

democracy. Where is our democracy? How can we have democratic government when a Legislative Council elected by one-sixth of the people can and does defy the Chamber elected by all the people? Another anomaly that this Bill, if passed, will remove, is that of plural voting. That is certainly not a democratic method of election. There are ten provinces in this State and three members represent each province in the Legislative Council. It is possible for one man to have ten votes at an election. I do not know whether that actually happens; I know that some men have recorded two or three votes, but the possibility is there. Anyone with a qualification in each of the ten provinces may register a vote in each.

I have referred to the constitution of the Senate and the House of Representatives. The system has worked very well there and, if adopted in this State, I am sure it would not react in the way feared by the member for West Perth. It would not make the Legislative Council a reflex of the Assembly because of the fact I have mentioned, namely, that the election for the Council would be held at a different time from that of the Assembly. I hope the Bill will become an Act. I think the day has arrived when second chambers of any sort should be abolished, not even excluding the Senate. After all the people with the franchise have an opportunity every three years to say who shall be their representatives. Why not, then, follow the good example of Queensland and have only one Chamber? I support the second reading hoping that the Bill will be passed, and I repeat that if this legislation is defeated this House should consider submitting the whole question to the people by way of referendum to determine whether the second Chamber should be abolished.

On motion by Mr. Graham, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 9.53 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Tuesday, 12th September, 1944.

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

ASSENT TO BILL.

Message from the Lieut.-Governor received and read notifying assent to the Supply Bill (No. 1) £2,700,000.

QUESTION—BUS SERVICE.

As to Perth-Como-Canning Bridge Timetable.

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT asked the Chief Secretary:

(i) Is it correct that a new time table was put into operation on August 20th last, for the Government bus service operating between Perth, Como and Canning Bridge?

(ii) If so, when is it proposed to make available to the public particulars of such alterations and to issue new time tables, in order that the inconvenience and annoyance now being experienced may be obviated?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(i) Yes.

(ii) A special issue of the time table was made and copies handed to bus drivers on this service for distribution to passengers. A large number have already been distributed, and further copies are available on application to bus drivers.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Hon. A. Thomson, leave of absence for twelve consecutive sittings granted to Hon. H. V. Piesse (South-East) on the ground of ill-health.

MOTION—FREMANTLE HARBOUR TRUST ACT.

To Disallow Bagged-Wheat Charges Regulation.

Debate resumed from the 31st August on the following motion by Hon. C. F. Baxter—

That new regulation No. 148 made under the Fremantle Harbour Trust Act, 1902, as published in the "Government Gazette" of the 24th December, 1943, and laid on the Table of the House on the 1st August, 1944, be and is hereby disallowed.

HON. C. F. BAXTER (East—in reply) [4.40]: The case put up in opposition to the passing of this motion was on the basis that the handling of wheat in cornsacks was not paying, that the Fremantle Harbour Trust was making a loss on it. That can be couced, but I would like to point out that the reason why costs have risen is not only the increased cost of labour but the slackening of labour, which is worse still. The quantity handled at Fremantle now is quite different from that handled in the past, and it is very apparent that, not only in Fremantle but elsewhere in connection with other works, the higher the pay the less is the work done in return for it. That is particularly applicable to the work done for the Fremantle Harbour Trust.

The Chief Secretary: You are forgetting that there are no young men on that work today.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: That may be so; but before the war the same position prevailed. It has existed over a period of years. The primary producers are the main providers of revenue for the Fremantle Harbour Trust—not directly, perhaps, but indirectly—yet they are denied the right to a representative on the Trust. There are five members on the Fremantle Harbour Trust, and three of them represent one particular section. I have every cause to complain about that. During my term as Minister controlling the Trust one of the members retired. He was a representative of the lumpers. I, like the present Minister, did not recognise that any section was entitled to have direct representation on the Trust, but the point is that recommendations from different sections are taken into account, and from that angle it can be said that members of the Trust can represent certain sections.

As I have said, during my period of office the representative of the lumpers retired by effluxion of time. A deputation waited on me and there was a heavy barrage of requests from that deputation, from people who supported me and from others who were in opposition to the Labour representative on the Trust, that he should be replaced by somebody else. I would not agree to that, because I considered it was not fair, that it was not British. I stood firm and re-appointed that gentleman. Yet, at the very first opportunity that occurred afterwards, when unfortunately a representative of the producers passed away and another appointment had to be made, he was succeeded by the secretary of a trade union, a direct representative of a political body. The result is that the Trust is under the complete control of Labour representatives who have a majority. Naturally the wages are creeping up and conditions are stated to have improved. Of course, the improvement is not for the benefit of the producers.

The Chief Secretary. Why do you say Labour representatives are in a majority?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: There are three Labour representatives out of a membership of five. In the circumstances, we are getting what we must expect. Costs are going up. We cannot sit here and allow regulations to be passed that keep up the cost of handling. We know perfectly well that the time will come when the increased price of wheat will disappear. Judging by the way other countries have been preparing for the post-war period, the decline will occur not very many years after the war. When we have a low price for wheat we know that there will be no hope of having these increased charges reduced. That has never occurred, so it behoves us to see that the charges are not increased now.

The Chief Secretary: For many years a special rebate was granted in connection with these charges.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: There should be a special rebate, too! Surely the Leader of the House recognises that the Harbour Trust's revenue comes from the producers, and they should have particular consideration, especially in view of the profit that comes to the Trust through them. It would be a false move for us to allow such few charges as we have control over to be increased at the present time, thus adding to

the large profit already made by the Trust. The wheatgrower does not even get the benefit of the enhanced return. Although the market price of wheat today is good, other people are reaping the advantage by getting wheat at a much cheaper rate.

