

of the fact that the income from agriculture has dropped considerably at present, may be inclined to shift his affections from that part of the State which has been waiting for water for only 120 years to somewhere else.

This area is the only one within the bounds of the original scheme still not covered, and we feel a concerted effort should be made to have the whole area fully investigated with a view to including it in the next seven-year plan or five-year plan—whatever it may be—when the current plan expires in 1972 with the completion of the second stage of the modified comprehensive water supply scheme. I am not advocating that other areas should be deprived of water because if one looks at the boundaries of the original scheme, one will see that my area has been left out.

I have said before in this Chamber that certain farmers voted against the scheme, but there is no reason at all why the sins of the fathers should be visited on the third and fourth generations. We must get on with the business and get water to the areas which are screaming for drought relief and water subsidies at the moment. I make this plea to the Government in the hope that it will investigate the matter so that the third stage can go ahead and bring to fruition something we have wanted for many years. Of course, I have spoken about the extension of the scheme many times in this Chamber—I think my remarks would just about fill a *Hansard* weekly number.

Some years ago I pointed out that at the rate we were going it would take another 150 years to extend reticulated water to the whole of the agricultural area, and I put forward the idea of providing dams at low cost to the farmer, financed on a similar basis to the S.E.C. loan.

The SPEAKER: The honourable member has another five minutes.

Mr. GAYFER: The loans could be at an interest rate of 5 per cent., with 25 per cent. down and the balance over 25 years. I think that suggestion should be investigated further because it would provide a rapid means of getting a central supply of water to the farmer.

In the few minutes remaining to me I would like to compliment sincerely the new members of this Chamber. We have heard some very fine speeches from them. However, in some instances one had to leave one's seat in case one was forced to interject. One of my friends opposite nearly caused me to commit the grave sin of interjecting. However, I would like to compliment each and every one of them.

The present Leader of the Opposition quoted Sir Earle Page in 1958 and said that most members come into Parliament on a pedestal and some of them are wise enough to get down from the pedestal

after a short while; but others wait to be knocked down. I think that was not a bad statement. However, possibly the best statement I have ever heard in this regard was made on an occasion when I was walking along the corridor with a new member. We passed a coffee table at which Mr. Hawke, Mr. Wise, and one or two other Labor members were sitting. Mr. Hawke said, "Good morning" and I replied "Good morning." But the gentleman with me was a little raw—he had taken a bit of a belting during the election—and he looked the other way. As we walked down the corridor we heard Mr. Hawke remark, "We even tame lions here!"

MR. THOMPSON (Darling Range) [2.49 p.m.]: It is indeed with considerable pride that I rise today to deliver my maiden speech in this place. I hope the electors of Darling Range who sent me here to represent them will have cause to be happy in the choice they made.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to join with other members of the House who have congratulated you on your election to the high office of Speaker of this Chamber. You have had some 15 years' service in this House and prior to that I believe you performed considerable service in local government. I think the experience you have gained in both fields will equip you to be a worthy occupant of the Chair.

I would like also to congratulate the members of the House who have been appointed to various offices and committees in this Parliament, and I would also like to extend my very best wishes to the other new members of Parliament. I feel a certain affinity will exist between the new members who have recently entered this Parliament, as I believe there must have been an affinity between the new members of previous Parliaments.

I would sincerely like to congratulate the Premier and his Ministers on their election. It must have been, indeed, a great personal satisfaction to the Premier to have been elected to that high office. I believe he is the oldest elected member in this House, having come here in 1933, which, I might point out, was two years before I was born. It is very humbling to me when I consider that aspect.

I must say I reserve the right, as did the member for Pilbara, to differ with him from time to time, and I will deal with one subject on which we disagree later.

I wish to thank the officers of this Parliament and the staff for all the assistance they have given to me and, I am sure, to every new member who has entered this place. They have made the ordeal of entering Parliament a lot less of an ordeal than it might otherwise have been.

I would like particularly to thank the officers concerned with the organisation of the seminar conducted in this Parliament, for the first time in its history, a

few weeks ago. It was of great benefit to me as I am sure it was to other new members—and not only to the new members, because there were some older members present also.

Perhaps the only lesson the seminar failed to get across was that one must be in the House at 12 o'clock on the first day of the opening of a new Parliament to be sworn in. I hope the member for Boulder-Dundas was not sworn in at for not having been sworn in at 12 o'clock.

My entry into this Parliament was not as sensational as the entry of the former member for the district during the 1962 election. He finished one miserable vote ahead of the Country Party candidate, and was finally elected on the distribution of the Labor Party preferences. The matter was referred to a court of disputed returns as a result of which there was another election a few months later.

