

if there is a further devaluation, the industry will be worse off than it was several months ago.

Hon. G. Fraser: Have a word with your friend Bob!

Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: I have a lot of faith in Bob. I hope the fear that is experienced at present will prove to be ill-founded. However, this thing can happen and we are fearful of what will occur if it does take place. I believe that the present time is ideal for such an event so far as the agricultural industry is concerned, and it would not mean ruination for farmers. No doubt they would oppose the move. It would lead to a reduction of their returns but the industry could well stand that. The goldmining industry, however, would be ruined, and we do not want that to happen.

Hon. A. L. Loton: You are only speaking for yourself.

Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: Of course I am! Although I am not a mine-owner I must speak for the district I represent—if the hon. member will permit me. That is my job.

Hon. G. Bennetts: The goldmining industry has brought the State out of two depressions.

Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: It will get it out of another one, too. Another point to which I wish to refer is the shortage of water. I give full credit to the Minister and to the Government for the way in which the work of trying to obviate that shortage on the Goldfields year after year is being pushed ahead. The new dam at No. 8 Pumping Station is going ahead by leaps and bounds and the duplication of the line in another section is progressing. We hope that as a result we will not again have to suffer a shortage in Kalgoorlie and see our fruit trees and lawns die out. In this case I am speaking for myself.

Hon. G. Bennetts: That is only a four days' supply.

Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: It may be, but at present we have not even that four days' supply. I hope the Government will be impressed with its value and that in due course there will be a duplication of the dam on the other side of Southern Cross. I support the motion.

On motion by Hon. H. S. W. Parker, debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT
(Hon. C. H. Simpson—Midland): I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till Tuesday, the 15th August.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 6.13 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 9th August, 1950.

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

QUESTIONS.

CHANDLER ALUNITE WORKS.

(a) As to Acquisition of Machinery and Equipment.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN asked the Minister for Industrial Development:

(1) Did anyone on behalf of the board of management or the Government acquire any machinery, tools, apparatus, equipment, appliances, fittings and/or materials for use at the Chandler works subsequent to the 16th November, 1949? If so, by whom, and for what purpose was such machinery, etc., acquired?

(2) Was such machinery, etc., obtained with the knowledge and approval of the Minister for Industrial Development?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) A complete milling unit was purchased from Wiluna for installation at the Swan Portland Cement Company's works,

and the installation was to be supervised by the Department of Industrial Development. A Dorr classifier forming part of this unit was ascertained to be unsuitable for successful operation under the cement works conditions, and the Director of Industrial Development, as chairman of the board of management, decided—I am now informed—to transfer it to Chandler as being capable of conversion, if necessary, for washing gypsum.

(2) No; except in connection with its acquisition for Swan Portland Cement Company.

(b) *As to Deputation from Manufacturers.*

Hon. J. T. TONKIN (without notice) asked the Minister for Industrial Development:

Following upon the Minister's reply to question No. 1 does he deny that a deputation from the Plaster Manufacturers' Association waited on him in December?

The MINISTER replied:

I have no record of such a deputation nor do I recollect it, but, if the hon. member persists, I am prepared to make further inquiries to ascertain if such a deputation took place.

(c) *As to Removal of Plaster, Supplies and Leases.*

Hon. J. T. TONKIN asked the Minister for Industrial Development:

(1) On what date did a certain person (or persons) enter the State Alunite Works and remove, without the authority of the manager, a quantity of plaster, which the latter subsequently recovered after a chase of some miles?

(2) On whose behalf were the offenders acting, and for what purpose was the plaster required?

(3) Why were legal proceedings not taken in connection with the matter?

(4) Was the deputation from the W.A. Plaster Manufacturers' Association, which, according to the Minister's reply of the 1st August, waited on him in January for the purpose of "acquainting the Government with the supply position of plaster in Western Australia and the views of the Association," the first occasion on which representatives of the W.A. Plaster Manufacturers waited on the Minister?

(5) On what date were the gypsum leases for which application had been made to the Mines Department by Brady & Co. reserved for the State Alunite Works?

The MINISTER replied:

(1), (2) and (3) There is no record of this matter in the department. Inquiries will be made at Chandler and, if any information exists, the hon. member can be informed.

(4) Yes.

(5) The 29th November, 1949.

LANDS DEPARTMENT.

As to Veterinary Officers and Surveyors.

Mr. BOVELL asked the Minister for Lands:

(1) How many veterinary officers were employed by the Department of Agriculture on the 30th June, 1939; the 31st December, 1945; the 30th June, 1950?

(2) How many licensed surveyors were employed by the Department of Lands and Surveys on the 30th June, 1939; the 31st December, 1945; the 30th June, 1950?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Veterinary officers employed by the Department of Agriculture on the 30th June, 1939, 8; the 31st December, 1945, 6; the 30th June, 1950, 8.

(2) Staff surveyors employed by the Department of Lands and Surveys in the field on the 30th June, 1939, 7; the 31st December, 1945, 5; the 30th June, 1950, 4.

DRAINAGE.

(a) *As to Boyanup-Elgin Districts.*

Mr. BOVELL asked the Minister for Works:

(1) In view of the damage caused by flood waters to roads in the Boyanup-Elgin districts, what action is being taken to expedite a proposed drainage scheme for this area?

(2) When is work on this project to commence?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Surveys have been made and plotting is in progress as a preliminary to proceeding with the design.

(2) No decision has been made.

(b) *As to Making Decision.*

Mr. BOVELL (without notice) asked the Minister for Works:

Following on the Minister's reply to my question in which he said that no decision had yet been made, could he inform me when a decision is likely to be made.

The MINISTER replied: No, not from here.

TOBACCO PRODUCTION.

As to Training Centre and Farms.

Mr. HOAR asked the Minister for Lands:

(1) What has been the cost of establishing the tobacco training centre at Manjimup?

(2) How many tobacco farms have been allotted to date?

(3) Do all these farms come up to the required standard regarding machinery, equipment and buildings?

(4) Is it a fact that the capitalisation of such a farm requires a 10-acre crop to finance it?

(5) If so, how many farms have 10 acres totally cleared in readiness for the coming season?

(6) What has been the average cost per farm in the Northcliffe area to bring these farms to a productive state, and how does this compare with anticipated cost?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Approximately £10,580.

