

# Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 1st August, 1946.

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

## QUESTIONS.

### CEMENT.

*As to Supplies for Farmers.*

Mr. TELFER asked the Premier:

1, What progress has been made in creating an increased supply of cement for farmers?

2, When may it be reasonable to anticipate that farmers may have arrear orders supplied?

The PREMIER replied:

1, The supply has been curtailed in the past by unavoidable circumstances, but two kilns are now operating at the Swan Portland Cement Works.

2, A substantial portion of the output is being devoted to outstanding orders of primary producers, and if both kilns continue in operation without interruption, it is anticipated that such orders will be cleared within two or three months.

### RURAL RELIEF FUND ACT.

*(a) As to Repayment of Advances.*

Mr. TELFER asked the Minister for Lands:

1, What was the total amount advanced by the Commonwealth for debt adjustment under the Rural Relief Fund Act?

2, Was this money made available by the Commonwealth as a free grant to farmers; if not, what were the conditions?

3, How many farmers have been assisted under the Act?

4, How many farmers have had their debts partly or wholly written off?

5, Can the State write off all the advances; if so, will this be done?

The MINISTER replied:

1, £1,283,000.

2, No. The money was made available to the States under a Commonwealth Act known as Loan (Farmers' Debts Adjustment), No. 23 of 1935. The money was granted to the States. Provision was made in the Commonwealth Act for the money to be advanced to farmers and for any repayments to be used for further debt adjustment, and these repayments to be deemed as money granted to the State.

3, 3,733 farmers.

4, 363 farmers have had the advances made to them, partly or wholly written off.

5, The State Government does not wish to prejudice any case by premature statements, but investigations are proceeding to see what action would be required both to write off the outstanding amounts and to clear the repayment account. The State is in consultation with the Commonwealth on the matter as the Commonwealth Act binds the State in some directions. When the State Government is in the position to consider the Commonwealth attitude and reach conclusions, a public statement will be made by the Premier.

*(b) As to Winding-up of Fund, etc.*

Mr. TELFER (without notice) asked the Premier: In view of the replies given by the Minister for Lands regarding farmers' debts adjustment matters: 1, Is there any likelihood of the balance of the moneys being made available to the State? 2, If that is unlikely, what further steps is he taking to make legal the writing-off of outstanding amounts and the winding up of the fund?

The PREMIER replied: There is a total of £2,000,000 still unpaid under the original Act which made available to the States moneys for farmers' debt adjustment. The last payment to this State was a few years ago and amounted to about £24,000. Repeated attempts have been made by my predecessor to have further amounts made available to this State for further debt adjustment. The position, when last considered by the Commonwealth on application by the States, was that had such sums been available for further debt adjustment, they would have been made available to the detriment of other sections of the loan

programme. At this stage, in reply to the last part of the question, we are attempting to clarify the position as to the legal responsibilities of the State, and as soon as we know not only the Commonwealth decision in the matter but all the legal responsibilities attaching to it, the State will attempt to take the requisite action to do the best in the interests of the farmers concerned.

### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

*Fourth Day.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

**MR. STYANTS** (Kalgoorlie) [4.37]: Before applying myself to the Address-in-reply I would like, together with other members, to express my sympathy to Sir James and Lady Mitchell in their recent sad bereavement. Also, I am particularly pleased to see the Minister for the North-West again in this Chamber and I congratulate him on his recovery. I think we are all pleased at his return to us, looking so well. Another matter for congratulation is that this is the first anniversary of the member for Gascoyne as Premier of the State, and I think everyone in the House will offer him congratulations. At all events, the members on this side of the House will be prepared to wish him "Many happy returns of the day." The first matter that I wish to deal with—I propose to deal with three or four matters relating to this State and then two that are Australia-wide, but which are closely associated—is the question of increasing the population of Australia, and the White Australia Policy.

First of all I wish to deal with the acute shortage of nursing and other hospital staff not only in my district but also throughout the State. For the last five or six years the reasons advanced for the shortage of nurses have been the long hours and poor wages, and there was a certain amount of justification behind those reasons. The new award which has been issued, however, provides for wages and conditions that I believe are equal to, if not better than, anything of the kind in Australia, but there has not been sufficient time for the new conditions to have effect and remedy the shortage. In Kalgoorlie for a considerable number of months the intermediate ward has been closed on account of shortage of staff, and patients are being turned away from the hospital.

On inquiry I find that the staff is short of 27 trainees and it is also short of assistant nurses. The award rate under which assistant nurses are now working is not an inducement for girls to undertake this work. In the Eastern Goldfields district an assistant nurse receives 19s. 4d. per week plus keep, while the wage for a domestic servant is £4 4s. 2d. per week without keep. Both are doing almost identical work; although the assistant nurse has a high-falutin' title, she is really only a qualified domestic. It is surely too much to expect to get assistant nurses for 19s. 4d. a week plus keep while a domestic doing almost precisely the same class of work receives £4 4s. 2d. without keep. This is an anomaly that will have to be corrected.

As regards trainees, I have made a suggestion to the Minister which he is now investigating and I understand that he views it favourably. We on the Eastern Goldfields realise that it is the responsibility of the community to provide the nurses to attend the locally sick while they are in hospital. We are prepared to accept that. There has been a provision that trainees must serve a certain time at Wooroloo, usually during the first 12 months of their service. Parents object to their girls being sent to Wooroloo because of fear of their contracting the disease. Whether there is any ground for this fear, the Minister probably knows.

