

**Mr. MARSHALL:** Prior to the suspension, I was making some reference to the essential need for paying some attention to the staffing of our hospitals which are at present in existence and of those that we expect to build. I was referring to the system of training our young people, and I consider that some consideration must be given to ensure that every facility is provided for them in the way of accommodation and so on. Following on the points I raised, I have also ascertained that when taking time off from their ordinary duties to attend lectures, I understand that that time is debited against the period which would enable them to qualify and so obtain an increase in salary, which would normally be given to anybody else working in industry after the completion of a certain specified time.

I feel there is some injustice created by that fact. These trainee nurses are performing good service in the duties they carry out in the normal course of their work in our hospitals, and it is difficult for me to associate their remuneration with their qualifications, because I consider they should be paid in accordance with the length of service they give, particularly when one considers the period of time they put in. I appreciate, as I said before, that they must have a complete and proper training before they become qualified nurses. I wanted to raise that point, however, and I hope the Minister will take all I have said into consideration, particularly bearing in mind the fact that we are endeavouring to encourage girls and women from overseas to come here and help us out of the difficulties we experience in obtaining our own people in sufficient numbers to undertake training as nurses. I will not delay the House much longer and I would like to thank members for the courtesy they have extended to me in the course of my speech.

**MR. W. A. MANNING (Narrogin) [4.7]:** I am pleased to have the honour of representing the Narrogin electorate following the retirement of Hon. Victor Doney, who served that electorate faithfully and well for such a large number of years. I hope to serve it just as faithfully and for just as many years. I would like at this point to express my thanks to members and the staff for the help, consideration and advice that has already been given to me. No doubt I will need plenty more. I do appreciate what has been done.

It is my duty to represent the entire electorate and I hope to do so justly and fairly in relation to the whole constituency. Quite apart from representing the electorate itself, I hope I shall truly represent this State. We are part of the great British Commonwealth of Nations and I think we must have a vision big enough to embrace that fact. I realise we have a tremendous responsibility for the development of this State and I think we

should set about it in a way that will bring credit to us and prosperity to Western Australia.

Fairly recently we have had set up a metropolitan regional plan. This seems to provide a splendid basis for the present and for the future. No plan such as this could be 100 per cent. correct, but I do believe that a plan which envisages what should be done in the future is worth a considerable amount, even if it is not 100 per cent. correct, because without a plan we would have no hope of advancing along the lines which we expect, and at the same time to have co-ordination.

I suggest that following upon the metropolitan regional plan, a regional plan for the country should be formulated. If we are to develop this State as a whole, it is essential to have some planning for every region so that we can put our resources to the best use, in the best place and by the best possible route. Unless these things are planned we will not get too far. I realise this is a long-term project and cannot be accomplished hastily. I suggest that in the meantime we should implement this idea to some extent by the development of rural industries.

By that I mean the processing of primary products at, or as near as possible to, the place of production. We have an abundance of good quality primary products, but we do not process enough to provide sufficient employment and to be able to export the finished goods in any great quantity. That is an important matter and it is time we dealt with it. With the good quality products we grow, we ought to find many markets. There is the processing of grain, the treatment of timbers, and the use of waste timber, colossal quantities of which are burnt. There is the use of the products from the mallet forest, the extraction of tannin and the use of the timber, the processing and canning of meat and carcasses, the treatment of hides, etc.

They are all associated with our primary production and it is high time we gave a good deal of consideration to planning rural industries near where the products are grown. When we look at the position we find that far from encouraging country processing, the discrimination in railway freights discourages any action along those lines. Very often the processed article bears two freights. In the case of wheat, for instance, there is freight to the mill, then the processed wheat bears a higher freight when it is railed out from the mill.

So we see that any product consigned to the port or city has to bear two freights when it comes from a country mill. In any case the freight is higher on a processed article than on the original primary product although they may have the same weight when carried by the railways. Because of this discrimination in rates the



manufacturer in the country is placed at a disadvantage. Perhaps an overhaul of railway freights might help to improve this position, such as by having fewer classifications in the freights, which might also make for economy in the working of the railways.

