

for the nation—or should I say rather that we show our hypocrisy—by giving them a home to live in, consisting of an old deserted lunatic asylum. Is that the best we can give to mothers as an expression of our appreciation of their services to the country? Their present only outlook from that home is a wall anything from 15 to 20ft. high.

Hon. C. B. Williams: With glass on the top.

Hon. G. FRASER: Round the home are spacious grounds. Apparently we even begrudge them the view of that wall because there is now being erected in the yard of the Old Women's Home a wool store, within a few feet of the windows of the building. I do not know who is responsible for that, but it is a standing disgrace to this country that such conditions should be allowed. I hope that the Chief Secretary and some other Ministers will take the matter up and see if something cannot be done to improve the conditions. We should at least provide a home for these women similar to that provided for old men.

Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. G. FRASER: We have plenty of land on which suitable buildings could be erected. Before the debate on the Address-in-reply is completed, I shall probably be asking for leave from members of this Chamber. Consequently this appears to be the last opportunity I shall have of addressing the House. I desire to thank hon. members for the kindnesses they have extended to me during my long association with this Chamber. I recollect many occasions on which we have clashed, but that is what we are sent here to do. We have our opinions, and we fight for them here. Nevertheless, at no time during my stay in the House have I made an enemy.

Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. C. B. Williams: Even the Labour members are not jealous of you for having, for years, moved the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply!

Hon. G. FRASER: I know one Labour member who will not do it. I thank members for the kindnesses shown me over the years. I hope that in the not distant future I shall again be amongst them to help in the construction of the new world order of which we have heard so much. We have not seen much evidence of reconstruction since the

last war, but I hope that following this war we shall witness desirable changes. It seemed to me that the old system had broken down and it was only this war that saved it. One thing I hope is that after this war no worker will be placed in the position in which so many men found themselves a few years ago of being unable to find a job by means of which to support dependants. I trust that, whatever alterations are made, there will at least be one along those lines.

HON. E. M. HEENAN (North-East)
[3.59]: I formally second the motion.

On motion by Hon. G. B. Wood, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 4.1 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 31st July, 1941.

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MEETING OF THE ASSEMBLY.

The Legislative Assembly met at 3 p.m., pursuant to proclamation, which was read by the Clerk (Mr. F. G. Steere).

SUMMONS FROM THE LIEUT.-GOVERNOR.

The Speaker and members, in response to summons, proceeded to the Legislative Council Chamber and, having heard His Excellency deliver the opening speech (*vide* Council report *ante*), they returned to the Assembly Chamber.

BILL—BAPTIST UNION OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA LANDS.

THE PREMIER (Hon. J. C. Willcock—Geraldton) [3.37]: In order to assert and maintain the undoubted rights and privileges of this House to initiate legislation, I move, without notice, for leave to introduce a Bill entitled "A Bill for an Act to enable the Baptist Union of Western Australia (Incorporated) to sell, lease or mortgage its lands."

Leave given; Bill introduced and read a first time.

LIEUT.-GOVERNOR'S OPENING SPEECH.

MR. SPEAKER: Accompanied by hon. members of this Chamber, I attended His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor in the Legislative Council Chamber to hear the Speech which His Excellency was pleased to deliver to both Houses of Parliament. For the sake of greater accuracy, I have caused copies of the Speech to be distributed amongst members of this Chamber.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

First Day.

MR. LEAHY (Hannans) [3.39]: I move—

That the following Address be presented to His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor in reply to the Speech he has been pleased to deliver to Parliament:—"May it please Your Excellency: We, the members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of the State of Western Australia, in Parliament assembled, beg to express our loyalty to our Most Gracious Sovereign, and to thank Your Excellency for the Speech you have been pleased to deliver to Parliament."

