

bers mentioned that in the speeches they made last session. In doing so they showed that they are progressive. If they can go that far, surely they can give the other place two years in which to consider any legislation, other than a money Bill or one to prolong the duration of the Parliament, that is sent forward.

Mr. Mann: Why two years?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: That is any amount of time, and it is not conducive to hasty legislation. If members there have not thinking power to decide about legislation within two years and in some instances they would have the opportunity to go to the country on a Bill, I do not know that we can do. In any case, we have a precedent—and I consider we could not get a better one—in the English Parliament Act of 1911. The system we are advocating now has been in operation, under that Act, for 34 years in England, which is more prosperous and progressive today than ever.

Mr. Cross: The people there have just shown it.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: That is so. I would like the member for Subiaco to give consideration to her advocacy. She advocates, and quite rightly, the equality of the sexes in voting. I find that the female voters in the Legislative Council represent only one-third of the voting power, whereas in the Legislative Assembly they predominate. At the last elections there were more female voters than male voters. As a result, the females of this country are today more or less really ruling Western Australia, as far as votes are concerned.

Mr. Mann: Do not say that.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Well, there were more female voters than male voters at the last elections.

Mr. Styants: The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world!

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: That is the position according to the statistics. I do not intend to say much more. I feel that, after the debates last year and knowing the time that members have had to consider the position, they will be more favourable to the request of this Government that we should have more power and more control in this House than we have enjoyed in the past. At present, only 16 per cent. of voters are represented in the Legislative

Council and they should have no right to veto legislation sent from this place. Members in another place represent a very small coterie; they represent only a few people with property qualifications. It seems, under the present system, that the Western Australian Legislative Assembly is the least democratic House in the whole world, because of the power of the Legislative Council. I commend the Bill and trust that members will give serious consideration to it. If we are to progress and to be allowed to bring down progressive legislation, we should have more control over the Bills we introduce, and not be subject to such power of veto by the Legislative Council. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Watts, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 8.22 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 5th September, 1945.

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

QUESTIONS.

IRRIGATION AND DRAINAGE.

As to Resumption of Work in South-West.

Mr. HOLMAN asked the Minister for Water Supplies:

1, In consideration of the fact that the war caused the closing down of important drainage and irrigation works in the South-West, causing the district and the State to suffer a heavy economic loss, have any plans

been made to re-open such works now that hostilities have ceased?

2, If so, what plans have been made?

3, Will work be recommenced on the Stirling Dam in the near future?

4, Will any new areas be served with irrigation on the completion of the Stirling Dam?

5, If so, which areas?

6, When work is recommenced on the above projects will the Government ensure that better living and working conditions will be provided for the men employed on such works, and their families (if any) than was provided prior to the closing down of such works?

The MINISTER replied:

1, Yes.

2 and 3, Immediately sufficient technical personnel have been released from the Army, work will be recommenced on the Stirling Dam.

4, Yes.

5, Areas north and south of Harvey.

6, This matter has been given special consideration and suitable proposals are being developed.

MIGRATION.

As to Plan for Orphan Children.

Mr. McLARTY asked the Minister for Lands:

1, Is he aware that the Minister for Immigration (Mr. Calwell) stated in the Federal Parliament on the 2nd August last that the Federal Government has approved of a plan to bring to Australia in the first three years after the war 50,000 orphans from Britain and other countries and the discussion and details of this plan are proceeding with the States?

2, If so, what was the nature of such discussions, and could he state what number of children will be allotted to Western Australia, and what institutions, if any, will take charge of them?

The MINISTER replied:

1, Yes.

2, Entirely general. No details have been proposed or discussed, but in a general discussion on immigration at the recent Premiers' Conference it was announced that the Commonwealth Government is not quite ready to make specific proposals to the States on policy matters.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY SPEECHES.

As to Departmental Consideration of Suggestions.

Mr. NORTH asked the Premier:

1, Are the speeches of members on the Address-in-reply referred to various departments in cases where specific suggestion for improvements, etc., are made?

2, Are suggestions acted upon if found useful?

3, Will he give instances, if any?

The PREMIER replied:

1, 2 and 3, Ministers are present during the debate on the Address-in-reply and give attention to any suggestions which may appeal to them as worthy of consideration. Where striking ideas are put forward they are referred to appropriate authorities for comment.

YAMPI SOUND IRON-ORE.

As to Koolan Island Leases.

Mr. CROSS asked the Minister for Mines:

1, Are the seven mineral leases on Koolan Island (in Yampi Sound area) still valid?

2, If so, in whose names are the leases held?

3, Is it a fact that a contract existed between the lessees and Japan to supply iron in large quantities to Japan and to pay only a small royalty to the State of 6d. per ton?

4, If such a contract did exist, has it been definitely cancelled?

5, If not, why not?

The MINISTER replied:

1, Yes.

2, H. A. Brassert & Co., Ltd.

3, It is understood that the company had arranged before the war to supply iron-ore to Japan. I have no knowledge, however, of contracts (if any) entered into. All iron leases issued provide for payment of royalty at the rate of 3d. per ton for the first 10 years and 6d. per ton thereafter.

4 and 5, Answered by No. 3.

EGG POWDER.

As to Waste by Services.

Mr. SEWARD (without notice) asked the Minister for Agriculture: Yesterday I asked the Minister for Agriculture a question,

which he evidently misinterpreted. The question was—

1, Is he aware that Service personnel returning on leave state that egg powder is not relished by such personnel and as a result it is thrown out and not used?

2, If not, will he institute inquiries to ascertain if such statement is true, and if so, take up the matter with the Commonwealth authorities with a view to stopping such waste, and thereby enable our export of eggs to Great Britain to be increased?

The MINISTER replied: I am sorry that when replying to the hon. member's question yesterday I did not give him the information that he sought. I am aware that a proportion of the egg powder being supplied to the Services is wasted, because it is not relished in the form in which it is prepared and served, but this can also be said of other foodstuffs that are being supplied. The Commonwealth authorities are well aware of the wastage of food, and regard it as unavoidable, though steps have been taken to reduce it to a minimum. As it is impossible to supply eggs to the members of the Services to the extent required, in forms other than egg powder, supplies must necessarily be continued in this form.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Mr. Wilson, leave of absence for two weeks granted to the Minister for the North-West (Hon. A. A. M. Coverley—Kimberley) on the ground of ill-health.

On motion by Mr. Watts, leave of absence for two weeks granted to Mr. Berry (Irwin-Moore) on the ground of ill-health.

BILL—GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES (PROMOTIONS APPEAL BOARD).

Message.

Message from the Lieut.-Governor received and read recommending appropriation for the purposes of the Bill.

MOTION—SOLDIER SETTLEMENT.

As to Proposed Legislation.

MR. THORN (Toodyay) [4.37]: I move—

That in view of the facts—

(a) That a large number of members of the Forces have been discharged and are continually making enquiries as to land settlement conditions;

(b) That particulars of such conditions cannot yet be given to them notwithstanding that some of the enquirers have been discharged for nearly three years—

this House views with alarm the failure of the responsible authorities to put into effect schemes applicable to such settlement, and calls for an immediate announcement that necessary legislation will be placed before the House this session so that there will be no prospect of such delay and risk of failure as will be likely if the announcement is deferred until the approach of the time when the bulk of the members of the Fighting Forces will be seeking repatriation.

In moving this motion, in relation to soldier settlement, I wish to state at the outset that I moved a similar motion about 12 months ago, owing to the urgency of the matter, and I still claim that it is a very urgent matter to be dealt with by the Commonwealth. As regards our own State Government, the present Premier, who was then Minister for Lands and Agriculture, and undoubtedly supported by Cabinet, paid a great deal of attention to this subject. I know from personal experience that he has put all the energy possible into it and has a full knowledge of its urgency. He also has an excellent knowledge of land settlement.

The Minister for Lands: He set a pace that I am finding it difficult to keep up with.

MR. THORN: I have had the pleasure of listening to him at returned soldiers' land conferences, and his views on land settlement are very practical. If the Commonwealth Government would only take more notice of him, and be guided more by State Governments which have a knowledge of these affairs, we would make far more progress. I wish also to compliment the ex-Minister for Lands on his selection of the Controller of Land Settlement in this State. Until recently, when I had the privilege of meeting Mr. Fyfe in conference with others, as a member of the Soldier Settlement Land Committee of the R.S.L., I only knew him—practically speaking—by name, as Surveyor-General, but after hearing his views I am sure that the Government has made a wise selection there. He is a practical man indeed, and if the Premier and Mr. Fyfe can press their views on the Commonwealth Government, soldier land settlement will not be a failure, in Western Australia at all events.

Just recently I attended a conference that took place in Mr. Fyfe's room. Others present included the Under Secretaries of the different departments concerned and the present Minister for Lands. In the gentlemen I have mentioned we have a set-up of very intelligent men who know what they are talking about. The only stumbling-block at that conference was the representatives of the Commonwealth Government who did not seem to know anything about the subject, and had no opinions to express. When they were asked a question they had to consult each other and endeavour to answer the query to the best of their ability after perusing the Federal rehabilitation enactment. I do not desire to be too critical of the Commonwealth officers, but the marked ability of our own departmental heads was outstanding by way of contrast. Another State officer who was present at the conference was Mr. Bosisto, the Chairman of the Commissioners of the Rural and Industries Bank. In the State set-up I feel that we have a body of men quite capable of handling the situation. If we can only persuade the authorities at Canberra to be guided by the State advisers, I am positive we shall be able to initiate a land settlement scheme in Western Australia that will be most successful.

At times we who sit in Opposition are accused of being critical of the Government. It is our duty to bring forward such matters as we deem necessary to ventilate. Recently I was criticised for drawing attention to one matter, and I was described as being destructive in my utterances. I claim I was nothing of the sort; I was endeavouring to be helpful. To indicate to the House what goes on in other States of the Commonwealth, I shall quote from the Labour Party's organ in South Australia, "The Herald," to show that in that State Mr. Richards, the Leader of the Opposition, attacked the Government with all the vigour of which he is possessed, upon what he regarded as their lack of action. The report in that paper appeared under the following headings:—

Mr. Richards Seeks Better Deal for Soldier Settlers.

State Government Criticised.

The report reads—

A stringing criticism of the Playford Government for its handling of the soldier settlement schemes for South Australia was made by the

Leader of the Opposition (Hon. R. S. Richards, M.P.) in the House of Assembly.

Mr. Richards was continuing the debate on the Address-in-reply to the Governor's opening speech. He pointed out that early in the war Labour had made a truce not to embark on controversial subjects to embarrass the Government in wartime—

In this State we also made a similar truce. To proceed—

But he made it clear that the Labour Party was not going to stand for muddling and mis-handling of settlement projects which not only affect the future soldier-settler, but the State as a whole.

Mr. Richards' speech is reported at length and throughout he tried to spur the Government into greater activity.

Mr. Watts: It is exactly the same position with this Government.