On that occasion the candidate finished up with 14 more votes and accordingly became the member for Darling Range. He was the member for that electorate in this House during a time in which great changes took place in the electorate of Darling Range.

Kalamunda and its environs have become very densely populated residential areas. I suggest that the area will become one of the premier residential areas in the State. I am pleased to note that there are two other members in this House besides myself who recognise the benefit of living in the hills. I refer to the member for Mirrabooka and the member for Kimberley.

During his period of membership of this House Ken Dunn was under a fair amount of pressure as a result of great changes that took place in the electorate. To give some illustration of how dramatic the change has been I would point out that the enrolment for Darling Range increased from 6,000-odd electors in the 1968 election to over 10,000 in the recent election. This constitutes an increase of about 4,000 electors.

This type of increase brings tremendous pressures, and one of the pressures that has been placed on the services in the area has been in connection with water supplies.

Kalamunda did not have any reticulated water supply until the early 1950s when a pipeline was built from the Mundaring Weir to service what was a fairly small urban development. When more people started to come to the Kalamunda area the pipeline proved to be inadequate, so an 18-inch main was installed from the Victoria Reservoir and the Metropolitan Water Board took over the supply of water to the area.

In these few years prodigious amounts of money have been spent on the amplification of older mains, and the provision of new mains and service tanks, and I

believe the people of Kalamunda and some of the adjoining areas owe a debt to the Metropolitan Water Board. If they are not grateful they indeed ought to be.

Whilst speaking about the Metropolitan Water Board I would like to say how grateful I have been for the co-operation shown me by the General Manager of the Metropolitan Water Board. It has been a pleasure to deal with him. There have been differences of opinion on a number of occasions but he is one who is always available to anybody who cares to ring him up. It is a real pleasure to do business with him.

Ken Dunn was, I believe, a popular member of this House. I think he had close personal friends on both sides of the Chamber. He is still an extremely popular man in his home town of Kalamunda and I would like to wish him and his wife well in their future life—I cannot call it retirement because he has not really retired.

Very little has been said in this debate so far about the record period of the Brand Government and the great achievements that resulted from that 12-year period of Government. I could spend the whole of the time available to me today and still not cover all that could be covered under this heading.

There are, however, one or two other matters on which I wish to speak, so I will keep my comments fairly brief. When the Brand Government came to power in 1959 this State had one of the highest rates of unemployment and one of the lowest average take-home pays of any mainland State in Australia. We had an antiquated railway system; little industry was established here, and we relied mainly on Eastern States and overseas supplies for our manufactured goods. Our roads were in a very poor condition and there was virtually nothing north of about Geraldton.

We found that school leavers and graduates from the university were leaving this State to go to the Eastern States to follow vocations that were limited in this State, or not available at all.

As a result of the activities and the policies adopted by the Brand Government there has been a dramatic change. Job opportunities have increased and we have now one of the highest average wages of any of the States in the Commonwealth. We have seen industries grow daily and I believe we should be proud of what has taken place in these few years.

We now have good bitumen roads. Before I was elected I travelled the whole of the State and there were very few places I visited where one did not travel all the way on a bitumen road. One graphic illustration of the change that has taken place in the 12-year period of the Brand Government is reflected in the conditions of the railways.

My father is a railwayman and I have always had a fairly close association with the railways of the State. We have shifted all over the State from one railway town to another. I have had an opportunity to observe this service and I would say without question that the railway service today is something of which most railwaymen are proud. The morale in the service has never been higher.

I would like to congratulate the leader and deputy leader of my party for what they did, not only for Western Australia but, I believe, for Australia itself. I feel they have made a significant contribution to the future of Australia, and I am sure that history will record them as being two men who have contributed to the foundation on which a great Australia will grow.

I believe that Australia has the capacity to become one of the foremost nations of the world. As Britain and America have emerged as economic powers, and as Japan will, I believe, so, too, will Australia and I consider Australians owe a debt to the performance of the Brand Government during the last 12 years. I might add that if we listened to some of the comments from the other side of the House one would imagine the past 12 years have been purgatory.

Earlier on I said I would make reference to a matter about which the Premier and I have a difference of opinion. I refer to the proposed State Electricity Commission power lines to be constructed across the face of, or somewhere through the Darling Range. The purpose of the lines is to take power from the Kwinana power station to a northern terminal at Balga. The decision as to which of two routes under discussion will be adopted is to be made in a very short while.

The supply is to be taken on dual lines each capable of carrying the load on its own, the idea being that one line will be in service while the other one will be out of service, thus allowing for maintenance.