I regret the necessity for referring to the passing of a highly honoured and respected member of this Chamber in the person of Mr. George Lambert, member for Yilgarn-Coolgardie. The late hon. member was a man of many parts. I think it was Canon Collick who said that Mr. Lambert was a man's man; and that speaks volumes. It conveys an idea of just the type of man he really was. His breezy, lively disposition endeared him to everybody. I had known George Lambert probably as long as had any man in this State, and I always had the impression that he was not an individual but an institution. He was something

unique in the way of a good fellow. At all times he was prepared to extend a hand of welcome and give advice out of his wide knowledge and experience. Nobody who approached him for advice or assistance was turned down. Mr. Lambert was one of the most striking and fascinating personalities in this House. He had undoubted ability, and perhaps, if his wide knowledge and keen intellect had been used to a greater extent in his own interests, he might have gone very far. His passing has left a gap in the social, public and political life of the State that will be very hard to fill. On behalf of members of this Chamber, I tender to his family our sincere sympathy in their sad bereavement.

At this juncture it is almost impossible to get any citizen to interest himself in State politics. The heart and mind of every citizen of the Commonwealth are centred overseas. Many of us have relatives in the fringing line. Those who have not feel deeply for those citizens who are anxiously awaiting some news of blood relatives in the field of action. Once again Australia is taking a very prominent part in actions of an international nature. During the 1914-18 war we established a name for ourselves as loyal citizens that was recognised throughout the length and breadth of the civilised world. The name of our Anzaes is known in every quarter of the globe. After the lapse of all those years, the sons of the Anzaes are repeating the glorious deeds of their fathers, standing four-square to stem the forces of the most bloodthirsty tyrant the world has known. What are our men doing? As in 1914, they are engaged as shock troops. Our immense continent with its sparse population is once again called upon to provide shock troops for service overseas. It speaks volumes for the type of people that we breed in this Commonwealth, and for what can be produced in a democratic, freedom-loving country.

What I believe forced our young men to leave the shores of Australia was really their desire to defend freedom, civilisation, Christianity and democracy. What else, I ask, is there that would induce any man to take up arms and travel and fight overseas? Is not that the finest, cleanest type of man that God ever put breath into, the man who values democratic principles and ideals, and the freedom which we in this wonderful land of

ours have inherited? To-day Australia occupies just as proud a position in the world as it did in 1914. The only regret I have is that our immense coastline is left undefended, and that appears to me to be rather contradictory. Our population is equal to three persons to the square mile, yet our men are sent overseas to act as shock troops. What I really understood that Great Britain, and the other democratic countries that are fighting with their backs to the wall to-day, wanted was not so much men as munitions, material, food and equipment. Possibly there is some truth in what the critics are saying to-day. I am not a military genius and do not for a moment wish to criticise people who make a speciality of things military; but, to my lay mind, such things as I have referred to require much explaining.

Even now a very powerful foe is working quietly south. Does that mean we shall have to find someone who will come in and defend our shores in order to prevent that foe from entering the back door of the Commonwealth of Australia? To me there appears to be something radically wrong with the whole system. I know and admire the spirit that makes our men go overseas as shock troops. I admire that spirit. We must remember, however, that we have something at home to protect, and that we are opposed to the most perfect fighting machine the civilised world has ever known. We are not fighting a war of aggression. We are not seeking territorial expansion; we are fighting for our very existence. In the last month or so the position appears to have become brighter than during the the past two years. Russia seems at least to be checking, if not holding, the aggressor. If that be so, it will give us time to equip ourselves for the greater effort which must be made in the near future. According to the Prime Minister of England, we are to-day on the verge of something that may mean to us life or death. However, as time is limited, I shall not dwell further on that subject.

I know I am expected to say something on the mining industry although possibly it is not of great interest. The fact remains, however, that a few years ago, as everyone knows, mining was in the doldrums. It was at an exceedingly low ebb. There did not seem to be any future for the industry.

