

continuing until 1969, and there is no reason to say that will be the end of the expansion.

I refer to the comments I made on a previous occasion and to the letter from the company which I had recorded last year in *Hansard*, when the company declared its intention to establish a smelter. In this regard, members will know that the Japanese came into the market rather unexpectedly by buying aluminium ingots from the Geelong plant of Alcoa, which is based entirely on the alumina from Kwinana. This is indirectly of tremendous benefit. In fact, I would say it is directly of benefit to us, because the sooner the plant gets to the optimum intended economic capacity and output, the sooner will a decision be made to establish a smelter in Western Australia.

It has always been envisaged that when the smelter was established here it would be based on the export of aluminium ingots rather than the use of the aluminium locally within Australia. From our point of view, this does not matter. The important thing is to reach the stage of having a smelter and to go from bauxite to aluminium ingots.

In planning the company's area, we have endeavoured to provide an area for the smelter to be established in due course. Various estimates have been made as to when it will be established; my own estimate is that it will be established by 1976, if not before. In working the road pattern, the rail pattern, and the area available to the company both from this agreement, and the area the company has bought by independent negotiations, we have endeavoured to provide for this. I commend the Bill to the House and ask permission to table the plans.

*The plans were tabled.*

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr. Moir.

#### *Message: Appropriations*

Message from the Administrator received and read recommending appropriations for the purposes of the Bill.

### **KWINANA-MUNDIJONG-JARRAHDAL RAILWAY EXTENSION BILL**

#### *Second Reading*

**MR. O'CONNOR** (Mt. Lawley—Minister for Railways) [4.35 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

The Minister for Industrial Development has just introduced the Alumina Refinery Agreement Act Amendment Bill and, in doing so, explained some of the details in connection with the necessity for the extension of a rail line to accommodate the requirements of the Jarrahdale area. This Bill is complementary to the legislation that was introduced by the Minister for Industrial Development.

There is not much more I can cover in connection with it. Members have already been given details relating to the necessity for the line, the requirements, the freight rates that have been collected, and the various other details. It has been pointed out that the line has operated satisfactorily in the past. As far as the railways are concerned, the alumina line showed a reasonable profit over its year of operation. We believe this will be to the further benefit of the Railways Department. As far as the department is concerned, it will encourage and increase the freight rate in that area.

The Minister for Industrial Development pointed out that the company will provide the funds in connection with this, and they will be levied backwards over a period of time after which it can be purchased. The extension of the line will involve a distance of a little less than four miles. I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr. Moir.

### **ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1967-68**

#### *In Committee of Supply*

Resumed from the 14th November, the Deputy Chairman of Committees (Mr. Crommelin) in the Chair.

**Vote: Legislative Council, \$56,500—**

**MR. YOUNG** (Roe) [4.38 p.m.]: As this is my maiden speech in this Chamber, I understand the privilege will be extended to allow me to make reference to some matters, provided they are not too controversial, which are not connected with the items of the Estimates. Firstly, I would like to thank the electors of Roe for the confidence they have shown in me and the honour they have bestowed upon me by electing me to be their representative in Parliament. As members are well aware, my predecessor, Mr. Tom Hart, retired from the Parliament because of continued ill-health. This ill-health was brought about by his constant endeavours for his electors. Since his retirement, the very good news is that his health has greatly improved.

At this stage, I would like to thank all members on both sides of the House for their congratulations and good wishes which were extended to me when I was first elected. I am very appreciative of the help and guidance given to me by all members during my settling-in period. I must say it has been quite a period. I would also like to thank all members of the House staff for their assistance and guidance.

This opportunity enables me to congratulate the Government on its continued effort to supply farming land at a controlled rate to the many people who apply

for it. As long as there is suitable land available, I believe we should make it open for selection to those young men, particularly young Western Australians, who are keen to go on the land. However, in making land available certain necessary precautions must be taken so that we do not fall into some of the errors which have occurred in the past. The problem of essential services, such as roads, schools, water supplies, and other matters, is one to be very carefully considered. To the extent of its resources, I believe the Government is doing this.

