

needs; they are looking to me to try to get the House to recognise their problems. However, just as I am committed to doing that, I fully appreciate that the Caucasian people of the Kimberley similarly expect from me that kind of representation.

I make it clear to the House that I will do the best I can in the days to come to satisfy the people who have elected me to this position.

As Parliament commences a new term, I see before us a number of challenging tasks which this Chamber will be required to face up to with great responsibility; but above all, it must be faced up to in a very honest way—that is absolutely essential. The electors of Kimberley are not likely to demand or expect miracles, but they do expect that Parliament will address itself to their concern in what I believe should be a fair-dinkum way.

[Applause.]

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Clarko): The Speaker has requested me to read to the House the following message which he has written—

I understand it is the desire of members that the replies to questions on notice today should be handed in, rather than answered orally.

I shall call upon each Minister in turn to hand in his or her replies. At this time the Minister should indicate whether the postponement of any question is required and also indicate what papers, if any, are being presented for tabling.

MR E. T. EVANS (Kalgoorlie) [3.43 p.m.]: As I rise to speak in this debate, if I speak a little loudly it is to speak over the thumping of my heart. I am extremely nervous. Many members on this side of the House have told me that they were nervous when they delivered their maiden speech; in fact, I believe it is a tradition that a member be nervous when delivering his maiden speech, and I would not like to break a tradition.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Speaker, in his absence, on being elected to that high office once again. As other members have said, I have no doubt he will act in an impartial and competent manner.

I would like to pay the highest possible tribute to my predecessor (Mr Tom Evans). He was first elected to this House in 1956 and represented Kalgoorlie with the utmost distinction until retiring of his own accord prior to the 1980 election. Not only was he a popular, well-known, and respected figure in Kalgoorlie and one of the great parliamentarians on this side of the House

since the war, but also he rose to great heights in the Parliament. Many members will well recall that he held the portfolios of Attorney General, Treasurer, and Minister for Education in the Tonkin Government.

Mr McIver: Hear, hear!

Mr E. T. EVANS: Indeed, he has left me a very hard act to follow. I would like to offer my thanks to the people of Kalgoorlie for giving me the honour of representing them and following in Tom's footsteps. I assure the people of Kalgoorlie that although they have got another Evans—another "Good 'eavens, not another Evans"—they have also got a full-time, conscientious politician available to them at any time.

Along with the previous speaker, I would like to thank the staff of Parliament House. Unless one is a country member, I do not think one can really appreciate just what the staff do. No-one has been lost more times than I have when walking around the corridors; I have said, "Good day" to the same fellow three times after walking in and out of the same door on several occasions! I thank every member of the staff of Parliament House for their assistance.

I would really like now to speak about my electorate. The electorate of Kalgoorlie not only sits on the famous Golden Mile, but also it is the centre of one of the richest mineral provinces in the world.

At the moment in Kalgoorlie there is an air of optimism which is higher than I can remember in my life; and I was born in the area and have lived there since 1939. My grandfather arrived at Kalgoorlie six months after Paddy Hannan, so I feel qualified to talk about Kalgoorlie, its prospects, its potential, its hopes, and some of its problems.

As I said, we have high optimism in Kalgoorlie. We now have a gold price approaching \$600 an ounce. Three or four years ago I would have been laughed out of town had I said in Hannan Street that the price would reach \$500 an ounce. Many people are now saying they knew the price would go that high, but at the time I did not think it would. However, the price is up there, and this has caused the tremendous potential and development in the area.

I would like to take this opportunity to bore you, Mr Deputy Speaker, with a few figures, because they are very important to my electorate. The Golden Mile is in the process of being redeveloped. Kalgoorlie Mining Associates, a consortium consisting of Kalgoorlie Lake View Pty. Ltd., Homestake Gold of America, and

Western Mining Corporation, has commenced development of its south-east leases on the Golden Mile.

Those leases are the old Perseverance, the Lake View and Star, the Associated, and the Oroya leases. The consortium intends to spend \$26 million over the next year on the redevelopment of the leases. The redevelopment will consist of the building of a new crushing plant at the Oroya mill, the construction of a new roasting plant at the same mill to roast refractory ore from the Fimiston leases, the refurbishing of underground equipment and facilities and, of course, development that is so essential to get into full production.

This will result in KMA coming into production about mid-1981, producing about 390 000 tonnes of gold ore per annum, which represents \$58 million-worth of export income to this State each year—and, more importantly, 230 extra jobs.