The State Electricity Commission would ideally prefer to run each line along completely separate routes for the safety of the line and security of supply. However, because of difficulties in skirting the city it has agreed to construct both lines along a common five-chain reserve. Two 140-foot pylons are to be constructed, each being 30 feet square at the base, every one-fifth of a mile along the five-chain reserve.

I would like to refer to the history of the negotiations the commission has had with the shires through whose areas the line is to pass. It goes back something like two years when the commission had considerable discussion with the shires concerned. About 12 months ago the Kalamunda Shire, and I believe the others concerned, were under an impression that the lines would pass to the east of Kalamunda.

I must indicate that at no stage during those negotiations was the Metropolitan Region Planning Authority involved. However, it appears that the authority was contacted early this year and asked to make some comment on what was proposed. The authority threw up its arms and said that it did not want the lines to go along the proposed route and to my complete amazement it has recommended—I might say not recommended, but suggested—that the lines go across the foothills and pass between Perth and the face of the Darling scarp.

These lines, if they follow the foothills route, will run parallel with and very close to what has become known as the green belt, and during the past few years the people of Western Australia, through the Government and the Metropolitan Region Planning Authority, have paid \$8,800,000 to buy land to be set aside as recreational reserves and thus provide a backdrop to the city. I believe that one day the people of Western Australia will come to regard the green belt and other reserves being set aside adjacent to Perth as they regard King's Park today. I would shudder to think what would happen if someone suggested we construct a power line of the magnitude of the lines under discussion anywhere near King's Park—not that that is likely to occur.

I believe that the Government owes it to future generations of Western Australians to take many aspects into consideration—more than it is required to do under the State Electricity Commission Act. The physical features of the metropolitan area are few. We have the Indian Ocean, the Swan River, and the Darling scarp and that is about all we have in terms of physical attractions. I believe it will be a sacrifice if these areas are impaired because we have raced ahead and constructed a line without taking these aspects into consideration.

I might point out that according to our planners a scenic drive is to be constructed along the Darling scarp and as far as I can determine from the contours and the general area that the lines are to follow, the scenic road will be at about eye level with the insulators of the pylons and all the way along the scenic road a person will most assuredly look through conductors. To those people who consider power lines and pylons majestic this scenic road will be a boon, but I suggest that the great majority of people who regard mother nature as the principal architect of beauty will not want to use that road very much. I believe the commission should have a look at other alternatives.

The shortest distance between the two points for a dual line is somewhere in excess of 30 miles. However, the two routes under consideration are 85 miles and 89 miles respectively.

At a public meeting in Kalamunda on the 7th June last the General Manager of the State Electricity Commission said that the commission would construct the line as far east as the two routes being surveyed because it was concerned with the aesthetics. I suggested the lines would look no worse if they were placed close to the city and I suggested a huge sum of money could be saved. I have made several suggestions and have asked for the commission's comments on other alternatives. I asked the commission why it would not be possible to take the line parallel with and fairly close to the standard gauge railway line. Already the land values in that area have depreciated—or at least have not risen—because the line has been constructed there and I believe that would be an ideal route through which to take the power lines.

I believe that some difficulties are associated with the lines passing the Perth Airport. However, I am also told it is not a complete impossibility for the lines to be lowered where they pass the runways of the airport and still have the required clearances.

I have asked the commission to consider yet another route. This one was discussed at some length by the planning authority, and has become known as the easterly route. What I and others have suggested is that the lines could go a little further east than the most easterly of the two now under consideration, cross Great Eastern Highway at right angles, skirt the John Forrest National Park, and cross the coastal plain to Balga. In that way very little urban development would be involved.

However, the Metropolitan Region Planning Authority in preparing its drawing, for some reason best known to itself, has taken a most devious line which darts and dives all over the place and involves 111 miles. I suggest a shorter route than that is possible, but the Minister has told us no other routes will be taken into consideration.

In reply to a letter I wrote him recently the Premier said that the estimated cost to take the lines on the more easterly route would be \$4,000,000. This sounds a tremendous sum of money, and indeed it is; but when related to the overall cost of the project, I do not think it is so great. Future generations of Western Australians will not thank us if we race into this and construct something ugly just to save a few dollars.

I believe, Sir, that one day a power station will be built in the north of the city. This does not mean to say that we will not need to have power lines to interconnect points of generation. Perhaps I could just read a passage from a letter I received from the general manager of the commission dated the 17th June this year. He said—

The generation capacity up to at least the late 1970s to early 1980s will

be located south of the City, and it is necessary to provide the outlet for this capacity to serve the areas north of the City.

He should have said, "necessary for some of the capacity to be transferred to the northern areas," because most certainly the whole of the generating capacity of the power station south of the city is not required to be taken north.