(2) Seventeen.

(3) Farms are up to required standard regarding machinery and equipment, and will be up to standard regarding buildings in the near future.

(4) Capitalisation requires a 10-acre crop to finance, on long-range price basis.

(5) Ten acres have been cleared on all farms, five having been totally cleared and the balance totally cleared except for a few odd trees which would not interfere with the cropping of 10 acres.

(6) Establishment not yet completed, so that final cost is unknown. It should not exceed the anticipated cost.

GRASSHOPPERS.

As to Baiting Material and Inspections.

Mr. KELLY asked the Minister for Lands:

(1) Of the amount of bran or branato to be used as baiting material for the destruction of grasshoppers during the present season, what amount will be supplied by city mills, and what amount will come from country mills?

(2) Do these supplies represent the maximum amount available?

(3) What was the total amount of bran or substitute material used during the previous grasshopper season?

(4) Was there any carry-over of material from last season, and if so, what quantity?

(5) What officer made a recent tour of hopper-infested areas and what was the date and duration of his tour?

(6) What districts were visited and what local governing authorities were consulted?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) The proportion of bran or branato which will be supplied as bait material by country and city mills will depend upon the district from which bait request emanates and the supplies held by various mills when orders are received. Every endeavour will be made to supply all requirements.

(2) Answered by (1).

(3) Approximately 180 tons of bran were distributed last grasshopper season.

(4) All road boards did not use the total bran quota supplied. Approximately 15 tons surplus remained.

(5) The Government Entomologist has made two surveys of approximately a week's duration in the grasshopper-infested areas this season. The Eastern Wheat Belt was visited in late June and the Midland Districts in mid July.

(6) Districts and local governing authorities consulted this season are as follows:—Westonia, Merredin, Yilgarn, Nungarin, Mukinbudin, Bencubbin, Mingenev, Lake Grace, Newdegate. A further survey in the Eastern Wheat Belt is arranged for next week.

COTTESLOE BEACH.

As to Arresting Sand Erosion.

Mr. KELLY asked the Minister for Works:

(1) Did the P.W.D. receive a request from the Cottesloe Council that a report made by Mr. E. T. Kempin be examined by the department's engineers, and an opinion be furnished on the best method of arresting sand erosion on the beach at Cottesloe?

(2) What were the recommendations of the department?

(3) What was the estimated cost?

(4) Is the department in favour of building a groyne from Mudurup Rocks across the reef and continuing some distance into deep water?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Mr. Tydeman considers that although observations made by Mr. Kempin over one year are of great value they are insufficient upon which to base definite conclusions. Years of evidence are required.

(3) An experimental groyne would cost from £50,000 to £100,000 or upwards.

(4) Answered by (2).

EAST PERTH CEMETERY.

As to Government's Proposals.

Mr. GRAHAM asked the Premier:

Could he advise the present position regarding proposals to deal with the old East Perth Cemetery?

The PREMIER replied:

I understand that a report has been completed and I expect to receive it at any time.

FOOD AND GROCERIES.

As to Statistician's Figures.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE asked the Chief Secretary:

What are the Statistician's figures covering the cost of food and groceries, based on the figure of 1,000 for the 1923-27 period, in the Perth metropolitan area and the towns of Kalgoorlie, Bunbury, Northam and Geraldton, as at the 1st December, 1949, the 31st March, 1950, and the 30th June, 1950?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

The retail prices indexes for food and groceries compiled from average retail prices of selected commodities as at the 15th of each month (based on the weighted average of the six capital cities for 1923-27 = 1,000) were:—

Metropolitan Area—

December, 1949, 1496; March, 1950, 1527; June, 1950, 1568.

Kalgoorlie-Boulder—

December, 1949, 1624; March, 1950, 1657; June, 1950, 1702.

Northam—

December, 1949, 1507; March, 1950, 1554; June, 1950, 1594.

Bunbury—

December, 1949, 1497; March, 1950, 1524; June, 1950, 1573.

Geraldton—

December, 1949, 1535; March, 1950, 1565; June, 1950, 1616.

ROADS.

As to Hovea-crescent, Wundowie.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE asked the Minister for Industrial Development:

Will he arrange to have the whole, instead of only a part, of Hovea-crescent, Wundowie, surfaced with bitumen by the gang of the Main Roads Department now working at Wundowie?

The MINISTER replied:

Treasury approval for the sum of £2,900 was given on the 13th June, 1950. In this approval was included the bituminisation of the crescent portion of Hovea-crescent, thence westerly to Boronia-avenue, as originally recommended by the Main Roads Department, and the Commissioner has been informed accordingly. Endeavours will be made to have all this work done in conjunction with the work now in progress at Wundowie.

CEMENT.

As to Shell Leases and Manufacture, Bunbury.

Mr. GUTHRIE asked the Minister for Industrial Development:

In view of the urgent need for increasing quantities of cement for housing, will he supply the following information:—

(1) Why has such undue delay occurred in assisting the exploration of shell known to exist in leases held by a Bunbury company within the Leschenault Estuary?

(2) Why has information in relation to limestone deposits available for cement manufacture been withheld from the local company formed to establish cement manufacturing, and yet been supplied to a group of Perth investors who are trying to "jump the claim" of the local company?

(3) Why has not adequate assistance been given the Bunbury company when the Government was aware that materials and machinery were available for the manufacture of cement at Bunbury?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) It is not considered that undue delay has occurred in assisting the investigation of shell deposits in Leschenault Inlet.

(2) Information concerning limestone deposits has not been withheld from any concern. Information of this nature collected by the Geological Survey is freely available to the public.

(3) Information and assistance has been given the Bunbury company in every direction requested, to the extent of advising the company where complete plants for cement manufacture might be obtained. There is certainly no such plant in this State.

MEDICAL SCHOOL.

As to Building Proposals.

Mr. NEEDHAM asked the Premier:

(1) Is it the intention of the Government to proceed with the establishment of a medical school in Western Australia?

(2) If so, will use be made of improvised accommodation until such time as the housing position is less acute?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) and (2) The Government has under consideration at present a proposal submitted to it by the Senate for the commencement of a medical school, which would not necessitate the provision of buildings immediately. If buildings are necessary, that section of the medical school requiring a building could not be suitably housed in prefabricated huts.

