

Legislative Council.

Wednesday, 9th August, 1944.

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

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Fifth Day.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. C. R. CORNISH (North) [4.35]: I would like to associate myself with the remarks of the previous speakers with regard to the present war situation. Our prospects of victory are much brighter today than they were 12 months ago. Australia can thank our Navy, Army and Air Force for keeping the war from this country. Our lads met the enemy outside our country and saved us from the horrors of war. Nothing is too good for them when they return and I trust the Government of the day will do everything possible for their rehabilitation in civil life. They should have preference, and, in these days of priorities, No. 1 priority should be given to the front line troops. I endorse the remarks of Mr. E. H. H. Hall in asking the Government to do something to secure accommodation for pupils attending high schools. I know of the need at Geraldton for such accommodation, about which Mr. Hall spoke, and we also have our difficulties at Carnarvon.

Hon. C. B. Williams: What! About the price of bananas?

Hon. C. R. CORNISH: No, with regard to school children.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Bananas are 3s. 6d. a dozen.

Hon. C. R. CORNISH: Knowing that the Minister for Education is sympathetic, we can leave it to him to do something in the matter of providing additional accommodation in the near future. I was pleased to hear the remarks of the Minister for Education on the subject of child delinquency. He said that he had studied the report of the Royal Commission and would give effect to its recommendations. Two of the three points made by the Commission should be carried out immediately. The first, that of

a detention barracks for youths at the Roestreet gaol, has been given effect to. The second was the formation of an advisory council to act in conjunction with the magistrate, while the third was that a detention home should be erected to accommodate about 12 boys from which they could not escape. This home was to be used for the reception and instruction of boys who would not stay in other homes.

Such boys escaped and continually got into trouble. They are abnormal lads who, having committed one crime, keep on in their bad course. Some have been convicted of as many as 37 crimes. The Commission considered that a detention home should be built from which these lads would be unable to escape and in which they could be trained to equip themselves for life upon their release. This recommendation so far has not been carried out. The work should be put in hand at once. It is a terrible thing to hear of the crimes committed by the youths as enumerated by Mr. Hall. It makes one wonder when one reads of lads pillaging trucks and destroying goods by pouring sauces and wine over them. They should be confined in a home with a suitable man in charge of them.

As the war is approaching its end, I suppose our responsibility is to make a few suggestions regarding works that could be carried out in the post-war period. We could very well spend some money in the North-West on the betterment of the water supplies of the towns along the coast. About 200 or 300 people live at Shark Bay, and they have to rely on well water and whatever rain they can catch in tanks—if they have any tanks. I do not know that very much can be done for that centre. Our engineers may be able to suggest some form of water supply to provide for the needs of the residents. If a farmer or a pastoralist were to build a home in the bush, the first thing he would do would be to look for a copious supply of good water, which is one of the greatest needs of our daily life. The 200 or 300 people at Shark Bay are living on what is practically salt water obtained from alongside the coast. Carnarvon, which is somewhat further north, has a good supply. That town was lucky in that the Government started a big and palatial meat-works there a few years ago at a cost of about £165,000. A good water supply was installed to meet the requirements of

the works, and the town has benefited as a result.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Which Government did that, a Labour Government?

Hon. C. R. CORNISH: I forget.

Hon. C. B. Williams: It was a Labour Government.

Hon. C. R. CORNISH: The meat-works were never completed, and that is one of the greatest tragedies of the North. We want freezing works along the coast, but not of such magnitude as those at Carnarvon, which were to cater for tinned meats and suchlike. The water supply cost £36,000, and not even a rabbit has been killed there. Carnarvon, as a result, with its wonderful supply of water is one of the garden cities of the North. Further north is Onslow, which is practically living on salt water. I do not know how many grains of salt to the gallon that water contains, but it is very salty.

Hon. L. Craig: The people are always a bit pickled up there!

Hon. C. R. CORNISH: The people have rainwater tanks to supplement their water supplies, and, from what we are told by engineers and others who should know, there is a wonderful supply in the Cain River, about 14 miles away, from which water could be conveyed to Onslow. The population would, I am sure, be much more healthy if that were done. I have seen really beautiful children reared in Onslow and further north, but they should have the benefit of a decent water supply. It is only a matter of money and work, and I take it we will have plenty of both in the post-war period. Onslow could be made into one of the nicest places in the North. It has a wonderful climate and plenty of facilities for swimming in the sea, but it has not a drop of water with which to grow a blade of grass, a lettuce or anything else. The water used for ordinary household purposes is salty and hard, and after a shower one's hair stands out in streaks.