Mr. THORN: I have already given credit to the State Government here for the manner in which attention has been given to this matter. What we must do is to impress upon the Commonwealth Government the fact that it should accept the advice of State Governments that know their States and know the position that obtains locally. Without doubt the present Commonwealth Government is endeavouring to initiate a policy of socialisation and is trying to apply it to the land settlement scheme. As I understand the position, the only type of scheme that the Commonwealth Government will consider so far is one based on the leasehold system. Members will agree that a purely leasehold method of land settlement is not suitable to Western Australia. Returned soldiers who desire to take up land will require, and should have the privilege of enjoying it, the right to be consulted regarding which form they will operate under—leasehold or freehold.

Many soldiers who return from this war—this applies to quite a number of them already here—will have £500, £750, or £1,000 in the bank, and they are therefore ready, financially speaking, to take up blocks. They may have enlisted from country districts where they know the conditions well. They have learnt their farming in the districts concerned. Why should not such a soldier be in a position, should he return to the district that he knows and where he has learnt his farming, to take up a property in that district if one is available and suitable for purchase? He would be in a position to

pay a deposit on the land and then he should receive further support from the Rural and Industries Bank and the Commonwealth Government. There is one phase that is wrapped up in any such scheme. If a soldier wants to select a property and is prepared to pay a deposit on the block, that course would not be followed unless the property had been examined by a competent board that had been appointed in this State for that very purpose. The object of that is to ensure that the man is getting a fair deal, and obviously that is a necessary safeguard. Seeing that that safeguard is already provided, the returned man should have freedom in connection with his desire to settle on the land. I understand that the Commonwealth Government, in its rehabilitation scheme, has made provision for advancing £1,000 to the returned soldier for rehabilitation purposes.

We should take steps in connection with the Rural and Industries Bank to inaugurate a scheme whereby that £1,000 will be regarded as the initial assistance the soldier is to receive, and then provide necessary cover by means of support through the bank itself. That would enable the man to complete his transaction, and thereafter he could be nursed, as it were, by the bank. What we must realise is that one of our greatest assets in Western Australia is land settlement. Under State guidance the necessary machinery is being set up to deal with the whole situation, and Mr. Fyfe, the State Controller of Land Settlement, has been responsible for the issuing of a questionnaire that has to be filled in by applicants for blocks. As we in this State have a thorough knowledge of our own requirements and, through the instrumentalities I have referred to, will give guidance to the men who avail themselves of our land settlement scheme, I am sure that it will prove successful here and that the soldier settlers will make good. Land settlement is most important from the standpoint of the progress of this State. With the provision of proper planning and advice, I am sure that soldier settlement in this State will be successful.

Just to let members have some idea of the situation, when I first placed my motion on the notice paper a month or so ago over 600 applications for land had already been received by the Lands Department. Many hundreds of applications had been made to

the Returned Soldiers' League. They are being received in the league's office every day, and the same applies to the Lands Department. Daily we have inquiries as to when the scheme will start and when men will be able to lodge applications. Such men are handed the forms that have been compiled, accompanied by a page or two of instructions to guide them. The fact remains, however, that there is no fixed scheme at the present juncture. The matter is still the subject of negotiation, and all this points to the element of urgency. We have probably between 1,500 and 2,000 applications in hand already, and we are not ready to deal with them. That is my reason for placing the matter before the House and stressing the element of urgency. It will be helpful to the State if, in turn, we can impress upon the Commonwealth the necessity of making some announcement straight away as to what its policy will be, so that we can get on with the scheme. I believe the States are still hammering at the Commonwealth Government in order to get finality and that they have the machinery ready to start with their land settlement. We have men out reconditioning properties both in the South-West and in the wheatgrowing areas, and they are doing all they can. Yet it appears to me—and I am speaking subject to correction—that the leasehold condition is standing in the way. If the Commonwealth would only agree to leave it to the option of the soldier settlers whether they desire leasehold or freehold tenure, we would be able to make progress.

I have little more to say because I do not wish to occupy the time of the House unnecessarily. Twelve months ago I expressed myself very much along the same lines as I am speaking this afternoon. I repeat that, although I moved a similar motion 12 months ago and although some progress has been made, there has been no settlement, and the urgency of the matter is more evident than ever. We should urge the Commonwealth Government to act straight away and let us get on with the job which, I feel confident, we are ready to carry out as soon as the Commonwealth makes available the requisite information about the scheme.

On motion by the Minister for Lands, debate adjourned.

MOTION—INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT, USE OF MUNITION FACTORIES.

To Inquire by Select Committee.

MR. DONEY (Williams-Narrogin)

[4.53]: I move—

That a Select Committee be appointed to enquire into and report upon—

- (a) To what extent can industrial development in Western Australia benefit (after the war) by the retention and use of the machinery and skilled workers employed at the Welshpool munition factory and other similar establishments in this State.
- (b) What articles could, with advantage, be manufactured.
- (c) What would be the probable demand for such articles—(1) in Western Australia; (2) for export from this State.
- (d) Should such manufacture (if found practicable) be carried on—(a) by the State Government; (b) by co-operative enterprise assisted by the State; or (c) by other means.

The object of the motion is to lend aid to rehabilitation in this State by promoting industry within our own boundaries and in order to improve trade relations with other States and countries. What has shown the question of trade expansion to be a matter of great urgency was a meeting held in the city no great while ago called by members of the Ironworkers' Union, I understand—at any rate by the Midland and Welshpool ironworkers—who, for very good reason, were concerned because of the threat to close the two factories. I believe that a member of the Country and Democratic League was the only Parliamentarian to attend the meeting, and it was his report that prompted the league to secure the opinion of the House on the best means of turning the position to the joint advantage of the workers and of the State.

What classes of trade those factories can most beneficially follow or with what countries they would trade can be determined at this moment only tentatively, but certain it is, as members will agree, that world economy is to undergo very big changes, making fresh trade alignments necessary in every direction. At the same time there are a few reliable pointers. For instance, already we can realise to our deep regret that the Mother Country, possibly—and very likely—for the next 15 or 20

years, will neither import from nor export to this or any other country upon anything like the vast scale to which the world has been accustomed. This is a truly bitter experience for a people of whom it may be said more than of any other people that they have been responsible for saving civilisation from destruction.

The question propounded in the motion is what to do with the Welshpool and Midland annexes. Can we so order the future of the very fine buildings at those two places, their costly machinery and equipment and the very substantial technical knowledge of the men employed there as to lay the foundations of a worthwhile industrial activity for the State in which we live? Midland Junction and Welshpool, as they stand, represent a solid going concern in one branch only of manufacture, but it is realised that, with but slight adjustments here and there, they can be made to accommodate quite a number of other branches of manufacture. Those buildings are there ready for our use when we are prepared to use them—no waiting, no delay of any kind, no need for any extra building.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: The machines would not be ready for use.

Mr. DONEY: The hon. member apparently has not noticed that I have switched over to discuss the buildings as distinct from the machinery and other equipment in them. I was about to say that this State will plainly be guilty of the worst form of neglect of its own interests if early action of a suitable kind is not taken. The question naturally arises: What form of manufacture is suggested for those two factories? I tell the House frankly I do not know, but I want to know and, because of this, I am submitting the motion in the hope of finding out. I admit that on the face of things my motion appears to be hardly as requisite as it did on the day when I gave notice of it. Before that day, there had been next to nothing in the Press to indicate any action or intended action or even any concern by the Government regarding the threat to close those shops, but in a day or two following my giving notice of this motion, there was considerable Press agitation on the part of both the Government and the union concerned.

The Premier: Do you not think it would be very unwise for the Government to announce all the negotiations it is conducting?

Mr. DONEY: Yes. As a matter of fact, if I had spoken another half dozen words, the Premier would have realised that I had no intention whatever of casting a slur upon him or upon his principal Minister. I was going to say that I am not so foolish as to take what I have just referred to as a matter of cause and effect. Far from it!

Hon. W. D. Johnson: They started long before those meetings.

Mr. DONEY: I am just about to make that acknowledgment. The nature of subsequently published reports indicated that those reports had been preceded by considerable departmental activity. Besides all that, there is this: I certainly am altogether unlikely to charge Mr. Fernie, or the Minister, with any lapse from an obvious duty. At the present moment, so far as the public knows, the only activity linked up with this factory is the making of a few bolts and nuts to meet a contract lodged by the Netherlands East Indies. That is all right as far as it goes, but it is merely a stop-gap, and not even in a minor way does it answer the principal question with which we are dealing. For that matter, the work proposed for these two factories is merely a start and only part of the big thing we are envisaging.

We on these benches—and I imagine it is the same with members on the Government side of the House—are aiming at having factories in every rural centre, that is, every rural centre which grows or produces something that can be processed or manufactured and sold at a profit, within or without the State. The Minister for Industrial Development in particular will recall, as no doubt will all members of this Chamber, that every town of any consequence in this State—at the Government's request, I will admit—compiled lists of industries regarded as adaptable to the processing of locally-found raw materials, subject to climatic and water supply conditions. I think I am right in saying that my own town was the first to take such action. The Government, I have no doubt, has those lists safely pigeon-holed. I do not hear very much about them these days. The Government has mentioned them in a general way perhaps once or twice during the past

six months, but I fear not with any great enthusiasm. Still, I am not blaming the Government for that, for I do not think I could reasonably do so.

The State Government can help to instal industries in country towns only by obtaining financial help from the Commonwealth Government, and that Government seems to be evading the matter now. Whether it will improve its attitude towards the question as time goes on is for the future to disclose. I return for a moment to the question of what can best be made at Midland Junction or at Welshpool, and in due course at the smaller factories to be erected in the country centres. I make it plain that personally I strongly favour processing our own products instead of manufacturing those highly specialised and intricate articles of all kinds of ware which for a century or two have been turned out so cheaply and in such vast quantities by the Old Country, the United States, Germany, Belgium, Japan and possibly a few other countries as well.

As I see it, the Australian population will need to multiply some three or four times over, and there will have to be very substantial changes in our industrial views, before we could have the remotest chance of successfully competing with mass production in Japan in particular, but also in the other countries I mentioned a moment ago. It is not only competition from those sources that we have to fear. We have also to fear competition from an awakened China and India. I may have mentioned this matter in the House before; at any rate, it will bear repetition. Both China and India seem, as everyone here must admit, to realise with a deadly keenness that what has been done by Japan can be done by them quicker, in greater quantity and better quality. We have to consider the 850,000,000 people living in China and India and the huge factory potential indicated by that enormous total. We shall also have to cope in the future, as we have done in the past, with the overflow of manufactured goods from Europe.

Having regard to that fact, for our 7,000,000 people to compete, or try to compete, with those countries is just madness, especially when we reflect that in the over-sea trade of the future we may—provided, of course, the requirements of the Atlantic

Charter are implemented—quite easily see our manufacturers bereft of the shelter afforded them in the past by a very high tariff wall. In regard to the goods that we shall make in the future, I think we should restrict ourselves to what other countries do not make, cannot make or will not make.

The Minister for Works: That would be nothing.

