

credit to think that it will not get past her—that it gets under a large pile of files and stops there. I think something should be done with the port hospitals. There is no doubt that those at Geraldton, Bunbury, Albany and Pinjarra are in a very bad condition—as a matter of fact, I should say that Pinjarra was the worst.

Mr. Guthrie: We at Bunbury are next on the list.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: So far as Bunbury is concerned, we found a block of land and had everything ready but unfortunately the work was not gone on with. I regret I have taken so much time in dealing with hospitals but it is a very important matter to this State. Most of the new members who have addressed themselves to the House have referred to matters affecting their constituencies, and I shall follow their lead and mention one or two requirements of the Leederville electorate. That centre has been a very happy place. It dates from many years back and little is wanted there at this juncture. Certainly, more houses are required but there appears to be no place for them. One matter that does require some little attention is the provision of further sewerage work, and in that regard I have today received a very promising letter from the Minister for Works.

I hope that the Minister who represents the Minister for Transport will ask him to consider the provision of another trolley-bus on the Cambridge street route. In the past Leederville enjoyed one of the best transport systems in the State, but with the growth of Floreat Park and other parts it is now impossible in the morning to get on the bus that traverses Oxford-street, and that applies particularly from the Leederville boundary to Mt. Hawthorn. I am glad to say that the Minister has provided another bus for the morning service, and I trust that as soon as another is available he will put that on as well for the peak periods.

I trust this is not my swan song; but, in case it is, I would like to say a few words to members. I have had many happy years here, and I do not know how much longer I shall be spared.

The Attorney General: You are not afraid of motorcars, are you?

Hon. A. H. PANTON: No, but I certainly agree with the magistrate who said in court recently that pedestrians must look after themselves on the streets. In case this is my swan song, I take this opportunity to express my appreciation of the very happy time I have spent not only under your guidance, Mr. Speaker, but that of others who have occupied the Chair. I thank the electors who put me in Parliament and have kept me here. During a short address I gave at the Y.M.C.A. recently I was asked how to get

into Parliament and remain there. I replied, "I know how to get there, but you have not to be found out to stop there." I have not been found out!

I thank the electors of Leederville for keeping me in Parliament and I acknowledge the kindness of the many good comrades I have had in this House. I say to the new members that I wish for them as happy a period of 29 years in the Legislature as I have enjoyed. I tell them that my sincere desire is that they should make as good friends and colleagues in Parliament as I have—and we can all make good friends here if we wish to do so.

Mr. W. Hegney: You can alter your mind and have another shot at Parliament.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: No. If I am too decrepit at 73, what would I be like at 76? I leave it at that. I hope the Premier will not regard my remarks as in any way critical but merely as an attempt to assist.

On motion by Mr. Grayden, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 6.10 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Tuesday, 15th August, 1950.

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

QUESTIONS.

FREMANTLE HARBOUR.

As to Test Bores for New Bridge.

Hon. G. FRASER asked the Minister for Transport:

In connection with the proposed harbour extensions at Fremantle, would the Minister supply the following information:—

- (1) How many test bores were put down for the proposed new bridge?
- (2) When were the test bores put down?
- (3) Would he lay on the Table of the House the report regarding the bores?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) 20.

(2) 1928-1929.

(3) The information sought can be found in Appendix 2 of Volume 3 of the Tydeman Report, and plans, etc., may be viewed at the Public Works Department by the hon. member.

ROADS.

As to Commonwealth Aid Funds.

Hon. A. L. LOTON asked the Minister for Transport:

(1) What amount did the State Government have on hand at the 30th June, 1950, from the Commonwealth Aid Road and Works Act, 1947-1949?

(2) What amount had been set aside for the machinery pool?

(3) If any money had been used from the machinery pool, what was the amount?

(4) What amount of the original sum was unallocated?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) £1,373,894.

(2) £162,000.

(3) £10,650.

(4) Nil.

STATE SHIPPING SERVICE.

As to Freight on Blue Asbestos.

Hon. H. K. WATSON asked the Minister for Transport:

(1) What is the freight per ton charged by the State Shipping Service on blue asbestos shipped from Point Samson to Fremantle?

(2) Does the Government pay a freight subsidy on such shipments, and if so, how much?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) 39s. per ton of 20 cwt.

(2) Yes. 10s. per ton, of which half is recovered from the Commonwealth Government.

TIMBER.

As to Intake of Sawmills.

Hon. A. L. LOTON asked the Minister for Transport:

What was the permissible intake and the actual intake of the various sawmills in this State, including the Western Australian Government timber mill, for the years 1947, 1948 and 1949?

The MINISTER replied:

This information is not available, as it is only supplied to the department confidentially.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Fifth Day.

Debate resumed from the 9th August.

HON. N. E. BAXTER (Central) [4.39]: I was greatly moved by the kindly and eulogistic references to my late father by His Excellency the Governor in his opening Speech and, on the following Tuesday, by yourself, Mr. President, and members of the House. My father was born in Victoria and came to this State at a very early age and Western Australia treated him very kindly. When he entered Parliament in 1914, he set himself out not only to attend to the interests of his electors but also to do everything possible for the development of Western Australia and its people. He left behind him a record of which I and my brothers and sisters are especially proud. I think it is one that any citizen would be justly proud to have, and would try to emulate as I desire to do. My family sincerely appreciate the messages of sympathy and condolence from this House, and I wish to say, "Thank you very much" to yourself, Sir, the members here, and His Excellency.

I also desire to express my thanks for the warm welcome extended to me and the other new members of this Chamber by you, Mr. President. We are all young men, and I think we will prove to be quite an acquisition to the House. I do not doubt, speaking not only for myself but the other new members, that we will uphold the traditions of the House and add tone to it inasmuch as in the past we have heard that the Legislative Council was a House for old gentlemen. We can now stand up and say to the people, "We refute that. Look at the talent and the young members here who will still be here, we hope, for some years to come." I am sure the other new members will stand by me in this; if they let me down, I shall certainly have something to say about it.