The regional planning which I suggested is part of the policy of decentralisation. I do not intend to enlarge on decentralisation at this stage because what I have suggested is part of it. The more we examine decentralisation, the more we realise that transport is the major factor. If we commence at the stage we have reached today, we are losing so much on the railways that there is a suggestion for increased freights. But is that the answer? It seems that might be the apparent and easy way of solving the difficulty, but I suggest that would not overcome the position at all.

Anyone with a knowledge of merchandising knows that as prices increase, so demand decreases; and that as prices decrease for any product, so the demand will increase, providing the quality is the same. I think it is fatal to keep on increasing the cost of transport. We may seek to increase efficiency or increase a service. I think the railways are justified by the assumption that they can transport more goods, more efficiently and at a lower cost, or a combination of the three factors.

The mere fact that there is agitation on all sides for the use of road transport rather proves that the railways are not performing the task which they should. There would be no demand for road transport if the railways transported goods efficiently, quickly and cheaply. So I say that at present the railways do not meet the demands of the growing community. They certainly are no encouragement to the establishment of industries in the country. As we look around the railway system we will find that much has been done to improve the efficiency and quality of the service, but something should be done to relieve the high cost.

I feel it could be accomplished by relieving the railways of the responsibility of meeting interest and sinking fund on their capital expenditure. I suggest this because any increase in freights can only be borne by country residents of the State. It is a fact that country people pay the freights both ways. Freight is added to the cost of what they receive, and is deducted from what they rail away. The city bears no proportion of the cost of increased freights. Yet I believe the railways are as much of an asset to the city as to the country. If that is true, then the whole State should bear the capital cost of the railways and the railway commissioners should be allowed to run the transport at cost.

We realise that people in the metropolitan area are privileged to use the roads for carrying goods from the port to the place

of business without any restriction, but when goods are transported to the country by road there is restriction on every hand. I cannot understand why that should be the position. We are all citizens of the one State. We pay the same taxes, yet there is discrimination between dwellers in the metropolitan area and those outside. I think that is not right.

Another suggestion I make is that the railways be separated from the workshop side at Midland Junction. I consider these are two entirely different concerns. If the railways were allowed to conduct the transport system of the State, it would be more efficient. If that system had to obtain trucks, coaches or locomotives, the Railway Department could secure a price from the workshops under contract. We would go far by separating these two organisations which are two entirely different types of businesses.

I believe the railways can accomplish much more than they are at present by increasing the efficiency of transport, but to do so they need to deal with the main lines where a service should be provided when required so that both consignor and consignee would know when goods would reach their destination, which they do not now know. If we had an efficient railway system which specialised on the main lines and gave a quick and reliable service, then the branch lines could be used as feeders, or alternatively either public or private road transport could be used as feeders to the main lines. This could be dealt with in individual cases according to the needs of the district. I feel it would solve quite a number of our problems, but we have to be efficient on the main lines.

A peculiar position arises in practically the whole of the Narrogin electorate, and that is in regard to the relative distances by road as against rail. Narrogin is 42 miles nearer to Perth by road than it is by rail. The position is even worse at Arthur River and Williams. Williams is 100 miles from Perth by road and 183 miles by rail. The residents of these places are expected to get their goods by rail and to pay the mileage freight on everything that is landed there. A person living 10 miles this side of Williams would be expected to be a purchaser in Williams itself. He is 90 miles from Perth but he has to pay freight on a distance of 183 miles. I know this is a difficulty, but I think something should be done to adjust freights in accordance with the distance from Perth, whether it be by road or rail. We must do this or we will have the breaking of the rules regarding transport by trucks.