Further north is Roebourne which has a beautiful big pool, but it is practically salt and water supplies from it are useless for growing purposes. It is connected only to the hotel and some other places in the town. Most people who want that water have to cart it in buckets. The town lives on the rainwater tanks. The people there will not swim in this pool. I had a swim in it, and an old lady said to me, "Did you

swim in the pool?" I said, "Yes." She said, "The niggers and the cattle go in there." I said, "Well, there is plenty of room for me and them, too." The Government could easily put in a scheme further up the creek to supply good water to the town, so that the people could have vegetable gardens and grow tropical and sub-tropical fruits, and whatever else can be grown there. Port Hedland is still further north, and its case is absolutely the dead limit! When I was there about six months ago, the water was turned off at 6 o'clock at night. A tub in the bathroom would be filled, and in the morning one could dip his pail into it and put the water into a wash-basin.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: That was only at times.

Hon. C. R. CORNISH: That water was very hard. It was not drinkable, and it would not help to grow anything. The people there depend on their rainwater tanks. I suppose 300 or 400 people reside at Port Hedland, and that is the state of their water supply. The soldiers stationed in the locality went out about 14 miles to the river, sank a few bores and found beautiful water. When I was there, they reckoned they had a supply of 3,000 gallons of fresh water an hour from one bore alone. There is no reason why they should not sink two or three bores, but 3,000 gallons an hour is sufficient to give Port Hedland an adequate water supply. It is our job to bring these matters before the Government to let it know where it can spend a little money to advantage. Port Hedland is a town right on the coast, with sea swimming, but no fresh water. Women and children will not live there. It is occupied mostly by men and the natives. Broome is one of the biggest towns of the North, but the water there is very hard. It can be used for showers, but rainwater is availed of for drinking purposes.

Broome has a big rainfall and the people should have adequate tanks, but they have not. It is extraordinary that people who live in the North for years never get a decent rainwater tank. At Broome sufficient water to meet all requirements could be caught in underground tanks and the inhabitants then would be able to cultivate little gardens and have decent showers. But they do not do it; they live on the hard water. Only hard water is available at the

hotel for ordinary purposes; the rainwater is used for drinking purposes and for tea. Further north we come to Derby, which has a beautiful supply of water but nothing with which to pump it. All they do there is to supply the ships. They have a windmill, and while I was there in the middle of summer the windmill was shut off. There was no scheme water in the town. Only a trickle of water could be obtained from the taps. Many people complained that they could not get water, and that the water was made available only to the ships. The authorities fill the ships' tanks and shut the whole town off.

Hon. T. Moore: Who is in charge of the scheme?

Hon. C. R. CORNISH: I suppose the Public Works Department, but no one seems to care. Of course, it was wartime when I was there. At Derby they can grow tropical and sub-tropical fruits, such as pawpaws, mangoes and tomatoes. Other types of vegetables are also grown, but very few residents have gardens because of the water scheme. I also think that the people living in Derby's torrid climate should have a swimming pool. I lived at Katanning 20 years ago and we had then to go to Police Pool, about six miles out, if we wanted a swim, but now that town has a fine swimming pool where Olympic champions could compete. Derby is situated right on the coast and I thought there would be any amount of swimming there, but it is not possible because of the alligators, sharks and the mud. No one ever goes near the sea.

Hon. L. Craig: Is the rise and fall of the tide too great?

Hon. C. R. CORNISH: That, perhaps, is one reason, but it is very muddy. It is impossible to go far out into the sea because of sharks and alligators. One would imagine that at a place like Derby with its large population of women and children of all colours, a swimming pool would be provided, even if only as large as this Chamber. The children could then have a plunge bath on a hot day. When people have to live under such conditions, is it any wonder that they do not stay too long? I visited the house of one man and he gave us a fruit salad made of mangoes, pawpaws and oranges grown in his backyard, but his was one of the few places where water was available. He was on the direct line of the pipe and could get water. I have not been

to Wyndham, though I have flown over it, but I have been informed by residents that the town has a good water scheme. This is due to the presence of the meatworks, for which the water was brought from the King River.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: It is the best water in the State.

Hon. C. R. CORNISH: I cannot vouch for that, but I have been informed that it is good water. If these towns were provided with better water facilities, we would have not only a larger but also a happier population in the North. Many people like the North and would be prepared to live there all their lives provided they could get a few of the amenities that are available to people in the south. There is no reason why they should not have an adequate supply of good water.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Do not they want anything to drink with the water?