At the outset, I shall touch shortly on the Korean situation. Most members are not particularly happy with the way things are going, although the United Nations forces seem to be holding their own, and in places, making gains. But the communist octopus seems to be reaching its tentacles out to every part of the world, and it appears to be doing its best to destroy what the democracies have built up over the years; and, apparently, it is trying to enslave the peoples of the world. We have one of those tentacles here in Australia; even in our own State.

We have experienced, on the last two Sundays in Western Australia, demonstrations arising from meetings held by the Communist Party on the Esplanade. These people are not attempting to build

up anything, but are out purely for destruction. They set up nothing constructive for the future. They are out, purely and simply, to pull down democracy. I say they are just as liable for the demonstrations that occur after their meetings as a starting-price bookmaker is for obstructing the traffic. They should be arraigned before a court and treated in a similar, if not a more severe manner. Our communist friends—Healy, Kelly, Alcorn and Mrs. Williams—were at the meeting last Sunday week. The expressions they used in regard to Korea were, I consider, bordering on subversive suggestions.

Members may have noted in the paper recently that the Sydney publisher of the Communist Party's paper "Tribune" was arraigned before a special court. He is now on trial for publishing seditious words. Mark the words of the people on our Esplanade! They say "Hands off Korea," and they object to our sending troops to Korea. Are they not just as seditious as the words of the editor of the Sydney "Tribune"? Why should not the State take action against these people? Here is a little pamphlet they circulate headed "Hands off Korea". Inside it states—

Hands off Korea—Demand Withdrawal of All Forces of Intervention.

We are supporting U.N.O. against the aggression by the North Koreans, yet these people are allowed to go around the streets and the public reserves preaching against what the Commonwealth Government has decided. Action should be taken against them immediately, and if they can be arraigned before a court, that should be done. Ways and means of doing that should be found.

If ways and means can be found for dealing with one law-breaker, then they can be found to deal with another. In my opinion these people are law-breakers. I sincerely hope that Cabinet and the Attorney General in particular, will attempt to find some method of dealing with them and stopping what I consider to be subversive work on the part of the communists. They are not so dangerous to the more mature people who have been brought up in democracies, but they are definitely dangerous to our younger people who during the war years knew certain measures of control. It does not seem so hard for them to listen to the communist doctrine, but we people who have had to work and battle all our lives and know what it is to live in and appreciate, a democracy are not liable to be converted. Our young people, on the other hand, are, and we have to look

after them. That is one reason why something should be done. In my opinion no action would be too drastic.

Hon. L. A. Logan: Treat them as vermin!

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: Exactly. If they do not like our democratic institutions, let them go somewhere else. I doubt if they would be accepted in Russia where they would have to think ahead. I want now to deal with the migrant position; the new Australians, as we call them. The State Minister has no control over these people, and in my opinion, from observation of the position here, the control that is exercised is fairly lax. One can travel through the country where these camps are—I refer particularly to the Cunderdin and Northam camps—and can see the people travelling on the road to and from one or other of the camps, or going from one town to another. They hitch-hike as much as they can, and to an extent are quite a nuisance to the motorist. At the same time, they were brought out here to start a new life; they were given an opportunity. I say that many of them are not making the best of that opportunity. They go out and take a job for a while and then return to the migrant camp where they get 25s. a week, and pay £1 a week board. They get the best of food there, and it is just a holiday for them. They have no responsibility to battle for their families.

I think it is time that more strict control was exercised over these camps. I know that at Cunderdin they hold concerts every night in the week, Sundays included. If anyone tells me that people who have concerts every night are working hard, I fail to see it. This matter, I contend, should be taken up very strongly with the Commonwealth Government. We saw an article in today's paper regarding the meals in the migrant camps. These people are not hardly done by, but are spoon-fed. This article is headed "4,500 for Meals at Northam Migrant Camp" and states—

Feeding more than 4,500 persons at a time is no small task, but it is the lot of the catering staff at the town-sized migrant camp at Northam. The food is prepared in well-equipped kitchens in various parts of the camp, and the cooks are mostly new Australians—

It does not say that they are all new Australians because some of our own people are employed there. It goes on—

—who have a high standard of ability. Certainly no charge of lack of food can be laid against the caterers, for plates are piled high with meat and vegetables. Children are especially well fed and there is no limit to

the amount of food which can be obtained for them. They are called in to meals before the adults, and are accompanied by their parents. Each dining mess for children caters for about 80 youngsters who are given three meals a day and morning and afternoon tea. All types of high class baby food are available—

I might add that a number of our own people—I mean the Australians outside—have considerable difficulty in obtaining baby food at times. I know that from some of my own friends who have young babies. The article continues—

—and all the children are given soup once and fruit twice a day.

The staff in one kitchen consists of three cooks and kitchen hands, who work to a roster throughout each day. This system is worked through all messes in the camp. One of the most popular dishes among the children is a special meat loaf, made from liver, kidneys, heart and other delicacies. New Australians have yet to gain a taste for mutton and lamb.

They would soon attain a taste for it if they had to earn it the hard way and food was a little difficult to get. It goes on—

For those who want extras there is the camp canteen at which more than 900 lines are stocked. Members of the camp have no need to travel into Northam to shop, for they can purchase anything they require at the canteen, including foodstuffs, clothes, soaps, toilet equipment and soft drinks.

Members can see by the last paragraph that these migrants can obtain everything they want at the camp.

Hon. R. M. Forrest: Is that a Government canteen?

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: It comes under U.N.O., but is under the control of the Commonwealth Government. This migrant camp is really a holiday resort, although these people were brought out here to work and help build up the number of people we require for industries, farming, etc. A few of them have been employed on farms but most of them say that they cannot do that work. They say they won't do this and they won't do that; then they leave.