It appears a power station is to be established in the north by the late 1970s or early 1980s, and the power lines which are under construction now would, I suggest, be constructed to serve a period of at least 20 years. No-one has been able to tell me this. The commission will not comment on how long it estimates the power lines will be sufficient to carry the load.

The point I am making is that if a power station is constructed before the capacity of the line is reached, there would never be any need to increase the size of the line. Consequently the commission would not have the fear of having to construct more lines later on as indicated to me in a letter from the Premier.

I would like to stress that I believe there are other alternatives that ought to be examined and I ask the Government to consider them. For a brief moment I shall look at the situation as far as the State Electricity Commission is concerned. I consider that the State Electricity Commission Act is too powerful when one considers it in relation to power lines that are now under construction. I suggest that when the State Electricity Commission Act was passed there was never any suggestion that there would be lines of this type. I think that the Act gives the commission too much power in this regard.

I wish to quote a letter from the Premier on this matter. I asked him a number of questions—three to be specific. Firstly, I asked the Premier to consider other routes. He replied—

It is considered that the foothills route and the escarpment route represent the most westerly and easterly alignments which could reasonably be followed.

Secondly, I suggested that the decision should not be left to the State Electricity Commission, but that he should allow a decision to be made by Parliament. The Premier replied—

The State Electricity Commission is charged with the responsibility of providing an economic and reliable supply of electricity. It is inherent that under its Act it must relieve the Government of the detail of running a major public utility.

I suggest that the power lines under consideration are no mere detail. Costing millions of dollars as they will, and affecting thousands of people as they will, the decision ought not to be left entirely to

the State Electricity Commission. It is true that the commission has the power under its Act to do this, but I suggest it has too much power in this regard. I would like to see the Act amended so that the commission does not have the right to go on as its does.

The Minister for Electricity said in the House the other evening that people have the right to lodge objections. They have no right, as far as I can determine from the State Electricity Commission Act. Section 38 gives the right to local authorities to object to the commission on any proposal, but no individual has the right to object. The Minister replied that there is some power under the Public Works Act. I should imagine that this would apply only in the case of resumption. However, I do not think that people objecting to individual resumptions will have any impact on the overall route to be adopted; that is the fundamental difference.

In cases like this Parliament ought to have more say. I do not think we should let the State Electricity Commission, or any other statutory authority, make decisions on such gigantic undertakings. I pose this question: If this is allowed, what is the purpose of Parliament?

Environmental protection is a subject that has been on the tips of many people's tongues in the last few years. Never before has the community been more aware of the dangers that threaten our environment. All political parties have recognised this and all political parties have come out and said that they will take steps to protect the environment. I know the present Government does not agree with the environmental legislation enacted in the last Parliament, and it has said that the Act will not be proclaimed. The Liberal-Country Party Government did not proclaim the Act for reasons which I think have been explained. However, the previous Government did give the people of this State an undertaking that no decision on the State Electricity Commission power lines would be permitted until after the matter had been referred to the body to be set up under the environmental protection legislation.

I believe the present Government has a moral responsibility, if not a legal responsibility, bearing in mind that it has come out and said that it will take steps to protect the environment, to take the decision out of the hands of the S.E.C. The present Government has said that the measure which it will bring down will have "big teeth." This is one of the first issues affecting the environment since the new Government came into office. I believe the Government has an obligation to do something about it.

I would like to quote another passage from a letter I received from the Premier dated the 15th July. I asked the Premier whether he would defer the decision on

the power lines until such time as the new environmental protection legislation is enacted. The Premier said—

The Commission is broadly responsible to its Minister and hence the Government. The Act provides for proper procedures in matters of this nature. Any further reference by the Government of the dispute to an area where legislation has yet to be enacted would introduce unwarranted delay.

I suggest that the Premier's attitude on this is not consistent with the policies he has been enunciating.

Another subject which I wish to mention this afternoon relates to the Midland Junction Abattoir. Might I say that I believe the previous Government was wrong in allowing the Midland Junction Abattoir complex to grow as it has. A number of problems have been created and one of them is the disposal of effluent from that abattoir. I consider that the additions which are currently in progress at the abattoir will make the problem more acute than before.

If we look at the history of the disposal of effluent at the Midland Junction Abattoir, we find that the system has always caused some concern. On a number of occasions I can remember reports appearing in the Press of the system overflowing into the Helena River, and great concern has been expressed by the Swan River Conservation Board. At the present time the amount of effluent discharged from the abattoir is 680,000 gallons a day. This is considerably higher than it has been in the past, because of the increased number of stock killed but, more particularly, because more water is used by the abattoir to meet the fairly stringent regulations placed on it by Americans; I refer to the regulations which enable us to partake of the American meat market.