Mr. DONEY: Not so! The Minister must surely know that certain of our productions give us a far easier chance of successful competition, particularly so in woollen goods, canning and so forth.

The Minister for Works: Those things are made in other parts of the world.

Mr. DONEY: Yes, I admit. Nevertheless, I doubt whether they can be made as cheaply as we can make them in Australia.

Mr. Watts: And get them here.

Mr. DONEY: Yes; we have always transport costs on our side so far as the locally-consumed share of our production is concerned.

The Minister for Works: That is a different point altogether.

Mr. DONEY: Yes. Anyhow, that is how I see it. If we are going to tackle China, Japan and India with respect to goods turned out in the mass in those countries, we are going to tackle a job in which we cannot succeed. However, while there is much that we cannot do, there is a great deal that we can do. For instance, from our high-grade iron-ore we could turn out steel, could we not, vastly cheaper than can any other country on earth?

The Minister for Lands: Who are "we"?

Mr. DONEY: I am referring to Australia. We could do it 25 per cent. cheaper than the Old Country and 50 per cent. cheaper than the United States. That is a very big asset, despite the Minister's view, when it comes to competing with the world in iron and steel goods. I do not know that there is anyone in the world more satisfactorily placed than are we in regard to Merino wool and the various forms of apparel manufactured from it. We grow wool of a quality that no other land can equal: that, too, is a very big asset. Incidentally, everybody wants our wool. The Minister for Works may recall that in "The West Australian" of a week ago, a Chinese envoy—I forget his standing

here—made a statement to the Press that China was prepared to take every ounce of Australian wool.

The Minister for Works: I do not think he knew how much we had.

Mr. DONEY: He may not have done so, but he quoted the right amounts and value, and apparently knows as much about it as does the Minister. Apart from any conclusion the Minister may care to draw from that, there is this fact: That it is an indication that China intends in future to go in for large-scale manufacturing. I dare say the Minister may agree that if there is any one country in the world likely to give us a commercial headache in the future, it is China. China, India, and countries like that are no longer going to take the junk from Europe or America that they have taken in the past. In regard to manufactured goods, we may be especially suitably situated in respect of our woods, which can be processed into a few score articles—I cannot be too precise as to how many. Our various forestry products are going to be of substantial use to us in the future. Our meats—beef, mutton and pork—our fish, and our fruits are all ready for canning or dehydrating, whichever form may be appropriate. In part, too, our wool can be exported as blankets and our skins and hides as leather goods. Our cheap iron and steel also will help us in the manufacture of enamel goods, parts for engines, tractor parts, agricultural parts and agricultural implements themselves. What can be done by judicious Government encouragement of private enterprise is instanced by the amazing strides in that respect made during recent months in Victoria. I have here a cutting that may enlighten the House as to the strides made there in that regard. This cutting says—

"Shrewd business people realise that Melbourne is over-populated and over-industrialised. They recognise that there is need for a distribution of both population and industry—that where an expansion of city industries is contemplated the new works should be located in the country."

This was the theme of the Premier (Mr. Dunstan) when he opened two more secondary industries at Traralgon and Morwell last week, and congratulated the company (La Mode Industries Pty. Ltd.) on their good judgment in extending their city activities to the country.

The Minister for Lands: What are those two places?

Mr. DONEY: Traralgon and Morwell.

The Minister for Lands: They are not too far from Melbourne.

Mr. DONEY: I suppose Traralgon would be 130 or 140 miles from Melbourne.

The Minister for Lands: That is not a decent bicycle ride, these days.

Mr. DONEY: In that case, no part of the land would be country to the Minister.

The Minister for Lands: As a matter of fact, you could dump Victoria into a sheep station.

Mr. DONEY: This cutting continues—

A crowd of nearly 3,000 people witnessed the official opening of La Mode's underwear factory at Morwell, and there was also a big gathering at Traralgon where the company is operating in temporary premises. Both towns were gay with bunting in honour of the occasion. Townspeople were not slow to let the Premier know how much they appreciated the work of the State Government in having new industries set up in the country to provide permanent employment there. There were many expressions of gratitude and pleasure at the practical way in which the Government is tackling the problem of decentralisation.

I am not reading this as a lecture to the Minister telling him what he should do. I realise that Victoria is far better circumstanced for expansion than are we; but there is a great deal we can learn from this, if the Government is prepared to learn. The report continues—

As the plans of La Mode Ltd. are materialised, it is expected that permanent employment will be found for about 400 hands at the two factories at Traralgon and Morwell. Housing estates are now in course of construction at both towns to provide accommodation for the factory workers. Thus the Housing Commission is keeping step with the Government's policy of decentralisation. Mr. Dunstan made it plain that all the factors in regard to secondary industries were in favour of the country. It had been proved that there was a greater degree of efficiency in the country than in the city.

I am not asserting all this; I am quoting Mr. Dunstan's rather optimistic opinion. All the same, I do not know that it is over-optimistic. The cutting continues—

Operatives were more contented. There was no dislocation through industrial trouble.

I think that is true.

Country life was more wholesome.

That certainly is true—

There was less time lost through sickness and absenteeism.

Mr. Rodoreda: How about that?

Mr. DONEY: The report goes on—

Country people co-operated fully with the managements of industries established in their midst. . . . Young people were now finding it possible to learn a trade in the country, and remain at home with their parents. Gradually, the drift to the city was being arrested. In fact, many people were now leaving the city for the country.

Assuming that the latter portion of the assertion of the Premier of Victoria is correct, it is certainly achieving something very much worthwhile.

The Minister for Lands: Hear, hear!

Mr. DONEY: I do not usually quote at length; but I will depart from my customary practice and read a little more bearing on the same matter to which I have been referring. What I am about to read deals again with what is happening in Victoria. The extract is headed "Decentralisation Advances. Further Industries in Country Districts." It begins—

In giving a review of the progress of the activities of the Department of Decentralisation during the last six months, the Acting Minister for Decentralisation and Minister for Public Works, Mr. Lichenop, M.L.C., said that it was encouraging to find the recognition now being given to the wise planning of decentralisation carried out by the Victorian Government.

The extract also refers to remarks made by the Vice President of the Victorian Chamber of Manufactures (Mr. A. J. Aird), who, on the 11th April, at an exhibition of goods produced by decentralised industries, spoke encouragingly of the work being done in that State. He said—

Since January, 1945, new industries have been commenced in Beaconsfield, Beaufort, Cranbourne, Kerang, Lancefield, Lilydale, Mansfield, Murtoa, and Whittlesea, while others are to open shortly at Cohuna, Morwell, Myrtleford, Portland and Wedderburn. A permanent industry at Morwell, employing 300 and upwards, was opened by the Premier on July 13, while on July 27 a similar function will be performed at Beaufort by the Acting Minister of Decentralisation.

It is pretty plain that the Department of Decentralisation is a very live concern in Victoria. The report continues—

The new industries in country centres established as a result of this State's initiative now number 41, situated in all parts of Victoria from Wodonga to Portland and Bairnsdale to Kerang.

I ask members on the Government side of the House to take particular notice of that total, 41. The report continues—

This development is not a temporary phase, for permanent factories for the production of a wide variety of goods are now being built at Ararat, Benalla, Beaufort, Morwell, Seymour, Warragul and Wodonga, and plans are being prepared for new factories for other parts of the State.

The Minister for Works: Wodonga!

Mr. DONEY: Yes. I took particular notice of that word, and for the same reason, apparently, that it appeals to the Minister. The next paragraph "Products Exhibited" is very interesting. It is as follows:—

In April an exhibition of the products of some of the decentralised industries established by the Victorian Government during the last two years was held at the Myer Mural Hall. Twenty-five attractive exhibits were displayed.

What follows is of special interest to the Minister for Industrial Development.

The products included canned hams, lard, edible fats, tallow, bonedust, dehydrated meat, fertilisers, canned tomatoes, tomato soup, tomato juice, engineering castings, sail canvas, supply parachute cord, parachute thread, seaming twine, sash cord, yarns for hose, pipe production, corsets and women's underwear.

The Minister for Lands: That is where we come in.

Mr. DONEY: I anticipated a sympathetic hearing when I got on to that part of the list. To show that I do not mind, I shall continue, and quote the last two or three articles again—

Corsets and women's underwear, children's socks, men's and boys' half hose, socklets, knitted woollen shirts, cardigans, jumpers, baby garments, pullovers, coats, dresses, skirts, children's dresses and pyjamas, woollen and silk underwear, stockings.

Mr. Cross: We use 5,000,000 pairs of men's and women's stockings in a year in ordinary times.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

The Minister for Lands: It is your turn to interject now.

Mr. DONEY: I did not very well hear what the hon. member said. The list continues—

Woollen scarves, mosquito tents, supply dropping parachutes, aeroplane wing fabrics and furnishings, fabrics, trousers, shirts, slippers and sandals, boots and shoes.

Mr. Read: Any egg powder?

Mr. DONEY: I think I would have read it out had it been there. On further reference to the report I find it contains nothing about egg powder. I have not read that list of Victorian manufactures with the idea of discouraging the Minister. I have no doubt that we did as well here as conditions permitted whilst the war was in progress. We certainly have not the facilities that Victoria has. I hope, quite sincerely, that the success that has attended the work of the Decentralisation Board in Victoria will spur us on to do likewise, so far as it is feasible here. I might say this, as a further encouragement to the Minister for Industrial Development and to the Premier, that I think it was at the exhibition of manufactured goods at Morwell, where the principal items on show were men's pyjamas, that the proprietors of the factory gave a specially manufactured pair to the Premier—it was a very nice suit of pyjamas, too—and another, equally as good, to the Deputy Premier.

Mr. Mann: Was that in this State?

Mr. DONEY: No.

Mr. Watts: They both look well in them.

Mr. DONEY: Yes.

The Minister for Works: It sounds like a bribe to me.

Mr. DONEY: In dealing with factories for this State, I recall reading in the Press, probably in "The West Australian" of maybe a week or more ago, some reference to the keen desire of the Commonwealth Government to finance factories in this State, and to assist in any way thought desirable while, at the same time, of course, possible. I remember, too, that the member for West Perth, when speaking on the Address-in-reply last year—or it may have been when speaking on the 1944 Estimates—drew attention to the large number of factories erected during the war in New South Wales, South Australia, Victoria and Tasmania by the Commonwealth Government. He suggested that it would be a fair distribution if a proportionate number, due to us on the ground of population, were established here. I am not referring to the buildings, but to the key workmen and, of course, to the machinery and equipment. Money from this State has plainly gone into these factories in the

Eastern States. I do not know whether the Premier, when he was over there recently, discussed this matter with the Prime Minister, but it is I think, a fair and sensible request to submit, that is, that our share of factories erected in part with money drawn from taxation from this State should be returned to us.

The Minister for Works: The people of this State before the war voluntarily sent £12,000,000 a year to the factories in the Eastern States.

Mr. DONEY: I know they did.

Mr. Watts: They could not get all they wanted here.

The Minister for Works: They could have got a lot.