RAILWAYS.

As to Salaries for Professional Vacancies.

Mr. BRADY asked the Minister representing the Minister for Railways:

(1) Were vacant positions for professional officers in the railways advertised in the local press at salaries lower than those being offered oversea applicants for similar positions?

(2) Will he call applications for existing vacancies in Western Australia at the present salaries?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied:

(1) No.

(2) Applications were invited locally, concurrently with advertisements in East-ern States and oversea newspapers.

HOSPITALS.

As to Radiographer, Kalgoorlie.

Mr. OLIVER asked the Minister for Health:

(1) Is she aware that there are no x-ray facilities at the Kalgoorlie district hospital between the hours of 5 p.m. on Fridays to 9 a.m. on Mondays?

(2) Is she aware that all x-ray work at the Kalgoorlie district hospital is performed by a radiographer from the Commonwealth Health Laboratory who is an employee of the Commonwealth Government?

(3) Will she give an assurance that a radiographer will be employed by the Kalgoorlie district hospital for duty when the facilities provided by the Commonwealth Health Laboratory are not available?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Arrangements exist for all urgent work to be done during week-ends, but it is agreed that these are not functioning well at present.

(2) Yes, by arrangement with the Commonwealth Health Department.

(3) Radiographers are almost impossible to secure, but close attention is being given by Commonwealth and State officers to the problem of improving the arrangements.

HOUSING COMMISSION.

As to Appointment of Mr. L. F. Barry.

Mr. MAY asked the Honorary Minister for Housing:

Will he agree to placing on the Table of this House the file dealing with the appointment and duties attached to the position now occupied by Mr. L. F. Barry, of the State Housing Commission?

The HONORARY MINISTER replied:

Yes.

SOIL CONSERVATION.

As to Stimulating Officers' Work.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE (without notice) asked the Minister for Lands:

Since it is accepted that the Soil Conservation Act of Western Australia is the best of its type in Australia, will he assure the House that he will give some stimulus to the work of the officers and the conditions that could contribute to arresting the serious soil erosion incidence in this State.

The MINISTER replied:

Yes, I will do so with pleasure.

GOVERNMENT POLICY.

As to Member's Criticism.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE (without notice) asked the Premier:

Does he propose to defend his Government against the attack made upon its policy by the member for Moore in the columns of "The West Australian" of Saturday last?

The PREMIER replied:

I do not feel there is any responsibility on me to answer every newspaper correspondent, but any attacks that are made in this House upon the Government I will be prepared to defend.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Fifth Day.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

MR. HEARMAN (Blackwood) [4.48]: I should like first to offer you my congratulations, Sir, on your election to the office of Speaker. As a new member who has been in the House only a short time, I am encouraged to know that the Speaker is a man of whom I have heard no criticism from members on either side of the House or from people outside of it. I was very interested in the remarks made by the Leader of the Opposition in his speech on the Address-in-reply in relation to closer settlement in the South-West. He put the matter very ably and I only wish that he had spoken longer and developed the theme further. As the member for the new electorate of Blackwood, I am keenly interested in this question which not only applies to my electorate but also to the whole of the South-West. I feel that it would not be unfruitful if the House did give some consideration to the difficulties which are besetting closer settlement in that area.

Firstly, I believe that the problem is essentially an economic one. Under existing circumstances a small farm does not offer sufficient monetary reward for the labour entailed in making it productive. The three main industries upon which closer settlement must depend are dairying, fruitgrowing and the production of potatoes. Of course, there are other activities that could be developed, but those I mention are the three main avenues. If we examine them, we find that in connection with the dairying industry last month the butterfat dairymen received 3s. a lb. for choice butterfat. Of that amount 8d., in round figures, consisted of the Commonwealth subsidy. The reason why the Commonwealth made available that assistance was to maintain and to increase, if possible, the production of butterfat. Despite the fact that that subsidy has been paid for some years, the production of butter-

fat tended to decline until last year when it just about held its own. There was no actual decrease, but the increase was very slight.

It is significant that an industry that is inherently part and parcel of closer settlement development in the South-West should be in a position at times such as the present to require the payment of a substantial subsidy in order to maintain production. The plain fact is that the dairying industry is not particularly attractive from the point of view of anyone desirous of starting out and developing a new farm. For many years the industry has largely tended to be carried on by the farmer with the assistance of his family. The continuance of the dairy farm has been made possible only as the result of the work put in, without the receipt of wages, by members of the farmer's family. If we take the figures for last year in connection with the grade herd recording scheme, we find that the average production per cow was 214 lb. of butterfat.

The records show that 11 per cent. of the cows in the State are under test in connection with the grade herd testing scheme. No-one will dispute the fact that figures based on that scheme would be above the average, because the more progressive farmers are those that submit their herds to the test. An average of 214 lb. per cow means, on the basis of 3s. per lb. for butterfat, that the dairy farmer receives per cow about £32 a year gross. That return is, as it were, out of the bucket. In addition, a certain amount of income is derived from pigs, but in that regard there is a great deal of outgoing as well. The production per cow is not sufficiently large to enable a dairy farmer to pay any appreciable amount in wages. The average number of cows per herd throughout the State is 25.3. On that basis it will be seen that in round figures the dairyman is receiving gross out of the bucket about £800 a year. If he pays an employee £7 a week, that will represent £364 in wages for the year, which is approaching nearly half of his gross income.

That is one reason why the dairying industry is being carried on to a great extent by the farmer and his own family, who certainly contribute a very appreciable proportion of the labour involved. A man who is milking 25 cows is fully employed himself in actually handling the stock, the maintenance of the property and the normal farming activities, without being able to devote any great amount of time to the further development of his holding. When it is realised that before he could afford to employ a man to help him the farmer would require to milk another 12 cows, it can be readily seen that the problems besetting the dairy farmer are very real. I mention the dairying industry first as it is probably the main one on which any closer settlement scheme for the South-West must depend.