Hon. C. R. CORNISH: The importance of transport to the North cannot be too greatly stressed. Until it is given better transport facilities, the North will never make progress. I was invited to visit one of the shipyards on the Swan River and there saw a boat being built. It is not intended to carry cargo, though I was informed by the manager that it could be altered to take cargo. Such a boat could do excellent work on the North-West coast. It could carry 300 tons, could navigate the South Passage and call at all the small ports, carrying supplies north and bringing wool back. In this way the North could be kept in touch with the capital. At present goods lodged for shipment to the North may be held up as long as three or six months. Cement is required for repair work, but this and other work is held up through the delay and, of course, that does not help the place. We want some good fast ships capable of entering all the little ports and running a regular service. We should have at least a weekly service on that coast. The ships should be fitted with refrigerated space.

Hon. L. Craig: The little ships you speak of?

Hon. C. R. CORNISH: I see no reason why they should not be.

Hon. W. J. Munn: Then where would you put the cargo?

Hon. C. R. CORNISH: The vessel I saw would be capable of carrying 300 tons of

cargo and the refrigerated space need not amount to more than 20 to 50 tons. These vessels have engines and electrical plants, and refrigerated space could easily be provided. They are well equipped ships that could go anywhere; in fact, I would be prepared to go around the world in one of them. What would help the North a lot would be a series of freezers at the various ports so that cattle could be slaughtered and the meat held until picked up by a boat. When I was in Carnarvon I saw a truck bring in 107 bales of wool, equal in weight to about 18 tons, and it was just an ordinary single engine of the Diesel type. This truck had transported the wool over tracks, not roads, which shows what can be done in the North. It is level country presenting no engineering difficulties.

According to figures published recently, there are 831,000 head of cattle in the State, of which 700,000 are in the Kimberleys. What are we doing to help the pastoral industry? Recently a big mob of cattle was taken to Queensland and that business was lost to this State. We rear the cattle and allow them to be taken to Queensland to be treated.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: The growers are getting good prices for them.

Hon. C. R. CORNISH: But that does not help this State. In the little freezing works at Broome I saw some excellent meat. The cattle had been reared in the district and killed locally. I was informed that last year 6,000 head were killed at Broome. I am referring to the new works put up by Mr. Farrell, which are doing a good job.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Any relation to the meat controller?

Hon. C. F. Baxter: The same man.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. C. B. Williams: A very pertinent question.

Hon. C. R. CORNISH: I do not know anything about him beyond the fact that he is supplying a long felt-want at Broome. The people of Derby are wrath because they have no freezing works in their town. They say that the cattle feeding the Broome works are being taken there from Derby and ought to be treated at Derby. I cannot see why they should be driven 200 miles from Derby to Broome when they could be killed and treated at Derby. Until we provide up-to-date methods of treating

cattle, the North will continue to be what it is today—a big empty space.

Hon. W. J. Mann: We have a special Minister for the North.

Hon. C. B. Williams: There are two.

Hon. C. R. CORNISH: If freezers were provided at the ports, they could also be used for fish. I was surprised to read in the Press a statement by a Commonwealth Minister to the effect that there were not enough fish in our waters to supply Australia's needs. I consider that anyone who makes a statement of that kind knows nothing about the subject. Have the thousands of miles of our coast line for a distance of 50 to 100 miles out to sea ever been scientifically investigated to determine the extent of the fish life? If we had small freezers at the ports, fish could be stored in them. At all our ports it is a common occurrence for the local fisherman to catch 100 king fish or jewel fish as they are called further North. If a boat happens to be in port, the fish are sold to the boat, but if not, a few are sold and the rest are thrown back into the sea.

I have seen a fisherman take 130 king fish weighing up to 20 lbs. each and many of them had to be thrown back into the sea. Yet the king fish is equal to any other fish. Most of the fish supplied to Perth comes from Shark Bay. After being caught there, it is taken to Hamelin Pool and then conveyed to Geraldton and from Geraldton by refrigerated truck to Perth. Such fish could be caught anywhere along the coast; 5 cwt. or a ton of it could be caught at Carnarvon at every tide and it would be fish of all kinds—salmon, schnapper, cobbler, rock cod, trevally, king fish, etc. I believe there is a small fish trap at Onslow. A fisherman told me that while out in his boat off the North coast he had sailed through two miles of sharks.

Hon. L. Craig: Were they sea-sharks?

Hon. C. R. CORNISH: Yes. He could see nothing but fins for two miles. Shark is one of the finest eating fish we have. I have seen gummy sharks in hundreds. It is only a matter of throwing a net around them to catch them. Anyone can do that. When I was at Shark Bay on one occasion Mr. Adams threw a net into a lagoon close to his house and caught 2 cwt. of whiting schnapper and other kinds of fish.

Hon. C. B. Williams: What are the rents like there? I am thinking of shifting.