Mr. DONEY: I think that was largely due to the prevailing idea, not only in this State but in others and in all parts of the world, that what is produced locally cannot possibly be as good as what is produced in some other place. We may overcome that outlook in time. During the war Western Australia expanded its industries by something like 300 per cent. That peak was reached in 1943, since when there has been a steady retrogression. We are down now, I think, to about 225 per cent. That, of course, is the result of the lessening weight of Defence contracts and also, I presume, because we are so far from the doorstep of the Parliament House at Canberra, and are, therefore, unable to press our claims with any urgency. Our munitions output was restricted by the Commonwealth Government—there is no doubt about that—although we have to admit that the work that has been done was well done. Still, there is always this charge that can be laid, that insufficient use was made of the Defence works factories in this State.

In charge of the work carried out in this State there was what was known, I believe, as the Western Australian Board of Area Management, connected with the Department of Munitions. That organisation comprised State officers and private industrialists. So far as my information goes, on that board there were, and may be still, Messrs. Ellis, Dumas, Brisbane, Trainer and R. O. Law, representing a very level-headed and trustworthy businesslike body. Mr. Hallam was the Area Controller. So far as I can

gather that body has travelled a very hard road. I think it had only some £13,000,000 to £14,000,000 worth of Defence contracts to carry out. It had to bid for every one of those contracts and bid high. I understand that nothing was ever offered to it. I do not assert it but I believe that the other States, in regard to this matter, had a far easier time than did this State. I greatly dislike Western Australia being singled out for invidious treatment of that description. Whenever I hear of such cases I feel like turning towards secession as a cure for evils of that kind.

In this State we have had—I do not know whether it is still in being—a committee known as the Trade Dilution Committee. Whether that committee was connected with the Board of Area Management I do not know for certain. I am told that it did a great job in educating promising unskilled labour, giving them an intensive technical education, and placing them in skilled positions. I submit to the Minister for Industrial Development the question whether that special committee or Trade Dilution Committee is still in existence. It seems to me we could wisely retain its services in some shape or form. I understand that a highly placed official connected with the Board of Area Management recently went to Burma, Malaya, Ceylon, India and the Netherlands East Indies successfully searching out for new markets for potential manufactured export products from Western Australia, and that in addition he formed a number of local committees. If during the course of the debate on this matter—assuming there is one—I can be advised whether that was so I shall be obliged.

I submit to the Chamber that that sort of technical and general research connotes exactly the type of commercial background of which we stand urgently in need in this State. I should like to know whether the kind of activity to which I have referred is still being promoted here. I believe that an official from the Board of Area Management—I do not know whether it was the same one—has been in the Old Country and the United States, and has secured in both countries valuable understandings and agreements of great use to us in our future as manufacturers, now that the war is over.

The Minister for Works: The person concerned did not go oversea as the representative of the Board of Area Management.

Mr. DONEY: I do not know the details with any thoroughness. I can hardly see how he could have been spared for the period involved in such a trip oversea, one of at least three months. He may have gone in some sort of private capacity, but I do not know. I am willing to be corrected if I am wrong, but I believe that the Board of Area Management—through what means I am not sure—has secured a number of sound commercial tie-ups in the United States.

The Minister for Works: Your information is all wrong.

The Minister for Lands: As usual.

Mr. DONEY: Having regard to the source from which I have secured most of my information I am not prepared wholly to accept the Minister's version, though I expect that, in general, he knows a great deal more about the subject than I do.

The Minister for Works: The Board of Area Management does not come into the question in any shape or form, in relation to these things.

Mr. DONEY: These things have to do with the Board of Area Management and must come into the matter.

The Minister for Works: I give up.

Mr. DONEY: If the Minister cares to suggest that I must introduce a new argument to prove what I am saying that will be all right with me.

The Minister for Works: The Board of Area Management does not in any shape or form come into these questions.

Mr. DONEY: Probably the Minister has misunderstood what these questions imply.

The Minister for Works: I surrender unconditionally.

Mr. DONEY: Nineteen times out of 20 I am willing to be corrected and directed by the Minister, but on this occasion, I repeat, I am not so prepared. Recently "The West Australian" had something to say about the formation in this State of an industrial syndicate. I do not know whether the Minister can give me any authoritative information here: nor do I know whether the Government has received from the syndicate an offer to work co-operatively with it in respect to productive activity at Mid-

land and Welshpool. Assuming that the State can attain the 300 per cent. increase of production over 1939 it is anticipated that, on that basis, one-third of our production will be needed for State use and two-thirds will be available for export. I should say that the syndicate to which I have just referred, with its very substantial commercial and technical associations, may bring valuable knowledge and help to the Government if it is prepared to enter into some joint Government-private enterprise agreement with regard to major factory jobs in this State. Apparently I am to get no information from the Government there. I thought I would have had some slight response.

The Premier: That is what we thought.

Mr. DONEY: I suggest to the Minister that he might find it appropriate and desirable to ponder that suggestion. I would express the hope that he is not so tied up as is the Commonwealth Government with the idea of the subjugation, or comparative subjugation, of private enterprise, but that rather he will be prepared, in the interests of all sections in the State, to lend a sympathetic and understanding mind to the proposition which, I understand, he has received from the industrial syndicate I have mentioned. I would suggest to him that co-operation is the wisest and fairest way, provided—I repeat—that he is prepared to give a square deal to all sections of the community. I think I have dealt with all of the eight or nine phases mentioned in my motion. I therefore take leave to submit it to the House, and for the moment will leave it at that.

On motion by the Minister for Industrial Development, debate adjourned.

MOTION—RAILWAYS.

As to Improving Metropolitan-Suburban Services.

MR. NORTH (Claremont) [5.41]: I move—

That this House recommends that the Government obtain a report in the near future upon the best means of improving the Metropolitan Suburban railway services and suggests that experts be engaged (locally if possible) to advise upon—

- 1, Straight-out electrification;
- 2, Diesel electric traction;

3, The elimination of level crossings in favour of subways or bridges;

4, The erection of and best site for a modern central railway station and the substitution of island platforms in suburban stations where possible;

5, Any desirable changes in the present route, including the best site for a new railway bridge over the Swan at Fremantle.

This motion is submitted on behalf of the people and is not a motion arising from expert opinion. It represents the viewpoint of a great many persons who, over the years, have approached me in regard to what they, as citizens, think should be done with our metropolitan-suburban railways. Therefore in asking for a report I am leaving it open—if the House will agree with the suggestion—to the Government to advocate the best course, rather than to advocate from this side of the House what I think, on behalf of various people, should be done. The first question that arises is whether the metropolitan-suburban railway system, or part of it, should be entirely removed. A great many people think that the route from Fremantle to Perth, and perhaps part of the way towards Midland Junction, should be removed and replaced by a concrete or bitumen highway, to enable a trolley-bus service to be maintained at frequent intervals, to deal with traffic offering in that way, and to be connected with the existing bus and trolley-bus services, including certain diversions. The difficulty then, it seems to me, would be how to deal with the traffic from the wheatbelt, and the country generally, that has to reach the port, because if we were to remove the existing railways in the area mentioned we would have to make provision for the freight traffic in some other way.

That, again, raises a question as to whether the proposed new route of the trans-line, going further afield, would be a suitable route for the traffic of the ordinary State railways. Other people say that the south side of the river should be the route from the country, for all traffic, to Fremantle. All that, however, would be dealt with in a report such as I think could be obtained. Before coming to the specific points in the motion, I wish to say that nothing in it is intended to detract from any of the ordinary and necessary works now before the Government, works such as housing, roads, water supplies, schools, hos-

pitals and all the other projects that we have in our minds. Nobody would suggest that any report to be obtained should be of such a nature as to divert manpower from such important works as those. It is thought, however, that four or five years from now—or perhaps sooner—we may find that a great deal more remains to be done to avoid unemployment than we now visualise. We may find that when housing, hospitals, schools and so on are all still under way, and when water supplies are also being dealt with, it will be possible to obtain the skilled labour for works such as those set out in this motion.

The first of the five points deals with the question of whether we should electrify at least the area from Fremantle to Midland Junction. This House is aware that we are shortly to build a large power station at Fremantle, and it knows also that the existing railway service on the metropolitan route is not capable of handling modern traffic as it should. We know that during the last few years a great deal of traffic has left the railways and has gone to the roads, to our buses, trolley-buses and trams. Therefore nobody would urge that there is the same need today for a metropolitan railway service as there was many years ago, because so much of the traffic has been lost. Nevertheless, we know that plans for the metropolitan area visualise a city, eventually, of about half a million people, as that population at least can be provided with water. Such a growth of population would naturally require big improvements in the railways of our city and suburbs in the future; that is, if we are not to scrap them altogether and replace them with some sort of highway, as one suggested alternative.

The cost of electrification is unknown to most of us, but that, again, will be a matter for report. It is significant that at this moment plans have been announced in New South Wales for the electrification of the railway from Sydney to Newcastle, which is quite a long run. That shows that electrification is to have a big future in the Eastern States. We know that already large cities such as Melbourne and Sydney have electrified systems. This new proposal to electrify the line from Sydney to Newcastle should bring home to us the fact that such proposals are becoming more widespread and, if there is a density of

population in those cities sufficient to justify such a work, surely between Fremantle and Midland Junction at least—if not further afield—we should consider such a proposal here, assuming that the original capital cost is not unbearable.

The use of coal is always advocated by the member for Collie, and by everybody else in this House, where it can be utilised. Therefore the electrification proposals should have the support of our coalmines and would not require anything to be brought in from oversea. If the expert appointed to investigate these proposals gives a capital cost that is too heavy we will then have to fall back on the alternative in this motion, that Diesel engines and carriages should be used in the metropolitan area to take the lighter traffic, between the peak loading periods morning and evening, thus providing a more frequent service. The only drawback that I can see to any such proposal is that it would involve the use of imported fuel. I believe that every member of this House would prefer, if the capital cost phase could be satisfactorily dealt with, the electrification of the railway system from Fremantle to a point as far away as would be economically sound. New Zealand and many other countries can supply instances of long runs with electric haulage.

Having made the position clear from my point of view regarding these subjects, I now turn to the third matter—the elimination of level crossings in favour of subways or bridges. There is no doubt that throughout the metropolitan area we have been handicapped because of the number of level crossings that exist. Any scheme having for its objective the improvement of the suburban railway system should include provision for the elimination of all level crossings and the substitution of subways or bridges. On many occasions recently and, indeed, over the years, I have had that suggestion put to me by various persons interested in this subject. I think it is agreed throughout the metropolitan area that existing conditions call for a change, seeing that the level crossings have been a constant source of danger and have caused loss of life, loss of time and also loss of petrol due to the delays occasioned by the closing of the gates. It is easy to visualise an early plan to eliminate such crossings, one by one.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: But the local authorities would not agree to that course.

Mr. NORTH: As the machine age has progressed, I would like another approach made to the subject.

Hon. N. Keenan: Did the member for Geraldton have in mind the complete closure of the crossings?

