the North all my life, I have owned a house in Mt. Lawley for a few years, and have no complaint about the increased water rates. I realise that I have had my good times with that

property and am positive that my constituents in the Kimberleys would be very happy indeed if they could get water at the price for which it is obtained in Mt. Lawley. The cost in Wyndham at present is 5s. per thousand gallons. In Broome one is lucky to get any water at all.

In reply to a question by me the Minister for Works said that the P.W.D. had no knowledge of the dangerous condition of the jetty at Derby. I do not know where the department got its information, but it has a resident engineer at that centre and if he does not know of the condition of the jetty he is probably the only person there who does not. At present they have to tie the wool on to the trucks to get it from the goods shed to the wharf. When I was there in company with the Minister for the North-West a truck was derailed and the men told us that that has been a common occurrence over the last 12 months, and that it is nothing to have two or three derailments during a 12-hour shift. When that sort of thing occurs we are apt to hear comments about the time taken by the waterside workers to unload a ship whereas it is really the fault of the P.W.D. for not having the jetty in order. I thank you, Mr. Speaker, and members for the hearing I have been afforded.

MR. HILL (Albany) [8.46]: I wish first to congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, on being elected to your high office. I have known you for many years and feel sure you will discharge your duties with credit to yourself and this House. Of course you realise that you will be there for three years only, but I can promise you an enjoyable three years as we private members are jealous of our reputation of being one of the best conducted Houses of Parliament in Australia. I desire to pay tribute to the late Bob Coverley. He may have been one of my political enemies, but there was no man whose friendship I valued more than his. He was the type of person one could trust implicitly. I will not forget the final hours of last session when I was granted a pair to allow me to attend a certain function. The member who paired with me was our late friend and as I said goodbye to Bob that night I felt that it was a final goodbye. I wish his successor every success and hope that he may gain the respect that was felt by all for his predecessor.

The present Government is bewailing the shortage of funds, but I think much of our financial difficulty is due to the fact that many electors are out to sell their votes to the highest bidder and I must congratulate members on the Government side on being very good bidders. I will read from the final message by my opponent a couple of days before the election. It is as follows:—

Labour also makes promises and we put them in writing, because we know that the promises we have made can