

Mr. THORN: Yes, it will be. But if I can be assured of that, I shall have nothing more to say. We should allow these people to make a living and not force shopping into the big centres in the city. If the assurance I have sought can be given, I feel that all those who have spoken on this matter will be perfectly satisfied.

On motion by the Minister for Works, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 6.7 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Tuesday, 20th August, 1946.

	PAGE
Leave of absence	320
Address-in-reply, tenth day	320
Bills: Railway (Hopetoun-Ravensthorpe) Discontinu-	
ance, received	329
Transfer of Land Act Amendment, 1A.	329
Bulk Handling Act Amendment, 1A.	329

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

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Hon. W. R. Hall, leave of absence for twelve consecutive sittings granted to Hon. H. Seddon (North-East) on the ground of ill-health.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Tenth Day.

Debate resumed from the 15th August.

HON. V. HAMERSLEY (East) [4.34]:

Allow me to congratulate you, Mr. President, on the high position you have attained in being elected to preside over the doings of this Chamber. I feel sure that you will at all times safeguard the rights and privileges of members, and of the House itself, so that it will long remain a standing example of fair play, freedom and democracy under the charter granted us by the Motherland, to whom we all feel such strong

loyalty and attachment. My congratulations also include Mr. Seddon, our new Chairman of Committees, whom we all wish a speedy recovery of health. I welcome the new members who, I feel sure, will strengthen the confidence held by responsible people of the State in the necessity of maintaining the bicameral system of government as granted to us in the Constitution.

I extend to Mr. Kitson, the Chief Secretary, my congratulations on his appointment as Agent General. He, I am sure, will be an able ambassador of Western Australia. I hope that among his multifarious duties he will be able to divert an endless stream of people to our shores, ready to throw in their lot with us so as to strengthen the bonds and ties of nationhood, and also to inspire hope in a land where there is ample room for new energy and ideas. Such people would also help the population dilemma in which we are likely to be swamped if it is not soon remedied. We want many families!

This is the last session of this Parliament. I would remind old members and advise new ones to be wary on the eve of an election! Do not be too eager to swallow the bait that is put on the line to catch the voters. Australia is in an ugly mess and it will take a lot of nursing to get back on to an even keel, or even on to its financial legs—and the 40-hour week will not help. If one Chamber is enough to govern the country, then I would advise that we pass out the Legislative Assembly.

Hon. A. Thomson: Hear, hear!

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: The Legislative Council created that body, and now the unruly fledgling thinks it can push the parents out of the nest. Human, is it not? I now quote from the Speech—

In common with the rest of the world the State faces serious problems due to the disruption of industry, trade and commerce inevitably arising from six years of war.

That is very true, but I say "fiddlesticks" when it places the period at six years. The disruption of trade has been going on for many years—long before the war started. It has been in existence since we started to stop strikes by the introduction of the Arbitration Act. Strikes were rife throughout Australia and it was our earnest endeavour to help industry and to help our

nation. To do that we had to adopt some scheme, and that of arbitration was the one embraced. Many people have acclaimed it as one of the best put up by any nation. I remember America sending out various people who said that Australia was really a star place.

Hon. G. W. Miles: A worker's paradise!

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: Those are the words I was looking for. But when these people inquired into the position they got other ideas. I remember well the closing sentence of the report one committee made, namely, that Australia was a very fine country gone wrong. With regard to the necessity of producing all that is possible in this country, it is interesting to note that before the 1914-18 war the Germans knew how essential superphosphate was for the production of commodities from the soil in Australia and particularly in Western Australia. Hence it was that when war broke out one of the first aggressive moves made by the Germans was against our sources of supply of phosphatic rock from Nauru and other Pacific islands. Despite that experience, it is extraordinary to note that when we realised that the war that concluded only last year was in the offing, a Perth concern very vitally interested in the production of wheat, asked the Commonwealth Government if anything was being done to fortify Nauru and the other islands for the protection of supplies essential for Australian production. The answer received was that nothing had been done nor was it in contemplation.