I had an instance where a friend of mine in Northam engaged four of these men to put up a building which he required erected. They asked for £10 per week with no tax. That meant that this man had to pay the tax for them and they said that they could not arrive for work at 8 o'clock because the bus did not leave in time. That meant that they could not get into work until a quarter to nine. They also told him that they wanted to leave at a quarter to four in

the afternoon in order to catch the bus back to camp. In other words they did not want to do a decent eight hours per day—not even 40 hours a week. They lasted four days and were proceeding so slowly with the job that the employer decided that if they kept going at that pace it would cost him three times as much as it should.

If we must put up with that kind of thing these people might as well not be here. They did not come here only to populate the country; they came here to help us to build homes and increase the production of essential supplies and supplies in general. I maintain that the control over them is not as severe as it should be and that our State Minister for Immigration and Labour should have control over these people. Our Minister should be able to say what shall be done with each man and if that man is put to a job the Minister should be able to say whether the migrant has a right to leave and return to the camp at 25s. a week. These people are kept at the migrant camps at the expense of the Australian taxpayers. I realise that the camps are financed with U.N.O. money but we all pay our share into U.N.O. by way of taxes.

Migrants are brought out here and we should have some say in what is done with them and the way that the money is spent so that it will not be frittered away in keeping up holiday camps. These people do not seem to want to work and unless we can do something about it I am afraid we will be on a losing proposition. Most of them are not short of money; that is one of the main troubles. They can go to a town like Northam and quite a number of them have purchased bolts of cloth and sent them home to Europe. They have bought all sizes of dresses and sent them to Europe also. Some of them are even building up bank accounts in that way. Many do not intend to stay here and a number of them will return to Europe by building up bank accounts in this country. They are sending goods to their home countries in Europe and they are reaping the benefit from it. I suggest to the Premier that when he attends the Premiers' Conference he should take up this matter with the Prime Minister with a view to giving the Government more control and placing it in the hands of our State Minister for Immigration and Labour.

Another matter mentioned in this Chamber recently has been that of milk supplies to school children. We all know that at present Sir Earle Page is deliberating with the Ministers for Agriculture in the Eastern States regarding this aspect. However, there is one feature about it in this State; during part of the year we may be able to supply this milk to school children but during portion of

the summertime our own metropolitan area is short of milk and it becomes necessary to ration it to our people. It is all very well to talk about providing extra supplies of milk, but where are we to obtain them?

We can draw them temporarily from the lower South-West, which is, however, generally considered a butterfat producing area, but I am afraid drawing milk from such sources would be a temporary expedient only. Also, it would be a costly one and far from economically sound. There is the long haulage of over 100 miles and that would increase the price to the consumers. We could not expect that increase to be borne by the producers because it would not pay them to send the milk such a long distance and accept a lower price. The producers would probably be better off on a butterfat basis supplying their milk to cheese factories and the like. Therefore, it behoves the Government to look round and see what can be done to develop land adjacent to the metropolitan area.

For consideration I suggest that land such as portion of the Wanneroo Road Board district be investigated. There are over 5,000 acres of what was the old stock route and this is reasonably good country. I would not say it is first class, but it is a good type of sand. Some of the producers there do very well, yet for a long time it has been neglected. It is timbered with banksia and jarrah and from personal observations I know that it will carry quite good pastures. The producers there can grow mid-season subterranean clover and good lucerne. This country could be easily adapted for dairying purposes. One important aspect about it is that it would be most economical to develop because it is so close to the metropolitan area and the timber cleared from it could be sold.

This type of country is easy to clear with bulldozers such as are being used on war service land settlement properties. The timber cleared could be sawn into firewood and sold in the metropolitan area. The money obtained from the sale of this firewood would almost pay for the cost of clearing the land and when it is cleared the country could be broken up into 200-acre farms. That would mean there would be 25 farms each with a carrying capacity of 40 cows. Therefore the 5,000 acres, fully developed, would carry at least 1,000 cows, and that would contribute considerably to our metropolitan milk supply. In the summertime they should get an average of at least a gallon a day and through the other parts of the year two gallons or more.

Someone may say, "This is almost in line with the Peel Estate of some years ago. What a dismal failure that was." We are not living in the days of the development of the Peel Estate; we are living in the days of modern development

in farming. The Peel Estate settlers did not know what could be done with clovers and other grasses. Our knowledge of those grasses today is one of the big factors in making a success of a project such as this. I have gone into this matter and to my mind the development of an area such as this would cost approximately £4,000 for each farm. That would include the building of a home at a cost of between £1,600 and £1,800 and the stocking of the property with 40 cows, which are expensive items today.

It could be said that it would not be an unreasonable proposition to make the capitalisation of these properties approximately £4,000. Once developed they would be worth very much more than that valuation. One drawback is that it would be rather hard to construct roads there. Very little solid material is to be found in the area, which is very sandy; but that difficulty could be overcome. I sincerely hope the Government will take up this suggestion regarding the development of land in areas close to the metropolis in order to augment our milk supply.

I do not know why, but in the past the tendency has been for dairying operations to be conducted further and further away from the city, with the result that today areas in the Denmark and Albany districts are being developed as dairying propositions. That is quite good, but when it comes to a matter of whole milk production it is a different proposition, and we ought to have areas developed closer to the metropolis. I have already quoted the Wanneroo district as an area adjacent to the city that could receive attention. That centre is not very far away from Perth and holdings there would make excellent dairy propositions. It is only a matter of making a start, so that the area would be made attractive to those concerned in the dairying industry.

While I was dealing with the question of migrants, I failed to dwell upon a point I desire to make in connection with the spoon-feeding of new Australians. In today's issue of "The West Australian" there appeared a report under the headings "Doctor's Antarctic Ordeal Ends," "Reunion with Wife; No Immediate Operation." The report went on to give details of the dramatic voyage of H.M.A.S. "Australia" to bring Dr. Udovikov to Perth. Members know that the "Australia" was sent down to Heard Island to bring the doctor back because he was suffering from acute appendicitis—a quite humane course of action.

