

Australia. If customs duties cannot be abolished then we should press for a large reduction. That should go a long way towards lowering the cost of home building. Alternatively, a subsidy could be granted by the Government to bring the price of the imported article to the level of the local product. I have always been a great stickler for the encouragement of Australian industries.

I was a Federal member for many years and when the question of customs duties came under discussion I always voted for the highest possible protective duty for Australian industries. I still have those ideas but I realise that in times like these, when we are still recovering from the effects of World War 2, I would not be opposed to, but would welcome, a reduction in duties on various materials which I know can be produced in Australia, and will be produced in Australia, when we get back on to our economic feet again. Other factors which should be taken into consideration are mass production methods and prefabricated houses to shorten the time in the building of homes.

Financial assistance should also be granted to a worker who wishes to buy his own home. Workers now can be assisted under the workers' homes legislation but in my opinion the assistance could be improved. It is not possible for any man on the lower income group to take upon himself the responsibility of purchasing or building a house. Interest-free loans could be granted by the Commonwealth Bank or the interest rate lowered to 2 per cent. That is sufficient interest to cover administrative costs and, if necessary, the home builder could make a nominal deposit.

I realise that even if those concessions were granted it would not immediately solve the housing problem but it would go a long way towards achieving something in that direction. I had intended to refer to several other matters such as transport, education and other items, but I understand it is the desire of the Premier to adjourn prior to tea. Therefore, I will defer consideration of those matters until a later date.

**MR. MANNING (Harvey) [5.37]:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to congratulate you upon your re-election to your present position. No doubt the work that you have performed in the past three years in this House was the reason for your re-election. My electorate is a new one arising out of the redistribution, and I wish to thank the electors of Harvey for showing their confidence in me by electing me to this Parliament as their representative for the next three years.

I propose to deal mainly with matters affecting my own electorate. The main theme which I intend to stress very firmly

is—methods to increase primary production. In particular I refer to milk, meat, potatoes and timber. I am anxious that the Government should do everything possible to increase production of these commodities and I intend to make a few practical suggestions. The first point is improved drainage. There are many drains in my electorate but these can be improved and deepened. If this work is performed on the main drains it will speed up the carry-off of storm water.

The next point is irrigation. I believe there is a need to speed up the completion of the existing schemes upon which the department is now working. If this is done it will assist greatly in bringing more country under production. There is a serious shortage of superphosphate at present and I consider this to be the greatest restricting factor for increased production. The position is most serious, and until it is improved it will be impossible to obtain the desired increase in production. The Government is to be commended for its decision to inquire into the superphosphate position. As soon as the inquiry has been completed we will have grounds for going ahead and looking for further improvements.

The provision of good roads is another essential in primary production. The Government can assist in this direction by permitting local authorities to use their grant money as they think best. In the past there have been restrictions and I think the time has now arrived when the local authorities should be given the power to spend the money as they think best, provided it is used for roadmaking and roadmaking equipment. The opening up of new land would also assist, and I am very anxious to see the old coast road linked up with Australind and that road put in trafficable order.

If the local authorities could do that work I think the Government could then assist by taking over the road and maintaining it. Also, there should be a complete survey of the gully land which embraces the lands east of the railway line in the forestry area. If that survey were made we would then know exactly what lies there. At present that land is unused. Much of the gully land is not growing jarrah but it is in the forestry area and is not available for selection. Fencing supplies constitute another factor against increased production and the boosting of the production of these materials is urgently needed.

I turn now to the research station at Wokalup. The Government is to be highly commended on its decision to establish such a station at that centre. I hope its activities will be wide and varied so as to be of real service to the primary producer. A qualified soil analyst stationed at Wokalup, and available to analyse soil and to give advice to farmers,

would be of great assistance. That would overcome the years of trial and error through which farmers have to pass to ascertain what types of seed, superphosphate and pastures are the most suitable for certain soils. A veterinary surgeon placed at the station to render service to the farmers would, especially, be of great value to the dairy industry. Pastoral experimental work should be carried out and organised through this research station, which could well be the headquarters of the Agricultural Department's experimental work. These are the ways and means by which we can increase our production of primary products.

The rural training centre at Harvey for ex-servicemen has been showing excellent results and the soldier settlers passing through it have stated that the six weeks course has proved of immense value to them. When all these men have completed their courses I suggest that the Government should continue the centre as a college to give six-week courses to junior farmers and other youths interested in farming.

I would like to see a mineral survey made in the Lake Clifton and Lake Preston areas. I have heard many rumours and statements about the mineral wealth there, and if a full survey was made of those two lakes it would reveal exactly what is there. If there exists mineral wealth in that area we should know of it and it should be exploited.

The Government should give consideration to subsidising bushfire insurance schemes. The heavy financial loss experienced by farmers last summer indicates that a scheme of this nature is necessary. I will not enter more fully into that matter now because I will have another opportunity later of speaking to it when the Bush Fires Act is discussed.

I must commend the Government also on its decision to build a junior high school at Harvey. Unfortunately, the work on this building has not yet commenced but I hope it will not be long before it is put in hand. In the meantime, the urgency for school accommodation there is just as acute as it was when the establishment was first requested. I want to stress the need for co-operation between Government departments. The departments which perform work in the country, such as the Forests Departments, the Department of Agriculture and the Lands Department, would benefit if there were closer co-operation between them. For instance, if such co-operation existed, the Forests Department would not plant pines on country suitable for dairying and it could also be induced to release land in areas controlled by it which had no marketable timber, but which would be suitable for cultivation.

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As to amenities for mill towns, the first approach to this problem should be through the building of good roads to the mills. It is essential for us to have timber but the people will not stay in the mill areas if they are stuck away in the bush and have to traverse long and rough roads to reach their homes. The roads from all the mills these days are carrying heavy loads of timber and, if they were put into good order, the mill people travelling to town to do their shopping and to attend their entertainments, etc., would feel much happier whilst living in the bush.

The Government should give some consideration to the provision of amenities, such as lighting, in bush towns. Lighting would be one of the most important amenities for townships such as surround Mornington Mill and Hoffman Mill which are well out in the bush and where the people are doing an excellent job. The Government should show some interest in those people and thus give them encouragement to carry on. I have not spoken at great length and I hope that all my speeches will be short and sweet. I know that we will have an opportunity of speaking on these same subjects at a later date so I will leave any further remarks until then.

On motion by Mr. Griffith, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 5.49 p.m.*

## Legislative Council.

Tuesday, 8th August, 1950.

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