

Mr. Doney: There is something in what you say, but your last statement is wrong.

Mr. WITHERS: I am of opinion that Parliamentarians could be employed to assist the Government along the lines I have indicated. At all events, I could find time on occasions to do something to assist the Government. I am not all the time receiving on my doorstep people who have parochial grievances. I have sufficient time on my hands to devote to the benefit of the State if I am required to do so.

Mr. Doney: Your idea is not a new one. It came from this side of the House two sessions ago.

Mr. WITHERS: That is so. I am prepared to say the idea is not original. However, I agree with it and I think the Government should give it consideration.

Mr. Fox: Have an alteration in Ministerial offices and so get a change!

Mr. WITHERS: No. More members of this House could be employed to help the Government in various ways. I did overlook one thing in the Lieut.-Governor's Speech. It is the question of education. I refer to it because the member for Avon was mentioned yesterday by his leader as having propounded a scheme for the raising of the school-leaving age in the inquiry held in 1938. The hon. member had a Select Committee appointed and the Leader of the Opposition yesterday gave us to understand that therein originated the idea of raising the school-leaving age, but I can remember attending conferences at the Trades Hall before I was in Parliament and also just afterwards, when Hon. J. M. Drew was Minister for Education, and this selfsame matter was placed on the platform of the Labour Party.

Mr. Doney: He did not claim it was a new idea.

Mr. WITHERS: Your leader yesterday made the claim that it was.

Mr. Doney: No.

Mr. WITHERS: The Leader of the Opposition said the idea was five years old, and that the Premier was only giving effect to the suggestion just before an election. The raising of the school age was supported by the party years ago.

Mr. Boyle: You did not support it five years ago; you voted against it.

Mr. WITHERS: Did I? I do not know whether I did or not. I am not bound to support anything brought forward by the

Opposition. I think it is a gracious act on the part of the Government that it assists to have put through some of the suggestions of the Opposition! It is a gracious act on our part to allow the Opposition to secure a majority vote for some proposals. When the matter is gone into from the economic viewpoint, it will be found that the raising of the school-leaving age will cost the State an enormous amount of money.

Mr. Doney: Of course it will.

Mr. WITHERS: The Leader of the Opposition may not be acquainted with the fact that according to what appeared in this morning's paper, the Country Party Premier of Victoria has, since an election, raised the Education Vote of that State by £500,000. Why? Because he has the finance available now and can see his way clear to increase the vote, just as the Premier of this State thinks he can see his way clear whereas it was not possible five years ago.

On motion by Mr. Perkins, debate adjourned.

COMMITTEES FOR THE SESSION.

Council's Message.

Message from the Council received and read notifying the personnel of sessional committees appointed by that House.

BILL—SUPPLY (No. 1), £2,500,000.

Returned from the Council without amendment.

House adjourned at 5.24 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Thursday, 12th August, 1943.

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The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 2.15 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTIONS (2).

MOTOR TRANSPORT.

As to Control of Passenger Traffic.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER asked the Chief Secretary: 1, What endeavours were made

to queue up passengers for trolley buses? 2, By whom, and when, were the efforts made? 3, Will the Government endeavour to do something practicable as regards the control of intending passengers about to board motor buses, and thus avoid further accidents?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1 and 2, A sergeant and four constables were detailed for duty at the trolley bus stand in St. George's-terrace in September, 1942, and attempted to queue up passengers for approximately four weeks. 3, No further action is being taken regarding passengers boarding motor buses under present conditions, except that the police patrol the vicinity with the object of preventing obstruction.

HIGH SCHOOLS.