I wonder if that would have been done for some of our able-bodied seamen or whether they would have had to take Hobson's choice. Possibly many members will recollect that a few years ago someone on a North-West station suffered from appendicitis but he was operated on by one of his colleagues on the

station, the necessary instructions being given him over the air. To my knowledge that operation proved quite successful. In this instance we have the doctor right on the spot and quite able to give instructions for anyone else to carry out.

Hon. E. H. Gray: It would be a big gamble.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: Why was not the procedure adopted with the station-hand repeated in this instance but by direct instruction. It will be noticed that when the doctor arrived at Fremantle, he was able to walk off the ship. I know that would be quite possible with a person suffering from appendicitis, because I believe the attacks come and go. Of course, I know the action taken regarding the doctor was very laudable, but would it have applied to Australians, or is this sort of thing to be done in respect of only a certain section? I wanted to refer to that matter in relation to spoon-feeding new Australians. Why do we not let them battle for themselves and paddle their own canoes? I support the motion.

HON. G. BENNETTS (South-East) [5.5]: I am very pleased to see you, Mr. President, back in the Chair in the enjoyment of your normal good health. I hope you will continue in that position throughout the session. I congratulate Mr. Simpson upon his appointment as Leader of the House and a Minister holding several important portfolios. He has not been very long in Parliament and it is certainly pleasing to see his rapid elevation to ministerial rank. Two of the portfolios he holds are most important and concern my province very much. As a representative of the Goldfields, mining and railway matters are of vital concern to those whose interests I seek to serve in this House. I hope the Minister will give special attention to those sections of his work as a Minister of the Crown. I know he will give fair decisions on all matters that will be placed before him.

I am sorry the Honorary Minister for Agriculture is not in his seat today because there are several matters I had wished to deal with in his presence. Incidentally, I am very pleased to note that he has been restored to good health. I regret the loss of three of our former members. I refer to the late Hon. Charles Baxter and to the retirement of Hon. G. W. Miles and Hon. A. Thomson. Mr. Baxter and Mr. Miles were pioneers of the goldfields and I always admired them because when I spoke of the pioneers I could see the gleam in their eyes and I felt at home with both of them.

As to Mr. Thomson, I do not think there was any subject dealt with that he was not able to speak about and throw some important light on the topic discussed. I congratulate the new members

—I refer to Mr. Baxter and Mr. Thomson in particular—and hope they will continue the good work their fathers did before them. I have a big list of subjects before me for discussion.

Hon. H. Hearn: Big business!

Hon. G. BENNETTS: I am glad of that interjection, because the topics I shall deal with are of importance. Since the redistribution of seats and the reallocation of electoral boundaries, my province has increased in area and extends from Baandee and Hines Hill through to Yilgarn. In various parts, including Southern Cross, the people are greatly exercised regarding the grasshopper menace. Mr. Cunningham spoke at some length in that regard and I have been supplied with a lot of information by the Yilgarn Road Board. The secretary of that body, Mr. Keany, has studied the subject for a long time and has gone into details thoroughly. Quite a lot of information has been sent to the Agricultural Department in the hope that a trial will be made in that district with regard to the suggestions that have been advanced.

Mr. Keany is of the opinion that three large depots should be set up in furtherance of the attempt to deal with the menace. I was in the district some time back and discussed the position with those concerned. They said the Government, through the Agricultural Department, was doing a good job, but there was a lot more that could be put in hand. So far, the attempts undertaken touched merely on the fringe of the whole problem and the Government, in their opinion, will have to spend much more money on the work. I have received a letter from the board dealing with the position on a property owned by Mr. Smith at Turkey Hill. It comprises 5,000 acres, 400 of which are under crops.

From the indications there they consider the grasshopper plague will be worse this year than ever before in the district. An appeal has been made to parliamentary representatives of the district to get in touch with the Agricultural Department immediately with a view to prompt action being taken. I do not know if members saw last week's issue of "Pix," which contained a write-up regarding the position in the Eastern States and South Africa and the methods adopted for dealing with the pest. Had the Honorary Minister for Agriculture been present, I would have appealed to him to do everything possible to assist the farmers in the outer districts, where the hardship is greater than that suffered by others in more closely settled parts.

Erosion is causing much concern in the district and representations have been made to the Agricultural Department regarding steps to be taken for dealing with this phase so as to maintain production.

If we are to lose so much of the soil because of erosion, it will mean a great loss of foodstuffs required for Australia and for export oversea. I have been very anxious for a long time regarding the conditions applying to railway workers at Merredin. I am particularly concerned about the condition of railway barracks. The men have to live on the tuckerbox for two-thirds of the week and, when away from home, have to use the miserable, dirty places provided for them. If the local governing authorities were in control, they would have condemned the buildings long ago.

Hon. H. Hearn: For how many years have those places been up?

Hon. G. BENNETTS: For very many years, but the previous Government was never really in control of the situation, as is the present Government. I am sure that, with the Railway Commissioners now in office and the new Minister for Railways, something will be done about this matter. With regard to the Southern Cross area, for the last couple of years or more we have tried, through the local prospectors' association, to have a plant erected in the district for the treatment of sulphide ores. The former Minister gave an undertaking that the plant would be installed down in the Widgeemooltha district. I do not know if the project has been abandoned, but I hope something will be done about it. There are great developments in the Bullfinch area, which are being undertaken by the Western Mining Corporation. That company does not depend on the Government to build homes but erects them for its employees.

Hon. H. Hearn: Private enterprise again!

Hon. G. BENNETTS: That is so. The company is giving them everything, and anything the Government could do by providing a train service would assist in the development that has been undertaken. I hope the Minister will induce the Government to consider this very important matter. Dealing next with the Esperance district, each year I have spoken about its requirements and I have constantly urged that the m.v. "Kybra" should be taken off the North-West run and put back on the south coast.

Hon. R. M. Forrest: You have no hope!