At the other end of the Golden Mile we have North Kalgurli Mines Ltd., which is well advanced in its development programme. Fortunately, the company kept its two shafts under care and maintenance and is in a slightly better position than KMA in that it will not need to spend an enormous amount of money to get back into production. The company's plant has been operating as a custom mill, and the shafts and winders are in good condition. All that is required is the expenditure of some \$10 million on a new roasting plant and, once again, this money will benefit the Kalgoorlie region. This will enable North Kalgurli Mines to reach production capacity—also by mid-1981—of about 200 000 tonnes of gold ore per annum which at the expected grade of a little over four weights per tonne, or about 2.6 grams per tonne, will represent about \$26 million per annum in export income and, once again more importantly, 170 additional jobs in my area.

At the same time, we have Mt. Charlotte, which is not part of the Golden Mile, but is away to the north. The Mt. Charlotte mine produces low-grade ore; it is a highly capital intensive, high tonnage operation, and currently is operating at full production of 750 000 tonnes of ore each year. Mt. Charlotte has a known life at current ore reserves of 10 years. However, there is every indication the gold-bearing ore will continue at depth, so the mine has untold potential.

Indeed, the potential of the entire Golden Mile is enormous if current gold prices are maintained. As members may imagine, prospecting in the area is at an all-time high. Every State Battery in

Western Australia is operating at full capacity and has a waiting list of at least six months. The North Kalgurli custom mill is receiving 5 000 tonnes of prospectors' ore each month, with a potential to increase capacity to 20 000 tonnes a month.

Other mines which previously were considered to be uneconomic are being reopened. Members probably have read of some of them. I refer to the Hill 50 and Morning Star mines at Mt. Magnet, the Marvel Loch goldmine, and the old Lansfield mine at Laverton; in addition, many other small deposits and small mines are under consideration.

I have given the House these figures this afternoon because they are of vital importance to the goldfields and to my electorate. Yet I was astonished to find that the Speech of the Lieutenant-Governor when opening this Parliament contained no reference to gold. Every person in Western Australia is talking about gold. People who hear I am from Kalgoorlie say, "You must be getting gold." The Speech contains references to iron ore, bauxite, natural gas, and uranium. However, gold does not get a mention.

I said I was astonished, but why should I be? Neither this Government nor its Federal counterpart has ever paid any attention to the goldmining industry. It was in 1976, after many pre-election promises from the then Opposition in Canberra that the famous Golden Mile closed, and Kalgoorlie and Boulder were decimated, with thousands of people being thrown out of work. If one Government, either State or Federal, had had the courage to put up \$3 million or \$4 million to enable these mines to remain open, the situation today would be quite different. Mr Deputy Speaker, with gold at \$600 an ounce, I am sure you would know what continued production would mean to this State.

Had the Governments of the day shown a little courage, we would have now what they are promising us we are going to have; namely, a town of some 40 000 people. As to the promises of such a town, I can say only that I have heard it all before. It might come to fruition if the people elect a Government which is prepared to back the industry and give it support when it is going through rough times.

This situation must never be allowed to happen again. Once these mines reopen and get back onto full production, we must ensure they enjoy the stability they deserve. Every other industry receives Government support, so why should not the goldmining industry be supported? For too long I have seen a situation where people did not know from one year to the next whether they were

to have a job, or whether their houses would be worth anything.

We need in the future a Government that is prepared to adopt a policy such as the one put forward by the Australian Labor Party. We recommend an orderly system of marketing for gold and we believe in having the courage to help the industry when it is in need.

I turn now to other minerals which are found within my electorate. Of course, members have all heard about nickel which, incidentally, also did not get a mention in the Lieutenant-Governor's Speech. At the moment, nickel prices are stable. Kambalda is booming and flourishing. The Windarra nickel mine is about to reopen and Metals Exploration have plans to reopen the Redross and Wannaway nickel projects. In addition, the massive Agnew nickel mine is about to come into production.

Other minerals are found within my electorate. There have been significant finds of cobalt, copper, tin and many other minerals. The most significant of these finds is the huge Teutonic Bore copper project which the Seltrust group expects to bring into production in 1981.

Many informed people—most of them are Government employees in the Department of Industrial Development, the office of the Regional Administrator and so on—are up in my area saying, "We are looking at a population of 40 000 within 10 years."

If that is the case, and many of the things I have outlined today come to fruition and these mines reopen, many problems must be faced. However, for the first time we have prior notice of these problems; in fact, we have at least one year in which to meet and overcome them. We must decide where the industry is going and what it needs.

The first of these problems is that within 12 months, unless some forward planning is done, there will be a shortage of skilled labour in Kalgoorlie. These companies will not be able to pick skilled miners from off the streets. We lost all our skilled miners when the mines closed and massive retrenchments took place at Kambalda, Redross, Scotia, Carr Boyd and other mines. The closure of these mines resulted in miners leaving the district. Miners are a highly skilled group of men, and they go where the mines are. Therefore, we have lost miners to other States.