I have no fault to find with the supply of cheap wheat to keep the cost of flour down and consequently to lower the price of bread, nor have I any objection to the supply of wheat as food for stock and the manufacture of breakfast foods. But why should the wheatgrowers have to carry the difference between the prices paid for those supplies and the market value of the wheat? Combining the export value and the internal price, one finds that there is still a loss on the average price, except in regard to flour. In connection with the other lines there is a direct loss to the wheatgrowers. Why should they be faced with that loss? In June last, Mr. Scully told the president of the Wheatgrowers' Federation, Mr. T. Lillie, that the wheatgrowers would not lose anything over the supplying of cheap wheat for stock feed because it was the intention of the Government to pay the difference between the price at which that wheat was sold and the average export wheat realisation.

There was a definite assurance from Mr. Scully, representing the Commonwealth Government, that the difference would be paid. That looked all right, but when Mr. Scully visited Western Australia he shifted his ground—at which practice he is very clever. He told representatives of the Primary Producers' Association that the intention was to pay the difference between the price at which stock feed was sold and the average realisation of the whole of the wheat, including export and local sales.

The Honorary Minister: What is wrong with that?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: There was at first a direct promise to pay the difference between the price at which the wheat was sold and the average export wheat realisation, but when Mr. Scully visited us just before the Referendum—when we had an avalanche of Federal Ministers—he shifted his ground and said, "No, I will take you back to the average price between the realisation abroad and the local price." There is a lot wrong with that. The propositions are entirely different. The difference is 1s. a bushel, if the average price is taken. That means a lot of

money. In Mr. Chifley's Budget an amount of £800,000 is provided to meet this obligation. That amount will provide only 6d. a bushel on 32,000,000 bushels whereas sales have been made of large quantities for approximately 7s. a bushel.

If an average were struck in connection with export sales, the price should approximate 6s. per bushel and even with the local sales taken into consideration, it would probably be more than 5s. per bushel. Is it not reasonable to estimate that the average disposals would be at least 1s. 6d. above the sale prices of stock feed? I think that estimate could easily be verified. The Commonwealth Treasurer's Budget proposes to provide 6d. to meet the difference, which means that the wheatgrowers will lose 1s. per bushel. It is apparent that Mr. Scully, the Commonwealth Minister for Commerce and Agriculture, intends to force the wheatgrowers to carry the load imposed by concessional prices granted to those associated with the manufacture of power alcohol, breakfast foods, and so on, and also a large percentage of the loss involved in providing cheap stock feed—all to meet Government policy.

Why should the wheatgrowers have to provide cheap wheat merely for the sake of giving effect to Government policy? Let us encourage the manufacture of power alcohol, breakfast foods and so on if we like, but why burden the wheatgrower in consequence? This is a national matter and the Commonwealth Government's policy, while dealing with a national question, should not impose the whole of the burden on the wheatgrowers. To suggest such a course is both unjust and unfair. It is much the same when we consider the attitude of the State Government here. The loss on the handling of bagged-wheat is small compared with the huge profit the Fremantle Harbour Trust is making annually. Notwithstanding that fact, the State Government proposes to impose an increased tax on the wheatgrower.

If a small loss is incurred—the Chief Secretary said that it was probably due to the fact that older men were employed now instead of young men, which really supports my case—and the extra charge is to be imposed to make up for that loss, we must remember that once such a charge is levied it will apply not for one season but for all time. Once the cost of a govern-

mental service is increased, the charge remains. It has been stated that the Fremantle Harbour Trust handles bulk wheat at cost, but that is not so. The Trust charges all costs against Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd., and, knowing the Trust as we do, we can be well assured that nothing is left uncharged for.

The Chief Secretary: Do you suggest that my statement regarding the Fremantle Harbour Trust was wrong?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: No, but I claim that the Trust misses nothing when making charges. Then it must be remembered that over and above what is charged, there is an additional 20 per cent. levied for administration costs. That is a different matter altogether. It is a very high charge to cover administration costs. Taking everything into consideration, I cannot understand how even the small loss registered is really made. The business should be highly profitable, especially when we consider that the Australian Wheat Board allows Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. only 10 per cent. in respect of some services and nothing whatever regarding others. Thus the charge for administration at the rate of 20 per cent. represents double the allowance to Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. There is another point. The Chief Secretary, speaking as the representative of the Government and also of the Fremantle Harbour Trust, said that the handling of wheat in bags by the Trust showed a loss, and it became necessary to increase the charges to equalise the position.

If that is so, why does not that policy apply right through? Where does the profit of, approximately, £90,000 come in? That is clear profit, which goes into Consolidated Revenue. Thus, the Fremantle Harbour Trust is a profitable institution. If it were established that the Trust requires only the extra amount to meet actual costs, then I would be prepared to withdraw my motion. On the other hand, if the Government were prepared to treat all services alike and merely cover costs, it would be all right. But if, for that very purpose it intends to add another tax to the producers, then we shall never get away from that position. As a matter of fact, the State will have a hard row to hoe in keeping the wheat industry in existence, for it is languishing at present.

Hon. L. Craig: There will be a shortage of wheat within two years.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: There will be a shortage within six months; there is no doubt about that—once the authorities start lifting the wheat on hand. I can carry my mind back to the period of the 1914-18 war when I was one of the men responsible for the control of wheat in Australia. In about six months the whole of it had disappeared.