Hon. J. C. Willcock: Yes, with a bridge or something else substituted.

Mr. NORTH: Members may have varying views as to what should be done. Experience has shown already that a bridge or a subway will replace two or more crossings and sometimes one is placed between two crossings that have proved quite useless. We also know that subways as well as wider island platforms have been very helpful in the handling of passenger traffic. They have facilitated the sale of tickets and of access to platforms. In any case, now is the time when we should consider making moves along the lines I have suggested. Over the past years, big improvements have already taken place. Only recently a subway at Claremont was completed, which provided much greater space for vehicular traffic than was available before. I believe no-one would object to an early move for the purpose of eliminating the menace of the level crossing.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: There is one within a hundred yards of Barrack-street, and that should be shifted, too.

Mr. NORTH: And there is the Melbourne-road crossing. I wonder how many thousands of pounds' worth of petrol has been wasted over the years, due to motor vehicles being held up there pending the opening of the gates. I think I can leave that phase of the subject, because it speaks for itself. The next point raised deals with the selection of the best site for, and the construction of, a modern central railway station and the substitution of island platforms in suburban stations, where possible. To deal with the first portion, there is a general body of opinion in the metropolitan area and, in fact, throughout the State, in favour of the State Government reaching an early decision regarding a permanent site for the central railway station and the future of Forrest-place, while with that is wrapped up the question of a new Town Hall site. The Premier made a move regarding that matter a long time ago, and he will remember that a number of businessmen expressed their opinions in the Press about dealing

with the central railway station and a general overhauling of the set-up in the centre of the city proper.

The statement has often been made here, and with it members have been in agreement, that if ever a move were made to secure expert advice to determine where the central railway station should finally be located, the removal of the station from its present site would provide land of sufficient value not only to pay for extensive improvements to the railway system itself but for many alterations that could be effected in the city itself. During a conversation with the Town Planning Commissioner, Mr. Davidson, some years ago, I was informed by him that his ideas regarding the central railway station and the opening up of the area between the city and North Perth, were that all lines converging on the city from country areas should run on rails that were dropped about 16ft. or 18ft. and thus enable a straight, smooth roadway to be constructed over the present site of the central railway station, thereby providing a vista right through to North Perth. By that means the Beaufort-street and William-street bridges would be rendered unnecessary. All that could be accomplished merely by lowering the level of the railway lines. The central railway station would then be situated at a spot chosen by the experts or by the Commissioner of Railways.

Now that we have had the announcement that the new East-West railway terminus is to be at East Perth, it might be possible for the future central railway station to be located there as well. If that move were made, big improvements to the city area in the vicinity of Forrest-place could be undertaken, and we might live long enough to see the Commonwealth Bank and the General Post Office as architectural features of Perth, whereas today they are not seen to advantage in the existing narrow street. It would enable Padbury Buildings to be removed, leaving the side of Boans' premises to fringe a city square. These matters should be inquired into because by a judicious handling of the problem great improvements could be effected. Now we are approaching the post-war era we are justified in contemplating the requirements of the future so as to fit in with the progress of the State, and the prosperity that we trust will be our por-

tion. Dealing now with the question of substituting island platforms wherever possible for the existing platforms at suburban stations, if we are to retain the present station sites, we could well contemplate the substitution I have referred to. The provision of island platforms would avoid many of the difficulties associated with overhead bridges, level crossings and other dangers. I do not think this point requires elaboration.

The last matter dealt with in the motion refers to any desirable changes that may be favoured in the present route, including the best site for a new railway bridge over the Swan River at Fremantle. We know that the construction of a new railway bridge will have to be put in hand when the harbour is extended up-river. I noticed a statement in the Press recently indicating that the Government is already dealing with that problem, and therefore I take it this part of the motion will apply automatically. The question of the deviation of the railway route is not so simple. As I suggested earlier, it may be necessary to do away with the line altogether and use the present route for trolley-bus services on a bituminised roadway. Whether that is so or not, the question does and will arise whether some deviations at least will not be necessary, if not a deviation throughout the whole of the way.

When the trans-line comes over the new route to the city, we might find it advisable to move our lines along the same route, which would mean having probably four tracks. All these matters are worthy of the attention of the House. Over the years we have heard many complaints about the railways and suggestions for improving them, but seldom have we heard any proposal for improving our metropolitan routes. The time has now arrived when we might well consider the question. I cannot see why a city of the size of Perth, having efficient bus and trolley-bus services catering for such a large proportion of the people, should condemn the rest to the use of the existing rail services, which are very little better than they were 40 years ago. Members will recall that 20 years or so ago there was a better rail service on the Fremantle line than there is now. The department used to run two non-stop trains from Perth, one to Claremont and one to Cottesloe.

The Premier: There was no road competition at that time.

Mr. NORTH: That is so. The department certainly missed a good opportunity to improve its service and thus hold much of the traffic. Twenty years ago there was a proposal to electrify the railways and run trolley-buses as feeders to the railways. Had that idea of catering for the suburbs been carried out they would have had a very good service today, though of a different nature, and the moving of this motion would not have been necessary. As things have been allowed to develop, however, the road vehicles have taken most of the traffic, and the House has to decide—I hope it will do so soon—whether we ought to scrap the railway service or electrify it or use Diesels, and take the opportunity of securing a better site for the central station. If this were done, we could at the same time effect a great improvement in the appearance and convenience of the city. All these things are quite possible of attainment if the right officials were called upon to make the report.

The committee making the inquiry would consist of experts, perhaps some from the railway department, and might even include some imported men, though I hope suitable men will be found here. We should not enter upon the peace era without having some plan along these lines. Over the years we have allowed the railways to slip badly, and the time has come when we should recognise that they are not worthy of us or the future of the State. Without indulging in criticism but with a feeling of optimism for the future and in the hope of benefiting the metropolitan area, I have pleasure in moving the motion.

On motion by the Minister for Railways, debate adjourned.

MOTION—WOOL.

As to Investigating Mather Plan.

MR. MANN (Beverley) [6.5]: I move—

That in the opinion of this House the Government should investigate and present a report to Parliament on the practicability of carrying into effect in Western Australia the plan known as the Mather Wool Plan.

Some time ago "The West Australian" published a fairly extensive review of the Mather wool plan, and recently a lot of propaganda in book form has been received from the Eastern States giving a general

idea of the plan. I am moving this motion for the benefit of some people in this State who are interested in obtaining the actual facts. Probably many members of the House are not aware of the full significance of the plan. Perhaps I might explain the general principles in this way. Australia is the largest wool-growing country in the world and it produces the best wool. The greater proportion of the clip is exported to markets overseas. It is not so very many years since all Australian wool was sold on the London market, and as regards Western Australia, only in the last 28 or 30 years has the wool been sold locally. Previously it was shipped to London and submitted to auction on the floor in London.

During the early years of the industry in this State, a very crude system of baling the wool for shipment was adopted. I can remember some of my forebears telling the story of wool, before the days of presses, being trampled into the bales. When the lunch hour arrived, in order to hold down the wool in the partly-filled bales, heavy stones were placed on top. One enterprising farmer—he was a member of a highly-respected family which is still farming in the State—placed a large stone on his wool and went to lunch. After lunch someone covered the stone over and it was included in the bale and sent from Western Australia to England. The consignee, on finding the stone in the bale, weighed it and returned it to the farmer, charging him with the cost of the freight from Australia to London and back to Australia.

We certainly have the best flocks of merino sheep in the world. In Western Australia we produce an exceptionally good type of wool, not only in the far North, the Murchison and the Gascoyne, but also in our wheatbelt areas. We are not now producing the blue wools which formerly were produced in the South-West. Owing to the conditions of our farming life in that district and the more intense pastures, we have lost the famous blend of blue wools and are now producing merino wool. There is a very large demand for it.

The Premier: I do not think the wool-growers in the Katanning district would agree with what you just said.

Mr. MANN: The blue wool is not now so pronounced. I am referring to the type of wool which we produced 30, 40 and 50 years

ago. The sheep were then depastured on a sparse type of country. We produced a fine type of wool for finer garments, but there is now a tendency to grow wool of a more robust kind. The war is proof of that statement. The khaki cloth used by the Army was made from the wool of a cross-bred or Corriedale; it is more bulky than is merino wool. We ship by far the greater part of our wool oversea. Further, we bring it down from the North to Fremantle, where it is appraised and auctioned and then sent oversea, to England, Japan, China, India and other parts of the world. This practice is uneconomic. The wool has to be brought down to Fremantle from the Murchison—a very long distance—and when it arrives here it contains at least 40 per cent. to 50 per cent. of foreign matter.

There should be more appraisalment centres and less centralisation. It was a very hard battle to get an appraisalment centre established at Albany. The whole idea seems to be centralisation; everything possible for the metropolitan area! Take the case of Sydney. Sydney has a population of 1,800,000 and it is one of the most congested cities in Australia, if not in the world. Townplanners today definitely state that when a city has a population of more than 250,000, there will be a period of congestion, and that is what will happen in our metropolitan area. For some time we had only one wool appraisalment centre, and that was at Fremantle. We are slowly decentralising in that connection. We should have more appraisalment centres, as these would enable the appraisers and buyers to go to the areas where the wool is grown and have it shipped at some port more convenient than Fremantle.

The Premier: The important point in what you are saying is that the money realised by the sale of the wool goes to pay interest.

Mr. MANN: I agree. There must have been an alteration in the present methods. During the war period England suffered severely in her manufacturing trade, yet today she is sending supplies to Germany and Italy. The woollen industry is not of such great importance in France. Russia has had a tremendous setback and most of the countries of Europe will have to instal new plants for spinning, combing and weaving the wool. Is there not a good chance for Australia to share in this work? Cannot we carry on

these activities here, instead of sending our raw wool oversea? It could be scoured here and thus the weight would be reduced for oversea shipment. This would mean the employment of additional labour required for combing and carding the wool. The wool could then be sent oversea and made into cloth. The argument may be raised by many people that the climatic conditions here are unsuitable. I reply by saying that Albany is producing a good cloth and that Geelong is producing an exceptionally good cloth.

With the advance that science has made in the past 40 or 50 years, it should not be beyond the capacity of our scientists to overcome the difficulties now encountered in climatic and water conditions. If we follow the course we are now pursuing with regard to wool in dealing with our other exportable commodities, what will be our position in another 50 years? Our object should be to attract population to Australia and I believe the adoption of the Mather plan would have that result. Mr. Mather was an adviser to the Commonwealth Government, Mr. Scully being Minister for Commerce, but the Commonwealth Government has not investigated the Mather plan. My idea is to bring it under the notice of members with a view to asking them to support my motion requesting the Government to make a thorough investigation into all the conditions appertaining to wool in this State, so as to ascertain whether the plan is feasible. That is the main consideration. I do not intend to comment upon the recent newspaper report of the plan. Wool has been a gamble for many years in this country.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. MANN: I should like to digress for a moment to refer to the display we have seen tonight. We have broken one of the most important regulations of this House in allowing strangers in our Chamber while the House is in session; but we saw a very fine picture of physical exercises performed by the youth of our State. This leads me to suggest that we might have a repetition in the form of pictures dealing with our farming, woolgrowing and textile industries. It would be very helpful indeed when we were endeavouring to place before the members of this Chamber information of a specific nature concerning

those industries. We have broken a very important regulation, but that could be made the starting point of a new era so far as Parliament is concerned. The principle might be extended even further. Perhaps the Chamber could be enlarged to accommodate a big audience, not only to hear the speeches of members, but also to see pictures of the type I have mentioned.

