

States of the Commonwealth. It is only by building up our population to a point where we can talk to the Eastern States with the power and authority of votes behind us that we will be able to get fair political treatment from those centres of power that at present are dominating our lives and our politics. Nelson T. Johnson, who was for some years Minister Plenipotentiary for America in Australia, visited Western Australia some time ago and went round the South-West. Later he said he visualised a development there over a period of years that would build up the population and give us cities like Los Angeles. I do not know if members know what the population of Los Angeles is; if not, I can tell them that it is 1,500,000, or more than three times that of the whole of Western Australia. Mr. Johnson is a capable, intelligent man. I do not think he would make such a statement merely for the sake of being nice and to please those who were listening to him. I believe he gave it as his considered opinion of our possibilities—not that we want cities of such a magnitude as he suggested.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Hear, hear!

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: Our policy should be one of decentralisation. However, that was the expression of the views of a competent outsider, one who was able to appreciate our possibilities and needs and one who was capable of assessing the population we could absorb.

In conclusion there is one point I would like to stress. I refer to the need that exists for unity of outlook and purpose in tackling the tasks that lie ahead. In Australia we have now the greatest opportunity for expansion and development that we have ever had. While there are some activities that must engage our first attention, such as the rehabilitation of our soldiers and members of the other Armed Forces who went abroad to fight for us and who have now to be re-established in our economy, there is also the question of building up our population and expanding our economy to take advantage of the opportunities that are now presented to us. There is a fairly vocal section of the community talking about shorter hours—they talk about a 40-hour week—and about improved working conditions. Those improvements might be quite desirable and logical if we had full supplies of goods on

our shelves and reserve stocks of various requirements readily available. That, however, is far from the position today. In fact, Australia is similarly situated to the man who has just recovered from a very serious illness, during which the whole of his energies and activities were engaged in fighting his ailment and getting well. When he is well again he has to pick up the threads of his life where he dropped them. He has to pay his doctor and his nurse; he has to pick up the lag that inevitably occurs in such a case when the normal activities of the man have ceased.

That is our position today and it is foolish to claim that we are in a better position than that in which we actually are. There is a lag that we have to pick up and make good. We have to work harder and we must apply all our energies to the task if we are to fulfil the ideal of a nation properly provided for, with plenty of goods in reserve. This is not just political talk; it is sheer economic necessity. Until we realise that we have to pick up that lag, we will never get our feet firmly planted on the road to recovery and we will never put our house in order.

HON. G. BENNETTS (South) [5.25]: Like Mr. Simpson, I, too, am new to the House, and I must confess to being rather nervous seeing that I have no knowledge of the Standing Orders or the rules of debate. No doubt we three new members will duly fall into line and we will soon get to know what is required of us. For my part, I am glad to find that among the members are some I have known for a long period. I am sure that we will prove to be of assistance to each other during the course of the session.

First of all, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, upon your elevation to your present high and honourable position. Having known you for so long, I feel sure you will be able to fulfil the duties of President with success equal to that of your predecessor in office. I also extend my congratulations to the newly-appointed Chairman of Committees. It is certainly gratifying to me to enter this Chamber to find that two goldfielders are occupying the two highest offices in the Chamber.

Hon. C. B. Williams: You should keep that to yourself a bit!

Hon. G. BENNETTS: I also extend my congratulations to the Chief Secretary. I know of his great ability and I feel confident that when he proceeds to London and finds himself beside another man who has been busy in establishing a record for Australia, a man who is looked upon throughout the world as an outstanding figure—I refer to Dr. Evatt—those two gentlemen will do much to maintain the high prestige of Australia not only in Great Britain but in foreign countries as well. On behalf of the people of the South Province, I wish to pay a tribute to their past member, Sir John Kirwan. He and I were pioneers of the Goldfields 50 years ago, and we have worked together on many committees. We have worked together on the Dads' Association, the Red Cross Society and dozens of other organisations. I can assure members that Sir John is looked upon as a great citizen of Western Australia, one who has worked not for his party alone but for the State in general. On behalf of the electors of the South Province, I desire to place on record their appreciation of his services to Western Australia.