The fruitgrowing industry is having, and has had over a number of years now, a very difficult time. Naturally the war affected it appreciably. Generally speaking, despite the constant complaints we hear about the price of fruit, the return to the grower is not very great. One of the troubles at the moment in that industry is that it calls for a lot of skilled hand-labour which is not always available, and the cost of that labour, if available, is unfortunately not always commensurate with the returns to the grower. The price of fruit to the local consumer has been very high, but that is not to say that the grower has enjoyed a tremendous return from his crop. As an instance, a large proportion of the growers have been forced to use whitewood cases at a cost of 4s. 6d. per case on the orchard which, on a 40 lb. case of fruit works out at an immediate charge of 1½d. per lb. So members will see that the lot of the orchardist is not particularly happy.

The potato-growing industry is perhaps in a more fortunate position than either of the other two, but at the same time, although the production of potatoes is much greater than it was during pre-war years, difficulty is being experienced in maintaining it. The area under potatoes is tending towards a reduction and with that trend production is likely to decrease. Thus, when we realise that these three basic industries for closer settlement in the South-West are not in as flourishing a condition as we could wish, it will be readily understood that the inducements to men to take up and develop small farms in that part of the State are not sufficiently great to encourage them in that direction. Most of the farms in the South-West that are paying reasonably well are those that were taken up a considerable time ago and on which much development work had taken place. They were, in part, already established farms.

It has often been said that it takes two generations to make a farm in the South-West, and I think there is a lot of truth in that. Unfortunately, while modern machinery and appliances unquestionably cut down considerably the time of development, the cost involved is very often prohibitive for the small man. The use of a bulldozer at £4 per hour is in many instances altogether beyond the means of the farmer who is milking from 15 to 20 cows. For that reason I do not think we can find the solution purely in additional mechanisation. It is true that a great deal of country is being developed at present by bulldozing, but in my own electorate much of that type of work is being carried out by the bigger farmers, the settlers who have been established there for a long period. The developmental work for the most part is being done by them, unfortunately, and not by the smaller men. I said "unfortunately", but I am very pleased that they are doing

this work. Personally I have no criticism to offer concerning them and no grievance against the larger farmers. In a great many cases, as the Leader of the Opposition pointed out, the land was originally taken up at a very low cost—sometimes as low as 1s. or 2s. 6d. an acre—and many of the farms today are in the third and fourth generation of ownership. The land has been subdivided and sons have farmed portion of the old property. Many of those people are very good farmers and are soundly established, and they are the folk who are still further developing their properties because they are in a position to do so.

It is difficult to secure figures to show just what proportion of those bigger holdings is still suitable for closer settlement, but I know from personal experience that the South-West is patchy. We do not get large areas of really good land going continuously from one boundary to another. Properties consist of good and bad land, and I think that any suggestion that there are large areas of good land being held and not developed might easily arise from the size of the holdings concerned, and an analysis will not always bear out the contention. In my electorate the bigger farmer is the man who is producing most of the stuff and also developing his land, to a greater extent than is the case with the smaller holdings, for the reason that he is able to employ the labour and pay for it.

I feel that these difficulties can be very largely overcome if we can increase the productivity of our land in the South-West. We have agricultural problems that are peculiar to that part of the State. There is a very heavy rainfall, but it extends only over about six months of the year, and we have a long dry summer which means that there are agricultural problems, particularly in connection with the establishment of permanent pastures, which are perhaps unique. Those problems will be solved only by additional scientific research. I believe that the Department of Agriculture has, in the past, done a remarkably good job under extremely difficult conditions. It has always been kept short of staff, materials and accommodation. I have a considerable admiration for the work the officers of the department have done, but I feel they should have had much more money made available to them, because these problems will have to be solved by us. We cannot look to other lands to find a solution for the problems which are peculiar to our country.

Of all the agricultural problems which are facing us at the moment, possibly the most pressing is the finding of a satisfactory blade grass to balance our subterranean clover pastures. The lack of research work which should have been undertaken is clearly illustrated by a reply

which the Superintendent of Dairying gave at a South-West Conference recently to a suggestion that it would be beneficial if the Government could make lime available to the farmers. He said that as yet we have not proved by experiment that additional lime applied in the South-West is needed or would be an economic proposition. I think that indicates the need for additional research—the fact that as yet the department is not in a position to say whether additional lime would be a good thing or not—and I hope that this Government and future Governments will take a much more realistic view of this matter than has been the case in the past.

It is essential that the development of the South-West should not be hampered by a lack of agricultural research, which I believe is the keystone to the whole problem. I know that the Leader of the Opposition, when he was Minister for Agriculture, was well aware of the necessity for a very much enlarged grant to the department; and I know that if he had had his way he would have had it adequately and properly housed. He is in no way to be held responsible for the fact that the present housing of the department is not what it should be. Nevertheless the need still exists—in fact it is probably greater today than ever it was—for additional research, because the necessity for increasing our production per acre is very much bound up with the economic welfare of the country. If we compare our production of 214 lb. of butter-fat per cow, to which I referred, with the average production in Denmark of 316 lb. per cow we can appreciate the room for improvement here. And, after all, the Australian dairy farmer has to compete with the Danish farmer on the world's markets.

There are other things we will need before we can get closer settlement in the South-West. We will have to provide additional amenities, not only on the farms but in the towns as well. We will have to provide adequate water supplies. The idea exists that because we have bounteous rainfall in the South-West no water problems exist there; but actually it is no use having a heavy rainfall if the water is allowed to run away, and unless we have adequate means of conservation and reticulation we will have a water problem during the summer months in the South-West. It may be of interest to members to know that last summer the Railway Department hauled very considerable quantities of water to Bridgetown, despite the fact that that centre is in the 35 in. rainfall area.

We have to recognise that if we are to persuade people to go into the country—and particularly young people and young married couples—to take up farming, we

must have available to them the amenities that are enjoyed by people in the city. There is no reason why any young wife should want to go to the country and face the difficulties of rearing a family under some of the almost primitive conditions that have existed in the past other than the present economic position that arises through the prosperous condition of the various agricultural industries. If we want people to go into the country, we will have to see that those industries can sustain them on a standard of living and with sufficient amenities to make life attractive.