**Mr. Mann:** There is not as much danger at Wooroloo as in the Perth Hospital.

**Mr. STYANTS:** I understand that the Minister will not now insist upon trainees at Kalgoorlie going to Wooroloo during the first 12 months. Some years ago Kalgoorlie hospital was a centre at which a nurse could receive full training, and I see no reason why the system that then prevailed should not be reintroduced. At Kalgoorlie we have a tutorial school and sister, and if nurses could be fully trained there under that system, I see no reason why trainees now cannot complete their course in Kalgoorlie.

**Mr. Mann:** How many years is the full course, three or four?

**Mr. STYANTS:** I think it is four.

The Minister for Lands: Under the Government system, yes, but three years in the Perth Hospital.

Mr. STYANTS: If the Minister is prepared to call for trainees in Kalgoorlie with a stipulation that they will not be sent to Wooroloo at least in the first 12 months, we will guarantee to provide the 27 trainees to make good the present shortage. Apart from the objection to girls being sent to Wooroloo for fear of their contracting the disease, there is a second objection, namely, that their service for the first 12 months carries the lowest rate of remuneration and it is very difficult for the girls to carry on if they are away from their homes. If it becomes necessary for the girls to go to Wooroloo for a short period in the second year, they will have acquired sufficient knowledge to appreciate that there is not a great deal of danger attached to nursing there. However, we will undertake to provide the trainees if the stipulation is made that they be allowed to remain in Kalgoorlie for the first 12 months.

The Minister for Lands: You would not want 27 in the first year.

Mr. STYANTS: The matron said she was 27 trainees short.

The Minister for Lands: That would apply to the first, second and third years.

Mr. STYANTS: The matron advertised a couple of months ago for assistant nurses and, although at least five of the seven applicants appeared to be suitable, immediately they found that the wage was only 19s. 4d. a week plus keep, they decided not to take the job. If we could get two assistant nurses for each of the eight wards, it would be possible to re-open the intermediate ward, but we are not likely to get them while we have the anomaly of domestics receiving £4 4s. 2d. and an assistant nurse getting 19s. 4d. plus keep, equal to about another £1 a week.

The action of the Commonwealth Government in providing for free hospitalisation has created a very difficult problem in the matter of accommodation both for patients and staff. A large number of people, from the fact that they can now receive free hospitalisation, are availing themselves of hospital treatment whereas previously they did not do so owing to the expense involved. In Kalgoorlie there have been 550 more cases in the last 12 months than in the previous year, and this is due principally to the provision of free hospitalisation. We will re-

quire additional accommodation for patients, a larger staff, and consequently extra accommodation for the additional staff.

As soon as it is possible to implement the 44-hour week, the demand for trained nurses will be still further increased. Consequently the Commonwealth scheme has definitely created a problem, and I consider that the Commonwealth should provide some funds towards the provision of the additional accommodation for staff and patients rendered necessary by the very laudable introduction of a free hospital scheme. I appreciate what the Government has done for the Kalgoorlie hospital in the last seven or eight years. What we have is good; we are not complaining about it, but there is not sufficient accommodation now to meet the requirements of the people of the district, and patients are being turned away. It has been on record that the St. John Ambulance has taken patients there and, despite every effort being made by the matron to find beds, they have had to be turned away.

Another question I hope will receive favourable consideration from the Medical Department and the Minister is the provision of male nurses. I noticed in the Press recently that they have formed an association. It is most desirable that we should have trained male nurses. I think the majority of men would prefer to have male nurses looking after them, and that is not saying anything derogatory to female nurses.

The Minister for Lands: I have been nursed by both, and, as far as I am concerned, you can have your male nurses!

Mr. STYANTS: Probably the male nurses the Minister had were not trained as they should have been.

The Minister for Lands: They were trained properly during the 1914-18 war.

Mr. STYANTS: Probably the Minister would prefer females to nurse him; but from my experience I would say that the formation of an association for the proper training of male nurses is very desirable, and I hope the matter will receive favourable consideration from the Minister and the department.

The next matter I want to deal with is the bituminising of the Great Eastern Highway from that point at which it was discontinued, the other side of Burracoppin, on to Coolgardie. I remember attending a road board

conference about 1938, when the member for Mt. Hawthorn was Minister for Works, and he undertook that within two years there would be a black road through to Southern Cross, and possibly a bitumen strip through to Coolgardie; but the war intervened and the work had to be stopped. In view of the population on the Eastern Goldfields, that district has a great claim for a bitumen road to be constructed from the metropolitan area right through to Coolgardie. Such villages as Albany, Bunbury, Geraldton, Bridgetown and Northam, with populations only a quarter or one-fifth of that of the Eastern Goldfields, have bitumen roads leading to them. Therefore we are asking nothing out of reason when we suggest that the road I have mentioned should be one of the first to be bituminised immediately supplies become available.

Mr. Watts: How would you get to the Goldfields without going to Northam?

Mr. STYANTS: I do not know, unless one flew.

Mr. Watts: You complained about a bitumen road to Northam. I thought it was a help.