We know full well that in these days the world is in a very serious plight. Whether or not there will be a further war very soon is a matter that is just hanging in the balance. I remember that when the latest war started Mr. Seddon, speaking from his place in this Chamber, delivered a very fine speech during the course of which he mentioned that we had no conception of how long the war was likely to continue, and he recalled to our minds some of the earlier experiences of Great Britain, mentioning her participation in the Thirty Years War. We must, in these circumstances, realise what negligence it was on the part of the Commonwealth not to have fortified Nauru and the other islands that are so necessary for Australian production, particularly of wheat and other foodstuffs. Because of that,

it is essential to ensure continuity of supplies of phosphatic rock. This serves to emphasise how necessary it is even now that such steps should be taken in view of our experience gained in two wars. On each occasion our enemies sought to destroy this source of supplies requisite for the promotion of production throughout the Commonwealth. We certainly deserve to go under if we do not take immediate notice of what has happened in the past and take steps to make safe our supplies from Nauru and the other islands in the days to come.

There is much talk of squandering money on broadening the gauge of railways that cross the continent, but that will not help us. The mere fact that our railways will have a broader gauge will cut no ice in the event of further hostilities, and even the military authorities say that the project does not appeal to them. Money that may possibly be spent in that direction could be put to better use in fortifying the islands that have been under mandate to Australia ever since the 1914-18 war. It is certainly up to the Commonwealth to spend money in that direction rather than fool about spending it in a manner that will not help us half so much in the event of trouble in future. While an important matter such as that to which I have drawn attention is left untouched, we find from His Excellency's Speech that various Bills are to be submitted to us.

We will soon be monkeying around with a vermin Bill and also with a disruption Bill, the object of which will be to whittle down the powers of the Legislative Council. These matters are of little importance compared with the major problem I have mentioned. As regards vermin, it is well known that our people are at sixes and sevens. We are taxed with the object of destroying the vermin on our properties and yet at the same time people who go out to catch rabbits are taxed on the skins they take from the vermin. Many of these men say, "We will not catch any more; we will not even try to do so." As to dealing with foxes, when farmers appealed for a larger allowance of petrol to enable them to go round their paddocks at night, it was suggested that they would not do any good and that they would not get foxes that way. It was really an indication of their sporting instinct.

I can assure members that farmers who did that were taking their lives in their hands every time they went into their paddocks. On the other hand, many of them found it was the most effective method to employ in dealing with the foxes, because it was then that the vermin could be found amongst the ewes and lambs. Many of the farmers were not getting a 10 per cent. lambing from their ewes, and yet they could not get a further allowance of petrol from the Government in order to help them destroy one of the greatest vermin menaces—the fox. Then again, many of the farmers are not interested in destroying the fox and I can quote instances where they are not going in for breeding lambs but buy dry sheep which they put to grass. To such farmers the fox is their greatest friend seeing that the fox kills the rabbit which eats the grass.

Dealing now with the wheat stabilisation scheme, in my opinion the Commonwealth Government is dishonest. I was surprised to learn from "The West Australian" of the 17th January, 1946, that Ministers for Agriculture from the different States had agreed upon the details of the scheme as determined by the Commonwealth Government. I cannot help thinking of the time when we were young and read books about brigands, pirates, highwaymen and bushrangers—Ned Kellys—whose one object in life was to bulldoze hardworking, thrifty people and relieve them of their possessions. Today we find Governments taking from one section of the community and distributing largesse to their followers and friends, thus making good fellows of themselves. They treat a contract merely as a scrap of paper, as the Germans did, to be torn up or burnt at their whim or pleasure. They forget they are trustees for the people whose property has been handed to them, in good faith, under National Security Regulations, or commandeered by them. The bureaucrats in charge talk sympathy, but that is all they will concede. Meanwhile, the farmer's condition is so serious that he cannot pay his accounts or meet his engagements. He is left to scratch while those who have control of the money for which he has worked are having a good time.

The farmers at present do not know where they stand in regard to preparing for the next season's crop. I want to know whether the farmers will still be restricted as to the

area they may crop and whether they must have a license to grow wheat. Now that the bureaucrats have control the farmers cannot act as they please; they are serfs and their feelings are almost bringing them to the verge of civil war. In what way will they be further restricted? Many of them are experiencing crop failures, as they did last season. The present abnormal rain have played havoc with the fields and paddocks. Go where one will in the country one will find machinery bogged which cannot be moved. Some farmers have not been able to crop their farms; others who were successful in cropping their farms now find that their crops are waterlogged. What had promise of being a good crop will now only be a water-grass crop. The cost to the farmers will be colossal, and they will be only too glad to receive some portion of the money which has been withheld from them—many millions of money.