However, in a field which is associated with development we find the problems of erosion, and water conservation in the newer developing areas are falling somewhat behind. In the past, we have seen large areas of farming land opened up, but very little thought has been given to surveying and no consideration has been given to the natural contour of the country. It was a feature of Western Australia's early development that the heavy country was opened up first and, of course, this was in the valley areas. As a consequence, we find that the new country which is being opened up is in the higher areas and this is causing great problems in connection with wind and water erosion.

Large tracts of land are now coming into development and I consider some thought should be given to surveying them, where practicable, along the natural contour lines of the country. Roads and shelter belts of timber should be surveyed on the higher grades, which would eliminate the areas of flooding which are found when a natural valley is cleared. The roads run along the bottom of the valleys and this causes associated water problems.

The farmers find that if their boundary lines follow the natural contour of the land and if they work the land by following the natural contour, this is of assistance in overcoming the water erosion problem. The carrying out of contour banking, which is a good conservation practice, would follow simply because their fence lines would be almost parallel to the existing contour lines of the original survey. In March, 1965, an area of some 29,500,000 acres had been cleared in Western Australia. By 1970 the area will have increased to 37,000,000 acres, and by 1975 an estimated 43,000,000 acres will be cleared.

So it can be seen that, in the space of 10 years, approximately 14,000,000 acres will be added to land already developed, and we will need to watch carefully erosion by both wind and water. As cleared land increases the potential run-off, thus creating erosion and flooding, pasture and contour development tend to fall behind the rate of clearing, and the problem becomes accentuated.

At this stage I would like to quote from page 3 of the Annual Report of the Soil Conservation Service for the year ended the 30th June, 1966, as follows:—

Problems have been caused by the sheer speed of development. More cleared land and more improved pastures have put feed ahead of stock numbers so there is not quite the same incentive for more pasture establishment. Also more clearing has accelerated run-off to the point of extensive shallow flooding in lower rainfall areas even without very big rains. This latter problem was already evident before the wet years of 1963 and 1964. It is in these lands that the main future extension of mixed pastures can be expected.

Study of past land use statistics shows some continuing trends. Assumptions of current trends continuing have been made as a basis for projecting their effects at 5, 10, 17 and 25 years in the future. This is not altogether sheer guess work although what seems reasonable now may be quite outmoded in a few years. Sufficient prosperity and finance for rapid development is also assumed. At March 1955 there were 4.7 million acres of established pasture in 20.7 million cleared. Thus 16 million acres were not under pasture. Pasture was 23% and fallow 9% of cleared land. By 1965 there were 29.5 million cleared with 10.4 million under established pasture. At first sight the increase in pasture from 23 to 35 per cent. and the decrease of bare fallow from 9 to 6 per cent. should lead to less run-off, less flooding and less erosion. But cleared land not under pasture has increased from 16 to 19 million acres, a big increase of 3 million acres of higher run-off potential. It is assumed that clearing tends to increase run-off more than pasture establishment decreases run-off.

It can therefore be seen that unless steps are taken urgently to reduce this ever-widening gap with pasture development and contour banking, we will have the ever-increasing problem of erosion, and eventually it must get out of hand. In the south-eastern portion of the agricultural area, and in that part of the State between Southern Cross and the Southern Ocean, some 8,000,000 acres are waiting to be developed. Conceivably, this area could be thrown open within the next 10 years if the present policy of developing land at the rate of 800,500 to 1,000,000 acres a year is continued and, of course, if finance is still available and prosperity continues at the same rate as it has in recent years.