Mr. STYANTS: I come now to the question of housing. I recognise the great work that is being done by the Workers' Homes Board, but there are certain features of the board's policy with which I do not agree. One of them is that mentioned by the member for York last night. The Workers' Homes Board will not consider building a house for a family in which there are only two persons.

Mr. Berry: They have done so.

Mr. STYANTS: Then the people concerned were specially favoured. As a general policy, the board will not build a home for two persons. I have made overtures on a number of occasions, and have always met with the same reply. I wrote to the Premier on the matter, and he put up fairly sound and logical reasons—as he generally does—for the continuance of the policy. That policy, however, works out very unfairly. The majority of the houses that are being built and which have been built here over the last few months are Commonwealth-State rental houses. We know that a rental for those houses, which would pay interest and other expenses connected with them, would be con-

siderably in excess of the maximum rent that has to be paid. There are plenty of people who showed no inclination years ago, when they were young, to acquire a house of their own, but who are showing a desire in that direction now, when they can get for 27s. 6d. a house the rent for which would normally be 35s. That works out unfairly for young married couples. Population is what we require in this country.

I know of many instances in which a young man went to the war and his wife entered a munitions factory or other war works, and between the two of them they were able to save £800 or £900. They have saved sufficient to enable them to have a home built for themselves through private agency and pay cash for it, but they are not permitted to adopt that course. They cannot get a permit for the release of materials because the materials are all being used in these other houses. Some reconsideration of that policy is necessary. I know that a good case can be put up for a lot of people with four or five children who are living in very bad conditions, but I know at least half-a-dozen families of that kind who showed no inclination and made no endeavour to secure a home when they were young but who now, when they can get these homes under particularly favourable conditions, are applying for them.

There are thousands of applicants for these houses, and their applications are being granted to the detriment of those who have endeavoured to obtain homes, although they have no children. They are not likely to have any children while they are living in one room or in a garage, or in an attic, with the use of a kitchen. I would refer also to the difficulty experienced on the Eastern Goldfields in obtaining materials even after a permit has been acquired. It is almost impossible to secure them there. After a permit has been granted, months pass before the applicant is able to get the requisite materials. I was therefore pleased to see that the Government had appointed Mr. Wallwork to inquire into the bottlenecks connected with the securing of materials. I do not consider that the Eastern Goldfields have had a fair share of the houses built since the Commonwealth-State scheme came into operation in Feb-

ruary, 1944. I notice that the mayor of Bunbury is complaining that since the inception of the scheme Bunbury has had only 30 houses built. The Eastern Goldfields have a population five times that of Bunbury, but not one house has been built there up to date, although we were assured from time to time that the matter was well in hand, that the blocks were being got ready and that tenders were to be called.

Mr. Watts: I think you had better resign from the Labour Party.

Mr. STYANTS: Tenders have been called for 10 houses in Boulder and 10 in Kalgoorlie, but on a pro rata basis of the population in Kalgoorlie even 20 houses is not a fair number. It is a wrong policy to build so many houses in the metropolitan area. It would not be an exaggeration to say that 85 per cent. of the building taking place is being done in the metropolitan area; yet the scarcity is just as acute in country districts as in the metropolitan area. While we have had a lot of lip service about decentralisation, this is an instance in which more than lip service can be rendered.

The Premier: And more than lip service is being rendered.

Mr. STYANTS: Not as far as my district is concerned. Not a post of timber has been erected on the goldfields for the last six or seven years, ever since the war started. There is work in industry for people in country districts, but they are prevented from taking it because of the shortage of houses. I know that in certain districts a number of houses have been erected, but the policy of building so many for people in the metropolitan area is having the effect of inducing them to remain there instead of getting out into the country where there is employment for them. But they will not go out until housing accommodation is provided for them.

I want to deal with the mining industry. There has been a serious curtailment of employment there due to the strike at the explosives plant of Nobels at Deer Park, Victoria. A commendable feature of the difficult times is the co-operation that has taken place between the A.W.U. and the mining managements to avoid as much loss of time as is possible, and to obviate any dislocation in the industry. The industry is, of course, still experiencing a great shortage

of mining equipment, and the Minister for Mines has performed yeoman service in endeavouring to get returned some of the machinery that was taken away, and also in getting priorities for new machinery to come into the industry. Another grave difficulty confronting the industry is the question of fuel shortage. There should be areas closer to Kalgoorlie than those from which the fuel and the mining timber for the mines are drawn. Areas that were cut over 40 and 50 years ago should be grown again now so as to make supplies available closer to Kalgoorlie than the areas from which supplies are being drawn. It might be well worth the while of the Forests Department to investigate this matter to see if by this means the cost of this fuel could be reduced.

There is just one more matter I want to deal with so far as general topics are concerned, and that is in connection with the road transport in the metropolitan area. I propose to deal with only one feature of it at the moment. When the Estimates are being dealt with we can have more to say on this subject. I want to mention the alarming increase in the number of charges being laid against persons for drunken driving. My impression of the development of road transport in the metropolitan area is that it has now come under rafferty rules. All classes of vehicles are involved in drunken driving charges — motorbikes, motorears, motortrucks, and recently a man was fined for being under the influence of liquor whilst driving a tractor. Any class of motor vehicle is dangerous even in the hands of a good and sober driver, whereas any person under the influence of liquor and in charge of a motor vehicle is a potential killer.