Had one approached an investor, or been foolish enough to look for an investor who would put his money into a mining proposition, one would have been regarded as about as stupid as a person looking for a cellarman in Lapland. At that time no investor would have thought of putting money into a mining proposition. It was just then that the Labour Government came to the assistance of the industry. That Government took a risk, with the result that almost every big mining proposition in the State received assistance and, together with smaller propositions, is now in a flourishing condition.

During 1940, 4,291,709 tons of ore were treated. This is a record for the State for all time. The tonnage broken yielded 1,154,843 fine ozs. of gold. This was equivalent to an average of 5.38 dwts. of fine gold per ton, and it is the lowest average grade of ore ever treated in the State. It shows conclusively that with improved practice in mining and metallurgy and with the application of brains and the use of modern machinery, the life of our mines can be considerably extended. I know that figures are dry, and possibly the subject of mining is rather dry, but the figures show just what is really happening in the industry to-day. Every ton of ore broken in 1940 averaged to the State £2 17s. 4d. During 1940—this will be news for Country Party members and others—

Mr. Hughes: Who is responsible for all this?

Mr. Raphael: We put the gold in.

Mr. LEAHY: We took it out. I wish to point out to my friend that the total value of gold produced during 1940 in this State was more than double the value of the wool and wheat produced in the State. Not only that, but it was almost half the total value of all production in Western Australia, showing that, without gold, we would be bankrupt. The gold mining industry to-day employs approximately 15,000 people, which means quite a lot for a State like Western Australia.

We have gone a little farther than gold, in that our mineral production in 1940 was valued at a little over £900,000. Of that, £750 came from quite a new mineral—vermiculite—which was mined in 1940 in this State for the first time. No doubt during the war period the demand will become greater, with consequent expansion in the

use of this particular mineral. It would be rather a good suggestion, too, if now that we are building a chemical laboratory in Perth we could have the walls decorated with vermiculite. That would demonstrate to the people just what really can be done with this mineral.

Our minerals should play an ever-increasingly important part in the future State economy, in particular when we realise that we are now launching out into the ship-building industry, and munition and general manufacturing. This vermiculite is by no means the only new mineral being mined. We have quite a number of them. Let me quote a few which can be produced in quantities in this State—bauxite, alunite, phosphate, iron, tin, copper, and asbestos. Each and every one of these will be of great use provided we can go on with our programme during the war.

Now I come to the mineral needed more urgently than any other, namely petroleum. We know that in the world today half the international squabbles occur over oil. The Government is assisting the Freney Kimberley Oil Company to a considerable extent. This company is engaged in an extensive boring programme which, if successfully carried out, will mean great things for this State. The Petroleum Act and the regulations made thereunder have been amended, thus giving a little wider scope to companies applying for areas in which to prospect and explore. One of the biggest oil companies in the world has taken up an immense area of country for exploration purposes in an endeavour to find petroleum in payable quantities. Last year the Government appointed a Royal Commission to inquire into the Collie coal mining industry. I am now on dangerous ground and I feel I should leave that question to the member for Collie (Mr. Wilson) to deal with.

The health of the miners engaged in the mining industry in general, and the gold mining industry in particular, is very important. Prior to 1905 the health of the gold miners was not much considered. No provision was made for checking the state of their health from year to year until the late Mr. S. W. Munsie (then Minister for Mines) moved the Government to make representations to the Commonwealth authorities, with the result that they established a health laboratory in Kalgoorlie,

where periodical examinations of the men engaged in the industry were made. In 1925, when the Commonwealth Health Laboratory was first established, 80 per cent. of the miners working underground were considered to be in a normal state of health. As indicative of what can be done as a result of care and attention, it is interesting to note that, in 1940, 96 per cent. of the men in the gold mines were in a normal state of health. That demonstrates conclusively that the efforts of the Commonwealth and State Governments to preserve the health of the miners have had undoubted results. To me it is most pleasing to note that the health of the miners, generally speaking, has greatly improved. Men are not admitted to the industry unless their health is satisfactory. The control exercised over work underground has also had a marked and beneficial effect.