Hon. C. R. CORNISH: A lot could be done in the way of canning fish. Two attempts were made in that direction, one at Carnarvon and the other at Shark Bay. The Carnarvon proposition was doomed to failure at the start. The old "Torrens" was used and there was a big staff comprising a captain, mate, engineer, and some offsidiers. These men worked on the 8-hour day method and did not catch much fish. The canning, however, was beautifully done. I have heard dozens of people say that those canned fish were the best they had ever eaten. The undertaking went bankrupt because of the high overhead expenses.

Another factory was started at Shark Bay and Mr. Adams also turned out a beautiful product. I took a case of his fish and found it very good. When I asked for a second case I was told that the industry had ceased to exist. I asked Mr. Adams what the trouble was and he said that he could not sell his product. He had received a few orders from Perth and Carnarvon, but there had been no repeat orders and he had to close down. The works are still there, but Mr. Adam's trouble is that he cannot secure tin. I should think that an industry of that description could well be started again now that tinned fish are in such short supply. I had a couple of tins of that fish some six months ago that was five years old, and it was equal to any salmon I have ever tasted.

Carnarvon is called "The Monument of Government Failures" because of what happened to the meat works, the canning works and the peanut industry. All those industries could have been successful if they had been worked on the right lines. The meat works should have been established on modern lines and about a quarter of the size they were. They should be capable of employing five or six men who could be picked up locally and the stock itself could come from the surrounding district.

The Chief Secretary: What was the chief cause of the works ceasing to operate?

Hon. C. F. Baxter: There was no stock.

Hon. C. R. CORNISH: There was a drought, and the works were built on too big a scale. The tragedy was that everything was pulled down, together with the cool storage rooms that had been so carefully insulated and which for the expenditure of a few pounds could readily have been brought back into use. It would be possible to keep two refrigerating chambers in

full use if a modern plant were erected. The undertaking should then prove a success. The works could also have been used in connection with the keeping of fish as well as for dealing with meat. As it is, the cattle in the district cannot be got away and gradually die of old age. When the works were in existence lots of cattle used to be brought in and treated there.

The peanut farms are going strong today but in addition to peanuts people are now growing tomatoes, bananas, sub-tropical fruits and citrus fruits. Last year the banana industry was worth £60,000. It is as yet in its infancy. We are perhaps lucky the war broke out because we have a market for the bananas and have been able to get good prices for them. But for Carnarvon no bananas would have been available in this State.

Hon. J. Cornell: I have not had one yet at the price.

Hon. C. R. CORNISH: Perhaps the hon. member was too poor to buy one. When I was up there a fortnight ago I heard that dozens of whales had been seen frolicking outside the port and as far up as the North-West Cape. Each whale is worth from £1,000 to £3,000, according to the statement of whalers. These are easily caught by means of modern equipment. I was talking to a skipper who told me that this was the handiest port in the world for whales, as they came within a mile or so of the landing stage. It is possible to catch six or eight whales a day with small vessels exactly like those which have been built at Fremantle. A gun is carried in front of the ship which is capable of travelling at eight knots an hour. The whales are shot with the gun.

The Chief Secretary: It sounds easy.

Hon. C. R. CORNISH: There is not much in it. A few Norwegians would soon give the industry a start. Our men who have been away and trained as sailors on mine-sweepers, submarine chasers and the like might well wish to embark upon this industry on their return.

Hon. G. B. Wood: Why not have a go at it yourself?

Hon. C. R. CORNISH: It requires money. That is the crux of the whole thing. The Premier said it was a question for private enterprise and not for the Government. If a few men each put in a few thousand

pounds and formed a co-operative company there is no reason why whaling should not be successful along the coast. We should be more sea-minded. Once a man goes to sea and learns of the wealth that lies in it he nearly always remains sea-minded. I notice from the report of the Chamber of Commerce that in 1934 there were 5,500,000 sheep in the pastoral areas, that these in 1937 had dropped to 2,750,000 because of the drought, but that the numbers had now risen to 3,250,000. Although the drought did a lot of harm, I think it also did a great deal of good. It was the worst drought known in the history of the State. The good point about the drought was that the pastoralists had to find water in order to keep their sheep alive. They were able to get water from wells in places they had never dreamt of.

A water supply is the main essential for the pastoral industry, and many people engaged in it have now got beautiful well water. They thus have an insurance against future droughts. Although these people are going through a bad time I do not think the numbers of sheep are likely to fall below present figures. I admit the season is very dry but there is every chance of keeping up the numbers of sheep. Sheep must have water. If people have country in which there is no water it is valueless to them. Good water will turn a desert into a good grazing area. I hear that the Broken Hill Pty. contemplates opening up the Yampi Sound iron-ore deposits. That will be the beginning of a successful era for the North-West, because it will probably mean the opening up of other industries as well. The North-West might well become a land that will be wonderful for people to live in.

Hon. L. Craig: The iron-ore will be brought down here.