Monetary fines are, in most cases, not a penalty at all. A man who is fairly well off can easily meet a fine of £10, £15 or £30. We have even seen inadequate fines of £5. Such a fine was incurred by a man for being drunk while in charge of a motor truck which travelled along Wellington street, over the Horseshoe Bridge and collided with another vehicle. We had the recent farcical example in Fremantle of two J.S.P. fining a man £1 for being, while drunk, in charge of a vehicle in High-street. That is ridiculous in the extreme. For the first offence a man's license should be cancelled for a given period, and if he comes up a

second time he should be prevented from holding a motor vehicle driver's license for all time.

Very pathetic stories are told of men losing employment and their livelihood if their licenses are cancelled. But when that is weighed in the balance with another man's life, or permanent disablement, then there is no reason why we should not take stringent measures against people who are guilty of being in charge of motor vehicles whilst under the influence of liquor. The specious reasons given by some members of the bench who try these cases are also remarkable. I noticed only yesterday that a man convicted of this offence was fined £30. He put forward, as a plea not to have his license suspended, the fact that he had to be at work earlier in the morning than the first tram started. He should have thought about that previously. However, the magistrate was lenient with him and did not suspend his license. The view that should be taken of these cases is that there is a very old and honourable means of locomotion and that is shanks's pony. It may be slow, but it is very sure.

The Premier: It solves parking problems too.

Mr. STYANTS: Yes. In addition, if this particular person could not get into work in time by shanks's pony he could get a push-bike, and that is the attitude that should be taken by the magistrates. These drivers are a menace to everyone on the road, including themselves. To make a nominal monetary penalty without a suspension of their license is not dealing with them properly.

Mr. Fox: Put them under the Dog Act!

Mr. STYANTS: I do not know that that always works out. I want now to deal with two matters vital to Australia. The first is the question of ways and means of increasing our population. There are two methods of doing that, namely, by natural increase and by immigration. That raises the question as to how many people we consider Australia is capable of absorbing and at the same time maintaining our present standard of living. With the ramifications and advances of science it would be difficult to say just how many people Australia could keep, but the general figure appears to be about 20,000,000 to 30,000,000. Of course the best type of immigrant for us is the Australian-

born infant. The birthrate in Australia has been a little higher the last two years than previously, but that has been brought about in a great measure by many people getting married quickly on account of the war, and also by the fact that the first and second children have, in many instances, already been born. There will be fewer marriages during the next five years simply because there was a greater number during the last five years.

I have some figures that show that our present birthrate is insufficient to maintain our existing population. The birthrate is about one per cent. of our population, which means an annual increase of about 70,000 people. I want members to cast their minds back to the numbers that were in the families of our parents and of their parents. I have some figures here that I have taken from an authoritative source, and they show that in 1875 the average Australian family had six children. In 1905, 25 years later, the average family consisted of four children. In 1925 it was three children; in 1930 it was 2.5 children, and in 1942 it was 2.2 children. Our increase of population, in five yearly periods, is as follows:—

	Increase of Population, per cent.		
1901 to 1906	..	..	1.38
1906 to 1911	..	..	2.04
1911 to 1915	..	..	1.87
1916 to 1921	..	..	2.07
1921 to 1926	..	..	2.11
1926 to 1931	..	..	1.5
1931 to 1936	..	..	0.76

The last figure shows the effects of the depression. It is generally accepted that a young country like Australia should be able to increase its population or to absorb increased population to the extent of two per cent. of its population, which would be, in the case of Australia 140,000 people on a basis of a population of 7,000,000. I find, on looking at statistics, that other countries have absorbed a much greater increase than two per cent. The Argentine, from 1895 to 1914 increased its population 5.2 per cent., and from 1895 to 1914 Brazil increased its population by 3.8 per cent.

Mr. J. Hegney: Was that natural increase?

Mr. STYANTS: It was both natural increase and immigration. To a large extent it was due to immigration. Between 1900 and 1920 the United States increased its population by two per cent. and from 1920 to

1940 by 1.2 per cent. The Argentine rate of increase dropped in the period 1940-43 from 5.2 per cent. to 2.6 per cent. Statisticians say that to keep the population of a country static it is necessary that each married couple should have the equivalent of 2.5 children. The two are to replace the parents and the other half is for the purpose of allowing for accidents, for those who get married and have no children and for those who never marry. The world's population doubled in the 19th century. The reason was not that there was a greatly increased birthrate, but because a greater number of children were born who continued to live to an adult age. That was brought about principally by an increased standard of living. The people then got better clothes and better food than before, and they had a wider knowledge of hygiene and sanitation than was the case previously. In addition, medical science advanced tremendously during that period.

Well into the nineteenth century, diphtheria was regarded as the white scourge as far as children were concerned. The mortality rate from this disease was in the vicinity of 80 per cent. Now, probably it is not 1 per cent. of those children whose parents have taken the precaution of having them immunised. So, although it may be said that the world's population doubled in the 19th century, it was not brought about because people had particularly large families. But about 1880, a new phase set in and the people of the western world, who were enjoying a higher standard of living, were not prepared to sacrifice it to have a greater number of children and larger families. They got new ideas and made new demands. It was on account of their desire to have a higher standard of living that they decided to restrict the size of their families. It will be found that in every country where there is a high standard of living there is a low birthrate, and the people restrict the size of their families. Whether it is that the smaller family allows them to enjoy a higher standard of living or that the high birthrate prevents their having a high standard of living is, of course, debatable.