The scheme for settling returned soldiers on the land seems to be in a sorry plight and many of our returned men are broken in spirit, especially as they realise that the promises held out to them are not being fulfilled. Few, if any, have been settled on the land up to the present time. Good prices are now ruling and will prevail for many years to come. The present talk of stabilisation of the wheat industry is, in my opinion, a lot of pap. The Government are not helping the returned men at all. I do not wish to take up the time of the House further. I promised that I would finish in half an hour and I have succeeded. I will now resume my seat, as Mr. Loton asked me to be sure to give him a chance to speak. I hope he will be able to place some views before members on topics with which I have not dealt.

HON. A. L. LOTON (South-East) [4.55]

I wish to extend to you, Sir, my hearty congratulations on the position you have now attained, the Presidency of the Council. After your years of service as a politician and a member of the Chamber, it is most fitting that you should at this juncture be elected its President. I feel sure you will discharge the duties of your office in the same way as your predecessor did, without fear or favour to any member.

To the Chief Secretary I extend my congratulations on his appointment to the position of Agent General in London. I do

not think the Government could have made a better choice; but I wish to pass one thing on to him. I would ask that when he is in London he furnish members of this Council with quarterly reports of his doings there, if possible. Since I have been a member of this House I have hardly known that we had an Agent General, and I feel most members will agree with me there. I take it that the Government receives a report from the Agent General, but members should also know something of the work he is doing. To Mr. Seddon I also offer my congratulations. I hope he will soon be restored to health and be with us again. As to the three new members I, as a younger member and the junior member before their election to this Chamber, extend to them a hearty welcome. I hope their stay will be a long and happy one. If they have not already done so, they will find there is a wonderful feeling of good fellowship among the members of this Chamber, irrespective of party or politics. I hope they will be one with us when we are outside the Chamber, as we do appreciate the good feelings members have one for another.

Nearly all country members have spoken on the subject of education. The matter is one that demands attention in our rural areas. The Government has inaugurated many bus services, but these will not solve the problem of the overcrowding of our schools. Provision has been made for extensions to school buildings, but these have not been made. Additional children are arriving at the schools, which are now overcrowded. I do not know how the teachers have been able to carry on their work during the winter months. We have read in the Speech that the school-leaving age is to be raised to 15 years in the near future and that a more complete system of consolidation of schools is to be effected. This makes me wonder whether the walls will be made of elastic; they will have to be if the schools are to accommodate the children.

Another problem is the shortage of teachers. Teaching in the past has not been looked upon as a profession at all—at least in most cases; I make that reservation. Teaching has simply been a job. Most girl teachers went to the country in the hope that before long some poor devil of a farmer who was looking for a house-keeper would make overtures to them. A wedding would then take place and the

Education Department would lose another teacher. Then someone else would be sent out, probably a junior with very little training.

Hon. V. Hamersley: They make good wives.

Hon. A. L. LOTON: Some of them may make better wives than teachers.

Hon. H. L. Roche: That sounds as though you ought to know.

Hon. A. L. LOTON: I would draw attention to the conditions at the Denmark Agricultural School and the Narrogin School of Agriculture. At Denmark there are over 40 boys, and more than 70 at Narrogin. At neither of these institutions is there enough supervision, in my opinion, over the health of the boys. Last session I referred to the need for securing a suitable laundry building for Narrogin, and brought the matter under the notice of the Government. Last year laundry facilities were available privately for the boys at Narrogin, but the man who was doing the work ceased operations. From then on, boys have had to get their washing done as best they could. Early this year the department, realising that the washing could not be done in Narrogin, made provision for the laundry from the school to be sent to Bunbury, or, alternatively, to be sent home by the boys themselves. That is unsatisfactory, both from the point of view of the school and of the parents. I understand now that a building is to be erected; possibly during the ensuing Christmas holidays. I am aware that building material is in short supply, but it is very unsatisfactory that over 70 boys should be without adequate laundry facilities.