As to Opening Dates and Cost.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL asked the Chief Secretary: 1, What were the dates on which High Schools were opened at the following towns:—Albany, Bunbury, Northam, and Geraldton? 2, What were the respective total amounts expended on the schools?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, Albany, February, 1925; Bunbury, February, 1923; Northam, September, 1921; Geraldton, July, 1939. 2, Albany, £22,005; Bunbury, £24,188; Northam, £21,610; Geraldton, £21,972.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Fourth Day.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. W. J. MANN (South-West) [2.20]: Before proceeding to comment briefly on the Speech of His Excellency, I would like to offer you, Sir, my sincere sympathy at the great loss you recently sustained. One feels how weak and fruitless must be any words uttered in offering condolences of this description. At the same time I want you to know that we do feel for you. It seems one of the great tragedies of our time that in an unsought struggle which the nations of the world are now engaged in, so many of the cream of our young men are called upon to give their all, and so many of the honoured parents must lay so costly a sacrifice on the altar of freedom. I also wish to offer my sympathy to one or two members who, since we last met, have had more than a fair share of ill-health. I understand that Mr. Piesse,

who had been confined to his bed for quite a long time but was with us on the opening day, is again in hospital. We are all sorry to know that. I hope that this will prove to be the last occasion for a long time that he will require such attention and that he will soon be back with us in good health. The same might be said, although perhaps to a lesser degree, of both Mr. Baxter and Mr. Thomson, who have suffered a good deal of those ills that we do not like, but which, as human beings, we must expect at times.

Referring to the Speech of the Lieutenant-Governor one cannot help realising that the war has overshadowed all other activities, and that from the point of view of a programme of recorded achievements it does not rank very high. Even so, we can feel satisfied that the Government has endeavoured to deal, as far as possible, with matters that called for immediate attention. The question of providing a number of facilities that have been required for years by the outer districts has had to remain in abeyance. We feel that, much as many of the people we represent have been disadvantaged, we will still have to put up with it and wait for better times. In the Speech reference is made to a general stocktaking of the lands in this State for the purpose of settlement after the war; particularly to that available for selection in the agricultural belt. As one with a very lively recollection of what happened in connection with our earlier land settlement scheme, I trust that the Government will take heed of the lessons learnt on that occasion.

The time is long past when the old idea held good that any man could make a farmer. That conception existed in the minds of many people. Though they realised that a man without training might not become a builder, carpenter, bricklayer or other craftsman whose work called for the exercise of skill, they still believed that any man could take up a piece of virgin land and convert it into a profit-earning farm. My experience has taught me that just as much business acumen, if not more, is required to make a successful agriculturist as is needed by a man if he is going to make a success in any other walk of life. When the men for whom these schemes are being designed return from the war, I hope the personal equation will be taken into consideration just as much as the quality of the land itself. The old idea that any land could be converted

into a good farm is equally erroneous. It may be quite easy for a man to make a success on the land in areas where the rainfall is bountiful, but all the factors must be considered in any future scheme. There is a large area of land still available in the favoured and well-watered parts of the State, and if the Government contemplates settling soldiers on the land after the war, those are the parts where a commencement should be made.

I am pleased that the Government has at last seriously considered the question of providing adequate water supplies in many of the areas to which I have referred. Much of the land east of the Great Southern railway has failed to meet expectations for the reason that the water supply has been inadequate. I have always held that the rainfall in the Darling Range was ample for the requirements of the whole of the immediate south-western districts, but every year countless millions of gallons of water are running to waste, running into the sea. For years I have felt that it was something of a tragedy that on the other side of the range men were struggling to make farms and not reaping the success that their labours deserved simply because the supply of water was inadequate. In the hands of the officer who has been so successful in installing south-west water supplies, Mr. Dumas, I believe that the scheme promulgated in "The West Australian" of today will prove as successful as has the Coolgardie Water Scheme—the creation of the late C. Y. O'Connor—and I am sure it will make a tremendous difference to the productivity of the State and to the fortunes of the people whom it is designed to serve.

The Speech refers to health and housing. Both of these are fairly hardy annuals. Our workers' homes scheme is a very good one. Recently I was in conversation with some men from New Zealand, who spoke of the housing scheme in the Dominion. They were very enthusiastic about it. When I told them the conditions of our workers' homes scheme, they looked aghast. They had thought that theirs was the last word in housing schemes, but they realised that they had to come to Western Australia to learn of the excellent opportunities offered to working men to get homes of their own if they so desired. I hope that in the housing scheme the Government has in mind, the same principle as applies to workers' homes will be given effect to. Though men nowadays sometimes say that

there is not much sense in being thrifty, because the thrifty man has to pay more by way of taxation, I believe that thrift is one of the things that go to make a nation. While the Government should do everything possible to ensure that the people enjoy decent housing accommodation, it should also take care that people benefiting under these schemes should do a fair thing for themselves as is required of those under the workers' homes scheme.