Hon. L. Craig: When I interjected about the forthcoming wheat shortage I had in mind a world shortage.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Quite so. It is essential that the farmers should rehabilitate their position as quickly as possible and as fast as taxation will permit. Members will remember that during the earlier war the farmers did not have to pay such heavy taxation as they do now, and, furthermore, they enjoyed better prices and better seasons than those they have experienced latterly. Taxation has increased tremendously, something like 1s. 3d. per bushel compared with the impost during the currency of the 1914-18 war. This House should safeguard the position of the producers. Let members ask themselves where the profit of approximately £90,000 comes from. It must ultimately come from those who produce goods that are exported. Who produces those goods? Obviously, the primary producers of Australia. Those who make available the timber, gold, wheat, wool and so forth are the ones who are producing for export.

Hon. L. Craig: The wool people are paying a lot of the taxation.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Of course they are. The profits have been derived from these various industries. In any ordinary commercial venture an increase in cost is immediately passed on and the necessary percentage of profit is maintained. Unless that position obtained, commercial ventures could not continue to operate; but the primary producers are not in that position. Why should one section of the producers only be singled out in this manner? The regulation represents a small matter, but it is vital to the wheatgrowing industry. I hope the House will do as it did in September last when, by a huge majority, it disallowed the former regulation. I hope that on this occasion members will vote to prevent the imposition of this additional tax on the industry, the difficulties associated with which are already bur-

densome, and this added impost will tend to retard operations.

Question put and a division taken with the following result:—

AYES.	
Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. W. J. Mann
Hon. L. B. Belton	Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. J. A. Dimmitt	Hon. H. S. W. Parker
Hon. E. H. H. Hall	Hon. A. Thomson
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. F. R. Welsh
Hon. J. G. Hislop	(Teller.)
NOES.	
Hon. L. Craig	Hon. H. Seddon
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. C. B. Williams
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. G. Fraser
Hon. W. H. Kitson	(Teller.)
PAIRS.	
AYES.	NOES.
Hon. H. V. Plesse	Hon. E. M. Heenan
Hon. H. Tuckey	Hon. W. R. Hall

Motion thus passed.

BILLS (4)—FIRST READING.

- 1, Dried Fruits Act Amendment.
- 2, Local Authorities (Reserve Funds) Act Amendment.
- 3, Northam Cemeteries.
- 4, Main Roads Act (Funds Appropriation).

Received from the Assembly.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Twelfth Day.

Debate resumed from the 31st August.

HON. G. W. MILES (North) [5.9]: I thank members for their congratulations upon my return at the last election for the Legislative Council. I regret to note from the Lieut.-Governor's Speech the death of Mr. R. S. Sampson and Hon. W. C. Angwin. I consider that Mr. Angwin was one of the most outstanding men we have had in this country. One of the remarks made by Mr. Fraser in the course of his speech on this motion related to the Swan River. He said, "Hands off the Swan River." This is the most retrograde suggestion I have yet heard in this House. We complain about not being able to get anything for this State, and here there is an opportunity for Perth to become the front door for the air service of the Empire, if not the world. Only the other day we heard of a plane coming from India to Western Australia in 15 hours.

The Government should take every opportunity to induce oversea organisations interested in commercial air transport to establish a base in Western Australia, whether on the Swan River or somewhere

else. In my opinion there is ample room on the river for such a purpose. If we are not going to take advantage of an opportunity such as this we deserve all we get. I agree with the remarks of Mr. Thomson concerning the policy of centralisation that has existed in this country for a number of years. Everything should be done to open up all portions of the State, particularly the Albany area, which has a very great future. I also agree with Mr. Seddon's remarks and congratulate him on his views. He takes a lot of trouble in preparing his speeches. That particular speech was a very thoughtful one.

The main point in Mr. Seddon's utterance was the emphasis he laid on the necessity for giving first priority in the post-war period to the encouragement of private enterprise. When our soldiers return there will be ample work for them without its being necessary for the Government immediately to spend large sums on national undertakings. Such undertakings can be launched if it is found that insufficient labour is available to the workers of this country. Later on, of course, it will be necessary to start numbers of national works, but the first consideration should be to encourage private enterprise to produce commodities that are required by our people. There will be any amount of work available for repairs and renewals and in other directions in which we have had to go without during the war. The main point is to get our industries into going order once more.

I agree with Mr. E. H. H. Hall's views concerning the educational system and the transport of children attending schools in the country. His suggestions should receive earnest consideration. I know of parents who have to drive their children eight or 10 miles a day so that they may catch a bus by which to reach school. I feel sure the Government will do everything possible to remedy the existing defects in the present system. My views concerning the proposed housing scheme are the same as those of Sir Hal Colebatch. Houses should be constructed in the country to induce people to go there. The only way in which this State can be developed is by means of a decentralisation policy, inducing people to go to the country and making them so satisfied that they will wish to remain there. Every facility should be given to country people so that they may

pay decent wages to their employees, and enjoy decent housing and other amenities.

With reference to the pay-as-you-go system of taxation there is, in my opinion, an anomaly which the Government should try to have rectified. We talk about attracting people to the country, and yet we find, on reading the calculations regarding the allowances for children for a man on £500 a year, that £21 is allowed for the first child and £8 for the second child. Those allowances should be increased if we desire to encourage people to populate this country. Every consideration should be extended to parents to assist them to educate their children and that anomaly should therefore be adjusted.

Another matter I desire to refer to is the secrecy of the ballot. We heard too much of that question during the recent Referendum. I had occasion to record an absentee vote and I found that the ballot paper was placed in an official envelope—not in a separate envelope, as is done in the case of a person recording a postal vote, when the envelope is put direct into the ballot box—but this paper was put in an open envelope and handed to the returning officer, who could therefore ascertain how every absentee voter recorded his vote. That is not the way in which the system was intended to be carried out. That also is something needing correction. One of the most serious happenings since the House last met is that the Police Union has affiliated with the A.L.P.