I would therefore urge the Government to ensure that sufficient funds are allocated to the Soil Conservation Service in

proportion to the gains expected from the opening up of this new land. The recruitment of trained staff and, indeed, personnel who can be trained in this work, is urgent. The service should be extended commensurate with the expected return from this land development. With the expansion of this department I would suggest, in relation to the conditional purchase agreements, a provision be written into the Act to exercise some form of control so that new settlers would be obliged to ensure their soil conservation work would be in direct proportion to their rate of clearing.

At the moment the position is that a farmer can, with modern equipment, log thousands of acres within a relatively short time, put a match to the clearing, and with the onset of the first winter rains have a water problem. A great deal of this trouble could be avoided if there were some form of control over the area cleared; if a condition were inserted in a farmer's conditional purchase agreement that he had to undertake a soil conservation programme commensurate with his rate of clearing.

The latest figures issued by the Soil Conservation Service show that there are 415 farmers awaiting the services of an officer of this department. The figures show that there have been 134 requests for an overall farm plan; 213 requests for contour surveying on part of the farm area; 36 requests for water conservation; and 80 requests for general assistance. Whilst I agree there will always be a waiting list of farmers for this type of work, it can be seen, by virtue of all the facts I have already mentioned, that the gap is increasing and it will not be many years before the present number of 415 farmers is doubled, with a consequent loss of control in their areas.

In regard to the extension work generally performed by this department, I will now quote from the minutes of the Soil Conservation Advisory Committee of Tuesday, the 15th August, 1967. The following appears on page 3 of the report:—

With regard to extension work generally, there has been no great promotion of soil conservation by the Service staff. The additional work expected, associated with the present lack of staff leads to considerable embarrassment when requests for assistance cannot be handled. Within those catchments where the Soil Conservation Service is already involved however there must be active promotion of all aspects of soil conservation to ensure the application of a complete conservation programme.

These are the remarks of the commissioner and from them I would think we must ensure that this department is enlarged as rapidly as possible and more funds are

made available to it to increase the activities of the department so that we have a positive control over these new areas which are being opened up, otherwise we could possibly have a situation similar to that which we discussed the other evening; namely, the problem of regeneration in the Ord River area.

I would now like to deal with the second section of my speech; that is, the problem of water conservation. With the ever-increasing demand for water in these areas, I can visualise the problem of a shortage of water for stock and domestic purposes arising, because in the large areas of this State which will, in the next few years, be opened up—that is in the Forestania and south-eastern areas—the land is very similar to the country now served by the comprehensive water scheme. This country does not lend itself to large key dams, because of the problem of salinity associated with catchment areas. When large areas are opened up and the comprehensive water scheme is taxed to its fullest extent, either by virtue of the fact that there is not sufficient water in the catchments, or the conduit supplying the water is too small, we will find there will be an ever-increasing demand for water in those areas.

Whilst in the past the department has made every effort to harness all the available water supplies in agricultural areas as they are developed, there are rocks of a suitable type available for catching water. Ten acres of suitable rock will catch 1,000,000 gallons of water. If these rock catchments were harnessed they would supply a permanent key point from which farmers could cart water. At this point I would like to refer to a statement that was published in *The Countryman* on the 2nd November, 1967, in which it was mentioned that water rationing may, in fact, be effected within the comprehensive water scheme before the present summer is over, and this will be after only one dry year.

Therefore, if we had a succession of dry years the position would be desperate. I would like to ask the Minister concerned if there is any substance in this Press report, because I have discussed it with a few farmers and, due to the shortage of water, they are faced with the prospect of selling their sheep on an already depressed market. In some areas feed is less than it has been in previous years and, as is known, wool prices are down to bedrock. Therefore if this Press report is correct and water is to be rationed resulting in farmers having further to deplete their flocks by putting more sheep on the market, the consequent fall in prices will be frightening. If the Press report is not correct I ask the Minister concerned to make some statement on the matter so that the fears of many farmers will be allayed.

Mr. Brand: I would think that was a rough guess on somebody's part.