Hon. C. R. CORNISH: The industry will mean work for a lot of people and the employment of a good deal of shipping. I liked to think of this firm going up there. It will show us what to do with our own country. The iron-ore deposits are amongst the finest in the world. I congratulate Mr. Cornell upon his speech regarding the rehabilitation of our soldiers, and am 100 per cent. behind him in all that he said, as well as behind the R.S.L. Our duty is to do as much as possible for the lads who have done so much

for us. I have pleasure in supporting the motion.

HON. L. CRAIG (South-West): In speaking to the motion the first thing I would like to mention is the music we hear at the picture shows. I am disgusted, as are many other people, to find when going to the pictures, when everything is quiet and everybody is in his seat, that we are called upon to rise for "Advance Australia Fair." Nearly everyone in the theatre appears to get up when that tune is played. The people are like sheep, for as they rise in front, others behind follow suit until most people are standing. People do like to stand when the National Anthem is played. I believe the playing of "Advance Australia Fair" represents a deliberate attempt to belittle the National Anthem.

Hon. J. Cornell: That is enough for us.

Hon. L. CRAIG: At the end of the show when people are rushing down the aisles and scrambling to get out the National Anthem is played. I understand the instruction with regard to "Advance Australia Fair" is a Federal one.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Question!

Hon. L. CRAIG: It is time the people of this State protested against this sort of thing. There is for us only one National Anthem, only one loyalty and only one King. Let us not have this mournful dirge that is worthy only of the people responsible for it. I am surprised at our community falling for this sort of thing. The other night my wife and I refused to move when the local tune was played, but people rose in a wall around us. In front of me was an airman. Afterwards when he saw we were not standing he turned round and said, "I wish to hell I had known you were sitting down; I wanted to stay sitting but did not have the courage to do so." I hope some publicity will be given to this matter, so that the feelings of the people may be gauged. I also hope some of our picture show proprietors will have the courage to resist this deliberate attempt to belittle our National Anthem.

I desire to protest against the spending of public funds in connection with the "Yes" side of the referendum.

Hon. J. Cornell: It is not being spent, but squandered.

Hon. L. CRAIG: I prefer to use the word "spent." This is the taxpayers' money

and many who may be supporters of the "No" campaign find themselves contributing to the "Yes" campaign in this way, which is nothing short of dishonest. It is utterly wrong for the Commonwealth Government to use money in support of one side of a campaign. I support Mr. Cornell's remarks about the settlement of soldiers on the land, and would like to congratulate the Rural Reconstruction Commission on the reports so far issued. The first, a general survey, is an excellent report, first-class in every way. It could almost be used as a textbook in rural schools because it indicates the pitfalls of land settlement. It points out the fundamental things to avoid and the fundamental necessities for successful settlement on the land. I have never seen a report that was so sound in its findings. The second report, which deals with soldier settlement, is controversial, but on the whole it also is a first-class report. I understand it is likely there will be some differences between the Commonwealth and State authorities as to the responsibilities and the financial contributions in regard to the rehabilitation of soldiers on the land.

Hon. A. Thomson: It looks as though the Commonwealth Government wants the States to carry the responsibility.

Hon. L. CRAIG: There can be no question as to who should bear the responsibility. It is impossible and quite unfair to expect the State authorities to have any responsibility except that of supervision. Let us examine the position of New South Wales and Western Australia. This State supplied to the Forces a far greater proportion of its population than did New South Wales. Consequently there will be far greater numbers returning to Western Australia and the responsibility per ratio of the population should be suitably adjusted. Secondly, the majority of the people of New South Wales who joined the Forces were not agriculturists, but industrial workers.

In Western Australia the proportion of men from the rural areas who joined the Forces was greater. That means that a far greater proportion of the soldiers returning from the war will want to go back to the rural areas. The cost of rehabilitating men in the rural areas is very much greater than that of any other form of rehabilitation. The cost of soldier settlement after

the last war was £45,000,000. That was the amount actually written off—not the cost, but the loss. Of that amount £23,000,000 represented the Government's loss and the rest the loss of banks and other institutions. An amount of £1,200 per settler was written off. It is inevitable that in any rural reconstruction scheme there will be losses. I hope that the losses will not be anything like those after the previous war but that there will be some loss is inevitable. It is unbelievable that the Commonwealth should expect a State to bear that loss, especially a State which supplied far more than its proportion of enlistments and which will have a much greater proportion of men returning to rural industries.

I hope the State Minister will resist under all conditions the taking of responsibility for financing the settlement of soldiers on the land. Men were taken from the land by the Commonwealth and surely it is the Commonwealth's responsibility to return them to the land. I had something to do with repurchased estates after the last war when I was a member of the Lands Purchase Board. The report to which I have referred points out that the repurchased estates which were cut up were not so successful as the small farms occupied by men who sold out and were succeeded by others. Let us assume that there will be losses which the taxpayers will have to meet on any settlement scheme. This time, however, I hope a good deal of developmental work will be done on land which today is undeveloped.