The Honorary Minister: That is a progressive step.

Hon. G. W. MILES: The Minister may think it is, but it shows weakness on the part of the Government in allowing the police to be affiliated with the Trades Hall.

Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. G. W. MILES: I have a great regard for the police; they are a fine body of men, but what is going to happen? To whom will they swear allegiance? To the King or to a dictator at Beaufort-street? Should a strike occur and the police be called out to quell a riot, from whom should they take instructions, from Beaufort-street or from the Government of the country?

The Chief Secretary: Do not let your prejudice run away with you.

Hon. G. W. MILES: There is no prejudice on my part. The Government should take the matter in hand and see that the

Police Union is de-registered. If the present members of the Police Force are not prepared to carry on, we shall have large numbers of returned soldiers who could form a new police force.

Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. G. W. MILES: In my opinion, it is a scandal and a disgrace to allow such a thing to pass. No mention has been made of it, except that in another place one member briefly referred to it. I hope the Government will take steps to see that the Police Union is de-registered.

Member: You are a bit optimistic!

Hon. G. W. MILES: I do not know about that. Something ought to be done. It is a nice thing if we are going to allow our police to be affiliated with a political organisation.

The Honorary Minister: Do you want them affiliated with a Nazi party?

Hon. G. W. MILES: No. I do not want them to be associated with any political party. I wish to say a few words about our North-West. I looked up a speech I made in this Chamber 18 years ago, and I then said that I would say a few words on this subject. Mr. Baxter interjected, "I hope it will only be a few words."

Hon. C. F. Baxter: I did not say that.

Hon. G. W. MILES: You did 18 years ago.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Eighteen years ago! Oh!

Hon. G. W. MILES: I have just looked it up. I shall not inflict upon the House all that I then said on the subject, but I desire to make one or two quotations from that speech. We all know the hell of a time the pastoralists have suffered during the past eight or ten years on account of drought and pests. The Government should get in touch with the Federal authorities with a view to securing an amendment of our taxation laws so as to enable the pastoralists to spread their losses over a period of 10 years. That is the only hope they have of making a recovery. Some of them have incurred enormous debts. Should we enjoy good seasons now, the taxation authorities will take half or three-quarters of the pastoralists' income in taxation.

Some provision should therefore be made to set off their losses against accruing income. A period of two or three years has been suggested, but it should be made retro-

spective for at least 10 years. I hope the Minister will read what I have said. I notice that in another place a Minister said that Ministers did not reply to all the points raised by members on the Address-in-reply, but that they read what was said and their secretaries took a note of various matters requiring attention. Among these are the disabilities under which our pastoralists are suffering. I am glad to note that some proposal is made in the Federal Budget for a reserve for repairs and renewals which cannot be effected during the war period; that will be of advantage, not only to the pastoralists, but to every other business man.

The cost of living in the North is very high, but no allowance is made for the increased cost in the taxation of the people in that part of the State. Further, educational facilities are limited and the residents have to send their children south for schooling. That is an additional drain upon their resources. No special concession is made to the people in the outback districts for these disabilities. Again, there is the question of transport. We know that, owing to the war, transport is not as satisfactory as it should be and that there is great difficulty in obtaining trucks to transport goods to the back country. Some of those goods have to be conveyed as far as 1,000 miles, yet we cannot obtain a truck to lift them, nor can we secure a weekly service to transport perishable goods.

The residents in the North are prepared to pay for such a service; it is 600 miles to Meekatharra and another 400 miles north to Marble Bar, when such facilities are required. But the position is that trucks are not available. Something should be done to see that those people get facilities of that kind. Recently a man had to come down to Perth for an operation and it cost him £100 for transport by air to save his life. He received no concession for that expense. Of course, he received concessions for doctors' fees and hospital attention, but surely some deduction should have been allowed for cost of transport to receive medical attention. I am glad that my colleague, Mr. Welsh, referred to the shortage of strychnine. Whether the Minister will arrange for sufficient strychnine to be made available to combat the dogs and foxes in the North I do not know.

There is no doubt that dogs and foxes are as much a menace in the North as are rabbits in the South. Kangaroos are another menace in the North; in fact, they also are as big a menace in the North as rabbits are in the South. As soon as a shower of rain falls in the North-West and the green shoots come up, the kangaroos eat them and thus the carrying capacity of the country is diminished. There is another matter I hope the Minister will take a note of with a view to seeing whether something can be done to remedy it. It is not a State matter. I refer to war insurance risks. I understand my colleague, Mr. Cornish, brought this matter up, and I hope the State Government will take it up also. During the past few years the English rate went up to £15, but it is now down to 17s. 6d. On our coast it went up to 15s. and it is now down to 10s. In my opinion, it should not be more than 2s. 6d. I trust the State Government will get into touch with the Commonwealth Government on the matter so that the people of the North can obtain some relief in this respect.

The Chief Secretary: To what risk are you referring?

Hon. G. W. MILES: Marine war risk. I wish to refer to a statement made by Mr. Dedman, Minister for War Organisation of Industry, in regard to the fishing industry. This statement appeared in the Press on the 1st August—

Before the war 55 per cent. of all fish and fish products consumed in Australia was imported from overseas because of lack of fish in our own waters, said the Minister for War Organisation of Industry, Mr. Dedman, today. His department, in co-operation with the State Fisheries Department, was taking steps to increase the catch of fish by organising the fishing industry on a national basis. No plan, however, could force the sea surrounding Australia to yield enough fish to meet the Australian demand.