Hon. G. BENNETTS: Most decidedly the vessel should be used in the southern waters. Still, I do not worry about that. The people of the North-West can have the "Kybra," but those at Esperance should have a ship, too. The district is one of the healthiest spots in the State and has the best climate. The land is good. I am sorry the Honorary Minister for Agriculture is away, because I wanted to make some reference to the light land in the district. Yesterday I was in contact with one of the men who took up land down

there last year, and has it under crop with a promise of good results. Fortunately, he was able to obtain fencing wire and is making progress with his property. The land is very valuable, but a ship is required to enable the settlers to have a chance of obtaining superphosphate and other commodities at cheaper rates than at present. They are paying £6 19s. a ton for super, and £1 16s. 3d. a ton for freight. That means that a total of £8 15s. 3d. a ton is paid for the delivery of superphosphate at Salmon Gums.

The Government should make every effort to assist in the development of this land so that food can be produced and stock raised. It is good stock-raising country, with a rainfall of 28 inches. There is an abundance of water at a depth of between 4 ft. and 12 ft. The water is fresh and suitable for drinking purposes. It is also good for the growing of vegetables and anything else. I took away from there last year some onions and potatoes, the onions weighing up to 3 lb. or 4 lb. each. I had them on show in Kalgoorlie. I also took home a bunch of grapes weighing 21 lbs. That is the sort of produce the district can grow. I have taken up with the Honorary Minister for Agriculture the desirability of a vermin board being established in the district, because at certain times rabbits are a menace and we want to deal with them.

During his speech, Mr. Cunningham spoke about the installation of a petrol depot. He mentioned that Hon. E. Nulsen had done a lot of work in this connection, but I think many of us were in the same boat. A supply of petrol would be a great help to the Goldfields, and the establishment of a depot would save congestion on the main railway and would enable us to obtain petrol more cheaply, giving farmers a better chance to develop the country. If we could have the services of a ship calling at Esperance, we would be able to obtain better supplies of building timber. At present, it costs us 6d. per running foot of 3 x 2 timber. Not only would the provision of such a ship help us in that direction, but it would stimulate the tourist traffic and would enable people to see what that part of the State was able to offer.

I am also very concerned about the main road. Now that we have a bus running from Lake Grace to Hopetoun, it would be a great advantage if the road between Ravensthorpe and Esperance could be linked up. We do not want a bitumen strip but a real trafficable road, something that people could travel on. It would shorten the distance by 100 or 130 miles, and in the event of another world war, it would provide us with another means of access to the port of Esperance, through which commodities could be brought into the State. Esperance is a

deep sea port and ships of any size can berth there. Moreover, it has one of the best groups of lumpers in Australia. Those men have never caused any trouble, and they are prepared to work any number of hours and do anything they can for the benefit of the State. I would like to see the State Tourist Bureau take some pictures of the district and advertise it in the Eastern States.

People in the other States do not, I think, know much about Western Australia. We are outcasts, and I urge that some consideration should be given to remedying the matter. Last year, the people of Salmon Gums had a really fine time, and harvested good wheat and other crops. We have an experimental farm at Esperance which is doing a good job, and at the moment it is a sight well worth seeing. There are a number of dams in the district but plenty of work needs to be done on them. Mr. Cunningham referred to school buses. We have some in our district which are doing a wonderful job, but there are other parts waiting to be served. Recently, consideration has been given to levying a rate in case it is decided to place another bus on the road to run children from as far as Scaddan into Esperance for good schooling.

In the Norseman district the Western Mining Corporation has spent a lot of money on homes for its employees. It is the second biggest mining district in the State and the company is a progressive concern. It has built a swimming pool for its employees and is providing all sorts of facilities for the benefit of the people, with a view to keeping them in the district. That is what we need to do. We want decentralisation and we should try to get people to go into the backblocks rather than swarm into the capital cities, as they are doing today. A little more attention should be given to the main road between Coolgardie and Norseman. Two years ago, a sum of money was granted for putting down a bitumen strip of eight miles, and I hope that the Government will see fit to use on this particular section some of the money that is available for main roads.

Work is being done between Coolgardie, Widgeemooltha and Norseman with a grader which is at least 50 years old, but Mr. Cunningham made mention of some of the equipment which other boards have. The Norseman Road Board has a wonderful plant, capable of doing anything, and it is a pity that it cannot be allowed some grant to enable it to give attention to this main road, so that a good highway can be provided from Norseman to Coolgardie. The schools in these outback places are due for a good deal more consideration than they have received. They are overcrowded, and more class rooms should be

provided. Some time ago I wrote to the Honorary Minister and asked him whether he could submit a suggestion to a conference that was being held concerning the fertiliser plant being erected at Albany to burn pyrites. Norseman has an unlimited quantity of pyrites, and the Government has assisted in production over the years. I noticed in the paper today that there was some reference to this matter as it affected Merredin, which is in my district. The desire is to know if it is possible to produce pyrites on a bigger scale for use in the production of superphosphate.

Last month I travelled throughout my province and in the course of my journey was admitted to a farmers' conference at Merredin. Both there and in the Esperance and Salmon Gums areas I was approached on the matter of the inadequate supply of superphosphate. I gathered that the general opinion was that the man with the big holding was getting his full requirements of super. but the man with the small holding was receiving only a percentage of his. The contention was that the man with the small holding ought to obtain his full supply and the man with the big holding a lesser quantity. Then, when the former was satisfied, any surplus could go to the latter. I think I heard it mentioned that from 60 to 75 per cent. of the superphosphate is used for topdressing. If I am wrong, farmer members of this House will be able to correct me.

I suggested that the plant which is being installed at Albany could be used to burn pyrites from my district. In view of the short distance of 120 miles between Norseman and Esperance the pyrites could be carried to the port and the company could purchase a small ship to take the mineral to Albany. The cost of production of super. in those circumstances would be less than at present when super. has to be taken such long distances over the length and breadth of the railway system. Mining activity is improving in the Coolgardie district but we are very scared about the water position. I have lived in Kalgoorlie since January, 1896, and I have never seen the prices of commodities so high or the commodities themselves in such short supply as has been the case in the last few months.