Mr. SPEAKER: I hope this has something to do with the motion.

Mr. MANN: I am linking up my remarks with the motion very definitely indeed. The remarks that have been made with regard to the Mather Wool Plan can to a large extent be applied to other essentials that we produce. A good deal of our wheat is harvested and ground to flour, not only in the metropolitan area but in many country centres as well. The point I want to stress is that a tremendous loss is entailed in the haulage of waste products such as dirt, burr and other foreign matter. Wheat and other products are carried long distances to the ports to be sent oversea in the same state as that in which they leave the holdings. That takes place with regard to wool; and after having had to pay freight on waste material, we then have to face a big tariff in order to bring manufactured goods back to Australia for our own use.

If Australia is to take its place as a leading nation in the world, it must have increased migration, and the adoption of such a scheme as that which I am putting to the House would probably have that result. Why should this country not be the largest wool manufacturing country in the world? No doubt some members will say that the cost is too great; and others will assert that the climatic conditions are not satisfactory, and that water supplies are not adequate. However, we have had experience of an exceptionally wet season, and I am pleased to see that the Government is having surveys made of the rivers in this State and is testing the water at high-water mark. It is also employed in gauging the extent of our river systems, no doubt with the idea of their being dammed and a large degree of conservation of water supplies thereby attained, especially in our southern areas. I can refer particularly to my own town of Beverley where an examination of this sort is in progress. The result of this work could be the provision

of electric power from our streams, and the subsequent handling of our wool in localities where those streams exist.

It has for a long time been said that the best woollen material in the world comes from West Riding in Yorkshire. Yorkshire has been the most important home of woollen goods in the world. Ireland and Scotland have a similar reputation for home-spuns. Here we have produced remarkably good articles at Albany, and the same could apply to Collie and the South-West generally and even to the Great Southern. The production of livestock for export is also an important question. One can understand why the people of Perth complain about the quality of meat that is consumed on farms as against that which is consumed in the metropolitan area, when one realises that stock are transported hundreds of miles to the saleyards and that sucker lambs, immediately they are removed from the mother, begin to lose their bloom. Stock is transported all that distance in trucks, and is probably delayed at the saleyards through congestion of the market before finally being disposed of. The Argentine has produced some of the finest beef cattle in the world. Those cattle, however, are not sent to Chicago for slaughter, but are killed in fixed areas where slaughter works are established. Then they are sent in chilled trucks to the seaport for shipment oversea.

But consider what must be the condition of our lambs on arrival at Smithfield, particularly those brought down the Midland line or from as far afield as York, Beverley, Kellerberrin, Bruce Rock and Narembeen. There is a good deal of wastage due to the long distance over which the stock has to be carried in the live state, for lambs begin to decline in quality immediately they leave the mother at the suckling stage. The stock should be killed in outside areas and then transported to the seaboard not in those awful louvered vans, which are particularly hot, but in chilled vans.

Mr. Rodoreda: Is that part of the Mather plan?

Mr. MANN: Yes, it is incorporated in the plan. Mr. Mather has made an extensive survey of all these items. There is also the question of sheepskins. Many of these during the war period, after the wool

has been taken off, have been destroyed in heaps in the country. France is the largest buyer of Australian sheepskins, which they utilise.

The Premier: And we have been pelting them away!

Mr. MANN: Yes. A scientific man from Europe at one time visited Australia, and referred to the enormous wastage of natural resources and by-products that took place in this country. We live in the world's greatest fool's paradise. We in Australia have never known want; we have never been forced to live under conditions such as have prevailed in Europe, where every item produced from the soil has been utilised, even to the straw, of which we annually burn thousands of acres. We waste things on an extravagant scale; and if this wastage continues, it will have a definite repercussion on our country.

I have brought this proposition before the notice of the House because numbers of people are carried away with the idea, and I contend that if a scheme is put forward by some person—whether he has ability or not—and that scheme has some grain of practicability in it, it is our job as members of Parliament to bring it before the House with a view to its being discussed and to ascertaining whether it could be put into operation. I hope the Government will not take the matter lightly, but will consider it in all its angles. If what I have said tonight helps to bring to this State some industries that will achieve greater wealth for Western Australia and for Australia, it will have been of some use. The industries to which I have referred produce the major and most important products of Australia, namely, wool, which is the best in the world, fat lambs, baby beef and pigs. If in the production of all these commodities we achieve better quality as a basis for overseas exports, then the few moments taken in this discussion will not have been in vain.

On motion by the Minister for Agriculture, debate adjourned.

MOTION—HARBOURS, DEVELOPMENT AND CONTROL.

To Inquire by Select Committee.

MR. STYANTS (Kalgoorlie) [7.41]: I move—

That, in view of the congestion and delays to shipping at Fremantle and having in mind the desirability of utilising and developing the

port of Esperance in the interests of goldfields areas, and other outports in the interests of their respective localities, a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into and report upon—

- (a) The extent to which it is possible to make fuller use of the outports of this State at the present time;
- (b) the steps necessary to ensure that all outports may be more fully used in the post-war period;
- (c) the effect any such steps would have on the trading community in the towns from and to which traffic may be diverted;
- (d) the capacity of the transport system, both rail and road, to cope with any steps recommended, and the effect of any such steps upon the transport system, especially if zoning is involved, in connection with freight rates and other matters affected;
- (e) whether the administration of harbours throughout the State should be concentrated under one harbour authority and to what extent existing legislation would need to be amended for this purpose.

In moving this motion, I realise that I shall probably meet with a lot of opposition, but I do not anticipate that it will come from members of this Chamber. Business interests have for a great number of years placed all the facilities for commercial distribution in Perth and Fremantle. The shipping congestion at Fremantle has been, for the period of the war, very serious, and still remains so. I would not like members to confuse the proposal I am about to make to use the outports of the State for the purpose of relieving that congestion at Fremantle with an inquiry which, I understand, took place some time ago into the possibility of relieving the situation there by diverting traffic, which should rightly come to the port of Fremantle, to other ports. That scheme was found to be impracticable and too costly, because of the rail freight involved in bringing such cargoes to the metropolitan area if they were landed at Bunbury, Albany or Geraldton. My proposal is to use the outports of the State for the purpose of handling the exports of the back-country and the imports which are intended for consumption in the hinterland of those ports.

Whilst the inquiry which I would like to institute does not concern the port of Fremantle, except for the purpose of relieving the congestion there, it might be well for members to give some slight consideration to the position at Fremantle today, and what it is likely to be in the post-war years.

Firstly, there is the matter of shed accommodation for cargo imports. It is taxed to the utmost at Fremantle. The discharge of inward general cargo is limited, because of lack of storage accommodation and the nature and the extent of the facilities provided. Because of lack of shed accommodation many cargoes have to be loaded direct from the ship into railway wagons. As a result of the shortage of manpower, engine-power, tarpaulins and railway freight wagons, the Railway Department has not been able to provide the trucks to handle such cargoes as sulphur, superphosphate, imported coal and sugar. In addition, we have to realise that Fremantle, being the last port of call for ships clearing to the United Kingdom and other oversea countries, needs to be equipped with ship repairing facilities. Also, ships coming from overseas may receive a buffeting, or have something go wrong with their machinery, and, as Fremantle is their first port of call, facilities should be available there so that they can be repaired.

I think it would not be any breach of national security, now that the war is over, and because a very interesting article was published in "The West Australian" dealing with the fact that Fremantle has been an important submarine base for the American Navy, to say that there was a floating dock there, used for the purpose of repairing submarines and other vessels. It might be a good idea for representations to be made to the Commonwealth Government to ensure that that floating dock is not lost to Western Australia. It can rightly be said that the congestion at Fremantle will soon be relieved by virtue of the fact that the Navy, which has had the use of many berths in the harbour during the war period, will, it is reasonable to assume, surrender at least a few of them in the near future. Even allowing for that, I still contend that with the increase in the volume of exports and imports that can be expected, great congestion will occur at the port of Fremantle. The whole of our railway system has been established on the assumption that Fremantle will be the port handling the greatest percentage of our imports and exports. I wish to point out the principal items that could, in my opinion, be shipped with advantage from the outports of the State.

I want also to quote the products which I think can be derived from certain portions of the State, and which should be shipped

from the ports in zones which I think should be declared. I want first to deal with the port of Albany. I think the exports from Albany would be fruit, wool, frozen meat, potatoes, the products of the Albany Woollen Mills, flour from the Katanning flour mills, and any other items produced in the back country of Albany, such as gum, mallee bark and sheep-skins.

[Resolved: That motions be continued.]

The Premier: And wheat.

Mr. STYANTS: Yes. From information that I have been able to obtain, half a million cases of apples and pears were exported from Albany in the year 1939, and the average pre-war was 300,000 cases of apples and pears exported from that port. In 1939, 80,000 carcasses of frozen meat were exported from Albany, and I think it would not be unreasonable for us to assume that those figures, as to both fruit and frozen meat, will increase greatly in the next five or ten years. The imports through Albany should, I think, include any imported coal that is required for industry in Albany or in a zone, to be declared, within a certain radius of the port.

Consideration should also be given to providing a coal hulk for the purpose of storing coal in the harbour at Albany under much the same system as that which has operated for many years at Fremantle. I think the coal imported for the railways in most instances comes to Fremantle, and it has to be carted long distances into the country—in the case of Albany 340 miles. By no stretch of the imagination can this be said to be good for the economy of the State. I think also that provision for the storage of fuel oil should be made at Albany, though whether by the Government or by the oil companies is immaterial.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: There is storage for fuel oil at Albany and also at Geraldton.

Mr. STYANTS: A large quantity of general merchandise comes to Albany. According to the Town Clerk of Albany, in an article which appeared in "The West Australian" of the 15th August last, approximately 400 tons of general merchandise are being brought past Albany in ships arriving from the Eastern States. This merchandise is brought to Fremantle and then railed back to what should be the Albany zone, and very often to Albany itself. That must raise the cost of those

commodities enormously. Those goods could reasonably be expected, under a proper system of working our outports, to be landed in those particular areas. I understand that if arrangements were made, for phosphatic rock and sulphur to be delivered straight to the works, the superphosphate companies would consider favourably the erection of works at Albany. At the present time supplies are railed from Bunbury or from Bassendean.