What an outrageous statement for a responsible Minister of the Crown to make! The fishing industry has never been thoroughly investigated. We have untold wealth in the sea around Australia, particularly in the North. We have turtle, whale, tuna, dugong and shark. Both shark and dugong are edible and every part of them is of value. We have, in addition, many other kinds of edible fish. In my opinion, as many as 50,000 or 100,000 men could be employed, directly and indirectly, in the

fishing industry on the Western Australian coast. There has been talk of some of our returning naval men forming a co-operative concern to exploit the fishing industry. That matter should be thoroughly investigated.

The Chief Secretary: Who do you contend should do the job?

Hon. G. W. MILES: The Minister should not ask a question of that kind. The Government should make the investigation. I recently went along our coast and ascertained that a Government official had come up by air. He stopped in a port for two days and then returned. We have bureaucrats like that going around the country and then making statements which have the effect of preventing people from coming into the country to develop it.

Hon. E. M. Heenan. Would you favour State enterprise?

Hon. G. W. MILES: No. I would not favour State enterprise. The hon. member was here when I referred to Mr. Seddon's speech. Mr. Seddon said that private enterprise should be employed to re-establish this State on a sound basis. The other day I asked the Chief Secretary a question about harnessing the tide in the North and his reply was that the matter had been investigated. The answer was, "A preliminary investigation of the economics has taken made." I do not know whether I have to ask another question to find out what is the result of the preliminary investigation. In March last I heard that the tide had been successfully harnessed in the Bay of Fundy. I have been putting this matter forward for the last 25 years. I inquired in England if it were possible to harness the tide in order to get power to smelt the Yampi Sound iron ore. At that time experiments were being made in England on the River Severn and also on the west coast of France, but harnessing the tides was not regarded then as a practical proposition. Since then many scientists have been on the job. In Carnarvon when at a civic reception tendered to the Minister for Lands (Hon. F. J. S. Wise), when he was returned unopposed, one of the local councillors told me that he had seen an American magazine which contained a report of the successful harnessing of the tide in the Bay of Fundy, which has the biggest rise and fall of tide in the world.

I would like the Chief Secretary to take a note of that and have the matter investigated. I do not want that done for my own personal benefit, but for the benefit of the people

of Australia. If it is possible to harness the tide, it will revolutionise the whole of the North from Broome around the Northern Territory to as far south as Townsville. It will mean cheap power for the development of the adjacent country. One must go outside one's own country to have any notice taken of one. In four days time it will be 28 years since I first had the privilege of addressing this Chamber on the subject of peopling the north of Australia and holding it for the white races, for our children and for our grandchildren. Mine has been like a voice crying in the wilderness, but something has to be done.

A year or so ago some act of Providence made Japan attack Pearl Harbour and so bring America into the war as one man. That is the only reason why Australia was saved from the Japs, because England had her hands full at that time looking after herself and saving western civilisation. The Americans were at loggerheads with each other and, however willing they might have been to assist us, had it not been for the attack on Pearl Harbour they would not have had the organisation to do it. In another 25 years our grandchildren will be in the same position as we are today. Our present state of affairs is due to interstate jealousy and party politics. Nothing has been done for northern Australia. If something is done for it, it will become an asset for the rest of Australia and for the Empire. I suggest to the "Noes" that they assist in the development of that part of our country.

The Chief Secretary: You will ask the "Noes?"

Hon. G. W. MILES: Some of the "Yes" people are occupying Government positions today. I suggest that the Government should open up negotiations with the Commonwealth for the handing over of that part of Western Australia which lies north of the 26th parallel of south latitude. By so doing the State will be relieved of a large liability. To commence the discussion, the value of that country could be assessed and, if it is £10,000,000 or £20,000,000, that sum could be deducted from our national debt. By so doing the liability of Western Australia would be relieved to that extent.

The northern part of our State would be developed and Western Australia would get the whole of the benefit of that development without any liability. I discussed this ques-

tion some years ago and I got this far, that the Commonwealth did put forward a proposal to the State Government for taking up an area north of the 26th parallel of south latitude. At this point I would like to refer members to the 1926 volume of "Hansard" pages 609 to 622, and also to page 3,006. On the last mentioned page the report starts of the debate on a motion moved by the then Leader of the House, Mr. Drew, opposing the Commonwealth's idea of taking over that portion of the State. I quote what one of the ablest members of this Parliament had to say in December, 1924. I refer to Hon. P. Collier. This is what he said:

The North-West requires special treatment. There is an obligation devolving upon the Commonwealth Government to assist Western Australia financially in the development of that portion of our territory. It is almost beyond the financial powers of the State to provide for the necessary developmental works in the North-West and at the same time to find the money required for the more closely settled portions of the State. It is the duty of the Federal Government to assist us in the development of the North-West, just as they have been finding money for the development of the Northern Territory. I do not see much hope of the State affording any considerable financial assistance to the North-West for some years to come.

Mr. Scaddan, in giving evidence before the Disabilities Commission, said:

The development of the State of Western Australia, comprising as it does an area of 975,920 square miles, is so tremendous that the task is too much for the State Government. It is too enormous for one Parliament and the parliamentary representatives generally to have a complete knowledge of the whole State and its requirements, while, from the financial standpoint, the task is impossible as well.