It is important that the Government, unions and management and all other affected persons—including local government—get together and plan to cater for the projected manpower requirements. We must train locally

available people by putting them through a training school, getting them down the mines, and teaching them the trade. We must attract labour from other areas. However, in doing that we will be creating other problems.

There will be a problem with housing. At the moment in Kalgoorlie there are seven estate agents, but there is not one house for rental. I know that because every day I instruct my secretary to ring around on behalf of constituents trying to find rental accommodation. There is not one house available. There are 67 names on the waiting list of the State Housing Commission. The answer to a question by my colleague in the other place indicated that not one house had been built by the State Housing Commission in Kalgoorlie last year, and there are plans to build two next year. There is need for an urgent building programme by the SHC.

People must be encouraged to have faith in the future. They must be encouraged to build and buy their own homes. The Lands Department must release land at reasonable cost. At the moment, land is being sold at \$9 000 or \$10 000, and yet five years ago people were walking off the land. We cannot have this. Land must be sold at a low cost so people can come into the area and have permanence. In that way, people can be encouraged to go to isolated areas.

We will have problems if we are to have a huge increase in population. What are we going to do about education? The schools in the Kalgoorlie area, apart from the Eastern Goldfields High School, are totally inadequate. The Eastern Goldfields High School was funded by the Whitlam Government, built by the Tonkin Labor Government, and completed by this Government five years late. The other schools are so inadequate that if children in the metropolitan area were asked to go to some of the schools in my electorate, they would look at them in horror. They are overcrowded and inadequate.

How will such schools cater for the increase of something like 18 000 people that various authorities tell us we will have? We must have a programme to increase the facilities at the schools. The school children in our town are just as entitled to improved facilities as the people in other towns and the cities. There must be recreational facilities, libraries and laboratories, and the other facilities that are taken for granted in the city.

A further problem, of course, is health. At the moment in Kalgoorlie we have the Kalgoorlie Regional Hospital. It has a capacity of 200 beds. These 200 beds are scattered in a higgledy-

piggledy mess of derelict buildings. The hospital contrasts starkly with the modern hospital complexes at Albany, Geraldton, Bunbury, Northam, Royal Perth, and the Queen Elizabeth II Medical Centre. Of the 200 available beds at Kalgoorlie, 95 are filled at the moment. Does that mean when the new people come into the area to open up the mines, they will be healthy? None of them will become sick?

The Government has a programme to upgrade the Kalgoorlie Regional Hospital in five stages. The first stage is an operating theatre. I would have no quarrel with that; but one cannot put beds into an operating theatre. The second stage provides for reception, catering, and ancillary services—ambulance, casualty, and so on. There would be no beds in that either. It will be some years before the number of beds will be increased.

We did have another hospital in the area—the St. John of God Hospital. The “compassionate” Fraser Government took away its licence to operate as an acute hospital in the middle of last year. The State Government was then called upon by myself, the member for Yilgarn-Dundas, and the members for South-East Province to buy the St. John of God Hospital from the sisters and to make it a permanent care hospital for all permanent care residents in Kalgoorlie. That would have relieved the Kalgoorlie Regional Hospital of something like 50 beds. However, the hospital was sold to private enterprise.

If one can afford \$105.50 per fortnight to stay in the Kalgoorlie Nursing Home, as it is now called, one is free to stay there. What happens to the pensioners? I know that question is often asked, but what does happen to them? I wish the Government would tell me. Furthermore, after one stays at the Kalgoorlie Hospital, one is charged the same rate. There is no future for the pensioners. It has become a sin to grow old.

We have done two things wrongly. We are not looking after the old people; and we are not providing beds in the regional hospital. Unless something is done along these lines, we can forget everything else I have said.

We suffer also from a lack of Government services in our area. This Government espouses decentralisation, and yet everything is centralised in Perth. There is not even a branch of the State Electoral Office in Kalgoorlie. Anyone wishing to enrol does so after blundering his way around. People go to the Commonwealth Electoral Office and they say, “Don’t come here, mate. We don’t know anything about you.” If they find enough information, they eventually go to the Mines Department to be placed on the roll. In this day

and age, with computers and everything else, I fail to see why we cannot enrol people on the State and Federal rolls at the same office in isolated areas. It is beyond me. All I can say is that perhaps this Government does not want people to be enrolled. With 65 per cent of the people voting against the Government, perhaps that is the reason.

There has been a lot said in the House so far about high freight costs and high fuel costs affecting the rural sector. I can assure the House the higher costs will certainly affect the mining industry. They will certainly affect the people who are working there. They will certainly affect the people who are building homes in the area; the cost of transport of building materials; and all the other things that will be necessary.