Another matter calling for reference is the manpower problem in the rural areas. It is the proud boast in most of our country districts that practically the whole of the men of fighting age have made their services available for the Fighting Forces. It would surprise members who do not have an opportunity to travel in the country to find how many homes there are in which merely the father and mother, with perhaps a young child or two, but often only the father and mother, are doing their best to carry on the properties. The tremendous exodus that has taken place from the country had to be felt before very long, but it has not been felt keenly until the last few months. I am forced to the conclusion, however, that unless many people in the country are given the help that seems to be very difficult to obtain, or are permitted to have some of their boys returned to the farms, the production of those properties will fall alarmingly. During the last two or three weeks no fewer than three instances have come under my notice of parents who have reached the stage when they feel they can no longer carry on the work in which they are engaged in the dairying industry. One is a man 70 years old who has been notorious for the amount of hard work he has done for many years past. He said to his boys, "Go on, boys; I will carry on." This old man who, with his wife, milks 30 to 40 cows for the greater part of the year has suddenly found that his strength is giving out after nearly four years of continuous work. He feels that he must either get assistance or that one of his boys should be released from the army to carry on the task.

There is no surplus labour available for farm work at present. There are many good jobs for youths on farms, but they are mostly engaged in some other direction. It is essential to keep up the fighting strength of our Forces, but we must realise at the

same time that they must be fed; and while in the industrial world we may be able to get substitutes for various materials, there is no known substitute that I am aware of for good food. For that reason, this is one of the problems which must be tackled to an even greater degree in the future than it has been in the past, at all events to the extent of providing labour for people who are so much in need of it. Another case is that of a man nearing 68 years of age. He tells me in a letter that the last time he left home was when he made a hurried trip to Perth with me four and a half years ago. He also tells me that for three years he has not been more than two miles from his farm. These are facts which the public should know. All honour to these people, but nevertheless I maintain the powers-that-be should be made to realise that these men cannot carry on without more help than they are getting. I wish to refer to one or two other matters. One is the payment of taxation.

Hon. C. B. Williams: We do not have much to do with that now.

Hon. W. J. MANN: We have the paying to do.

Hon. C. B. Williams: We certainly do the paying.

Hon. W. J. MANN: I would point out that the yearly lag in the payment of income tax is not in the best interests of the people. We are paying taxation now on income that we earned last year.

Hon. C. B. Williams: There is some doubt about that. Do not be too sure.

Hon. W. J. MANN: I am referring to the members who earn income and have to pay tax on it. The point is that we are not paying tax on income as we earn it. I think it was Mr. Fadden, of the Eastern States, who elaborated the idea of "Pay as you go."

The Chief Secretary: He spoke about re-funding portion of the income tax already paid.

Hon. W. J. MANN: If a taxpayer has overpaid his tax, he should obtain a refund of the amount paid in excess. The point is that a person may earn a large income this year, but that towards the end of the financial year or the beginning of the next one—

Hon. C. B. Williams: He may have gone to the races.

Hon. W. J. MANN: —he may have had misfortune, and then suddenly might

find himself called upon to provide a large sum for taxation out of a greatly reduced income. That is not right. I understand that Canada has adopted a "Pay as you go" scheme such I am suggesting and that it is working well. I have also read that the United States some time ago were trying—and are still trying—to put into effect some such scheme that will satisfy two contending factions. I understand the position in the United States is that there are two parties, each of which maintains that its method is the proper one, and so far the two schemes have not been harmonised and put into effect.

Another matter about which I feel perturbed—it is really not a State matter but affects us as Federal electors—is the tremendous increase in government by regulation. Very shortly there will not be much left for Parliaments to do; all the governing will be done by regulation.