Hon. A. Thomson: Hear, hear!

Hon. L. CRAIG: I hope that will be done so that whatever loss occurs we shall at least have an asset which was not an asset previously. With modern plant, developmental work can be done extraordinarily cheaply. Even with wages as high as they are, developmental work can be carried out very cheaply. We have large areas of land which are or could be brought within an irrigation scheme. Within an irrigation area a settler requires only a small holding and if he is a worker he cannot fail. What I have in mind is the clearing of the land by the use of large power bull-dozers for the pushing over of the trees and placing them together. It can be done today. It has already been tried at Wokalup and I believe that the cost was about £1 an

acres for pushing trees over. Bull-dozers are necessary for grading work. There is an unlimited demand for them. On my tiny two-penny half-penny farm I would be prepared to employ a bull-dozer at £10 a day for six months. There are hundreds of acres of that land suitable for settlement. The work that would have to be done is of national importance. If it were done, the land would be graded suitably for irrigation and would have a very high productive value. Drained, graded and irrigated the land is worth £40 an acre.

The point I make is that if a soldier should prove unsuitable for the land—if he was not a worker or there was something else wrong and it had to be abandoned by him—there would be something left, something good for somebody else to take over. There would be no loss on the purchase as there has been in the past in respect of the purchase of farms. Of the £1,200 per settler that was lost in connection with the previous land settlement scheme the greatest portion was written off the value of the land. If undeveloped land of low value—say £2, £3 or £4 an acre—is cleared and, with the use of modern plant, is developed up to a value of £20 per acre, we have something left if the settler proves unsuccessful and for such land there would be an immediate purchaser at a high price. I hope that schemes of this sort will be considered before we start this rotten business of buying out men who have been successful and putting on their land men who would not be.

Hon. G. B. Wood: Do you not think the Government should start to get some farms ready now?

Hon. L. CRAIG: Yes. But the difficulty is to get the plant. There is an unlimited demand for bull-dozers and power plant from people who have land. People down my way are crying out for these things and the productive capacity of the land could be tremendously increased. Members can hardly conceive of the increased production that would take place if all the draining work were done. But we cannot have successful irrigation farms unless the land is done properly and the land is suitably drained.

Hon. A. Thomson: Mr. Wood asked whether something could not be done to-day. Do you know whether the Government has arrived at any decision or whether any areas have been selected?

Hon. C. B. Williams: Mr. President, is this a speech or an interjection?

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. A. Thomson: Oh, sit down!

Hon. L. CRAIG: I do not know whether the Government has any land in mind but I do know that the department would like to have the use of bull-dozers now. I discussed the matter with Mr. Baron Hay and I know that every effort is being made to secure plant for the use of settlers. There are big areas of land waiting to be properly developed. A thousand acres would settle at least 10 farmers. It is very much better to have 10 farmers on a thousand acres where there are roads, schools and railway facilities. The capital outlay would be so much less and the production so much more.

Hon. A. Thomson: I agree.

Hon. L. CRAIG: A hundred acres is plenty. If I were young, I would be prepared to start on a 100-acre farm and would make a good job of it.

Hon. G. B. Wood: While prices are good!

Hon. L. CRAIG: A man on a farm of that size could compete successfully with many men on 1,000 or 2,000-acre holdings. I had a man working for me, who married our cook. They are both splendid people and now have a 70-acre property opposite mine. I should like to bet the man is banking from £200 to £300 a year and he would not call the King his uncle. A stranger walked in the other day and pleaded with him to sell the farm for £40 an acre. He replied, "I do not know what I would do with the money if you gave it to me." There is land in that area which could be developed and I consider that is the proper form of soldier settlement to undertake, instead of placing men on farms of over 1,000 acres where the plant requirements are so great. A small farm requires very little plant. All I have is a single-furrow plough. I have not even got a chaffcutter.

Hon. G. B. Wood: How do you pull it?

Hon. L. CRAIG: I push it! The other day I was talking to a man who is engaged in wheat farming on a fairly extensive scale, and he said that he would go off his farm if he could not have a Diesel tractor. I agreed with him in that respect. He emphasised that he had to have heavy plant with which to carry out his farming operations. A successful wheat farmer carrying on in a big way would have on his property plant valued at £4,000 or more. I believe that would be

the value of the plant owned by the man I refer to. A tractor, for instance, costs £1,200 and heavy ploughs are required when worked in conjunction with a tractor. Imagine settling people without capital or experience on a property with £2,000 worth of plant on it! It is ridiculous to contemplate. No one could stand the burden. On every modern machine farm today there must be highly skilled men. If there were not, the value of the £3,000 worth of plant would be gone with the snap of the fingers. That is no way to settle people on the land. Rather must it be done on small areas where the risk of failure will be so much less.