The Government should be considering convincing its Federal counterpart to abolish the fuel policy it has at the moment, in isolated areas at least; and in the interests of decentralisation it should reduce these costs to allow development to proceed. After all, this is the development Government—or so we were led to believe.

I will now deal with the problems of prospectors. I have already mentioned that prospecting in the area is at an all-time high. Even people from the metropolitan area go prospecting.

Firstly, I would like to mention the State Batteries. I would like to say to the Premier, although he is not in the House, that his Government, and particularly the Minister for Mines, must be kidding about the State Batteries. If anyone has ever been to a State Battery and thought it was satisfactory, there must be something wrong with his head.

The State Battery is the only Government instrumentality to my knowledge which goes around to scrap metal dealers to buy up metal with which to keep its machinery operating. I doubt whether this happens anywhere else in the world. It is doing a magnificent job. But is this situation to continue? We have prospectors who are prepared to go into the bush to find precious metals, but we are giving them no support; we are giving them nothing through which to put their dirt. The subject of State Batteries should receive a complete review. They should have money spent on them to renew them. After all, \$3 million is not all that much, as we have already found. We could easily fund this programme from our “windfall profits” from water charges.

The North Kalgurli mine is going into operation in mid-1981. This means there will be no custom mill. The prospectors put through

5 000 tonnes of dirt per month, which is more than any other State Battery in Western Australia can handle, and as I said earlier, we have the capacity to increase this amount to 20 000 tonnes per month. However, unless the Government takes action this facility will not exist.

I have done some figuring, and there is no way a custom mill—which would probably cost in the vicinity of \$4 million or \$5 million to be a viable proposition for private enterprise—could be viable unless the Government is prepared to fund it under the Mines Department. Such a facility should be put into operation as quickly as possible so that the prospectors can make use of it. Even if the Government ordered such a facility now, it would not be ready by the time the one we have will be lost in mid-1981.

The final blow across the prospectors' ears by this Government was its introduction of the obnoxious Mining Bill, which was railroaded through this House last session. There is not one section of the mining industry which wants the new Act. I know by reading the front page of yesterday's issue of the *Kalgoorlie Miner* that the Liberal Party in Kalgoorlie—how they got on the front page I do not know—is to try to convince the Deputy Premier and two Federal Ministers to throw out the new Act. My advice to the Deputy Premier is to take notice of the people in the area who are concerned. The Deputy Premier should do exactly as they ask. He should listen to the people affected by the Act.

The Government should amend the original Act if it thinks it did not measure up to what was required. The Government should allow the prospectors to get on with the job they have been doing for the last 80 years, which was finding minerals in this State. Companies do not find the minerals. All the Mining Act is doing is doing away with prospectors and making them company employees. Company employees have never found one mine of note during our history. Quite often prospectors were diddled out of their dues by the companies.

I thank the House for its indulgence and its patience in listening to my problems. I shall say no more except that I assure members they will be hearing from me many more times about the problems associated with the gold and other mineral industries on the goldfields.

[Applause.]

Debate adjourned until a later stage of the sitting, on motion by Mr Shalders.

(Continued on this page)

PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

Delegation: Presence in Speaker's Gallery

THE SPEAKER (Mr Thompson): Before I deal with questions, I draw members' attention to the presence in the Speaker's Gallery of a delegation of people from the People's Republic of China who are in Perth to attend the Australasian Federation of Travel Agents Convention. On behalf of all members of the House, I extend to them a very sincere welcome to our Parliament today.

[Applause.]

QUESTIONS

On Notice: Handing in of Answers

THE SPEAKER (Mr Thompson): An announcement has been made with respect to the system which will be employed today for handing in questions on notice. I would like Ministers to point out if there are any questions which are to be postponed and if there are any questions which are accompanied by papers to be tabled. Ministers should indicate specifically which answers are involved.

I shall call each Minister in turn and ask him to present to the attendant the questions, the number of which I shall call for each Minister.

QUESTIONS

Questions were taken at this stage.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY: THIRD DAY

Motion

Debate resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

MR SIBSON (Bunbury) [5.03 p.m.]: I rise to join the debate on the Address-in-Reply. Firstly, I would like to congratulate you, Mr Speaker, on your reappointment to the Chair. It was rather interesting to see a vote taken on the election of the Speaker, and the outcome proved that over the period you have held office you have done the correct thing. Certainly the vote demonstrated that you have the support of the House in what you are doing.

I would like also to thank the officers and staff of the House for the job they do and for the help they give members. I would like to thank especially the *Hansard* reporters for the fantastic job they do, especially having regard for the background noise in the Chamber and the crossfire that erupts sometimes.