Last year, the Railway Department came in for a good deal of comment in this Chamber with regard to refreshment rooms, but it has been let off lightly so far this year. I understand that the department has a man in the State making recommendations, after inspections, in regard to the various refreshment rooms. The sooner some of those recommendations are put into effect, the better will it be for the travelling public. I am afraid the refreshment rooms are run as a source of revenue and not as a convenience for the travelling public. An afternoon train leaves Perth for Narrogin at about a quarter past three, and stops at Chidlow, Spencers Brook, York and Bever-

ley, four times in less than a hundred miles. Every stop occupies some ten minutes to a quarter of an hour. The refreshment room at Chidlow is a disgrace and should not be tolerated by the health authorities. In summertime travellers are presented with some dry bread, and pieces of meat in the form of a sandwich, and a cup of luke-warm coffee. That is all the refreshment room provides. The scale of charges is always the same. One has to take it or leave it. The Railway Department has made no complaint about it, and also "takes it." The buildings at Beverley are wholly unsuitable. The refreshment rooms are housed in the same building as are the lavatory arrangements. If any of the railway officials were to wander into the lavatory, I am sure they would see that something was done in quick time. If anyone likes to travel on the train with me, I will show him these things. This is outside my province, I admit, but I use the railways, as do other people, and I think these matters should be brought to the notice of the House.

Reference was made to S.P. betting by Mr. W. R. Hall and others. I also can speak with some authority on this question. I like a flutter now and then. I fail to see why men and women who live in the country or a town and have to earn their living should not spend their hours of recreation as they desire. If they wish to speculate with a view to accumulating, why should they not do so? As it is, the authorities prosecute a man because he stands in the street taking a few bets. He is charged with obstructing the traffic when, at the same time, one can walk down the street, morning and afternoon, and see a queue outside a tobacco shop or a picture show, and sometimes can see a policeman controlling the queue, and yet these people are not prosecuted. If two or three men write something in a notebook and hand over a few shillings to someone else, they are prosecuted.

I am not complaining about the law but of the manner in which it is carried out. Every Saturday, from 10.30 a.m. onwards, sporting items are broadcast from the National stations. We hear all the betting information, all about the horses, the riders and the tips for the various races. All that sort of thing is going on over the air. The Commonwealth Government is making all these facilities available, and the State de-

partment concerned is making full use of them in order to catch anyone who tries to turn the information to his or her advantage. I hope the betting Bill will not be delayed until the last few days of the session and then be thrown out because there will be insufficient time in which to debate it.

After a good deal of agitation in the lower Great Southern, as a result of the cessation of the wool plan, I am pleased that the Commonwealth Government has agreed that wool appraisements shall again be held at Albany. This means a great deal to that centre, particularly as we are informed in His Excellency's Speech that a plan has been drawn up for the speedy development of the port. During the last 20 years, £140 only has been spent on the development of Albany. To hear that some move is now afoot on the part of the State Government is certainly encouraging. In the past, Albany has been neglected and no plan for its future development has been drawn up with an eye to its future progress. At least we now have hopes. During the war a good deal of use was made of the port of Albany by the American Forces, as well as by other Forces. Many visitors were surprised that such a wonderful harbour should have been lying vacant and not used as it should have been.

During the war years our wool that was sent to Albany for appraisalment was taken back to Fremantle. Our apples were taken back to Fremantle. Our frozen meat, lambs and so on that were sent to Albany for treatment, also went to Fremantle. That is where the bottleneck is. Until Albany is used as a port and facilities are installed, we shall make no progress there. Behind Albany there is a huge hinterland, and the timber supplies should provide for a large export trade in sleepers so that the port could be occupied full-time. Recently it was decided that the town jetty should be closed and fenced off. Despite protests from the local municipal council, a barricade was commenced. The A.L.P. in Albany then got into touch with the Premier, with the result that the barricade has been removed and notices have been erected. If the local council cannot get something done, at all events the A.L.P. can! There is one point in the Speech which has caused me some misgivings. It is stated there that—

Western Australia has the capacity to produce vast quantities of the food which the

world so urgently needs. By increasing production we can make a substantial contribution to relieving the starvation and misery which confront millions of our fellowmen. The Government is endeavouring to promote the maximum production of food in the shortest possible time.