During his remarks, Mr. Simpson dealt with a number of important matters to which I intended to refer. Included among them was the subject of education. Nowadays, people are looking for something new in educational methods. On the other hand, in the big province I represent, which extends from Ravensthorpe to the border of South Australia and back to Kalgoorlie, there are many places between Esperance and Norseman in the mallee districts where there are no schools at all. In some instances, the number of children available is not sufficient to admit of the Education Department providing schools, and the young people there have to participate in the correspondence courses. In many instances, the families are not financially strong enough to afford an adequate education for the children, and much of the young people's time is taken up by labour on the land, with the result that they suffer a corresponding loss from the standpoint of education.

I would like the Government to consider the provision of rural schools whereby children could be brought from outlying centres to central schools established in various parts of the outback country. Today there is a

home at Esperance where Goldfields children are accommodated for holidays and the enjoyment of the fresh sea air. I was wondering whether later on the Government, probably by the provision of a small subsidy, could enable the children to be sent from the mallee districts to Esperance where they could be accommodated in the home and receive some education while at the same time benefiting from the change of air, particularly as that could be done at a time when the premises were not required by the children from the Goldfields. The way in which some of the people are living in the outback districts is a crying shame; they are rearing big families and are handicapped in all directions.

Hon. C. B. Williams: They have nothing else to do.

Hon. G. BENNETTS: I have reared seven children myself on earnings just above the basic wage. I know the hardships suffered by the people in the back country. When my parents went to the Goldfields, we were taken there by team and my mother had five little children to care for. Such were the hardships suffered by the pioneers. We must look for something better; we must do the best we possibly can for our people. The rural schools will no doubt make a difference in the lives of the children and consideration must be given to their establishment.

The mining district occupies a big part of my province and I am greatly concerned about the mines getting into full production again. We know that large quantities of mining machinery were taken away during the war. I was acting on various committees at the time with the representatives of the Prime Minister and the Chamber of Mines. We all knew how vital it was for this machinery to be sent to various parts of the world for the protection of Australia and we agreed that the country's protection came first. That machinery was taken oversea and to various parts of Australia, where it was placed on foundations. Time will be required to dismantle it and, with the scarcity of shipping, some time may elapse before it is returned. However, we hope the machinery will be returned at an early date and again be available in order

that our mines may be in full production again. All these things, however, cannot be done overnight.

A great disadvantage in the mallee country, as on the Goldfields, is shortage of water. A good railway service and an adequate water supply are vital in our outback districts. At Norseman people are paying 10s. for 1,000 gallons of water. They consider that charge outrageous to people living in and developing our back country. I notice in the Speech that the Government has started to enlarge the Stirling and other dams, and this should help to overcome the shortage in our outback districts. I take it that the country people will benefit from the extra storage of water. I also notice in the Speech that the Government has initiated a programme for new locomotives and rolling-stock. This work is of paramount importance.

Speaking as a railwayman of 35 years' experience, I say without fear of successful contradiction that the new type of rolling-stock, wagons and so on, will prove of the greatest assistance to people in the outback districts, especially to farmers, who have been short of trucks for the transport of their commodities. There has been a shortage of trucks in my district for the transport of firewood and mining timber; but the greatest bugbear to the people of the Goldfields is the shortage of passenger cars. For the past two or three years, Goldfields residents have been queueing up all night in order to get accommodation to proceed to the coast. The Government has under construction a new type of car that will be a credit to the State; in fact, it will be outstanding in the Commonwealth. I myself have seen the car which has been built for inspection by engineers and others with a view to their making suggestions for its improvement. We must overcome the slowness of train travel.

The journey from Kalgoorlie to Perth now takes longer than it did 35 years ago. When I was a conductor then, we left Kalgoorlie at 5 o'clock in the afternoon and reached Perth at 9.20 a.m.; today, the train does not reach Perth until 10.20 a.m., a difference of one hour. Since air transport to the Goldfields has been inaugurated first-class passenger traffic has dropped considerably. We must therefore consider

the expenditure of additional money to brighten up the railway system. In my opinion, what is required on the Kalgoorlie line is a Diesel train that could leave Kalgoorlie at 8 o'clock in the evening and reach Perth, I should say, at 9 o'clock in the morning. The present train occupies 17 hours in running and its average speed is about 20 miles an hour.

Better facilities should be provided for second-class passengers on that line. People with families cannot afford to travel first class, and some of the second-class corridor carriages have not got doors and are therefore open to the weather with the result that women and children are forced to sit in draughty compartments. Our Commissioner has recently been in the Eastern States and with his years of experience he should be able, as a result of his visit, to make suggestions to the Minister for a heating system to be installed in the trains. The local governing bodies on the Goldfields have for years been trying to get better conditions on the trains, but the Commissioner on all occasions has failed to give those bodies a favourable reply. We have not been successful in securing a revision of the freight charges for which we asked. Surely the people in the outlying districts are entitled to some consideration in this respect.