Hon. G. W. Miles: There will be nothing else left to regulate.

Hon. W. J. MANN: Any Federal Minister who gets a bee in his bonnet about what he considers to be necessary for the people of Australia simply brings down a regulation and gets away with it. With the 400 odd Commonwealth boards now in existence and the sheaves of regulations in force, I sometimes wonder what will be left for the Parliaments of the States to legislate upon in the future. The members of this Chamber are perhaps on the conservative side in dealing with regulations. We take good care—or have done so in the past—that regulations brought down by any Government are keenly scrutinised. If we consider the regulations are not in the best interests of the public we disallow them. In the National Parliament it is unusual for a regulation to be disallowed.

Another point on which I think we are justified in voicing an opinion is the present war situation. We have been very much heartened by the successes of the various Allied Forces in different theatres of the war; so much so that quite a lot has been mentioned on the subject of peace. I hope the time when we will be talking about real peace is not far off, though I cannot help thinking we are still some distance away from that end. I hope, however, there will be no bargaining with the defeated nations. We want no bargaining with defeated Italy. The idea of Winston Churchill and other

great leaders that there shall be unconditional surrender will, I hope, be insisted upon. It is not out of place for members of the Parliaments of the Dominions, of which ours is one, to voice our opinions to that effect. It seems to me that if we are not careful, despite all the sacrifices and loss of life and all the debasements that have taken place because of the endeavour of maniacs to take charge of certain countries, we are going to allow these people to get away without paying a proper price for their crimes. I do not desire to appear a firebrand or anything of the kind, but wish clearly to indicate my hope that everything possible will be done to ensure that for many generations to come there will be no more war, and that once and for all those people who—when a big national calamity ends there is always a section of such people—want to be apologists for those who were the cause of the war, will not be allowed to take the part of the criminals and endeavour to prevent the punishment of those who were responsible for it.

There is one matter I would like to mention and it is as well that it should be alluded to here. I refer to the printing of documents, etc. If members will cast their minds back over the last year or two, they will have noticed in regard to printed reports and such like documents which were laid upon the Table of the House, that these have been curtailed to a considerable extent. I happen to be possessed of firsthand knowledge to the effect that the paper position in Australia is extremely acute; so acute is it that very shortly in Melbourne there will be a gathering of men concerned to see what can be done to obtain additional supplies from oversea. The point I wish to make is that quite a lot could be saved by the Government Printing Office here if it would see that the best possible use was made of such material as it has on hand. A case in point is the Lieut.-Governor's Speech. I may be told that not many copies of that document have been printed and that any saving in that direction would not amount to much. The report of the Speech has two blank pages and all the matter is most generously spaced out. I make the statement that any craftsman who was given a copy of the Speech and told to put it in a form equally as good as it is now and still retain the same sized paper, could do so, and he could make a saving of 50 per cent. in paper compared

with the copy before us. I have here another report. Whilst the same argument might not hold good in this instance, I point out that there is still 25 per cent. of paper without a line of printing upon it. I hope the Minister in charge of the Printing Office will pass on to the Government Printer the opinion, for what it is worth—and I contend that in this case it is worth something—that this House will be glad if even greater economy is practised in future than has been noticeable in the past.

I do not say that the printed matter that comes before us is such that we are not pleased to see it, but if members will examine the reports themselves they will see that quite a lot of good material could be saved. Perhaps members do not know that very shortly we shall be using brown paper for envelopes. I think there are some in the Chamber now. That is clear evidence that there is insufficient paper available for white envelopes. It is well known that for some weeks or months past people have found it impossible to purchase writing pads. Members probably know the position quite well. These are factors which prompt one to express the hope that all possible economy will be practised in regard to all printed matter that is brought before the House. I do not make these remarks in a carping spirit or with any desire to air such knowledge as I may have on the subject, but those I have made contain a good deal of commonsense and are in the interests of the Government Printing Office itself.

On motion by Hon. H. S. W. Parker, debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till 4.30 p.m. on Tuesday, the 24th August.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 2.55 p.m.