So that members may know that this subject has been discussed, I would like to refer to the 1926 "Hansard." At page 3,006 the then Chief Secretary, Mr. Drew, moved this motion—

That, in the opinion of this House, the proposal of the Commonwealth Government for the surrender of all the territory in Western Australia north of the 26th parallel of south latitude, contained in a letter from the Prime Minister, dated the 12th August, 1926, is not in the best interests of Western Australia and therefore is not acceptable to this House.

The House debated that motion, and it will be interesting for members to see the views expressed. On that occasion the opportunity arose for the Commonwealth to relieve the State of this burden. But, notwithstanding

what Mr. Collier and Mr. Scaddan and other members had said about the State not being able to handle the North-West, nothing was done. The House eventually agreed to discuss further the proposal for the Commonwealth to take over that area north of the 20th parallel of south latitude. If it is to be done at all it should be taken over from the 26th parallel. When the matter is discussed by the Commonwealth and the State Governments a referendum of the people of the North should be taken to see if they are agreeable to this transfer. No notice is taken of my views, so I shall quote those of other people. I turn now to the "Adelaide Mail" of the 8th July last, which, under the headline, "Practical Plans for North Now Ready" contained an article, which stated—

Practical detailed plans that could realise enthusiastic dreams of huge-scale development of the Northern Territory, outback Queensland, and the North-West lie ready at the Government's hand.

When I refer to the development of the North, I am not now talking so much of the pastoral area in the North-West of our State, but rather of the Kimberleys, the Northern Territory and the north of Queensland, which area is, in my opinion, the richest part of Australia, but it has no population. We cannot hold it unless we do something towards its development. The article in the "Adelaide Mail," which was contributed by its special representative, continued—

They are to be found in the 100 pages of hard common sense written in 1937 by Queenslanders William Labatt Payne, chairman of the Land Administration Board, and John William Fletcher, pastoralist.

Fresh from a 2,500 mile tour through the Barkley Tablelands and Central Australia, American Minister to Australia Nelson T. Johnson this week sent a challenging cry to the Australian Government and youth. "I'm tired of hearing about Australia's dead heart," he said. "There's an awful lot of marvellous country waiting for youth to go out and conquer and build cities. Build a railway from Mount Isa to Wyndham and one to the gulf and you'll have a city like Chicago at Newcastle Waters." Now anyone who dismisses that as the superficial view of a brief visitor misjudges the capacity of shrewd Nelson T., and must share the blame with those whose apathy has been responsible for the long years of stagnation in the Territory.

I lived in the Northern Territory for a year in 1935. I met hundreds of Territory dwellers who had been made cynical by the repeated piecemeal promises of successive Governments

who have promised "new deals" that never came off. Over the years Ministers for the Interior have journeyed north. Their enthusiasm has matched Mr. Johnson's. Countless reports have been made—and filed away on dusty shelves at Canberra.

Sprightly Senator Joseph Silver Collings, present Minister for the Interior, says that extensive development of the North is intended, and that plans have passed the thinking stage. Goaded by the necessity of making post-war opportunities, whatever Federal Government is in power must do something about the Territory. And Fletcher and Payne, in their report after painstaking investigation do not go as far as Mr. Johnson, but they do plead for a new policy in terms that it is criminal to ignore.

At the end of the article we find this—

Payne and Fletcher also want a revived meatworks at Darwin, though on a smaller scale than Vestey's costly failure. They recommended suspension for 20 years of tariffs, petrol and income taxes, and other charges. They want the White Australia policy preserved in the Territory's development. If the Government uses this blue-print in practice it could, as Mr. Johnson forecasts, find answers to Australia's major reconstruction and population problems.

The "West Australian" of the 5th of this month contains a report from Canberra dealing with the tour of the Canadian High Commissioner through Central and North Australia. The report is as follows:

Central and North Australia were an Eldorado of potential agricultural wealth, said the Canadian High Commissioner (Mr. Justice Davis) today after a tour in which he visited military and air establishments. He drove over the highway from Alice Springs and inspected 1,300 miles of grazing lands. He stated that he had seen an undeveloped area greater in size and in possibilities than either the Canadian or the American west.

"I have seen an area where the stage of development is about equal, with minor exceptions, to what ours was about 1880," he said. "I have seen a land where there will never be, in my opinion, a large population, but which is capable of producing wealth in such dimensions that it will support a great population in the rest of Australia. I have seen a land where the finest beef in the world can be raised at a cost which I believe no other nation in the world can touch and where without much effort a cattle population many times greater than the present population can be carried with ease.

"I have seen a land which on the surface is largely waterless, but where a kindly Providence has put the water where it can be best conserved away from evaporation—under the ground. I know of no place on this globe where there are greater chances of development. Australians are favoured in the pos-

session of this great national asset and it should be a challenge to the Australia of tomorrow to develop it to the limit."

Yet what is happening today? Cattle bred in the Kimberleys are being driven overland to Queensland, a distance of 3,000 miles. During the trek, the cattle lose condition and the muscles become hard and they have to be put on to grazing land to be fattened before they can be killed. If we developed the Kimberleys and provided railways, the cattle could be killed on the spot and transported direct to the markets of the world. Not only in the Kimberleys but also in the Northern Territory and in the Gulf country, there is an abundance of rainfall and there are many rivers waiting to be harnessed.

In addition to raising cattle in the Kimberleys, butter, cheese and bacon could be produced. When I first suggested that some years ago, I was laughed at by people who seemed to think the South-West was the only place that could produce those commodities. So long as refrigeration is provided, such produce can be raised in the tropics, as is being done in the north of Queensland. Nothing has been mentioned of the pig-raising industry. Pigs have been killed in the Kimberleys weighing up to 400 lbs., and they had lived on roots and natural grasses. This has been going on for the last fifty years.