When one ponders over the contents of recent Federal and State Acts, one wonders. We have a wool "grab" of £7,000,000, and we have a wheat "steal" scheme. We find that rabbit skins are worth 1s. 6d. per pound. We have had prisoner-of-war labour withdrawn in the early part of the seeding season. All those men were taken from the farms and herded together in the Northam military camp. They were fed on frozen meat taken from the stores in Fremantle. We have had a shortage of fuel. The railways could not cart fuel from the depots over a large part of the seeding season when the ground was ready to be tilled. On top of that, we have the wool sales commission of 5 per cent. under the new plan. The outlook is not encouraging when we bear all these facts in mind, and we cannot help wondering whether every endeavour is being made to increase production. At any rate, there is sufficient to cause members representing rural areas to ponder. Perhaps the Chief Secretary will deal with these matters when he comes to reply. Meanwhile, I have pleasure in supporting the motion.

HON. H. L. ROCHE (South-East) [5.12]: I should like, Mr. President, to tender you my congratulations on attaining the highest position it is within the power of the House to confer on anyone. It is a tribute to you that the members who have served with you so long on the floor of this Chamber so decisively decided that you should govern their future deliberations. To the Chief Secretary I should like to tender my congratulations upon his appointment as Western Australia's chief representative in London. It is a far cry from what I understand were the push-bike days on the Murchison some years ago to the position of Agent General for Western Australia at the hub of the Empire. I feel sure that he, as well as the President, will worthily justify the confidence that has been reposed in him.

My congratulations are also extended to Mr. Seddon upon his election as Chairman of Committees. I hope he will soon be

restored to health. I congratulate, too, those new members who were returned at the last election. They may find political life somewhat different from what they anticipated, but I feel sure they will give of their best and serve well the people of Western Australia who put them here. Their contributions to the debates in this Chamber will, I am sure, be valuable.

Before expressing my support of the motion before the House, I would like to refer, firstly, to one very important matter that is exercising the minds of many people in the rural areas of Western Australia; that is, the position that obtains in respect of soldier settlement. Last year, when speaking on the Address-in-reply, I expressed the opinion that there seemed to be certain influences at Canberra that were not at all enthusiastic about the establishment of any considerable body of returned soldiers on the land. The 12 months that have elapsed since then have more than confirmed my view that there is a section—if not of the Commonwealth Government then intimately associated with Commonwealth administration—that would far prefer to see the soldiers from this war returning to jobs such as work on the standard gauge railways or some other pick-and-shovel jobs on public works, than that they should be established as farmers, where their enterprise and sense of responsibility for their own welfare and that of the State might lead them to regard with less favour the present trend—which is so obvious—towards the socialisation of the industry in which many of them wish to engage, the opportunity for which is being denied them.

The excuses for the delay are legion and if we accept them all as reasons, we must, I think, reconcile ourselves to the attainment of the millenium before there will be any great body of soldiers from the recent war settled on the land in this country. To me it appears that there is an absolute phobia in Government circles on the matter of soldier settlement. There is the fear that the applicant may not be suitable. Admittedly we do not wish to see men who are unsuitable established on the land at public expense, but it should not be necessary to delay a scheme of this kind for years because it is not possible to establish machinery to check the qualifications or suitability of the

men applying to go on the land. That seems to me probably one of the least tenable of the excuses. There should be in Western Australia, and in the other States, plenty of men available with the requisite knowledge to enable them to approve of the purchase of properties of a reasonable classification that would provide for the returned soldiers who are anxious for land—sufficient land at least to establish some of them.

Some months ago we were told that there would be 11 of them on the land soon. Now I think the story is that there will be 20 soon. The latest information that we have, as the result of a question asked in another place, is that as yet there is none established. This may go on for years, and it may go on for ever unless something of a radical nature is done to change the attitude of—more particularly—the Commonwealth authorities towards soldier settlement. Of course, there is the fear of lack of markets for our produce. That has been emphasised more than once, but I think some people in authority are very pessimistic. In years to come some weaknesses will doubtless develop in the markets for our primary products, but I suggest that such weaknesses are a possibility also in the case of other industries. At times there is even a scarcity of pick-and-shovel jobs. It is one of the risks that must be taken. There is no industry and no job that will be 100 per cent. secure unless the nations of the world get their business relationships on to a sane footing.