The present trend in Australia, according to our statisticians, is that with the present birthrate we will reach a population of about eight millions in 25 years' time, and

by the end of this century we will have started on the down grade and will be back to the position we are in today, with a population of  $7\frac{1}{4}$  millions. Australia has a vital need for an increase of population, not only from the developmental point of view, but that of defence. The problem that we have to face is not one of inducing people to marry, or to marry young; they already do that. Our people probably marry in as high a percentage as they ever did, and as young as they ever did, but what we have to persuade or encourage the people to do is to have three, four or five children. It will be found that the majority of Australian married couples have only one or two children. Very few of them are voluntarily childless, but they have one or two children and then start to restrict the size of their families.

Certain inducements, such as child endowment, maternity allowances and rebates of taxation have already been given, but the married man is still in a much worse financial position than is the single man. I doubt whether, with all those inducements, we will find an increase in the population. At all events, those inducements have not had that effect up to date and have not increased our birthrate. In addition to what we have already done, I think we might try marriage loans or allowances, which have been tried in other countries with a fair degree of success. I think we shall also have to provide domestic assistance in the home for mothers of three or more children. We will have to provide kindergartens for the children, and better housing. As I said previously, potential mothers are not going to have children under the conditions of our housing in Australia today.

There is a reason for the shortage of houses, and there has always been a shortage, as far as I can remember, but the position has been aggravated by the fact that no houses were erected during the five or six years of the war. Although at present we have insurance against sickness and unemployment, that insurance will have to be made on a more liberal scale. It is certainly better than we had previously, but if we take the case of a married man with one child, who becomes ill or gets out of employment, he is allowed 25s. for himself, £1

for his wife and 5s. for the child. If he has more than one child, of course, the child endowment scheme applies. If he has only one child, he gets a total of £2 10s. per week, a bare existence. Assuming that he has to pay 25s. per week rent, he is then left with 25s. on which to keep himself and his family. If he is an out-patient, away from the hospital, he has to provide food for himself, his wife and his child, as well as his medicine, out of 25s. per week. I think the greatest obstacles to having larger families are economic instability and international insecurity. There are a number of reasons why people do not have as large families as their parents had, but I think those are the main ones.

Let us see what has occurred since 1914. The first Great War started in 1914, and we had four years and nine months of it. During that period there was no price control and so prices skyrocketed. Wages did not go up to any great extent and there were shortages of goods, so that people with families found it difficult to keep roofs over their heads and to get the necessities for their wives and children. From the end of that war until about 1921, we had a boom, and prices went up, almost out of the reach of the man on the basic wage. From 1921 until about 1928, we had a reasonable era of prosperity, but from then we started to get into the depression, which lasted—despite what anyone says to the contrary—until the commencement of the second Great War in 1939. It must be remembered that even in 1939 there were tens of thousands of people unemployed in Australia, and there must be a depression when a large percentage, or any considerable percentage, of the people are unemployed. During those years the hardships that people had to bear had to be seen to be believed.

Those who were closely associated with those conditions realised how difficult it was for the man with a family, the man who we say is an asset to the country and who has four or five children, to exist. In some cases a man had two or three of his children out of employment, children who had previously been employed. Very often they were not young children, but those grown to manhood or womanhood. Some of them had married and then had to return to their parents' homes in order to have a roof over their heads. The father then found himself

in the position of having to keep perhaps three or four adults, and in some cases their wives and children. Let us take the case of a young woman of about adult age in 1914. During the war period, she probably lost her husband, her father, her brother or, in some cases, her fiancé. Time healed the wounds and afterwards she married. She went through all the period of depression, battling along to provide necessities and make the best of what her breadwinner could find for her family. She found that, after having struggled and reared perhaps two or three boys, another war started in 1939, and perhaps she then lost the whole of her male offspring.

There is not much inducement for people to have large families in circumstances such as those. Again I say that economic instability and international insecurity are the two greatest reasons why people will not have large families today. We hear a great deal about large numbers of people who desire to come to Australia from Europe and from Britain, but I doubt whether there are great numbers wishing to come here. It has been stated by her leaders that Britain requires a population of 40,000,000 people for her national economy, and it is on record that we said we would agree to take a great number of war orphans from England. It must be remembered that the number of women killed during the air raids almost equalled the number of men lost from the same cause. We thought we were making a generous offer to look after those children by bringing them out here when young and converting them into good Australian citizens. We were told, however, firmly but politely, that England required them. Out of gratitude to their parents, England was quite prepared to look after those orphans and ensure for them a good start in life. In those circumstances it is not likely that we will get any orphans from Britain.

It is essential for our own sake, as well as for the sake of the British Empire, that Britain herself should recover quickly from the effects of the war. Should Britain not recover quickly the best market Australia had in pre-war days and the best she is likely to have during the post-war period, will have been lost, because Britain provided the greatest market for our exportable goods, much greater than that of any other country in the world. I do not believe that the peoples of the Nordic countries are likely to migrate to



Australia, or anywhere else, in any great numbers. From what I have read regarding the standards of living and the social legislation in those parts of the world, the people are not likely to leave those countries to come here. In my opinion the best types of migrants come from the Nordic countries, for those people are assimilated most quickly into our population and our ways of life. In view of the favourable conditions under which they are living at present, they are not likely to migrate to Australia. I think that possibly we might get 100,000 migrants from the British Isles, but that total would be merely a drop in the ocean compared with the population requirements of Australia.