These shortages and high prices and the acute water position are problems that require urgent attention. Only last year, with the temperature at 110 degrees, the water supply was cut off between 5 p.m. and 7.15 p.m. I was called to two homes where they had no water. Only one house in every 200 or 300 has a tank. Last December 8,660,000 gallons were pumped from Mundaring Weir per day and 4,160,000 gallons reached No. 7 pumping station. This

was meant to be a Goldfields water supply. We do not wish to deprive the agricultural areas of water, but feel that we should have first claim to it. We do not mind small restrictions, but object to having supplies cut by half. The agricultural districts took 4,500,000 gallons of our water daily. From Mundaring to Twin Hills there is a 36-inch main and from there to Merredin a 24-inch main. The volume of water required on the Goldfields in the coming year will make necessary the installation of larger mains. The Bullfinch mine is shortly to come into production, as are others in Kalgoorlie and Coolgardie and that, together with the increase of population through immigrants coming to work in the mines, makes it necessary for us to have more water.

Hon. A. L. Loton: What about the swimming pool?

Hon. G. BENNETTS: I must also mention the swimming pool at Kalgoorlie. I take pride in the fact that I was a prime mover in the provision of the pool. In the early days many people often had to share one tub of water for bathing purposes. I was not able to have a swim in those days, but I decided to do everything humanly possible to ensure that the children who followed me should have better conditions and healthy recreation, instead of having to crowd into hotel bars, as was mentioned recently by Dr. Hislop. I do not blame anyone for having a drink, but I do not like to see our young people today crowding into the lounges of certain hotels.

During the past year oranges and apples were on many occasions unprocurable on the Goldfields. When I was in the Esperance district women asked me what could be done about getting some oranges. I inquired of the local greengrocer who said that he was unable to get any return on oranges for which he had to pay 6s. 6d. per dozen. That was the position, in spite of the fact that orange juice is a prime necessity for the healthy growth of children in areas such as that. Housewives on the Goldfields were often during the last twelve months allowed only two eggs at a time, and those at the rate of 4s. 4d. per dozen. Even in the early days of Kalgoorlie eggs were always available, and at a price lower than that ruling today.

I can perhaps enlighten the House more on the subject of milk than could any other member. A few months ago powdered milk supplies became very short on the Goldfields and the Kalgoorlie Road Board asked me to take the matter up. I went to the various agents for powdered milk in Kalgoorlie in order to discover the facts, and then I came to Perth, where I saw the manager of the Nestle Milk Company. In outlying areas our people depend almost entirely on powdered milk for household use and on Lactogen and similar products for their

babies. From my inquiries I discovered that a ship due to arrive at Esperance at that time was carrying only one-third of the necessary supply of powdered milk. It carried only enough to last for three or four weeks, and that vessel was calling at Esperance only once in three months.

The shortage, I found, was accounted for in two ways. Firstly, it was due to the floods that occurred last year in the Eastern States, destroying many pastures and putting many milk processing factories out of production. Secondly, I was informed that a number of cattle had had to be destroyed owing to tuberculosis. It takes a good while, after herds have been decimated in that way and through the ravages of floods and shortage of fodder, before they can be got back to normal. The producers of milk had sought a higher price for their commodity and the matter was referred to the Commonwealth Prices Commissioner. No increase was granted on the retail side but the producers received an increase in price. That put the manufacturers in a worse position and consequently they steadied up on their production.

This winter we have again had floods in the Eastern States, with the result that the position will be still worse in months to come. Members have mentioned the Commonwealth scheme to provide free milk for children in our schools. The Nestle company has spent a lot of money on plant at Waroona, for the processing of powdered milk, and would spend more if it could rely on getting regular supplies of milk. Mr. Baxter said that it was too far to bring milk from Albany, but I would point out that milk is at present being sent from Adelaide to Alice Springs. It travels for a day on the South Australian railway and then for two days on the Commonwealth railway—three days in all—but arrives at Alice Springs in perfect order.

On the Goldfields, Fletcher's dairy gets 1,500 gallons of milk per week from Perth. The Ayrshire dairy gets 1,100 gallons, Golding's get 360 gallons and Bond's 240 gallons, bringing the total to 3,200 gallons of fresh milk that is sent from the metropolitan area to Kalgoorlie every week. In summer we require another 100 gallons per day at least, but do not know where to get it. The milk producers of this State would, I think, be glad if something could be done to relieve them of the necessity of sending so much milk to the Goldfields. I might mention that, in addition to what is brought by rail, one dairy locally produces 350 gallons per week, another 280 gallons and still another 350 gallons, or 980 gallons in all. We are at present negotiating in an endeavour to get milk supplies from South Australia.

We have approached the Commonwealth railway authorities to see whether we can bring the milk over at a freight rate such as will allow it to be sold at a reasonable price. People are paying 3s. 5d. per gallon for milk from Perth and that, together with 1d. per gallon railway freight, brings the price to 3s. 6d. per gallon. In Adelaide milk is being sold for 2s. 4d. per gallon. Our endeavour is to secure a railway freight rate from both the South Australia and Commonwealth railways that will allow us to land the milk at Kalgoorlie at a reasonable price. I hope to make a trip to Whyalla in South Australia, in order to inspect there one of the most outstanding dairies in the Commonwealth.

If we can make satisfactory arrangements with the Commonwealth and South Australian railways we will perhaps be able to have a guaranteed milk supply for the Goldfields. The prices of commodities in my electorate have never been higher than since the present Government took office and since the last change in the Commonwealth Government. Prices have increased to an astounding extent. Onions have been unobtainable.

Hon. R. M. Forrest: What is the cause of it?

Hon. G. BENNETTS: There is not enough interest being taken by the Government of the State in seeing that commodities are produced and kept here to feed our own people before the export market is satisfied. I understand that no more chilled meat will be available to the Goldfields after this week. Mr. Baxter mentioned immigrants. I think the bringing of these people into our country should be stopped until our own people are properly housed and fed. In any case, I will guarantee that one Australian is equal to any two immigrants. Our Australians were recognised on the battlefronts of the world as soldiers, workers or in any other capacity. What encouragement is there today for young parents to produce families?