It must be remembered that if the superphosphate works that are established in the metropolitan area and at Geraldton and Bunbury do not use their installations for the delivery of supplies within a certain distance, they have to pay at a higher rate on the railways than the usual low freight levied on superphosphate. Reading of the position at Albany—I do not think the House requires a great deal from me as to the conditions operating there, because they have been fully placed before the Chamber from time to time by the member for Albany—it appears that cargo from a ship in Albany, through there being no storage facilities and no shed accommodation, has to be loaded direct into railway trucks. Next comes the question of whether the railways can supply the trucks. It is said there is a limited amount of storage in the township adjacent to the railway, but practically all of it is required for the Railway Department's loco traffic. The Select Committee could find out if that storage is sufficient, and the extent to which more storage could best and most economically be provided.

From the information I have obtained the facilities provided for handling outward cargo appear to be crude and out of date. It is said that two berths are available at the deep sea jetty at Albany, and that two vessels could be accommodated at the town jetty, though they would be ships drawing not more than 24ft. of water. The town jetty is reported to be in a very poor condition. The committee could inquire whether this berthage was sufficient for present needs and for requirements five or ten years hence. I understand there are two cranes at Albany, one a seven-ton mobile steam crane, and the other a five-ton mobile hand crane. This is for the purpose of shifting ships' gear, in unloading the cargo that comes there. I do not know whether a hand-operated crane is regarded

as modern equipment but I think it is antiquated, and that is another matter into which a Select Committee could inquire. It is reported that the lighting on the wharves at Albany is insufficient and, when it is remembered that the majority of the cargo which would be exported from that port would be perishable cargo, loaded into refrigerated vessels, and that most of this work is done at night-time, the necessity for efficient lighting is apparent.

It is said by the business community of Albany and the surrounding districts that shipowners have a definite prejudice against using that port. The business men do not know whether this is caused by the outmoded facilities, or the lack of facilities for expeditious handling of inward and outward cargo, or whether it is the fact that the ship-owners do not get much high-priced freight, such as wool, from Albany, owing to the majority of the wool being shipped from Fremantle. Those, also, are matters into which the Select Committee could inquire. I am told that the branding and assembling of shipments at points distant from the ship's side is due to no sheds being available on the jetty, and to there being no road for access, even if sheds were available. I have not seen the lay-out of the Albany Harbour, but it seems a remarkable thing if there is really no way to get a motor truck on to the wharves. I understand that exports such as fruit, etc., must be brought to Albany by motor vehicles and loaded into railway trucks in order to gain access to the wharves. If that is correct it is certainly something which should be altered in the very near future.

Hon. J. C. Willecock: There is no wharf at all at Albany, but there is a deep sea jetty.

Mr. STYANTS: It is claimed that bulk-handling facilities should be installed there, and the committee could deal with the question of whether the Government or a company would be prepared to instal them. Albany people claim that a slip, for the purpose of overhauling vessels of reasonable size, should be installed there, or even that a floating dock should be installed and, as there is no further room for docking facilities at Fremantle, I think Albany has quite a good claim. It is also stated that a lot of ground could be reclaimed there by filling in to the depth of 5 ft. or 6 ft.

The Premier: The member for Albany has been stressing that for a long time.

Mr. STYANTS: The member for Albany knows the facts intimately, while I am only speaking from what I have gleaned through information that has been sent to me, and information I have been able to get in other ways. I take it the member for Albany will have something to say in connection with that aspect. Dealing with Bunbury, it is common knowledge that that port is not suitable for the handling of other than ships of comparatively light draught. It is hampered through the harbour continually silting up, with the result that a dredge has to be kept at work most of the time in order to provide a reasonable depth of water. Exports that could be despatched from Bunbury would include timber, potatoes and bulk wheat. An installation to deal with bulk wheat has already been established there. While dealing with the subject of the bulk-handling of wheat, it has always been a mystery to me why a plant capable of handling 250 tons per hour should have been installed at Geraldton, another capable of handling 200 tons per hour should have been erected at Bunbury and one capable of handling only 120 tons per hour should be established at Fremantle.

In our present set-up the vast majority of the wheat consignments from Western Australia are despatched to Fremantle for the purposes of shipment. I understand that the Government installed some of the plant and the company erected plant at another place, and instead of the installation with the greatest capacity being located where the largest quantity of wheat is loaded for export the reverse conditions obtain. With the almost certainty of a South-West electric power scheme being inaugurated, we can expect a great increase in the export trade at Bunbury. As I mentioned earlier, the chief exports from that port are likely to be timber, potatoes, bulk wheat and probably butter. Apples could also be exported from that centre. Large quantities of apples could be inspected there if Bunbury were the port of export. Apples could still be examined at the Bridgetown packing stores as is done now, so there would be no excuse from the point of view of the necessary inspections.

The imports at Bunbury would comprise phosphatic rock and sulphur, for dealing

with which there are works already available at Pieton Junction. In addition, there would be the general cargo to meet the requirements of the zone concerned. At Bunbury, however, there seems to be no adequate provision for sheds nor yet for proper hauling and handling facilities. Next we come to the port of Esperance, with which I am particularly concerned. Apart from wheat I do not know that a great deal could be exported from the port. If refrigerated space were provided, there could be considerable trade in frozen lambs, for the hinterland there is eminently suitable for the raising of lambs for export. When considering the position regarding Esperance, I must point out the difference between railway mileages affecting goods landed at Fremantle and conveyed thence to Kalgoorlie, Norseman and Esperance, compared with the distance that would apply if Kalgoorlie requirements were landed at Esperance.

The distance from Fremantle to Kalgoorlie is 387 miles, from Fremantle to Norseman 477 miles, from Fremantle to Esperance 602 miles and from Esperance to Kalgoorlie 210 miles, while the distance from Esperance to Norseman, which it is expected will be the largest mining centre outside Kalgoorlie in the immediate post-war years, is only 125 miles. The difference between the railway mileage from Esperance to Kalgoorlie and from Fremantle to Kalgoorlie, respectively, is 182 miles while the difference in railway mileage from Esperance to Norseman and from Fremantle to Norseman, respectively, is 352 miles. Mr. Thorn, the general manager of the Lake View and Star group of mines at Kalgoorlie, estimates that the average saving to his companies on all commodities if landed at Esperance and taken to Kalgoorlie, compared with what it would cost to bring those goods from the Eastern States, land them at Fremantle and rail them to Kalgoorlie, would amount to 30s. per ton.

If shipments could be made to Esperance instead of Fremantle, the Railway Department would be provided with a great deal of back-loading from Esperance. If the port were not used for handling imports, most of the railway rollingstock used for that purpose would have to return empty. I am sure that if Esperance were used for the purpose of landing cargoes for the Eastern Goldfields, the railways would benefit tremen-

dously through the back-loading that would be available. Then again a considerable quantity of imported coal is necessary for railway purposes. At present that coal is landed at Fremantle and conveyed 602 miles to Esperance, which, to say the least of it, is most uneconomical. If that coal could be landed at Esperance, it would be right on the spot when required.

The Central Norseman Goldmining Corporation considers that by having the whole of its commodities, particularly machinery required for the equipping of its mines, landed at Esperance there would be a saving of £1,200 compared with the present cost of landing those requirements at Fremantle and railing them to Norseman. If these savings were effected, it might be said by some people that the additional funds would merely be paid away in the shape of dividends, but I do not know that that would be so. I think the savings would more likely be utilised for developmental purposes to enable the mines to operate over a longer period or be spent in the purchase of additional plant, and by that means provide more work for the employees.

A matter that has always concerned members representing Goldfields constituencies is the surcharge levied by shipping companies when they divert vessels from the usual route to Fremantle in order to traverse the 60 miles to Esperance. Despite the fact that the deviation involves only 60 miles in and 60 miles out, it results in the saving of approximately 600 miles compared with the distance traversed if the ships steamed straight on to Fremantle. Notwithstanding that fact, the shipping companies levy a charge of 5s. per ton more on goods shipped from Sydney, Melbourne, and Adelaide to Esperance than they do on those goods if shipped direct to Fremantle. I claim that such an imposition should not be tolerated. I consider that the levying of that surcharge of 5s. per ton in the circumstances I have outlined cannot be justified.

I propose to read to the House a statement showing boat charges, loading charges, cartage costs and rail freights and the various stores that come under the different State railway rates between Kalgoorlie and Esperance and Fremantle and Kalgoorlie, respectively. These show the cost of getting goods from Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney via Esperance to Kalgoorlie, from

those places to Kalgoorlie via Fremantle, and from Fremantle to Esperance. A comparison of the various rates is as follows:—

KALGOORLIE-ESPERANCE.

| | Adelaide. | | Melbourne. | | Sydney. | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|-------|------------|-------|---------|-------|
| | Ton. | s. d. | Ton. | s. d. | Ton. | s. d. |
| <i>A. Rate—4 Ton—</i> | | | | | | |
| Boat Freight | 43 | 0 | 48 | 0 | 53 | 0 |
| Esperance Wharfage and Handling | 10 | 6 | 10 | 6 | 10 | 6 |
| Rail to Kalgoorlie | 33 | 11 | 33 | 11 | 33 | 11 |
| | 87 | 5 | 92 | 5 | 97 | 5 |
| <i>B. Rate—2 Ton—</i> | | | | | | |
| Boat Freight | 43 | 0 | 48 | 0 | 53 | 0 |
| Esperance Wharfage and Handling | 10 | 6 | 10 | 6 | 10 | 6 |
| Rail to Kalgoorlie | 47 | 2 | 47 | 2 | 47 | 2 |
| | 100 | 8 | 105 | 8 | 110 | 8 |
| <i>C. Rate—1 Ton—</i> | | | | | | |
| Boat Freight | 43 | 0 | 48 | 0 | 53 | 0 |
| Esperance Wharfage and Handling | 10 | 6 | 10 | 6 | 10 | 6 |
| Rail to Kalgoorlie | 59 | 4 | 59 | 4 | 59 | 4 |
| | 112 | 10 | 117 | 10 | 122 | 10 |
| <i>First Rate.—</i> | | | | | | |
| Boat Freight | 43 | 0 | 48 | 0 | 53 | 0 |
| Esperance Wharfage and Handling | 10 | 6 | 10 | 6 | 10 | 6 |
| Rail to Kalgoorlie | 95 | 2 | 95 | 2 | 95 | 2 |
| | 148 | 8 | 153 | 8 | 158 | 8 |
| <i>Second Rate.—</i> | | | | | | |
| Boat Freight | 43 | 0 | 48 | 0 | 53 | 0 |
| Esperance Wharfage and Handling | 10 | 6 | 10 | 6 | 10 | 6 |
| Rail to Kalgoorlie | 127 | 7 | 127 | 7 | 127 | 7 |
| | 181 | 1 | 186 | 1 | 191 | 1 |

The value of those figures lies in the comparison that may be made with charges for goods of the same classes landed at Fremantle and conveyed to Kalgoorlie. The following are the figures:—

FREMANTLE-KALGOORLIE.