Then we come to the question of European nationals. If they are nationals of countries that have been our enemies, I say definitely that such people will not receive a welcome in Australia. Their advent would not be to the advantage of the migrants themselves nor yet of those who are already here, because they would undoubtedly be unwelcome. Thus we have to look to other countries that were either neutral or semi-neutral or definitely on our side during the recent hostilities. I believe that Europe as a whole, and particularly Holland, Denmark and Norway, will be definitely short of population for a long time to come. They have suffered from the ravages of war and now are suffering from the ravages of the transition period with its starvation and other ills. Those countries are not likely to give their nationals any encouragement to migrate.

Then as regards the nationals from southern Europe, I believe that such of them as migrate will go to North and South America because the population in those areas is of such a polyglot nature that the migrants will be more or less among their own countrymen. In addition to that, the Americas are much nearer to Europe and so it will be much easier for those nationals to return to their homelands, should those countries recover quickly and provide them with better prospects. I believe a lot will depend upon how quickly such countries recover their economic stability. If they recover quickly, I think their nationals will probably return to their homelands. Then again we have to consider whether a great number of southern Europeans would be welcome in this country. Up to date such people have not received a warm welcome here by any means.

If we want to attract migrants to this country it must be remembered that we have certain obligations to fulfil before we can encourage migration to any great extent. The first obligation is to rehabilitate and re-establish our own men and women who have been away in the service of Australia. We must attend to that before we attempt to bring in any great number of people from outside countries. We all recognise there will be great difficulty in doing that during the next 12 months or so. Members will appreciate the fact that it took us two years to swing from civilian to war production, and it will take just as long to swing back again. The next obligation is one of almost equal importance, and that is to catch up with the lag in housing accommodation. According to the statisticians, Australia is 500,000 houses short. Until we can provide decent housing accommodation we cannot justly bring here womenfolk and their families from other countries, any more than we can justly ask for an increase in the population on the part of our Australian mothers themselves.

We must alter our attitude towards migrants. We must give them a welcome. We know that many who were brought out to Australia after the last war were scathingly referred to as "pommies." We must get away from that sort of thing if we are to encourage people to come here with the object of making Australia safe. It will be remembered there was bad feeling in evidence throughout the timber industry; there was a certain amount of friction in the agricultural areas where many of these people were working on clearing contracts. The problem is very difficult and will not be solved without some sacrifice on the part of the people of Australia. Professor Giblin, in a paper prepared only four years ago, estimated that it will cost Australia £8,000,000,000 to establish 20,000,000 migrants over a period of years at a rate of between 50,000 and 100,000 per year. Members will realise therefore that it is by no means a problem easy of solution. Most decidedly we shall have to alter our attitude with respect to migrants and others who come to this country. We have been altogether too aloof in the past and in many instances we have been definitely hostile to the newcomers. Then again we shall have to encourage our Australian mothers to have their third or fourth child by providing

some financial assistance and helping in various other directions. All this will be necessary if we are to increase the population of Australia to the extent necessary to enable us adequately to defend the country.

There is another problem closely allied to that of an increased population. I refer to what is known as the White Australia policy. I have read repeatedly public statements by people drawn from the different strata of our social system in which it was alleged that our White Australia policy could not be sustained, and in some cases it was suggested that it should be discarded altogether. What we have to consider is whether our White Australia policy is an insult or a threat, or both, to other nations. I shall endeavour to establish that it is neither an insult nor a challenge to other nations, but merely the expression of a desire on our part to maintain our Australian way of life. I have some figures for the provision of which I am indebted to Dr. W. G. K. Duncan, the Director of Tutorial Classes at the Sydney University.

When considering the White Australia policy, we have to take note of Australia's geographical position and her standards of living. In considering the standard of living in Australia and taking 1,000 as the index figure representing it, we find that New Zealand, with a population of 2,000,000, has an index figure of 1,200. Figures for other countries are—

Country	Population (million)	Index Figure
Netherlands East Indies ..	64	150
British Malaya .. ..	5	150
Thailand .. ..	22	150
Burma .. ..	13	150
India .. ..	350	150
China .. ..	400	120
Iudo-China .. ..	15	150
Philippines .. ..	13	340
Japan .. ..	70	350

So there are 469,000,000 inhabitants of the islands immediately north and north-west of Australia who have an average index figure of 150 and they are buttressed by China with a population of 400,000,000 and an index figure of 120 compared with the index figure of 1,000 representing the Australian standard of living. If we add them all, we find there are 859,000,000 people living adjacent to Australia having an index

figure of 150 or less. There are 950,000,000 people within reasonable attacking distance of Australia in a war sense and we have 9,000,000 whites to hold Australia and New Zealand against them.

I think the very name of "White Australia policy" is an unfortunate one. It implies that the white races are superior to the coloured races. Japan always regarded it as such and endeavoured to get a clause inserted in the Covenant of the League of Nations to provide for racial equality, but Australia's delegate at that conference—think it was Mr. W. M. Hughes—stood out and would not agree to it in any shape or form, and he was successful.