Mr. YOUNG: I thank the Premier for that assurance. In areas not served by the comprehensive water scheme, and even in those areas where rock catchments do not occur, or suitable types of ground are not available to construct water catchments, we must push on with all speed to harness all the water possible where it falls and retain it for farming purposes.

The system of contour banking, which I mentioned when speaking on soil conservation, can also be used to catch water in dams or in rock catchments. In conjunction with adequate contouring of the land the water can be contained where it falls. There is, of course, a scheme already functioning to establish key dams to provide water for stock, but this is not the only problem. There is also the problem of providing sufficient and suitable domestic water, and for this purpose rock catchments could be brought into play.

Some rock catchments already harnessed are giving excellent service by supplying townsites, but there are other areas where rock catchments are not harnessed to provide a water supply, and although they would not be suitable for supplying water to a townsite, such catchments would constitute a permanent source of water from which farmers could cart supplies.

Another point that concerns settlers in my area is the fulfilment of the terms of their conditional purchase leases; that is, in relation to that provision that they must reside on their blocks within two years. Some revision of this provision is necessary; firstly, because in the event of a farm being allocated after harvest—and it does occur quite frequently—the first year after allocation is practically lost to the farmer. He could carry out his logging in the winter or spring months, but he must wait till the next summer before he could burn. He then has to fallow the ground, and crop it the following year. So, the first two years after allocation are practically gone before he obtains any return whatsoever from the farm.

With the need to reside on the block or the farm within a period of two years, we find that the settler can obtain only one return from the farm. He has to comply with all the other terms of the conditional purchase agreement in regard to clearing and fencing the land, and also in regard to making some provision for the establishment of a home within that two-year period. With the modern trend of light land development, it has been proved that a settler must burn, fallow, and then crop. That being the case, some extension of the two-year limit is necessary.

With an extension of this period the settler can be told, "We have extended the period in which you have to comply with the provisions of the Act, but with that extension we will enforce the terms of the conditional purchase agreement to ensure that you or your agent do, in fact,

reside on the block within the new specified time." If we did that we would halt the position which was mentioned earlier in this debate in regard to absentee owners.

At the moment we find that the newer settled areas lie on the fringes of the older established areas. With the use of modern machinery mounted on rubber tyres, a settler could hook the machinery to a tractor, travel a distance of 50 miles, put in his crop, and return home after completion. We find that in some districts 50 per cent. of the farms are being worked by absentee owners. In the town of Hyden, which is in my electorate, one can walk along the street in the afternoons and see more vehicles with number plates of other local authorities than those with local number plates. This is proof of the number of farms which are worked by absentee owners.

If the period of two years can be extended before the provisions of the Act are enforced, then the problem of absentee ownership will be overcome. If the people concerned are not prepared to comply with the Act then their blocks will revert to the Crown. One thing which the enforcement of the provisions of the Act will bring about is the return of the family unit to farming in Western Australia. It is the family unit which has made the farming areas of this State, because we see the same surnames appearing in all farming districts from the time they have been opened up. The absentee owner set-up is destroying the family unit which has been the backbone of farming in this State ever since farming started; and the sooner we revert to the family unit instead of allowing big companies to control farming in Western Australia the better for the progress of the State.

I would like to make some brief reference to the practice of the Lands Department in adopting wide road surveys. In some districts the department is surveying roads up to 10 chains in width, with a view to protecting the wildflowers which grow on the sides. This is a very laudable intention, but it is creating problems. We find that in some cases a farmer, with a 5,000-acre conditional purchase block and with 240 chains of road frontage, has a 10-chain strip of reserve between his property and the road; that is, some 200 acres of reserve land between his property and the road.

He has to be responsible for the destruction of vermin that might gather within this reserve. As the area of 200 acres is, in some cases, bigger than the areas controlled by the Agriculture Protection Board for the purposes of destroying vermin, the provision which requires a farmer to be responsible for the destruction of vermin in the circumstances I have mentioned is rather severe; because his neighbour, a mile or two along the road, might have only a one-chain survey and

a 40-foot wide road to look after. In other words, the neighbour has a strip only 13 feet wide to look after.