About two years ago a new lagoon system was installed to cope with this additional quantity of water. The system cost in excess of \$100,000, and I suggest it may have been as high as \$150,000. It consists of three lagoons which act, as the old ones did, as huge septic tanks. The water flows from one to the other and, in each of them, the bacterial action is supposed to break down the effluent. The water is pumped from the second lagoon to a third lagoon, which is located three miles from the Midland Junction Abattoir in an area known as Ridge Hill Road, which is Commonwealth land. It is at this point that the water is pumped and sprayed on the surrounding hillside.

The new system has not operated satisfactorily from the time it was installed. No blanket has formed on it. As soon as a blanket attempts to form, wind action has broken it. It has been suggested to me by people who, I believe, are fairly

experienced in this problem that the design of the lagoons is such that the system will never really work. This applies particularly when we consider the increased quantity of water that will soon be used. It will have no chance in the world of working. The problem is that the lagoons cannot be made deep enough, because they are sitting on a water table and they cannot be taken deeper than the water table will allow. To have the lagoons big enough to cater for the volume, they have had to be made large in area and, because of this, there is no chance for the blanket to build up and the bacterial action will not work.

The Midland Junction Abattoir Board, at the suggestion of the Public Health Department, has done a great deal of work in trying to get the system to work. The lagoons were seeded with sludge from the old lagoons and that had some degree of success. Then they were reseeded with more sludge and they improved a little further. However, it is still not working satisfactorily. The lagoons are not sufficient to cope with the quantity of water coming into them.

To give some indication of how foul is the water which is being pumped out on the Ridge Hill Road site, I mention that it is killing all the vegetation in the area. Jarrah trees are dying. On three occasions the abattoir board has sown grass but this just continues to die.

The third lagoon—and this is a point which I believe somebody should stand up and answer—is located outside the noxious trades area. In the opinion of legal advisers—I am told of a Queen's Counsellor—legal action could be taken against the abattoir and an injunction would succeed. The ramifications of this are that the abattoir would be rendered useless. It could not use the lagoon if people took legal action and the abattoir would be forced to close. I suggest somebody should answer why that situation has been allowed to develop.

The smell from the Ridge Hill Road lagoon of the disposal system has been a matter of controversy for some months now. Two sets of answers have been supplied. The Public Health Department says it is O.K. It recognises this area smells a little now but in a short while the system will work satisfactorily. That opinion is not shared, I suggest, by the members of the Midland Junction Abattoir Board, because at the present time that board is going ahead with plans to investigate a new method—a newer system. I believe that the Manager of the Midland Junction Abattoir Board is doing all he can to rectify this problem.

The board has invited suggestions and quotations from a number of world-wide authorities on this. It will take some months before the new system will be operating, and if indeed someone can come

up with one that is sufficient to meet the needs of the Midland Junction Abattoir Board I believe the new system could cost a lot of money—\$1,000,000 would not buy it, I suggest.

What really concerns me is that with the new plan nearing completion there will be an increased quantity of water flowing into the lagoons that have already proved inadequate to cater for the effluent now being handled. The management of the Midland Junction Abattoir Board tells me that although the additions will be completed in September there will not be a very greatly increased amount of water because some of it will be recirculated. However, the capacity of the Midland abattoir, by virtue of these additions, is to rise by 30 per cent. I should imagine the Midland abattoir will find it very difficult under those conditions to keep the amount of effluent discharged from the place below what it is now, and I feel that unless something is done, and done very quickly, there will be a lot of trouble associated with this plan.

The completed abattoir, when it gets to its maximum capacity, will discharge 1,500,000 gallons of effluent a day; almost two and a half times the amount handled there today and considerable problems are going to be associated with this unless some quick action is taken.

I would urge the Government to have a look at this matter and do something about it very very quickly.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for the courtesies extended to me and I also thank members of the House.

Debate adjourned until a later stage of the sitting, on motion by Mr. Brady.

(Continued on page 388.)

QUESTIONS (29): ON NOTICE

I. ROYAL PERTH HOSPITAL

Upgrading: Loss of Beds

Dr. DADOUR, to the Minister for Health:

As the board of management of Royal Perth Hospital has decided to upgrade the patient accommodation in a number of wards, what is the resultant estimated total loss of beds for these wards?

Mr. DAVIES replied:

A scheme for adding wards and departments to the hospital and to adapting part of the existing hospital to provide more beds is already under way. The board has also approved, in principle, a scheme to improve some of the existing wards where the standard of patient accommodation is below an acceptable level. Details of this part of the scheme are still