It is well for us to consider just what our White Australia policy is. The practice of restricting Chinese from entering Australia dates back to the early gold rushes in Victoria. The Chinese caught the gold fever and went to the diggings in thousands. They worked principally on tailings dumps that had been discarded by the Europeans and were very successful. By 1859 there were 40,000 Chinese in Victoria alone. The very success of those men led to serious racial friction, and a number of attempts were made to remove them from the gold fields by force. The Government intervened and between 1855 and 1861 Victoria, South Australia and New South Wales passed legislation restricting the influx of Asiatics and placing a very heavy poll tax on those already in those colonies. It was said that the reason for having to increase the tax on the Chinese already in the colonies was that they needed extra protection on account of the animosity being shown by the European population. These restrictions were repealed within a few years because most of the Chinese had left and others were coming in.

During 1870 public opinion hardened against the influx of Asiatics and Orientals and this was fostered by the Australian trade unionists, who were fearful of such an influx lowering their standard of living. By 1881 all colonies including Western Australia had re-introduced measures to restrict the entry of Chinese, and one of the first Acts of the Commonwealth Parliament was to deal with the influx of Asiatics into Australia. All States agreed, and the Immigration Act of 1901 was brought into being. All States declared that Australia must remain "white

Then we come to what is now known as the language or dictation test. Australia's determination to exclude the Chinese and other Orientals was seriously embarrassing the British Government. At that time the British Government was on particularly good terms with Japan and was moving towards concluding an alliance with Japan. At an Imperial Conference in 1897, Mr. Joseph Chamberlain requested the Australian delegates to bear in mind the tradition of the British Empire that it did not discriminate either for or against race or colour. He suggested that it might be possible to have a form of words instituted that would not give offence to any of Her Majesty's subjects, and that form of words came to be known as the dictation test.

This idea was borrowed from the colony of Natal, South Africa. In order to gain admittance to Natal at that time, an applicant was required to be able to write and sign an application form in any European language, but there were so many abuses such as forged application forms that the Commonwealth Act of 1901 required the migrant to write out at dictation a passage of 50 words in any European language. This did not quite suit the Japanese, and in 1905 it was altered to provide that the passage of 50 words for the dictation test should be written in any language. Consequently it is quite possible for a Frenchman wishing to gain admittance to Australia to be given a test in Japanese.

Mr. McDonald: Or even in Gaelic.

Mr. STYANTS: Yes. The whole thing is what might be termed a polite fiction. Migrants that the Government wish to exclude know they have no chance of gaining admittance to Australia because they would be given a dictation test in a language unknown to them. But nominally—and this is the main point—if a migrant is refused admittance to Australia, it is said that he was refused because he failed in the dictation, the language or educational test and not because of his race or colour. Thus there is no loss of face for a coloured man.

In actual practice the test is used more to keep out individual Europeans whom the Government does not wish to have in Australia for moral or political reasons. One of the last cases was that of Mrs. Freer who, on moral grounds, was not allowed to land in Australia, though she afterwards landed in New Zealand. The test is not used

to any great extent against Orientals or other coloured races. As a matter of fact, between the Australian, Japanese, Chinese and Indian Governments, there has been for many years what is known as a gentleman's agreement under what it was arranged that passports would not be issued to anyone other than merchants, students and tourists to come to Australia and Australia on her part agreed to admit that class of person without his passing any test. I believe the basic reason for the White Australia Policy is that we fear the competition of coloured people, accustomed as they are to a standard of living much lower than ours.

We are not prepared to compete against the tireless, yellow men who work very long hours and exist on a very light standard of living. It must be remembered that the Chinese did not always work for wages; they were thrifty and soon got together sufficient money to establish themselves in business and purchase properties. It was for that reason that the Australian unionist always had the backing of the Australian nation in an endeavour to exclude Asiatics from Australia. From the political viewpoint, a large influx of immigrants unaccustomed to self-government would endanger our system of government.

Mr. Seward: It might make us work!

Mr. STYANTS: It would be dangerous to give a large number of such immigrants the franchise; and it would be extremely undemocratic if, after allowing them to come here, we did not give it to them. It is hard enough to get Australians to take an intelligent interest in politics; we have made both enrolment and voting compulsory. One can imagine what it would be like here if we were to get hordes of coloured people in our country who did not understand our method of government. Politics is only one of the differences and difficulties. These people have different ideas from ours of what is right and wrong. I believe that many of the atrocities committed by the Japanese against our prisoners of war and people who became subject to them in over-run countries, were committed without any idea that what they did was wrong, because, if we can believe the stories told us by our own returned prisoners of war and the people who became subject to the Japanese, we know that they were not only cruel to them, but were also particularly cruel and sadistic to their own

people. It was not uncommon for an N.C.O. or an officer to bash a private on parade. So these people have a different idea from us of what is right and wrong. They also have a different attitude to their womenfolk.

In many of the islands to the north of Australia women are regarded as being no better than the chattels of the males. In addition, there are no family ties. The authority of the parents in those islands is entirely different from ours; our authority over a child ceases when it becomes 21 years of age. The authority of the parent on the islands, however, continues as long as the parent lives. We know that in many instances the parents arrange the marriage of their female children while still babies to men of 35 or 40 years of age. That betrothal continues throughout the child's life. Then there is the difference in religion, which is most important. We realise that even among people like ourselves, who are allegedly Christianised and civilised, the quickest way to bring about friction is to interfere with religious beliefs.