In areas where wide road surveys have been undertaken, it has been the practice of the Main Roads Department and of the local authorities concerned to open up gravel pits right at the edge of the road. One can travel along a road and see where the Lands Department has been making an attempt to preserve the wildflowers but find that the Main Roads Department or the local authority has moved in and established a large gravel pit at the edge of the road. Some control over this is necessary.

Mr. Gayfer: They do not even fill it in.

Mr. YOUNG: As the honourable member mentioned, the Main Roads Department and the local authorities do not fill in the pit. With a 10-chain strip between the property of a farmer and the road, no difficulty should be experienced in establishing a gravel pit a couple of chains from the side of the road, thus leaving an unbroken edge of wildflowers on the roadside. If gravel pits are established out of sight they would not appear to destroy the wildflowers along the road edges. Of necessity, such gravel pits would have a track into them, but there would be an unbroken verge of wildflowers along the roadsides.

In conclusion I wish to say that now that I have made these points and got them off my chest, I hope I will be able to add a little to the debates of this Parliament.

MR. BRADY (Swan) [5.8 p.m.]: I wish to pass a few remarks in this debate, because we have the opportunity to bring to the notice of the Ministers and to members some of the difficulties which our electorates face. One of the problems I have is what I should mention, and what I should leave unsaid because of the time which various subjects take to present. Some subjects are much more important than others, but to individual people their particular problems could be of major importance.

My experience in politics is that very often if one wants some development in one's electorate one has to start 20 or 25 years before one can expect to achieve the objective. The member for Belmont has said it could take 30 years. He should know, because in my early days I was very closely associated with him. In those days we advocated the establishment of two particular institutions in the Midland area, and both took 20 to 25 years to reach fulfilment.

The first was the establishment of the Governor Stirling High School at West Midland. I first went into that district in 1929, and in 1930 a gentleman well

known in the district (Mr. Balinski) was president of the parents and citizens' association. He was very closely associated with the member for Belmont and me, and we agitated actively for the provision of a high school. Twenty-five years after that we got the high school at West Midland, but by that time Mr. Balinski had passed away, so he did not see his wishes fulfilled.

The same happened in the case of the hospital at Middle Swan. This was advocated away back in 1930, and ultimately it was established during the time when Dame Florence Cardell-Oliver was Minister for Health. Since then it has been extended.

I now refer to another subject which is of great importance to my district, although it may take 20 to 25 years to reach culmination. However, I hope that it will reach culmination within the next 10 years.

Mr. Graham: That looks like an application to the State Housing Commission.

Mr. BRADY: It concerns a type of housing, but it does not concern the Housing Commission. What I am advocating is the establishment of a university in the eastern suburbs. In case any member gets me wrong and thinks I am advocating that one be established in Midland I can disabuse his mind, because I can assure him there is not sufficient land there to cater adequately for a university.

Mr. Nalder: You should start an argument with the member for Albany.

Mr. BRADY: I shall not do that, because as I proceed I shall show that I am sympathetic to Albany getting something in the nature of a university college or a university institution of some kind.

What I want to do is to draw the attention of the Minister for Education and of members generally to the great development that is taking place in the northern and eastern suburbs. It is envisaged by people with knowledge of these matters that the population could reach somewhere in the vicinity of 200,000 within a few years. When I see the figures in black and white they stagger me, particularly as some of them were compiled back in 1955 and were based on the Metropolitan Region Plan. At that time the great activity which is currently taking place in mining and in other types of development in the north-west was not envisaged, nor was it believed to be possible.

Mr. Lewis: You have not the figures in blue and white!

Mr. BRADY: No; but I have them in black and white. I see the Minister for Education is intensely interested in this matter, and as I proceed I hope he will become more interested. Firstly, let me assure him that I am asking for something which is brown and yellow. The figures I am about to quote relate to the