| | Adelaide. | | Melbourne. | | Sydney. | |
|----------------------------|-----------|----|------------|----|---------|----|
| | s. d. | | s. d. | | s. d. | |
| <i>A. Rate.—4 Ton.—</i> | | | | | | |
| Boat | 33 | 0 | | | | |
| Landing | 9 | 7 | | | | |
| Cartage | 2 | 6 | | | | |
| Rail | 44 | 0 | | | | |
| | 89 | 1 | | | | |
| Kalgoorlie-Esperance | 87 | 5 | 92 | 5 | 97 | 5 |
| <i>B. Rate.—2 Ton.—</i> | | | | | | |
| Boat | 33 | 0 | | | | |
| Landing | 9 | 7 | | | | |
| Cartage | 2 | 6 | | | | |
| Rail | 60 | 10 | | | | |
| | 105 | 11 | | | | |
| Kalgoorlie-Esperance | 100 | 8 | 105 | 8 | 110 | 8 |
| <i>C. Rate.—1 Ton.—</i> | | | | | | |
| Boat | 33 | 0 | | | | |
| Landing | 9 | 7 | | | | |
| Cartage | 2 | 6 | | | | |
| Rail | 77 | 8 | | | | |
| | 122 | 9 | | | | |
| Kalgoorlie-Esperance | 112 | 10 | 117 | 10 | 122 | 10 |

First Class.—

| | s. | d. | | s. | d. | | s. | d. |
|----------------------|-----|----|--|-----|----|--|-----|----|
| Boat | 33 | 0 | | | | | | |
| Landing | 9 | 7 | | | | | | |
| Cartage | 2 | 6 | | | | | | |
| Rail | 127 | 4 | | | | | | |
| | 172 | 5 | | 172 | 5 | | 177 | 5 |
| Kalgoorlie-Esperance | 148 | 8 | | 153 | 8 | | 158 | 8 |

Second Class.—

| | s. | d. | | s. | d. | | s. | d. |
|----------------------|-----|----|--|-----|----|--|-----|----|
| Boat | 33 | 0 | | | | | | |
| Landing | 9 | 7 | | | | | | |
| Cartage | 2 | 6 | | | | | | |
| Rail | 167 | 0 | | | | | | |
| | 212 | 1 | | 212 | 1 | | 217 | 1 |
| Kalgoorlie-Esperance | 181 | 1 | | 186 | 1 | | 191 | 1 |

It will be seen that a great advantage could accrue to the mining industry and the country outback from Kalgoorlie if the port of Esperance were used, as it should be, as the natural port of the goldfields instead of having commodities carried right past that first-class port, on which the State Government has spent a great amount of money, conveyed to Fremantle and then charged with excessive rail freights amounting to pounds per ton to transport the goods to the goldfields.

The next port with which I wish to deal is Geraldton. It would appear that the imports that could reasonably be expected there are phosphatic rock and sulphur, for which there are works to manufacture super-phosphate, and general merchandise for local consumption, including the northern goldfields. Those goldfields will probably be importing a large quantity of machinery, because the mines in the outback country, particularly on the Murchison fields, were denuded of manpower and machinery, and the machinery must be replaced when the mines re-open. So Geraldton would have quite a fair volume of imports as a result of having to handle all the machinery and requisites for the rehabilitation of the mining industry on the Murchison fields.

Hon. J. C. Willecock: And also fuel oil.

Mr. STYANTS: Yes. A matter that has been in dispute between the traders of Geraldton and the Railway Department, which controls the wharf there, is whether electric cranes should be provided. I understand that the only provision for landing cargo at Geraldton, apart from the gear of ships, is a 7-ton hand-crane, which is taken across from the loco. sheds to the wharf as required. For a port of the importance of Geraldton, such provision appears to me to be totally inadequate. The Railway Depart-

ment states that the hand crane has met all requirements up to date and that the installation of a crane on the wharf is not warranted, but the trades people say it is definitely warranted and have made application for it. The exports that the harbour would handle are wheat and flour, and I think it can reasonably be assumed that within a short period the installation of freezing works would be warranted to deal with the fat lambs raised in the hinterland.

It is interesting to note the expenditure on the respective harbours. The information I am about to give was supplied by the Commonwealth Minister to Senator Collett in the Senate about three weeks ago, and was made up to October, 1943. The figures are—Fremantle, £1,604,551 including wharf construction and dredging; Geraldton, £849,670 including wharf construction and dredging.

Hon. J. C. Willecock: Did you say £849,000?

Mr. STYANTS: Those are the figures supplied to Senator Collett in the Senate.

Hon. J. C. Willecock: That must be the total.

Mr. STYANTS: I am giving the expenditure on the respective harbours to October, 1943.

Hon. J. C. Willecock: That is for all time.

Mr. STYANTS: The expenditure on other ports has been—Bunbury, £326,071 including facilities for bulk-handling of wheat; Esperance £76,409 and Albany £214,142. If those figures are not correct, it is not my fault. They were supplied by the Federal Minister to Senator Collett. Should the exact date on which the information was given by the Minister be required, I can obtain it from the person who supplied me with the figures I have quoted. The inquiry should also be directed to ascertaining the effect on the trading community in the towns from and to which traffic may be diverted. It is, of course, logical that if it is decided to use these outports and the result is that one town would receive a great increase in the volume of its business, while another town may lose business, the inquiry should embrace an investigation into just exactly what the results would be.

An important phase of the proposed inquiry is the effect upon the transport system. If zoning were adopted—and I think it should be, because lesser haulage would result—there would be a saving to both producers and consumers, as the freight charges would be less, the engine power required not so great and the depreciation of rollingstock reduced. I do not think, however, that zoning should be adhered to strictly; it should be adopted more or less as a general principle. For instance, Katanning is 115 miles from Albany and would readily fit into the Albany zone. It is 148 miles from Bunbury; but if there should be a vessel loading at Bunbury for which cargo from Katanning, or in its vicinity, were available, then although the distance to Bunbury is an additional 33 miles, Bunbury should get the cargo, rather than that the authorities should stick hard and fast to the mileages which might be set out in the zone system. In the declaring of zones, railway grades would be an important factor. The actual declaring of the zones for the particular ports could be decided by the officers of the Railway Department, either by the local superintendent of the district concerned or by some officer in the central office at Perth.

There is only one other point I wish to deal with, namely, harbour control. The committee should inquire into this point. Our harbours are controlled by various authorities. In some cases the authorities appear to be satisfactory to the people using the wharves; in other cases they are not. The harbour at Geraldton is controlled by the Harbours and Lights Department, but the wharf is controlled by the Railway Department. The harbour at Bunbury is controlled by the Bunbury Harbour Board, the members of which are controlled by the Government; the Harbours and Lights Department controls the pilots and navigation lights, while the Railway Department acts as contractor for haulage from the jetty on behalf of the Bunbury Harbour Board. At Busselton the harbour is controlled by the Harbours and Lights Department and the jetty by the Railway Department. At Albany the port is controlled by the Harbours and Lights Department and the jetty by the Railway Department.

It is interesting to note that an Act, entitled the Albany Harbour Act, was

passed by Parliament in 1926, but was never implemented, as Cabinet in 1929 decided against the appointment of a board at Albany. At Esperance the harbour is controlled by the Harbours and Lights Department and the jetty by the Railway Department. At Port Hedland the Railway Department controls the jetty, the reason being that there is a clause in the Government Railways Act providing that any jetty connected with a main railway comes under the control and authority of the Railway Department. If the Government agreed to the appointment of this Select Committee, the views of interested parties could be obtained.

The latter part of my motion deals with the question whether the administration of harbours throughout the State should be concentrated under one harbour authority and to what extent existing legislation would need to be amended for the purpose. As to whether the control should come under one central authority, I should say that is a matter which ought to be decided by the Select Committee. In conclusion, I want to say that in order to use the outports to their fullest extent and economically to the State, it is necessary that wharfage, as distinct from berthage, be provided for. It also seems reasonable that port facilities must precede port development in most respects. True, ship-owners have an objection to coming into ports where it takes a long time to discharge or load cargo. It is well known that one berth, properly equipped, will handle as much or more cargo, both inwards and outwards, than two or three berths equipped with out-of-date facilities. It seems that not any of our outports are provided with modern facilities sufficient to load and unload ships of 7,000 or 8,000 tons expeditiously. They appear to be able to deal with ships of from 1,000 to 2,000 tons, such as small coastal boats.

The members of the committee could travel to the various ports, and obtain information from reliable people who would be only too willing to testify before the committee. I feel that if better use is made of our outports, much will be done to lessen the present undesirable centralisation which has prevailed over so many years. The persons appointed to the Select Committee will have much work to do, but the information which they will obtain I

have no doubt will prove to be invaluable and will result in substantial benefit to the progress of the State. I hope the Government will agree to the appointment of the proposed Select Committee, and I feel certain that much good will result from the inquiry.

On motion by Mr. Hill, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 8.30 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 6th September, 1945.

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

QUESTIONS.

FISHERIES.

As to Crayfish, Perth Herring, Canning, Etc.

Mr. KELLY asked the Minister for the North-West:

1, What amount of crayfish have been canned in Western Australia since the commencement of canning operations?

2, What was the output of Perth herring from Western Australian canning factories for the year ended the 30th June, 1945, (a) Perth, (b) Mandurah?

3, Now that hostilities have ended will canned fish and canned crayfish be made available for civilian consumption in greatly increased quantities?

4, What are the possibilities of increased expansion in either, or both, of these canning industries?

5, Is consideration being given to increasing the size permitted to be caught for canning purposes for (a) herring, (b) crayfish?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (for the Minister for the North-West) replied:

1, At Geraldton cannery, January, 1942, to August, 1945—56,635 dozen 7 oz. tins.

2, Year ended the 30th June, 1945: Perth—6,621 dozen 1 lb. tins; Mandurah—No canning done.

3, Small quantities of locally canned fish are at present available for civilian consumption. It is anticipated that greatly increased supplies will be available to civilians in the near future.

4, Supplies of Perth herring and crayfish indicate the possibility of considerable expansion in the fish canning industry.

5, The minimum legal lengths for Perth herring and crayfish apply in the taking of these fish for any purpose. There is no present intention of varying the existing legal minima.

POST-WAR RECONSTRUCTION.

As to Regional Planning.

Mr. WATTS asked the Premier:

1, Referring to the map showing the sixteen regions into which Western Australia has been divided for purposes of regional planning which was recently laid on the Table of the House, is he satisfied that, as proposed, the Albany region should be confined to the road board districts of Albany, Denmark, Plantagenet, Gnowangerup, Cranbrook and Phillips River, thereby leaving out a substantial proportion even of that area which is now known as the Albany Zone, and which is related to Albany geographically and by community of interest?

2, For what reason is it considered that road board districts as far apart, for example, as Bruce Rock and Upper Blackwood, where climatic, production and other conditions are so diverse, should be included in the Great Southern region?

3, Would it not be more advisable for such a road board district as Tambellup to be included in the Albany region, probably with others adjacent thereto, and for a road board district such as Bruce Rock to be included in the Eastern Wheatbelt region?