Following on soldier settlement will be migration. I understand statisticians claim that without migration the population of Australia will never exceed 8,000,000. The population at present is over 7,000,000. Perhaps in 40 or 50 years it may reach 8,000,000, but of that number nearly 1,000,000 will be old-age pensioners and suchlike. On our present birth rate, Australia's population will never exceed 8,000,000. If that is so—and I believe it is so, according to very high authorities—what are we to do? It looks as though we must have migration, more perhaps for defence purposes than for anything else.

I am not too enthusiastic about bringing here strangers who are without capital. It may be better to have half a million well-educated, contented people with some little means than to secure an addition of 1,000,000 people not in that category. Even though it may be necessary to increase our population for defence purposes, I hope the State will not bear the cost of any such rush of migrants. I trust Western Australia will resist with all its possible power the finding of money for migration purposes. We know what amount was written off on account of group settlement losses, and we do not desire to repeat that experience. Migrants should be carefully selected and it would pay the Government to start secondary industries, even if the State were to lose £300,000 or £400,000. It would be better to achieve that result in the establishment of secondary industries rather than to waste such a total on land settlement.

Hon. C. B. Williams: If you advocate that, you had better join the Labour Party!

Hon. L. CRAIG: I do not suggest that the Government itself should start the industries. I believe it is always better to encour-

age private people to do so, and I am sure Mr. Williams will agree with me. We require markets for our primary products as well as some check on the importation of goods brought to this country. We should do more than experiment with land settlement schemes. So far, this State has done nothing but experiment in that direction. Let us try something else. If another land settlement scheme were to be inaugurated, we would have people saying, "We have already lost a few millions in connection with that sort of scheme." If we were to lose money in some other direction, I do not think there would be so many complaints. We all appreciate that the farmer requires markets in which to dispose of his products. The trouble that we may anticipate after the conclusion of hostilities will not be in connection with production but with the securing of markets. If the Atlantic Charter means what it says, we may be placed in a very awkward position. It means free access to the markets of the world, which means that Great Britain will not be able to provide any Empire preference for Empire goods.

Hon. C. B. Williams: I think you had better cancel your trip to the South-West because you are endorsing our policy.

Hon. L. CRAIG: I shall certainly not do that, and I do not think the hon. member is a very strong "Yes" man.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. L. CRAIG: I shall now mention a subject about which I have felt very sore for some years, but I have not referred to it before. Recently I have had a number of complaints and I intend to raise the matter, which has reference to Government departments. When the irrigation scheme was inaugurated in the South-West, departmental officers urged the people to accept the proposition. One officer attended a meeting at which quite 100 people were present, and set out what was to be done. A question was asked, and, in my hearing as well as in that of more than a hundred others, certain promises were made. The people asked, quite reasonably, "If you are going to do this on our land, what will it cost us?" The officer replied, "If you come into this scheme, one-third of your irrigable area will have to be rated."

One of the residents said, "If I have a hundred acres, 60 of which will be irrigated, does that mean I will have to pay rates on

20 acres?" The man was told that that was the position. Today, with no authority from Parliament or from anyone else, so far as I am aware, those people are being rated on one-third of the whole of their holdings if one-third of the whole of the land is irrigable. Members will note the difference, although the position may sound much the same. The effect is that the compulsorily ratable area on some farms has been more than doubled. That is an instance of cunning, and it is not very nice. It is the difference between a rating imposed on one-third of the irrigable area and on one-third of the whole area if irrigable.

Hon. G. B. Wood: I cannot see any difference.

Hon. L. CRAIG: There certainly is a difference.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: Give members figures so that they can note the comparison.

Hon. L. CRAIG: A farm may consist of a hundred acres, of which 60 acres are irrigable. In that case, the compulsory rating would be on one-third of the 60 acres, or 20 acres. In the other instance, a man may have a farm of a hundred acres, the whole of which is irrigable. In that instance, one-third of the irrigable area would mean that the compulsory rating would apply to 33½ acres. Probably nineteen out of twenty people did not note the difference at first, but I certainly did because of my rate notices. I have no possible chance of using the whole of my farm. I claim that that treatment was unfair and unjust. I asked a question about the matter in the House, and I received a most futile answer.