I believe that if we have to anticipate a continuing insanity in the business and trade relationships of the nations of the world—as we understand them today—we needs must anticipate the breaking up of our western civilisation and, if that goes, soldier settlement and many other things will go with it. I prefer to anticipate that the efforts that are being made to raise the standard of living of the below-standard countries of the world will be successful and that some considerable improvement in those standards will result, making a greater demand for the food and clothing that we, with our primary industries, can supply. There has never been enough food in the world to go round. As the result of trade and exchange difficulties there have been temporary surpluses in producing countries, but a large section of the world's population has never had adequate nutrition. The over-

coming of that maldistribution I think will provide the remedy against such surpluses accumulating in producing countries, as in the past. If that is to be the excuse for the delay in establishing soldier settlers on a worthwhile basis, we will never have soldier settlement, and men returning from this war will not be placed on the land. Though there cannot be any certainty as to future markets, I think there is some prospect of considerable improvement and that, in the interests of this country, we can look forward to that prospect.

In governmental circles there is apparently horror at the thought of the losses that may eventuate through soldier settlement. Time and time again we are reminded of the loss, hardship and suffering that were occasioned as the result of soldier settlement schemes after the first world war. Admittedly the loss, hardship and suffering occurred, but that effect was largely the result of the harsh conditions under which the men were settled. The losses were inevitable owing to the foolishness of thinking—if it ever really was thought in responsible quarters—that men could be settled on improved properties and pay a high interest rate on 100 per cent. capitalisation. It cannot be done successfully and, if it is attempted, losses must be faced. The fear of losses seems to be associated with the lukewarm attitude towards soldier settlement, and appears to be one of the greatest brakes on progress today. There will be losses under this scheme, just as there were last time, but I trust there will not be the hardship and heartbreaks that there were for the men concerned then.

The Commonwealth Rural Reconstruction Commission, in its report on soldier settlement, while attempting to outline something of a basis for soldier settlement this time, made it obvious that losses must be expected and that they should be faced up to by the Commonwealth authority when it was establishing the men on the land. The Commonwealth Government apparently recognises that fact, and more and more it seems to be endeavouring to minimise the loss that it will have to face, by trying to acquire improved properties at a controlled price below a fair value. If it can do that and continue to get away with it, that is, of course, one way in which it can make the man who is already on the land, and who has probably gone through 20 or even 40

years of vicissitudes, suffer part of the loss which it should be the nation's responsibility to shoulder in order to establish soldiers from this war on the land on a reasonable basis.

The procrastination that exists is discouraging many men who want to settle on the land. They are wondering how much longer they must wait before they get land—whether they must wait until their old age. There are numbers, as the latest information shows, who have withdrawn, and a considerable number have cancelled their applications for inclusion in the scheme. I know men who are securing jobs, as they cannot wait for ever. We can easily visualise the position of those men who take jobs, settle down and get married. Within a year or two, if they leave their names down for the scheme, they may—there is no certainty about it and I think the "charities" has something to commend it by comparison—be allocated a property. There will then be a big decision for a man to make. By then he has established himself in a position and must decide whether he is going to give up his job and uproot his homelife in order to take on the risks and responsibilities of farming.

There does not seem to be anything done to expedite soldier settlement, as far as the authorities are concerned. One can gather, from the lack of properties being made available for the soldiers, that the authorities concerned are just not interested, and that confirms the view that I have expressed. Certainly the State Government at one time seemed concerned about the delay and one or two statements were made that appeared almost critical of what was not taking place in the matter of soldier settlement, but I must confess that latterly it seems to have reverted to the familiar role of "echo of Canberra." There is not in the State Government controlling this State which is so essentially concerned with primary production and settlement, the activity that I, for one, would wish to see. I do not suppose it matters very much what individuals wish for in that regard. As Mr. W. R. Hall stated, nobody takes much notice of what is said on the Address-in-reply. Still, we go on saying it.