The officers appointed by the Government to act as inspectors are men who have been through the various phases of the industry and know their business thoroughly. They have paid strict attention to the ventilation of mines upon which the health of the miners so greatly depends. Once the air underground becomes contaminated with dust particles, and these are breathed in by the miners, their health commences to be adversely affected. The inspectors are University-trained men of considerable ability, and possess a good knowledge of ventilation and other phases of mining. The officers charged with the work in the Kalgoorlie district are particularly efficient. A strict measure of control of underground workings is being maintained. The officers at Kalgoorlie are drawing up ventilation plans of all mines of importance, and these will show the temperatures in all parts of the mines, the humidity of the air, the quantity of air circulating through the working faces, and the number of dust particles present in the air. Many additional fans have been installed, and the condition of the underground atmosphere has been continually improved. The prospecting scheme is still in operation, and we have to thank the Government for the movement.

The Mine Workers' Relief Act has been amended in certain respects, as a result of which more consideration is given to individual cases. Provision has also been made for mine workers who enlist in the fighting forces for service at home or abroad.

Their laboratory tickets are kept intact and, should any misfortune befall the men while on service, their interests will be conserved. On their return to this State, should they be found to be suffering from silicosis or dust, they can apply for compensation and their claims will be met. When six months have elapsed after their return from service overseas, should they be found to be suffering from tuberculosis or some other complaint, their position will be different. The colossal cheek of the Commonwealth Government—

Hon. C. G. Latham: I do not know that you are in order in referring to another Government in such terms.

Mr. Cross: They deserve it.

Hon. C. G. Latham: They have rights, just as we have.

Mr. LEAHY: I am not referring to any individual, nor to what he may consider his rights, nor yet to what I may consider my rights. I desire to refer to facts.

Hon. C. G. Latham: But you mentioned "colossal cheek."

Mr. LEAHY: In imposing an iniquitous tax upon production, the Commonwealth Government attempted to do more to kill the goldmining industry than anyone else has done in the past twenty years.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Do not forget the tax imposed by the State on the mining industry.

Mr. LEAHY: That is a different thing.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Of course it is!

Mr. LEAHY: I am referring to a tax imposed upon all production. We have to maintain the movement to secure relief from the imposition. A measure of assistance has been secured in that the prospector or the man working a low-grade proposition, has to realise a return of at least 25 ounces before the tax is applicable to his output. We had considerable difficulty in obtaining even that concession. I believe it is the duty of every Federal member to exert himself to get that tax removed. Gold is one of the most important commodities produced in Australia, and certainly is a most important commodity to this State. No exception could be taken to the imposition of a tax on profits from goldmining, but the tax on production is too heavy for any mining company to bear. In one year the Commonwealth Government took from this State taxation to the extent of a million pounds. Although the Common-

wealth boasts of helping us to foster the mining industry, it was content to dole out £111,000 for advances to persons engaged in the production of gold. In effect, the Commonwealth said, "You have been a naughty boy and should not ask for anything, but we will give you £111,000." If I remember aright—I believe the statement was made by the Minister for Mines—we offered the Commonwealth a million pounds worth of gold if it would release a million pounds worth of relief to the industry.

Hon. C. G. Latham: That does not seem to be a bad arrangement, but where would the Commonwealth have got the £1,000,000?

Mr. LEAHY: The Commonwealth would have received £1,000,000 worth of gold from us. I regret that I have been unable to refer to these matters without quoting figures. On this account members must be feeling rather sorry for me because, when addressing the House, my remarks are not usually so boring.

MR. STYANTS (Kalgoorlie) [4.6]: I formally second the motion.

On motion by Hon. C. G. Latham, debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

THE PREMIER (Hon. J. C. Willcock—Geraldton) [4.7]: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till 4.30 p.m. on Tuesday, the 5th August.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 4.8 p.m.