Hon. L. Craig: Not too good eating.

Hon. G. W. MILES: That is one of the silly remarks we hear about the North. Members may laugh, but this is no laughing matter. Fifty odd years ago, my father told me of the wild pig shooting on the De Grey River. On the trip through the Kimberleys in 1932 when you, Mr. President, were a member of the party, we saw wild pig shooting. There they are eating as pork today the progeny of those wild pigs, which shows what could be done in that part of the State if the industry were developed scientifically. In 1922 England was importing £60,000,000 worth of pork and pig products. That indicates the market that is available for the produce of the Kimberleys.

I regret that I have not before me a report of the speech delivered by Sir Hal Colebatch after he had toured the Kimberleys. After hearing his remarks, I felt that there would be no need to worry in future and that he, as a responsible Minister, would take the matter in hand and see that that territory was developed and peopled. But nothing has been done. And I am afraid that nothing will be done, though I talk about

it till I am blue in the face. Sooner or later our children or our grandchildren will be pushed out of this country unless the North is peopled and developed. If it is peopled and developed, the rest of Australia will be made so much the safer.

Hon. J. G. Hislop: That is right.

Hon. G. W. MILES: Here is a statement made by a member of the party that toured the Kimberleys in 1920—I refer to our old friend Mr. Sydney Stubbs—and the statement was made on the occasion of his birthday on the 20th July last—

Only a miracle saved Australia from the agonising experience of Japanese occupation.

Stressing the need for development of the North-West, Mr. Stubbs was reported as follows:—

This State contained untold wealth, practically undeveloped. He recalled a visit he had paid to the Kimberleys. There, he said, was an area of about 300,000 square miles, too dangerous in its unpopulated state. The valleys of the Fitzroy and Ord Rivers were fabulously rich and fertile beyond words. The soil of the banks of the Ord River was deep and the richest in the world. Tropical fruits of every description grew prolifically in the valleys. He hoped the area would be included in the settlement schemes for repatriation purposes. Thousands of millions of gallons of water from those rivers that now went to waste must be harnessed and settlement of the whole area effected.

People say that all I can talk about is the North, but this afternoon I have given the opinions of other people who have toured the country. In spite of all they have said, however, nothing has been done. At a later date I hope to induce the Government to open negotiations with the Commonwealth and discuss the possibility of its taking over the North, thus relieving the southern part of some of its liability and providing means for getting people settled in the North. If this happened, it could not be other than beneficial to the southern part of the State, because the Kimberleys would provide much trade and commerce for its people.

Hon. W. J. Mann: You do not agree with the Chicago man?

Hon. G. W. MILES: The Chicago man was absolutely right. The Kimberleys will carry the cattle, and the areas where irrigation can be undertaken will accommodate the people.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: We are looking for information from practical men.

Hon. G. W. MILES: Last year I gave information supplied by Mr. Durack, who is a practical man, and also quoted the views of Mr. Griffiths, of Queensland. They put up proposals for the opening up of that country.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: Would you say that there should be a Jewish colony up there?

Hon. G. W. MILES: Yes.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: Anything to get population!

Hon. G. W. MILES: A Jewish settlement would demonstrate as feasible what Australian people will not undertake to do. The Jewish people were prepared to provide money, engineers, soil analysts, etc., and show what could be done in that territory.

Hon. J. Cornell: That would wash out pig-raising.

Hon. G. W. MILES: It is all very well for the hon. member to joke about the matter.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I ask members to listen in silence.

Hon. G. W. MILES: Such jocularity will get us nowhere. I regret that members refuse to take the matter seriously. I have given the Minister for Lands a letter from Dr. Steinberg, who is now in New York, where he has the support of the American people. Dozens of schemes could be evolved to people and develop the Kimberleys.

Hon. W. J. Mann: What would those people live on?

Hon. G. W. MILES: I am not replying to that silly interjection. What I have said about the North should be sufficient to create some interest in it. I hope the Minister will take my remarks seriously and endeavour to ascertain whether the Commonwealth would be prepared to do something for the North. If the North were taken over by the Commonwealth, it might be of some assistance in connection with the franchise Bill now before another place, because the Parliament in the south would be relieved of seven members. There could then be a redistribution of seats in the remainder of the area and there would not then be the need for pocket burroughs in the South as there has been in the past. Of course, the North is entitled to representation. One of the conditions on which it was handed over by the British Government was that it should have representation.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: You ought not to talk of pocket burroughs!

Hon. G. W. MILES: I am not going to reply to that interjection, either. Another matter I wish to refer to is the coal industry. Some years ago I moved for the appointment of a Royal Commission to inquire into the coal industry of this State. A Commission was appointed and it was instrumental in saving this State something like £1,000,000. That was 12 or 13 years ago. Since then the industry has drifted badly. The portion of the Commissioner's report recommending investigation of the Irwin coal seam has not been carried out. The Government has not seen fit to investigate the possibility of using Irwin coal. This is a matter that should be inquired into by a Royal Commission or Select Committee. I believe Mr. Mann stated that he was not satisfied with the management at Collie today.

Hon. W. J. Mann: I did not use those words.

Hon. G. W. MILES: Then I withdraw them. The coal industry should be investigated once more, as I advocated when the Bill for providing pensions for coalminers was before the House. I want the coalminers to have proper facilities and to enjoy decent pay and decent home conditions, and I also want proper consideration extended to the owners. I have some authentic figures showing the big increase in the price of Collie coal. In 1906-10, the price was 8s. 4d. a ton; in 1911-19, it rose to 10s. 9d. These figures cannot be questioned; I have details of tonnages and prices before me. In 1920-29, the price went to 16s. 6d., and then a move was made to get a Royal Commission of inquiry. The opposition to an inquiry came from Ministers and ex-Ministers. I do not know why.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: When was that?