Mothers travelling with their families are unable to get hot water for the children's food. Nearly always the second-class passengers must wait until the first-class passengers have had their meal. I was on the train the other night and there was not sufficient food for the second-class passengers. I am continually receiving requests—I have one in my pocket at the moment—for Diesel coaches on the Esperance to Kalgoorlie line. The letter which I have states that 20 hours are occupied on the run from Coolgardie to Esperance. That is on what is called the mixed train; but there is a "flier" once a week and people would rather wait a week in Esperance to travel on that train. The provision of Diesel coaches on that line would not only afford better facilities for the people, to which they are entitled, but would make for decentralisation.

I have been going about the city of Perth recently and everywhere I went I found that every amenity was provided for the city

dweller—picture shows, dances, beaches, swimming pools, and so on. People in the outback districts, particularly the women-folk, have only a camp or a little hut. During the day the husband can talk to his fellow workmen, but for the woman there is nothing. We should try to get community centres. There are certain railway camps each with accommodation for six to eight men. Two of these gangs could be put into a centre and then perhaps a school could be provided which could be used for the amusement of the parents of the children at night-time. The womenfolk would certainly then have more company. I hope the Government will do something in that direction.

Every consideration must be extended to the prospector. It is as a result of his efforts that mining communities spring up throughout the Goldfields. At present there are many returned soldiers prospecting the outback country. I saw some at Widgiemooltha the other day. They said they were doing well and thought there would be at least 600 men in the district by Christmas. These people require houses; but the prices which the Workers' Homes Board is charging are considered too high. What the outback people require is a small type of house costing in the vicinity of £400 or £500. I understand the board has only one application from Norseman for a workers' home; the people there consider the price too high. Yet there are people at Norseman living on verandahs. That is not right, especially when they have little children.

We are all aware that the slowness in proceeding with the erection of houses is due to the shortage of manpower in the timber-mills and that that shortage is caused by the absence of amenities at the mills. Consequently the timber is not available for building purposes. I would like to see more houses built in country districts. During my walks about the city I have seen many homes in course of erection. In the past 10 years only 10 houses have been erected in Boulder and 10 in Kalgoorlie, and naturally the Goldfields people are feeling somewhat hostile about the matter.

Rural hospitals are required in the outback districts and I notice that it is the Government's policy to provide them. They are especially needed for maternity cases. Owing to the slow transport service to which I have referred, people in the outback dis-

tricts are concerned about the lack of hospital accommodation. Anything we do in the way of provision of hospitals and schools will encourage people to settle in the country and rear families. We urgently need population and our best immigrant is the Australian-born child. It has been proved in this war that they are outstanding. The Australian soldier was placed on all fronts of all battlefields. We should encourage an increase in population even by going to the trouble and expense of giving amenities to these young parents, because by so doing, we would achieve something worth while. We would also keep them away from the many vices which might tempt them today.

Much of what I wanted to say has been said by other members, so I have little more to add. I am very interested in the question of T.B. in cattle in outback places. We have appointed a board in Kalgoorlie to deal with this matter, and I think that the subject will come before Parliament at an early date when members will have an opportunity of speaking on it. I think there is need for more testing of stock to prevent disease. In conclusion I would like to comment on Mr. Baxter's remarks in congratulating the new members. He will find that I will be a law-abiding citizen who will be of assistance to the people of Western Australia.

HON. J. A. DIMMITT (Metropolitan-Suburban) [5.47]: I desire to add my congratulations to those already expressed to you, Sir, on your elevation to the Presidency. It is a well-earned and richly-deserved honour. I also desire to congratulate Mr. Seddon on his election to the Chairmanship of Committees. I know that both you, Sir, and Mr. Seddon, will each do a good job in your respective offices. I trust that Mr. Seddon will soon be restored to health so that he may fulfil the duties attaching to his new position.

May I also compliment the Chief Secretary on his appointment to the Agent Generalship of Western Australia in London. We, who know him so well, fully realise his sterling qualities and are conscious of the wisdom of the Government's choice. We know that the high prestige which Western Australia enjoys in London will be safe in the hands of Mr. Kitson, but we are going to miss him in this Chamber. With all due respect to the