I have suggested that the problem could be solved, to some extent at any rate—and I believe to a very large extent—by additional agricultural research coupled with improved methods, and the necessary development and distribution of the machinery which is most suited to the requirements of that particular portion of the country. I have not suggested that I think the solution lies in increased prices, because I do not believe the solution does lie in raising the price of anything. If we could devote thought and ingenuity to endeavouring to reduce costs rather than merely put prices up, we might do far more towards solving the problem of the inflationary spiral. It is not a matter that should be dealt with on purely party political lines. It is one with which we are all concerned and the finding of a solution is important to every one of us. If we can all approach it from the viewpoint of seeing what we can contribute towards reducing the inflationary spiral rather than try to demonstrate that the blame lies elsewhere, I think we will come far closer to a solution.

If we can increase the production per acre of our land the costs of production will be reduced, and to that extent we will have contributed to the elimination of the inflationary spiral. I know that at present the costs in the dairying industry are based on the assumption that the dairy farmer works 56 hours per week, and I know that most dairy farmers would be very pleased if they did work only 56 hours a week. We cannot reasonably ask a dairy farmer to work longer than that, but I do think we should give him all the assistance we can towards reducing his costs.

I do not believe the answer to the problem lies in increasing the price of everything, but if we can bring down the costs encountered by all farmers I think that they in turn will be in a very much better position to cope with the reduction in world prices. I am very much afraid such reduction is inevitable. I cannot say when it will come, but I hate to think what the result will be when it does come, if present costs are not reduced. We must do all we can to see that

the farmer uses the best methods possible and is assisted to solve the very many problems which beset him. I hope that members will appreciate the difficulties with which settlers in the South-West are faced, and will make some effort to alleviate some of those difficulties.

MR. GUTHRIE (Bunbury) [5.13]: In speaking to the motion, may I first congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, on your reelection to the office you have so ably filled in the last three years. I would like also to express my thanks to the members of this House, who have all treated me with great courtesy, and to the members of the staff who have been very helpful to me.

All that I propose to say will have to do with Bunbury, and the first thing I wish to mention is the desirability of the establishment of a steel and iron industry in that district. Such an industry was promised to Bunbury some time ago and in September last year a firm of consultants, Brasserts Ltd., undertook an extensive survey of the district to see whether there was any suitable place available for the erection of a foundry. Up to date we have received no word about the matter and the people of my electorate are wondering whether any report has been made to the Government.

I now wish to direct a few remarks to the tourist industry. In the South-West people are becoming more tourist-minded, and favourable conditions lend themselves to more tourists coming from overseas or the Eastern States. What we require is help from the Government. We have our own Tourist Bureau but, as members realise, the tourist business is expensive to run and we require some assistance from the Government. I do not know whether I am too early in asking for help from this source, but that is what we really require.

The South-West, in common with other portions of the State, is enjoying a period of prosperity and development is proceeding in both towns and rural areas. The development of these South-West towns brings the need for such amenities as gas, sewerage, surface drainage and electric power. These are the functions of Government. In regard to gas, the Lurgi system has been proved practicable but the proposal to build a plant has been pigeon-holed.

The timber industry is of vital importance. Years ago when karri first came on to the market thousands of pounds were spent in finding means of disposing of this timber. Karri is not favoured by many builders but it would be a great pity if, after spending thousands of pounds in finding a market, we lost it. If we stop exporting karri we definitely will lose our markets and be forced to look elsewhere. So far as jarrah is concerned the quantity exported is merely a token of our previous exports. If we do not export to the Eastern States then we will

not receive any other products in return. For every 400 loads of timber that we ship away we receive about 500 loads of farming implements and other items in return. Two good customers of the mills are the Ford Motor Works and the people who manufacture farming implements. If we do not export timber we will certainly lose that trade.

I now wish to direct attention to the member for Albany. I do not know why he always seems to have a grouch against Bunbury. It would be far better if the hon. member worked hand in hand with the member for Bunbury.

Opposition Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. GUTHRIE: All the outports are on the same line.

Mr. May: Always uphill.

Mr. GUTHRIE: We are all trying to get something for our own districts. If the member for Albany talks about cutting out Bunbury there will soon be talk about cutting out Albany, and centralisation will be a much bigger problem than it is today. The same applies to the member for Moore. I cannot understand his remarks because he seems to be sitting fairly well, in the financial sense, and I do not see why he should have a grudge against Bunbury for the small things that she must have. If the Government wants to solve the problem of housing in my district, then its best method is to take away the shipping facilities.

Of course, I cannot allow the question of regional hospitals to pass. If I do not mention it the Government may forget all about it. This hospital is a necessity in Bunbury. The land has been prepared and cleared and, as I have already said, a road has been made. That is a most important item.

I agree with the member for Harvey when he mentioned the Australind-road. I think it is too much for the Main Roads Department to take on, but some grant should be made by the Government to the road boards concerned so that they can commence work. Then, perhaps the Main Roads Department could take over from there. Talking of Australind brings me to the question of the Australind train. This is a very fine train but there is one point about it which is not beneficial to people travelling on it; I refer to the dust that accumulates in the train. I would like the Railway Department to consider making this train air-conditioned. I do not know whether that is possible but it is worthy of mention. During the summer months the train becomes very dirty and, in my opinion, it should be air-conditioned if it is at all possible.

Amenities on the timber mills are a matter of considerable importance. If more amenities could be provided for the mills, more people would be attracted to work

in the industry. People cannot be expected to live in the country unless amenities are provided. If this could be done more timber would be milled and this, in turn, would assist in the export of our timbers because we would have more supplies.

MR. BOVELL (Vasse) [5.21]: I desire to join with other members of this Chamber in extending to you, Mr. Speaker, my congratulations on your re-election to the Speakership. It is indeed an honour to be unanimously re-elected to this, the highest position that the House can bestow. Therefore, you, Sir, must feel it an honour to be escorted to your chair by both the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition. I also desire to pay a personal tribute to Sir Norbert Keenan. To me, as a new member in this House a little over three years ago and during the three years of the Nineteenth Parliament, Sir Norbert Keenan was a guide, philosopher and friend. His parliamentary experience was imparted to me at various times, and he assisted me greatly in my initiation into the parliamentary duties that I have to perform. His long experience has been a valuable one to Western Australia and I pay tribute to his service to the State, as well as my personal tribute to him. I regret his absence from this Chamber and hope that he will enjoy many happy and healthful years.