Hon. H. Hearn: There is the child endowment.

Hon. G. BENNETTS: I was able to build a house and add to it as my family increased, but today people cannot get homes. A great deal of misery is being caused through young couples having to live in hotels and boarding houses. Our young people would be prepared to raise families if they could house and feed them properly, but there is no encouragement when meat, milk, vegetables and other essentials are unobtainable. The only commodity of which there seems to be no shortage in most areas is beer, and parents cannot feed their children on that.

The Goldfields people are extremely concerned, too, about their train service. It is known that the passenger traffic to and from Kalgoorlie did drop, but that is not the only line on which such traffic has decreased. I have paid special attention to the Bunbury line. I made several trips on it and noted what was taking place. All eyes are on that train to see whether it arrives or departs on time. On the Goldfields line we had only one train a day, and no road transport running parallel with the railway, yet we are deprived of it. I know that lack of engine power has been a handicap, but I hope the Minister will consider putting that train back on traffic. If we are to develop the country, we must have a good train service regardless of whether the passenger traffic decreases or not.

Hon. H. Hearn: The hon. member said he wanted to keep immigrants out.

Hon. G. BENNETTS: I want to keep the immigrants out until we have our own people housed. The present Australian population should have homes first and then we could build homes for the immigrants, which they could occupy on arrival instead of living like rats as they are now doing. At present these people are entering the country and after saving a few pounds have to expend double that amount in order to obtain a home, which is not right. They should be able to get a home in the proper way.

Hon. A. L. Loton: Do you not think they should work for it?

Hon. G. BENNETTS: I believe in a fair day's pay for a fair day's work. Mr. Cunningham has mentioned the conditions of our main highway, about which I am also concerned. I have taken a lot of interest in it, have been over it several times and have worried the Minister on many occasions to have it completed. At one time the authorities did get a move on with it, but at present the plant has been taken off the job and put on dam sinking at No. 8 pumping station. Mr. Cunningham also mentioned that if the local authorities were granted a certain amount of money they would do a good job and expedite its construction, and I agree with him.

As things are now, the foundation of the road is put down and it is then left to be cut to pieces by the traffic. That means the work must be done all over again, and it is costing too much. Instead of working on two or three sections of the road, it would be best to have one decent gang doing the job. We should provide the men working in the gang with proper facilities such as canteens and refrigeration. In my opinion, if this were done they would do twice the quantity of work. These men, after working hard all day on the road, return to their camps

and have to cook with antiquated camp ovens. To keep their food fresh and cool they are using the old Coolgardie cooler. If modern refrigeration were granted to them, I am certain they would be quite willing to pay for it, and their work output would be increased as a result.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Are you sure they would pay for it?

Hon. G. BENNETTS: They are not afraid to pay for it, and are quite prepared to meet the extra cost of such facilities. As to housing, I think the Goldfields should receive a larger quota of homes. For example, Norseman has only obtained about two workers' homes. There is ample need at that centre for more houses, and that also applies to Kalgoorlie and Boulder. The Kalgoorlie Municipal Council has assisted the Goldfields and also the Government by building quite a number. It has turned out a very suitable type of cottage at prices ranging from £900 to £1,000.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Where did it get the labour?

Hon. G. BENNETTS: It employed its own municipal employees.

Hon. H. Hearn: It should come down and give the Housing Commission some education.

Hon. G. BENNETTS: It has commenced a modern housing scheme. The Boulder council has also built 42 homes at Victory Heights, which are a credit to it. A busy-bee formed by ex-members of the 2/28th Battalion has also erected a nice lot of homes, and every credit is due to that body, too. The Goldfields people have done more than their share towards the erection of houses for the residents, more than the people of any other part of the State.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Does the hon. member mean that they have more than their share of homes?

Hon. G. BENNETTS: Not in comparison with what they have built. While the hon. member says we have a great deal more than our quota of homes—

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Is the hon. member suggesting that he has more than his quota?

Hon. G. BENNETTS: —some of the stumps have been in a couple of years with nothing else erected on them, and I hardly think that one could call them homes. I hope this House will give further consideration to amending the Workers' Compensation Act to remove many of the disabilities suffered under the present legislation, including those relating to payments and the percentage of disability allowed. The schools at all centres on the Goldfields need extra room and hospitals are short of staff.

When the Labour Government was in power it was criticised on many occasions for not being able to recruit additional hospital staff. Today, I think the position is worse than ever. In Kalgoorlie the patients are being turned out of the hospitals far quicker than they should be because of the limited number of beds. The other day, a patient who had been operated on for appendicitis had to be discharged two days earlier than usual because his bed was needed for someone else. The same position exists in the midwifery block. Something must be done to encourage young girls to enter the nursing profession.

Hon. H. Hearn: What does the hon. member suggest we should do?

Hon. G. BENNETTS: Members may be able to put forward better suggestions than I can, but the situation certainly needs investigating. Perhaps, if Dr. Hislop and other members of his profession were to form a committee they might arrive at a solution. I am also greatly concerned over the school dental and medical services. I raised the question of dental services with the Minister and he has promised me that a dentist will be appointed for the Esperance and Goldfields areas, and that children up to the age of seven years will be treated. That is the age at which children's teeth require careful attention. Perhaps Dr. Hislop knows more about that subject than I do.

The effect that increases in the basic wage have on old age and invalid pensioners is causing me great concern. The cost of living is mounting from day to day and is out of all proportion to the increases in the basic wage. Some of the old age pensioners who pioneered this country are fairly comfortable but, nevertheless, when they reach a certain age they require extra nourishment. However, with the rate of pension they are receiving now they are unable to afford it. I would therefore like to see the Government take some action to increase the old age pension by 11s. or 12s., which would be somewhere in keeping with the increase in the cost of living. Apart from these old people not having sufficient money to keep themselves in a decent state of health, the pension is insufficient for them to purchase the clothes they require. Recently I received a letter from an old prospector at Higginsville who is in receipt of the old age pension, and this I have forwarded to the Commonwealth Government for its consideration. He pointed out to me the prices of the different articles of clothing he required, such as flannels, working trousers and boots, but which are absolutely beyond his means. If he expended the total amount required to purchase these clothes, he would have to go without food for a month.