There are many reasons why we should object to the immigration of large numbers of these people, apart altogether from economic or political reasons. There are two important results of these differences. Immigrants, particularly if not welcome in the country to which they come, huddle together perhaps for spiritual warmth and comfort and because they understand their customs and language. While they are in the nation they certainly are not of the nation. That applies particularly to portions of Perth and to the Goldfields, where foreigners congregate in small communities; they are in the nation but are not of the nation. Their Australian-born children are taught an entirely different code of behaviour in the home from what they are taught at school. They quickly pick up and learn our language and, because their parents probably speak only pigeon-English and are unable to write the language, they get the impression that their parents are not very bright or that they may be particularly dull. A certain amount of friction is caused on that account.

The greater the difference in outlook and traditions between newcomers and residents of the country, the greater is the difficulty of assimilating them and adjusting the differences. Some groups take only a few years to

become assimilated, while others will not be assimilated in a lifetime. In fact, they will never be assimilated. Where there is an obvious difference in physique or in colour the difficulty of assimilation is all the greater. That is very evident in America where, although slavery was abolished following the civil war of 1861 to 1865, almost 80 years ago, the white Americans are no nearer assimilating the negro population than they were when the negroes were freed from slavery in 1865. I am afraid that that would be the position in Australia if we had a great influx of Asiatics. I had the pleasure of discussing the racial problem of America with an American officer here. He said that one of the greatest difficulties with which America had to contend was the coloured races, and he urged upon me the necessity of adhering to our White Australia policy and keeping Australia for the Europeans.

Mr. Abbott: What about the Australian aborigines? They are increasing.

Mr. STYANTS: But we are not assimilating them in our population.

Mr. Abbott: We are not.

Mr. McLarty: The half-castes are increasing.

The Premier: But not the full-bloods.

Mr. STYANTS: Notwithstanding that our standards of living and education may be higher than those of the people in the islands it does not necessarily follow that we claim to be superior to them. In other words, our restriction upon immigration does not connote a belief in race superiority. I think it is based on an awareness by ourselves of the difficulties and dangers that might arise when large numbers of people from various countries are brought together. Even though we may deplore race prejudice we cannot ignore it. It would be the height of political folly if in framing our immigration policy we did not take it into consideration. The prejudice may be broken down slowly by education and experience; but it would be just as unfair to the newcomers themselves to allow large numbers of an unpopular race to enter this country as it would be to the people residing here.

It must be borne in mind also that our White Australia policy is not directed only at the coloured races. We place restrictions upon white races as well, and those restrictions applied during recent years to Italians

and Jugo-Slavs. Our right to exclude these people is accepted, at least on the surface, by most of the countries concerned. The Japanese Consul in Sydney in 1901, when the first immigration law was brought into operation, while protesting against it, said that Japan was prepared to concede the right of the Government of Australia to limit the number of persons who might be allowed to land here. The Indian delegate to the Imperial Conference as late as 1918 moved a resolution to the effect that all countries should have the right to control the composition of the population of their respective countries, and it is interesting also to realise that it was not until 1922 that British Indians were permitted to vote at a Commonwealth election in Australia. I think though it is recognised on the surface by the rulers of these countries that we have the right to exclude people we do not want, our White Australia policy is generally regarded as one of selfishness, and it will be our job to show the League of Nations or F.N.O., or any other authority set up internationally to keep the peace of the world, that that policy is not an arrogant claim to race superiority but is due mainly to our desire to preserve our Australian way of life.

There is one thing that can be said to our credit, though I have heard it suggested it should be otherwise, and that is that up to date we have not brought out any coolies to do our hard work. While it is said by many that Australians have ridden into prosperity on the sheep's back, I hope it will never be said that we rode on the backs of coolies and coloured races in order to develop the Northern portion of our continent. We should demonstrate to the people of those countries that we are prepared to act as good neighbours to them in a world order; that we are prepared to trade freely with them; that they can have our surpluses, and we are prepared to take theirs. At all times, however, we should tell them carefully and politely, but nevertheless emphatically, that we are going to reserve for ourselves for all time the right to decide what the composition of the population of this country is going to be.

On motion by Mr. Read, debate adjourned.

## BILL—SUPPLY (No. 1), £2,700,000.

Returned from the Council without amendment.

*House adjourned at 5.58 p.m.*

## Legislative Council.

*Tuesday, 6th August, 1946.*

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

### QUESTIONS.

#### HOUSING.

*As to Commonwealth-State Rental Scheme.*

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT asked the Chief Secretary:

1, What types of houses are being built by the Housing Division of the Public Works Department under the Commonwealth-State Rental Housing Scheme?

2, How many of each type were completed during the year ended the 30th June, 1946?

3, How many of each type were under construction as at the 30th June, 1946?

4, Of those completed during the year ended the 30th June, 1946, what was the average cost of each type?

5, When quoting the average cost of each type, will the Minister advise if those costs include any provision for administrative and other overhead costs?

6, What is the average of administrative and other overhead costs for each type?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

As the reply to the question is altogether too long for me to read and is really in the form a return, I shall place it on the Table of the House.

Return presented.