If the State Government cannot or will not do something more than on the surface it appears to be doing to hasten this scheme along and make it more worth while to the

soldiers than it is at the moment, I suggest that it should concentrate its energy and influence in the direction of prevailing on the Commonwealth Government to make the loan advance which is available for returned personnel through the Rural and Industries Bank, a sum of £2,500 instead of the £1,000 set at present. An amount of £1,000 for a man to establish or re-establish himself on a farm in this State—and this is the cheapest State in Australia for the purpose—is totally inadequate. This is obvious to anybody who understands the conditions. If the advance, at the reasonable rate of interest of about 3 1-3rd per cent., were increased to £2,500, many men who have some capital of their own could avail themselves of the money and establish themselves reasonably on the land before becoming too old to qualify under the Soldier Settlement Scheme.

The new member for the North Province, Mr. Forrest, made some reference to the native question in his part of the State. I should like to mention the half-caste problem in my province. This is a serious and a growing problem. It has developed as a problem very considerably in recent years and gives every indication to people in close touch—that is, the people living in that area—of becoming worse. I believe that the greatest handicaps to the half-castes are those foolish sentimentalists who know little or nothing of the actual conditions but who are for ever weeping over the rights and wrongs of the natives. They set out to influence public opinion in a way which is, in the ultimate result, never in the best interests of the half-caste population.

We should appreciate that the general make-up of the native is not quite the same as that of the white man. I would say that the native is 75 per cent. wayward child and that the remaining 25 per cent. consists of many of the least desirable characteristics of the white man. Unless considerably more control is exercised and a much more realistic approach is made to the problem, it will become progressively worse. Thanks to the utter foolishness or stupidity of indiscriminately granting child endowment to the half-castes in the South-West and certainly to those in the Great Southern, the half-caste population, in a civil sense, is out of control. There is little or no control of them within the limits of the civil law; that

is, until a policeman has to be brought in. As a people somewhat irresponsible, it has made them more irresponsible than ever, and the action or inaction of the Government or of the department is doing nothing to assist in correcting the position.

The adult or adolescent half-caste—generally speaking though not in every case, but possibly in 99 cases out of every hundred—may be ruled out as regards any hope of reform or of bringing him to understand that he has a place in a white man's community. The only way in which we can deal with this problem in those areas is to accept it as one calling for a long-range policy and to seek a solution through the children—by the education and direction of the children of the present generation. To throw money and privileges at the adults is not only useless; it is also well-nigh criminal, because it is only allowing them—one might even say encouraging them—to continue to lead the same sort of lives and bring their children up in the same way. So I say that, while we might do something through the children, it is utterly hopeless in a general way to try to do anything with the parents.

In order to get the children for the purpose of educating them and bringing about some correction of their parents' nomadic and other habits and to give them an idea of home life, there must be control. It is of no use burking that issue. If their control were established in decent and fixed habitations, then I believe there would be a reasonable prospect of doing something more for the education of the children and for their general upbringing.

Hon. G. B. Wood: Would you take the children away from the parents?

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: I do not think that could be contemplated.

Hon. G. B. Wood: Then what would you suggest?

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: If parents would not accept control, it might be necessary to take the children away, but if the Department of Native Affairs were given more say in the disbursement of the money provided by the Commonwealth Government for child endowment or other social benefits, the department could exercise control, and even difficult parents might be kept in fixed habitations where schools and recreation facilities could be provided. I know there is a stock argument against the establishment of

schools solely for coloured children, namely that it produces in them a feeling of inferiority, but unfortunately this feeling is being engendered under the present system. There could be no more effective way of engendering a feeling of inferiority in the native children than by compelling them as is being done at present, to attend schools with white children, by many of whom the coloured children are shunned. Let them have their own schools, and if possible let them be kept at those schools until they reach the highest standard they are capable of attaining.

Under existing conditions the parents of coloured children are a month in one place and six weeks somewhere else and then they may go for a walkabout in the timber country, and thus there is no chance of the children getting education. I understand that the average half-caste child can hold its own with the white child up to the sixth standard, but that in the higher grades it is not so successful. We should regard this problem as a job to be spread over two or three generations. Our aim should be to get the half-castes up to the sixth standard with a prospect of having them settled in decent fixed habitations where they could learn something of the ways of white people and their hygiene. Then, with the next generation, we might improve upon that. As things are, we are not improving any of them. They are certainly learning to play two-up, to attend S.P. shops and that sort of thing.