Mr. Graham: Your party was responsible for his absence.

Mr. BOVELL: As the first member for the new constituency of Vasse, I desire to thank the electors for electing me with such a huge majority. I trust that I will be able to satisfy their needs during the term of this Parliament. I should say that today could almost be called a "South-West field day." Members have heard the member for Blackwood, the member for Bunbury and now myself, following each other to bring before the House the needs and potential wealth of the South-West. Firstly, I wish to deal with agricultural development. When responsible government was inaugurated in 1890, and the late Lord Forrest was Premier of this State for a period of 10 years, rural development in that year was very restricted. But, with the commencement of responsible government the question of agricultural development became not a party political matter but one for all parties because it was one of vital interest to the State.

In 1905 there entered this Chamber two members of country constituencies who were to play perhaps the greatest part in the agricultural development of this State. I refer to Sir James Mitchell and the late Mr. Phillip Collier. For a period of up to 20 years either one or other of those members led the Government, and their policies of agricultural development were reflected in the vast increase in production from the primary industries of this State.

Sir James Mitchell, as the Honorary Minister for Agriculture at the time, started out to increase development in the wheat areas and to encourage increased settlement in those areas for the production of enough wheat for home consumption. We realise today the wealth that this State receives from its wheat.

Following the first world war we had to import from the Eastern States a vast quantity of dairy produce. After assisting in providing the State with its bread requirements, Sir James Mitchell turned his attention to providing butter and, in conjunction with the late Phillip Collier, over the years that followed, the dairying industry developed. The Group Settlement Scheme, which was criticised from all sources at its foundation and during its early pioneering stages, has proved a great factor in the development of the dairying industry. When Sir James Mitchell went out of office in 1924, and the late Philip Collier became Premier for the next three years—

Hon. A. H. Panton: Six years.

Mr. BOVELL: —he continued with the policy of development in the dairying districts.

Hon. A. H. Panton: I think you are forgetting the principal man—the late Mr. W. C. Angwin.

Mr. BOVELL: I have not finished yet.

Hon. A. H. Panton: You should have started with him.

Mr. BOVELL: During this period of responsible government there have been various Ministers for Lands who have contributed, with these gentlemen, to the development of primary industries. I refer, as the member for Leederville has said, to the late Mr. W. C. Angwin, and also to Mr. M. F. Troy. There is the present Leader of the Opposition too, but as Minister for Lands he had a somewhat different task. In the depression of the early 1930's it was not a matter of further developing the primary industries of this State; the question of their stabilisation was one of prime importance. It was as Minister for Lands in the 1930's that the present Leader of the Opposition played, at that time, a somewhat different but nevertheless most important part in ensuring that the primary industries of this State did not decline to such an extent as to go out of existence altogether. That was the position.

In 1939, I myself was in charge of a small country bank in the marginal areas of Beacon, and I believe that the Government of that day assisted greatly in keeping some of the farmers in those districts. The present Administration has followed on the lines of agricultural development as set by its predecessors in office. I desire to thank the Government for the establishment of a rural research station

in the South-West. A rural research station has been established at Wokalup and also one at Bramley, along the main highway between Cowaramup and Margaret River. At the South-West conference held in Busselton recently, the chairman of the South-West Zone Development Committee, Mr. Cullity, stated that there were 1,800,000 acres of alienated land in the South-West, of which less than 700,000 acres were being used for agricultural purposes.

Whilst in recent years headway has been made in developing the land in that part of the State, further development can only be achieved by the use of heavy land clearing equipment. It is impossible for existing settlers to bear the cost from their own resources. Financial assistance is necessary, and this should come through the Rural and Industries Bank and be available to settlers at a nominal rate of interest. I desire at this stage to read from "The Countryman," a supplement of "The Western Mail," which reported Mr. Cullity as saying—

The committee had recommended to the Government that every possible action be taken to procure more bulldozers. The average size of properties in the South-West was less than half the size of the average farm considered in the Joint Dairy Industry Advisory Committee's investigation of the cost of producing butterfat and less than half the size of the objective set for the war service land settlement.

It can be seen from that that the individual holdings must be increased if a profitable venture is to be maintained for existing settlers. With the development of agriculture, however, the producer has to face the problems of today. I would say that the two most serious problems which have to be overcome are those of clearing and the need for heavy land-clearing equipment for this purpose, and increased supplies of super. Here again I would like to quote what Mr. Cullity said to the South-West conference in Busselton recently regarding super. This is reported in "The Countryman" of July 13th, a supplement to "The Western Mail," as follows—

The superphosphate position was a little obscure, said Mr. Cullity. It was known that there was sufficient to meet the demand and there was reason to fear, in the absence of definite information to the contrary, that the growing demand would continue to outpace the increasing capacity of the works. The committee had notified the Government of this and asked that a thorough investigation be undertaken.

Here I might say that since this has been reported the Government has appointed a commission to investigate the super. position, and I hope that something concrete will come of that inquiry. To continue what Mr. Cullity said—

Usage of super. in 1940 was 360,000 tons, he said, and in 1948-49 it had risen to 362,000 tons and 20,000 tons were ordered and not despatched. It was estimated by the Department of Agriculture that at the end of 1948, 548,000 tons would be required by 1957-58. Manufacturers had indicated that they expected the capacity of their plants to increase by 20,000 tons for three or four years. The Albany factory has been designed to supply 40,000 tons by 1953-54. Its capacity was being increased to 60,000 tons.

With all this, the need for super. is still vital and the Government must see that further supplies are made available somehow if land development in this State is to proceed. With regard to the land clearing system, the Government should consider a policy of agricultural development in connection with making available Crown lands for settlement. As we are aware, the procedure in the past has been that some person wishing to indulge in agricultural production applies to the Lands Department for Crown land under C.P. lease. It is virgin country and he has to go out and hew a farm for himself and, as the member for Blackwood has said, it takes at least two generations before any impression can be made. In this enlightened age, the Government should frame a bold policy in regard to creating a new era for agricultural development. It should make land available for selection only after certain clearing has been done and fencing and buildings erected thereon. If a land settlement scheme were evolved on this basis, I believe that it would induce many more people to go to the country and engage in agricultural production.