I will admit that some of these old people are receiving assistance from their families, which relieves their hardship

a little, but, undoubtedly, there are those who are suffering great hardship because of their limited resources, especially those who are unable to do a little work to augment their pensions. I therefore hope that the Government will take some action in the matter to ensure that these old people will be able to buy the commodities to which they are entitled. Although the medical profession is very considerate when these old people take sick, such consideration is not shown by the members of the dental profession or opticians. I have been trying for two years to obtain a concession in dental charges for these aged residents on the Goldfields.

The Government is sympathetic because when I approach the authorities in Kalgoorlie on behalf of an old age pensioner who needs dental treatment, they generally provide a free rail pass to send him to Perth. These aged people are not in a fit state of health physically to travel to Perth and, if they were, they would not be able to afford to pay for hotel accommodation during their stay. A little while ago I was informed that a set of dentures cost £21 or £22, and an aged person has not the money to pay that amount. I contacted the Minister for Health and negotiations were carried on with dentists on the Goldfields with a view to arrangements being made for aged people to be treated locally, but so far without success. I should like to see transport facilities provided by the Government for a dentist to travel to those parts and an optician might also be included. Even if such an arrangement entailed some expense to the Government, I think it is not too much to ask.

Provision should be made in the form of a home for the aged people of the Goldfields. At one time the Kalgoorlie Municipal Council thought to do something along these lines—I am aware that the Salvation Army undertakes work of this sort—but found that the expense would be too great and the idea was dropped. In my opinion, such a home should be established at Esperance because, in that class of country with its good rainfall, some of the inmates could work at vegetable-growing and, in fact, might be able to raise most of their food requirements. At such a home, I believe that a few head of stock could be run cheaply.

During my earlier remarks, I omitted to mention that we have been waiting for a period of four years for additions to the hospital buildings. I understand that some negotiations were entered into, but the Minister is well aware that the time is long past when something should have been done. I hope that this year the facilities at the Coolgardie Hospital will be improved. An efficient hot water system is urgently needed. At present the

hot water, which is in such urgent and constant demand, has to be heated in pots on the stove.

I hope that the Minister will favourably consider reinstating the running of the Kalgoorlie train on Tuesday evenings. Another urgent need is improvement to the railway barracks at Merredin and Kalgoorlie. These barracks are long overdue for repairs and renovations to wash-houses and bathrooms. In the Salmon Gums area there is a definite shortage of accommodation for railway employees, and men for this class of work are very hard to get. I think the Minister will agree that something like 50 per cent. more staff is being employed than formerly, and the only way to hold these men is to provide them with reasonable facilities. On the Trans. line the Commonwealth Government has provided houses costing £1,500 and has installed kelinators, and I understand that the rental is about 14s. 6d. a week. On the other hand, for houses just completed at Kalgoorlie by the State Government, the rental is 38s. 6d. a week. I repeat that railway men are hard to get, and they will not undertake work in those districts unless the conditions are improved.

Of course, I shall not say that the many accidents occurring on the railways are due to a lack of efficient men, but there have been many accidents during the last few years and we might well ask the reason why. The only way to obtain and retain competent staff is to provide reasonable amenities. Last year I mentioned the conditions at Salmon Gums and I hope something will soon be done.

I believe that progress is being made to ensure that the railway system is brought up to standard. I have not met the new Commissioner of Railways, but I have met the Assistant Commissioners and I know they are capable men. From what they have already outlined, we should see a wonderful improvement in the system in the course of a couple of years. The experience with imported locomotives recently has resulted in a setback. Anyone who has worked on the railways is prepared to concede that the "PR" class has given good service.

An order was lodged with English manufacturers and the specifications were altered in order to turn out a "PM" class instead of a "PR" locomotive. Then what happened? These engines had to be taken off express trains and put on to goods trains. The trouble was that the couplings between the tender and engine and the donkey carriage were too rigid and that the draw gear was unsuitable. In other parts of the world, I have been informed, engines with a certain wheel base are designed for a certain radius of curve. Then there is the "W"

class locomotive, the specifications for which were also altered, and I understand that the manufacturers were not at all pleased when the alteration was made. I have been informed that the Chief Mechanical Engineer has introduced an improved fire-box to burn Collie coal and that the improvements he has effected will save 10 per cent. in the coal consumption. I believe that he has other suggestions to make that will prove of benefit to the system.

I am glad that this officer has adopted the policy of conferring with the men who work under him. I know that firemen approached his predecessor on various occasions and were asked, "Who are you?" The reply was, "I am the fireman on such and such an engine and I want to speak to you." He was then told, "I do not speak to firemen." An engineer in such a responsible position should take into consideration any suggestions that the men in his department have to offer. I can appreciate any man's being given a certain job and his remarking that a better way to do it would be so and so. If I could agree with him I would do so, but if I thought he was wrong, I should consider it only right to explain the reason why. I think that is what will happen in the Railway Department in the future. I hope the Minister will consider the suggestions I have made and will endeavour to have the work that I have outlined put in hand.

On motion by Hon. H. Hearn, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 6.15 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 15th August, 1950.

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

QUESTIONS.

WATERSIDE WORKERS.

As to Police Search.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN asked the Minister for Police:

(1) Is he aware that the Police Department carried out a mass search of all waterfront workers as they left the wharves on Friday, the 28th July?

(2) If so, with what result?

(3) Is it his intention to allow wharf workers to be humiliated in this way in the future?

The MINISTER replied:

(1), (2) and (3) There has been an increase of pillaging of cargo at Fremantle recently, and complaints have been made to the police in this connection.