Hon. G. W. MILES: In 1931. These are the prices following the inquiry by the Royal Commission. From 1933 to 1940 the average price was 12s. 4d. per ton. In 1941 it was 13s. 11.8d., in 1942 15s. 1d., in 1943 18s. 5d.; or an average for the three years of 15s. 9d. per ton. In 1944 the price has gone up to 21s. 6d. per ton. These figures call for further investigation by a Joint Select Committee or a Royal Commission, and a Government having the courage to carry out recommendations made.

The Honorary Minister: You are speaking of private enterprise?

Hon. G. W. MILES: Yes, private enterprise interfered with by the Government fixing a price on the basis of cost-plus. Thus there was no inducement for the companies to progress. There is the Collie power scheme, which is talked about and which we must get, whether the coal comes from Collie or from Wilga. I have here a diagram showing an up-grade of six feet in three miles against the load from Wilga, and an up-grade of 195 feet in eight miles against the load from Collie. That is the difference from the standpoint of transport. I consider that every member of the Chamber should view this matter seriously, and I am hoping that some young member will take it up and move for the appointment of another Joint Select Committee or Royal Commission. I will give him information in support of such a proposal.

In 1933 the average value of the year's output of coal in Western Australia was 12s. 7.5d. per ton. Thereafter, for seven years, the price averaged 12s. 4d. per ton. Notwithstanding this very favourable price and adequate supply by private enterprise under the cost-plus system and the Davidson Award, in 1941 the price had risen to approximately 14s. per ton; in 1942 it rose to 15s., approximately, and in 1943 to 18s. 5d.; but by November the average price had risen to approximately 20s. and up to June of this year, according to the latest returns published, had not been reduced. The June figures, as published, are 48,172 tons valued at £51,169, equal to approximately 21s. 6d. per ton.

Our annual normal output is about 550,000 tons, and the present requirements are about 650,000 tons. Assuming that the normal output for the current year will be attained, and that the average price will equal that of June, namely, 21s. 6d. per ton, our coal bill will be £590,000. The same tonnage, under private enterprise, would cost approximately £339,000—that is, 12s. 4d. per ton. The difference of £250,000 is what we shall have to pay under the present award. One may well ask: Where does all the money go? We could do with another 100,000 tons of coal per annum, but the supply is always short. The companies are earning only small profits, and a miners' representative said in evidence that the Collie mine workers were the lowest paid in Australia. The Collie output in 1938 was just over 600,000 tons,

valued at 12s. 4.6d. per ton, and about 200 men fewer were employed than at present. Mechanical appliances have been introduced, and cheap open-cut mining resorted to.

More men only mean more absentees. That is where the trouble comes in—and not only at Collie. Throughout Australia the trouble is absenteeism. I am told that men finish working at two o'clock in the afternoon because, as they say, they have earned enough and do not care to pay the taxation required for war purposes. That is one of the aspects which require to be investigated. I have only one other phase to comment upon, and what I am about to say on it I hope the Minister will read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest. I now quote from "The West Australian" of the 26th August—

Speeding Victory. U.S.A. Plant for British Coal. New York, August 25.—The Washington Bureau of the "New York Times" reports that in order to hasten victory the United States is sending to Britain equipment both for developing new strip or open-cut coalmines and for mechanising old deep mines. According to the report of American experts who recently visited England the introduction of American machinery and mining methods into British coalmines will step-up production at a rate exceeding 20,000,000 tons yearly. On the recommendation of the American experts between 70 and 100 British mine managers will visit the United States to study the use of American machinery and equipment.

As regards coalmining, we are not educated in this country. Modern methods of coalmining will mean that we can get our coal at a cheaper price. If an investigation is made as I have suggested, there will be evidence to show that the country is being bled by the bureaucratic control of incompetent men.

Hon. W. J. Mann: You are not referring to the coalminers, but to the Government?

Hon. G. W. MILES: Yes, and to absenteeism. With the introduction of modern methods, the cost of our coal must come down. Who is paying the extra £250,000 for coal? The taxpayer! If, under the post-war reconstruction scheme, we are to do anything for the development and peopling of Western Australia, one of the main things required is cheap fuel. Fuel is the basis of the whole scheme. I hope that some member will take up the problem of the coal industry of Western Australia, and ensure that we return to a proper basis instead of being bled, as is now the case, by having to pay 21s. 6d. per ton for our coal. I do not

want to see the wages of the coalminers cut; but if, when the mines are mechanised, there is not enough work for the extra 200 men to whom I have already referred, work will be provided for them in other industries by cheap coal. We are told that the coalmining industry is not one in which men want to engage. We cannot stand still, persisting with the old methods. We must bring ourselves up to date. We must endeavour to speed up victory as is being done in Britain and the United States.

On motion by Hon. L. B. Bolton, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 6.10 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 12th September, 1914.

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

BILLS (4)—THIRD READING.

- 1, Dried Fruits Act Amendment.
- 2, Local Authorities (Reserve Funds) Act Amendment.
- 3, Northam Cemeteries.
- 4, Main Roads Act (Funds Appropriation).

Transmitted to the Council.

BILL—INDUSTRIES ASSISTANCE ACT CONTINUANCE.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 5th September.

MR. THORN (Toodyay) [4.37]: As was stated by the Minister, this is a continuance measure. The Act has been in operation since 1915 and has undoubtedly rendered