I wonder if we could suggest how the railways could derive more income. We can couple this matter with decentralisation. I suggest that the best way of getting more income for the railways is, instead of increasing freights, to increase



the business. This seems to be the logical way of deriving more revenue. If we encourage country industries and increase production in the country, the railways will naturally derive greater revenue. This applies especially to rural industries, as I have called them. There is another way by which revenue can be raised and that is by the greater use of the land which is adjacent to the railways.

Some mention has been made of an increased tax on unimproved land in the rural areas. This may be quite a good way of bringing land into production, and it may be desirable in many respects because we will all agree that to have an efficient railway system we should use the land adjacent to the railways. But the problem is deeper than it appears. To impose a tax in a special way may be all right if the owners have some alternative.

Let me give an illustration. A man may have 1,000 acres of unimproved land which he desires to clear and use. He would be fortunate indeed if he could clear, fence and crop or pasture the property for £10 an acre. That means he would need £10,000. He cannot borrow and there is no State scheme for civilian land settlement, so he must have £10,000 before he can start on it. So, there is not much alternative to leaving the property as it is. It might be said that he can sell it. He has to find a buyer with that amount of money to put into the land and who is then prepared to wait for a return from it. Thus, the problem is not just the surface one that might appear in the first place.

Something should be done to launch a project for civilian land settlement. That is something which has been wanted for long enough. Until we have some such project we cannot expect the land adjacent to the railway lines to be brought into use. I think, though, that some inquiry could be made into the prospects of using such land. If an inquiry were to be made, it need not be confined to the use of freehold land but could delve into the matter of reserves that are held by the State for all sorts of purposes—water reticulation, forests, fauna, caravan parks and goodness knows what. Some of these reserves may be justified but I feel that some are entirely unjustified. If we solve these problems and get production from the country districts we can, perhaps, expect the railways to have some prospect of paying.

I believe that we could do more for the development of trade outside the State. This follows on my suggestion for the establishment of rural industries. The export of primary products is all right, but it is better for us to establish an export trade in processed primary products. Here we should encourage the sale of these goods to our neighbours and our geographically logical customers in Indonesia,

Singapore, India and the Persian Gulf. I believe there is much scope for the advancement of our trade in those areas. Neither do I forget the Northern Territory through Darwin. I think we have an excellent opportunity to develop a market there for our goods, provided it is catered for efficiently by regular shipping up the coast. I am convinced there is a splendid market in that area.

In regard to education, I am pleased to note that some attempt is being made to raise the school leaving age, because I believe it is essential these days when we hear of automation being likely to expand considerably. This means that the brains to manage and the ability to plan for long periods ahead will rate a much higher place in our community, and there will be less work for just labour. If this is going to be the position, as it surely must be, then our education will have to be of a very high standard or we will have no capacity to control or plan for these machines which, after all, are only automatic, and the brains behind them are the brains of our youth today.

That is all right as far as industry is concerned, but what of agriculture? It is very hard for me to conceive of any great form of automation in the growing of our primary products. What then is the alternative? It is the use of better and more scientific ways of growing bigger and better crops or producing bigger or better sheep or cattle or whatever it may be. It is the responsibility of the State to educate those who are going in for agriculture. I think this matter should be taken in hand without delay.

The Narrogin School of Agriculture was the forerunner of our agricultural schools—the foremost school—but what do we find there now. The dormitories built of corrugated iron some 40 years ago are still there, and they are the dormitories being used today. There has been no increase in the accommodation at the school for a considerable number of years. I believe that not only should the accommodation there be improved but that it should also be enlarged in order to give those who desire to follow agricultural pursuits an opportunity to obtain the best education possible.

One of the things which hits country people hardest of all these days is the high price of petrol and those who have furthest to travel, through living in outlying centres, have to pay most for their fuel. That seems to me to be an entirely wrong basis. Surely some scheme could be devised whereby the price of fuel would be set at a flat rate throughout the State, so that it would be available to country people at the same price as is paid by those in the metropolitan area or larger centres.