In my hearing, a head of the department was asked about the drainage rates. The answer that officer gave was, "If drains are constructed and you benefit, you will have to pay rates. If you receive no benefit from the drain constructed, you will pay no rates." The man replied, "If that is the position, it is quite all right. It means: No benefit, no rates." He had been considering dealing with a certain area upon which no drains were necessary. The head of the department told him that the area would not be rated because it required no works to be constructed. In view of the two specific promises the settlers decided to accept the risk. Within two or three years departmental officers again visited the locality and announced that, in effect, no officer had any

real authority to make the promises I refer to. That is the position.

Hon. F. E. Gibson: Were the rates varied in the first, second and third years?

Hon. L. CRAIG: The areas were not rated at all at first but suddenly the officials came along and said that the land would be rated. Today the settlers are paying up to £20 or £30 per farm for their drainage, and that represents a heavy capitalisation for most of them.

Hon. G. B. Wood: Who did that—the Minister or the head of the department?

Hon. L. CRAIG: The head of the department, I presume.

Hon. A. Thomson: Do you derive any benefit from the drainage scheme?

Hon. L. CRAIG: None whatever.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Some of them have made a fortune out of this scheme in the South-West and the general taxpayer has to pay interest and sinking fund. Some of the farms are valued at £40 an acre.

Hon. L. CRAIG: The fact remains that the departmental officer made these promises and hoodwinked the settlers, who are feeling very sore about it. Another senior officer attended the local road board meeting and asked in my presence, "Will you give me permission to leave the spoil from the drain on your road?" The road there was very narrow and the request did not appeal to the board members. We said, "That is not fair; it is only a half-chain road, and you intend to dig a deep channel." The officer said, "We will want the spoil for other purposes, and it will not be left there for long. It will be removed within 12 months or, at the outside, within two years." We, as board members, thought that in the circumstances no great difficulty would be created, and we agreed to the request. That was ten years ago, and the spoil is there still! No attempt has been made to remove it, and it lies there in the form of a bank many feet high and stretching along the road for miles.

Hon. J. Cornell: The Crown can do no wrong!

Hon. L. CRAIG: I am not exaggerating when I say that today our road board will not accept any promise from a Government official unless it is in writing. It is very wrong that that feeling should have been created. It is bad when a senior Government official says, "I will do something," and does not carry out his promise. If he

says he will do something, he should do it, or else he should not make the promise.

Hon. C. B. Williams: We were not at war ten years ago, and the promise should have been carried out.

Hon. L. CRAIG: Yes, or else it should not have been made. There is a vast difference between wanting something done by someone and that someone, having been responsible for the original position, then losing interest in the matter. I understand a somewhat similar position arises in connection with the nurses' trouble at Claremont. Their organisation wanted to allow the girls to go to Claremont for a month and now the authorities will not allow that month to be treated as part of their course of training.

The Honorary Minister: You are wrong.

Hon. L. CRAIG: The reason for their attitude is that they were assured that some promise had been made by the department, and now they will not accept the department's assurance. An impression is growing that one cannot trust a department unless one gets something in writing. On the other hand, I am sure that any promise made by a Minister is carried out. I do not believe that any Minister would make a promise and not carry it out. Mr. Cornish raised the question of education, and I am very glad the hon. member did so. The subject has been chopped to pieces for years, as regards the need for better education. Mr. Cornish, however, raised a point which has been worrying several members for a long time—accommodation for high school pupils. I fail to understand the Education Department's attitude in regard to that matter. If the high school system is to be extended to certain areas, accommodation for pupils is just as important as the school itself. The school is of no use unless accommodation is available for pupils.

Hon. J. Cornell: The major question is to get primary education into the country.

Hon. L. CRAIG: It is useless to provide high schools in country centres unless accommodation is provided for children, resident at a distance from the centre, to stay at. That must be done. It is really part of the scheme. In the past schools like the Bunbury High School have proved reasonably satisfactory, children being accommodated all over the town. The Country Women's Association has promised to conduct a hostel for the high school children in Bunbury;

but why should women be expected to spend their time and energy in running hostels? I do not know. The feeling of the women is that somebody has to do that work. I trust that in any future scheme for the expansion of the high school system, the matter of accommodation will receive attention.

We must lift our system of education to a higher plane, and, in my opinion, the accommodation part of the system is part of the high school. Without accommodation, I repeat, a high school is useless. Hostels in association with high schools need not necessarily be conducted by the Government. I do not want the Government to run them. I do, however, want the Government to supervise the hostels. A hostel built by the Government can be let, if that course is thought desirable; but there must be a supervising board. If we want to lift the standard of education for country people—by which term I mean people living at a distance of eight or ten miles from a school—measures must be taken to allow the children of such people to attend school five days per week, with good accommodation under supervision. I support the motion.

On motion by Hon. A. Thomson, debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till Tuesday, the 22nd August.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 5.50 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 9th August, 1944.

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