I desire now to refer to an area eastward of Augusta and south of the Blackwood River. This area was under consideration for land settlement when the present Leader of the Opposition was Premier. The first soil survey made under the post-war land settlement scheme in 1944-45 revealed that 130,000 acres of virgin land of which the soil survey was made—running eastward of Augusta and south of the Blackwood River—82,000 acres were found to be similar to the country which surrounds Alexander Bridge and Nillup. Similar country can be found in the Walpole, Denmark and Karridale areas insofar as soil and climatic conditions are concerned. It has been proved that these areas are second to none in productive capacity in relation to dairying. The area has a rainfall of approximately 50 inches over a period of seven to eight months of the year.

The figures, from a dairying point of view, in the Alexander Bridge-Nillup area show that production has reached as high as 86 lb. of butterfat per acre. I should like to emphasise that of the 130,000 acres comprising the soil survey first made under the post-war land settlement scheme, 82,000 acres have been found similar to that in the Alexander Bridge-Nillup area. When we take the State average of 40 lb. of butterfat per acre, we see the high productivity of this land. I would impress on the Government that the present is not so much a time for experiment in regard to agricultural development but for the development of areas that have been proved. These areas should be the first developed, and I trust that the Government will see they are developed without further delay, in view of the fact that a vast part of this land is equal to that which is producing the high dairying figures to which I have referred. With agricultural development there are three departments concerned—the Forests Department, the Department of Lands and Surveys and the Department of Agriculture. I understand that some time ago there was some sort of committee that had, or endeavoured to have, a close liaison between these three departments, but I am unable to find out whether the committee has functioned.

It is vital that the Government should establish some closer liaison between those departments because they work hand in hand in the development of the various sides of agriculture in Western Australia. If the Forests Department is permitted to exercise its discretion in the matter of policy without consultation with the Department of Lands and Surveys and the Department of Agriculture, we shall have a continuation of the conditions that prevail in many country towns today. I have in mind particularly the long road leading through forest areas to settlements. In my opinion, there are too many isolated agricultural areas, and I trust that the Government will ensure that very close liaison is established between those three departments.

It is vital to the progress of agriculture that sufficient qualified staff be employed. On the notice paper today there appeared questions in my name about the number of veterinary officers employed by the Department of Agriculture. Members will appreciate the fact disclosed by the answers that, whilst we are endeavouring to encourage agricultural development, the number of veterinary officers is exactly the same as it was just prior to the outbreak of war in 1939. That is a very unsatisfactory feature. More veterinary officers are needed and I hope the Government will ensure that additional ones are obtained.

Mr. J. Hegney: The Government will have to increase the salaries in order to get them.

Mr. BOVELL: I do not mind how much the salaries are increased, but they must be obtained if the dairying industry is to develop as we hope it will.

Hon. A. H. Panton: They are not available.

Mr. BOVELL: Further, it will be seen from answers given to my questions that the number of licensed surveyors employed by the Department of Lands and Surveys at the 30th June, 1939, was seven and the number at the 30th June of this year had declined to four. People are anxious to take up land and there are probably approximately 1,600 applications awaiting surveys. With the limited number of surveyors available, it will be impossible for these people to get their land and develop it. More surveyors are urgently needed.

The member for Middle Swan interjected that it would be necessary to increase the salaries being offered. I quite agree with him. It is important to the State's welfare that we obtain the services of these qualified men and they should be offered sufficient financial inducement not only to obtain them but also to retain them in this State. This is a matter that the Premier might well bring up at the next Premiers' Conference. We do not want the several States to be competing one against the other for the services of qualified officers. Some overall policy should be adopted by the States so that when qualifications are equal, the salaries shall be equal, and those salaries should be adequate. Unless we obtain the services of qualified staff to assist our agricultural industry and its development, we shall find ourselves in a hopeless position.

Mr. J. Hegney: Veterinary officers were actually brought here and the salary was not high enough and they had to provide their own cars; so they moved on elsewhere. Some went to Singapore.

Mr. BOVELL: That is what I have been trying to emphasise and I thank the hon. member for his interjection. One other matter to which I wish to make brief reference is the timber industry. Several members have stated that timber is being exported from this State at the expense of the local building programme. Members, however, should appreciate that there must be reciprocity in trade. Ships that bring goods required by us arrive here fully laden, and I should say, though I have no definite figures, that one out of four returns to the Eastern States in ballast, which plainly indicates that we are receiving more than we are giving. Close co-operation between the States is needed in regard to the commodities they have to offer us and those we have to offer them. There is another aspect that

should be borne in mind: the waterside workers of Busselton and Bunbury are dependent mainly upon the shipment of timber for their livelihood. If export supplies are to be withdrawn, an economic hardship would be imposed upon those workers, which would be grossly unfair.

The member for Bunbury spoke of the need for providing amenities for workers in the timber industry. These men gave sterling service during the years of war and in the post-war period, and there has been no serious industrial trouble amongst them. They put their shoulders to the wheel and provided the requisite timber that was so urgently needed. It does one's heart good to visit a timber mill in the South-West and see the energy that these men put into their work. With the member for Bunbury, I hope it will be possible to provide some amenities for these workers, many of whom are living under very primitive conditions. This would be only fair to a body of men who have played such a vital part during the years of war and since.

MR. SEWELL (Geraldton) [5.53]: I wish to join with other members in offering congratulations to you, Mr. Speaker, on your reappointment to the Chair, and I wish to thank members on both sides of the House for the kindly welcome extended to me. I also wish to thank the electors of Geraldton for having done me the honour of returning me to this Parliament. I am deeply conscious of the honour conferred upon me and appreciate the responsibility that the position entails. I can only hope that at all times I shall be able to do my best to serve the interests of the people of the Geraldton electorate and of the State generally.

Tonight we have heard members from the south-western portion of the State dealing with that territory and speaking of the things that ought to be done there. We in the northern agricultural areas consider that we have not been treated quite fairly by Governments over the years, and I hope that in future some of the matters represented by members from those parts will receive attention. One of the great requirements of many parts of the State, and particularly of the northern agricultural areas, is water. Over a period of some months we have heard of the disabilities being suffered by settlers in various parts of the State through lack of adequate water supplies. I earnestly ask the Government to take immediate steps to improve the water supply position at Geraldton. This entails an improvement of the catchment area at Wycherina, an enlargement of the holding tank and an increase in the size of the mains from the reservoirs, as well as amenities for workers at the pumping station.