Hon. G. B. Wood: Attend S.P. shops?

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: They are learning those things, and if those are the benefits of the white man's culture, they must be gaining some benefit; I do not know of any other. I am aware that the department is hostile to the establishment of separate schools for half-castes on the ground that it produces an inferiority complex, but I repeat that this feeling of inferiority could not be more effectively engendered than is being done under the present system. And the trouble is that while it is going on, the coloured children are not getting education. We must have control, and this control can be obtained only by compelling the parents to adopt fixed habitations. In most cases the State will probably have to provide the accommodation, and it will have to be something better than some of the habitations I have seen.

There is one subject which is popular and at certain times very unpopular with the public, and that is taxation. I should like to emphasise the serious effect of the present high Federal taxation on many members of the farming community. Where a farmer has had a few good years and reasonable prices it is almost, if not quite, a penal rate, and the result is that his improvements are not being maintained owing to shortage of labour. He cannot employ the necessary labour and he is paying tax on that money. He cannot reduce his liabilities to any appreciable extent because he has to provide for his taxation liability. I can anticipate—I do not say I hope for—a state of affairs where, in a few years' time, we may have bad seasons, with or without low prices, and we shall be told that the farming community were improvident and did not make proper provision for reducing their debts in times when seasons and prices were good.

Hon. A. Thomson: How can they, when the Government takes the lot!

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: It is utterly impossible for them to do so. I would like to emphasise that. I know that figures have been quoted to show the extent to which primary producers have reduced certain of their liabilities; and figures could also be quoted to show the way in which much of that reduction has taken place. I know of one property in my district which was purchased by a cash buyer; and he paid off a £10,000 debt. That, of course, reduced the farmer's liability. There has been a good deal of that going on, and other factors are also operating. In view of the condition of development in many of the farming areas of Western Australia, it would be worthwhile for the Government seriously to suggest to the people in the gilded palaces over Canberra way that some provision should be allowed to the farmer-taxpayer for amortisation of debt, even if it were only two per cent.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: Should not the same be allowed to the business man?

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: I suggest that those who profess to speak for the business man might do their own speaking. I am speaking for the farmer at the moment.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: I can speak for both.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: It is a pity the hon. member did not do so when he was on his feet. Even an amount of two per cent.

would be something. A very serious position is developing, with all the farmer's ready cash taken by the tax gatherer and with no improvements made to his property—the tax, in fact, having increased as the result of no labour being available to enable him to effect those improvements—and with no reduction in his liabilities. I do not know—I can, however, hope—that this will be one of the remarks made on the Address-in-reply of which some notice will be taken. I have pleasure in supporting the motion.

On motion by Hon. G. W. Miles, debate adjourned.

BILL—RAILWAY (HOPETOUN-RAVENSTHORPE) DISCONTINUANCE.

Received from the Assembly.

BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

- 1, Transfer of Land Act Amendment.
- 2, Bulk Handling Act Amendment.

Received from the Assembly.

House adjourned at 5.51 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 20th August, 1946.

	PAGE
Questions: Roads—(a) as to condition of Great Eastern Highway, (b) as to Yellowdine-Lake Sea-brook construction	330
Tractors, as to permits and imports	330
State deficit, as to recommendation of Grants Commission	331
Veterinary surgeons, as to number registered, etc.	331
Soldier land settlement, as to bank advances to partnerships	331
Goldmining, as to Commonwealth assistance to re-establish industry	331
Drainage, as to survey of Canning, Belmont and Goswells Districts	332
Bills: Feeding Stuffs Act Amendment (No. 2), 1r.	332
Railway (Hopetoun-Ravensthorpe) Discontinuance, 3r.	332
Transfer of Land Act Amendment, 3r.	332
Bulk Handling Act Amendment, 3r.	332
Medical Act Amendment, 2r., Com. report	332
Factories and Shops Act Amendment, 2r.	332
State Government Insurance Office Act Amendment, 2r., Com.	336
Marketing of Barley, (No. 1) 2r.	356
Legislative Council Referendum, 2r.	359

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