Another matter on which I feel I must touch is native welfare, because that is one of our definite responsibilities, as has already been recognised in many ways.



The main trouble is that the way in which that responsibility has been recognised up to date is through benevolence, and I am afraid we have trained our natives to look for hand-outs rather than to accept any responsibility. They like to live on their allowances and it is all very well to provide them with some means of existence, but entire dependence on the Government does not improve their outlook.

The greatest difficulty with these folk arises at two points; firstly, when the native children leave school. They attend the schools very often from their native reserves and they are usually kept in a condition which I think is a credit to their people. They attend the schools and in many cases their work is at least equal to, if not better than, that of some white children. The native children have no lack of ability when at school, but what happens when they reach the age of 13 or 14 years? There is then no prospect for them and nowhere for them to go except back to the reserves to their own people.

Naturally I suppose their own folk do not like parting with these native children. The children cannot be taken from them as they cannot be declared neglected children, and so they drift back gradually into the bush life, because they receive no further education, their parents never having been trained. At the age when these people should be expecting to gain citizenship rights, they have no idea—never having been trained—what citizenship means. I consider it should be the responsibility of our Native Welfare Department to train them and teach them what citizenship means. I realise it would be a most difficult job but it is at present the responsibility of no one and I feel that the work should be done by the department. An endeavour must be made to instil into these young natives some sense of responsibility and citizenship.

It may be to a certain extent futile to try to teach the older ones, but unless we do something in the direction I have mentioned, we will not accomplish what we have set out to do. At present the native children, on leaving school, are just drifting round in a circle, as there is no means of training either parents or children beyond a certain point. We need a definite programme as to what we will do for the natives and what we in turn expect them to do. So far I do not think anything has been done in regard to what we expect of them.

After all, if the community keeps on giving the natives various things, it becomes a habit with them to expect to receive that assistance. I therefore hope that something will be done along the lines that I have suggested. Once a native secures citizenship rights the Native Welfare Department has no further responsibility for him. Who is responsible? Nobody!

The activities of the Native Welfare Department should be extended so that it may continue to help natives after they have received citizenship rights, or there should be some other organisation formed to show them the way to go. We put them into houses and some of them are doing a good job there, but it is the responsibility of no one in particular to see that they make a success of their new environment, except in cases where there are native welfare committees or similar bodies doing the job on a voluntary basis.

I appreciate the speed with which the comprehensive water supply scheme is proceeding but if the work were speeded up even further, that would provide an excellent avenue for absorbing unemployed. This is a work which is already in hand and I feel that the unemployed could be used on that project as the amount of labour required is considerable in proportion to the money spent. The reticulation of places such as Williams and Pingelly could be accelerated and the sooner the work is done, the sooner will the department receive money from rates in those centres. This is one case where the people would be glad to pay rates and the revenue from those rates could be acquired at no extra cost—once the work was done—except that of pumping the water. I feel that while the pipeline is proceeding northward to Pingelly smaller places such as Cuballing and Popanyinning should be reticulated.

We have been informed the charges for water in the country are to be raised and I cannot see the justice of raising those charges, as they are already approximately twice those in the metropolitan area, unless a similar increase is made in the metropolitan water rate. I feel that the tendency should be towards making the country and metropolitan water charges similar rather than to extend the gulf which already exists between them, and I consider that a protest in that regard should be made. I thank members for the way in which they have listened to me this afternoon and hope they will always pay the same attention to what I have to say.

**MR. NORTON (Gascoyne) [4.37]:** I desire first to congratulate you, Sir, on having been appointed Speaker of this House. I know that you will carry out your duties to the best of your endeavour and that you will be impartial and give us all a fair go.

Next I wish to pay tribute to three prominent men of the North-West who have recently passed on. I would like first to pay tribute to the late Hon. C. W. D. Barker who died suddenly while on tour of the North-West. As members know, he was a man who loved that part of the State and worked for it, sparing no effort or time, and he was a good friend to all who lived there.