About three years ago certain materials were provided to build homes for water supply workers at Wycherina. Those

materials have not been used but are still lying on the ground. Those men are suffering disabilities in their living conditions and we consider that this position should be remedied as soon as possible. I should like the Government to continue with the boring operations to ascertain the quantity of water available at a depth in the Northampton area and at Howathara, Waggrakine, Utaccara and Narngulu. If water can be provided in those parts, it will materially assist the settlers and also aid the policy of decentralisation, of which we hear so much and which we fervently hope one day will be brought about.

The other evening the member for Moore mentioned the scheme in the Gingin Brook area to serve Wongan Hills and Midland areas. I heartily endorse his remarks and agree that some definite plan should be put in hand as early as possible. Meanwhile the requirements of the Geraldton district, which I have stated in brief outline, should be attended to immediately.

I also ask the Government to establish a research station at Geraldton for the benefit of the gardeners, particularly those engaged in the tomato-growing industry. This industry was the means of bringing into the district a sum of £300,000, which is quite a lot of money for a district of that size. That amount included a large sum from the Eastern States and also payment in gold from the Singapore area. All possible assistance should be given to the people engaged in the industry, and research officers should be stationed there to assist them to combat the various diseases to which the tomato plant particularly is subject.

An improvement is needed in the school facilities and the recreation grounds attached to the schools in the Geraldton district. The Northampton school has no decent recreation ground, and I ask the Government to proceed with the levelling of the site that has been selected in order that the children attending that school may have a decent recreation ground. The Geraldton high school is an excellent institution, doing very fine work, and caters for children who come from far distant places, some as far away as Wyndham in one direction and Wiluna in the other. The school is sadly overcrowded and, considering the work it has done and will be called upon to do in future, we ask that it be enlarged in order that the increased inflow of children may be adequately catered for.

We also ask for a speeding up of the building programme in connection with Government rental houses; and an improvement in the supply of building materials generally, particularly in connection with jarrah, jarrah fittings, door frames and things of that nature. Consideration should be given, where possible, to the use of local materials such as our stone and bricks. I believe that the use of those materials would lessen the demand on the

timber, etc., of the South-West. We also ask that a less costly home be built for the workers in the lower income groups. We would like to see reintroduced the workers' homes system as we knew it pre-war. That system was one under which a £5 deposit was made, and every fortnightly payment of rent meant so much paid off the house, and not as the present scheme is. We would like that to be instituted as soon as possible to allow those desirous of owning their homes to do so.

The extension of the main roads programme in the district generally, and the Northampton-Carnarvon road in particular, should be proceeded with. That road serves a useful purpose in assisting to open up our vast North-West, but at times, after rains, large portions are practically impassable. We believe that the road is of such importance that it would warrant a grant being made by the Federal Treasurer, or being asked for by our State Government, so that it could be made an all-weather road as far as Carnarvon for the time being.

There should also be an improvement in the port facilities at Geraldton. We do not get the amount of shipping that we think we should. Perhaps something could be done about that at a later date, but the facilities generally for handling cargo are crude. They are the same now as when the wharf was first put there, except for the addition of tractor equipment which was introduced in the last few months. That is worked as a shunting engine, and that is about all it is used for.

We ask for improvement in the district hospitals. We would like to see the Government do something in the way of establishing our regional hospital. Some years ago officers made a survey of the site selected by a committee, but since that time nothing has been done. If the Government intends to go on with the construction of a regional hospital for this vast area, I ask that it make plant available so that the ground can be levelled in preparation for the time when the hospital will be built. We are far from the metropolitan area, and we have not the proper facilities to treat urgent cases. We think it is a vital necessity that our regional hospital should be established.

Another question, that of abattoirs at Geraldton, has agitated the minds of the primary producers and also the householders in our district for a number of years. I believe that some years ago a committee was formed and it presented a report, and a site was actually selected for abattoirs in our district. I would like to see the Government do something in connection with the establishment of abattoirs and freezing chambers in Geraldton so that the primary producers could use them to handle their stock in the flush season instead of having it left on their hands for the lean periods.

Another important industry in our district that I hope the Government will give assistance to—it is an old industry, and yet a new one—is the lead mining industry. I suppose it is one of the oldest industries in this State. It was allowed to lapse for a period of years because of the low price of base metals. In the last few years, however, we have seen the price of base metals rise to a great height. Today there is a certain amount of activity on the fields but, as it is of only a small nature, the prospectors and small mineowners experience a great deal of difficulty. I believe that to put the lead mining industry on a sound basis would require very little assistance in the first instance, but it would be an industry that would be valuable not only to the Northampton and Geraldton districts, but to the State and the Commonwealth in general.

I believe, in conclusion, that we should, wherever possible, assist in a policy of decentralisation. I think that one of the worst things that can happen to this State is what has happened in the Eastern States, and that is for the State to become top heavy by the centralisation of all its industries in one portion of it. It should be a vital policy of any Government, and of every member of this Chamber, to help anyone who is trying to decentralise industry.

On motion by Mr. Totterdell, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 6.7 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 10th August, 1950.

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

QUESTIONS.

PUBLIC SERVICE.

As to Car Mileage Subsidy to Officers.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE asked the Premier:

- (1) How many State officers are subsidised on a mileage basis for the use of their own cars on Government service?
- (2) What are the mileage rates (metropolitan and country) applying?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) Not known. Each department and instrumentality has authority to authorise the use of officer-owned cars on State business.

If desired, a return will be prepared from information to be obtained from departments, etc.

(2) The mileage rates applying at the present time are—

Mileage Travelled Each Year on Official Business.

Metropolitan Area—

1—5,000 Miles:

Over 12 h.p., 6.4d.; 12 h.p. and under, 5d.

5,001—10,000 Miles:

Over 12 h.p., 4.6d.; 12 h.p. and under, 3.7d.

Over 10,000 Miles:

Over 12 h.p., 3.7d.; 12 h.p. and under, 3d.