

Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 4th December, 1946.

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 3.30 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTIONS.

STIPENDIARY MAGISTRATES' COURT.

As to Cessation of Functioning.

Mr. McDONALD asked the Minister for Justice:

1, For what reason was a proclamation gazetted on the 22nd November, 1946, providing that Local Courts, Magisterial Districts and Courts of Session at Bunbury, Donnybrook, Collie, Pinjarra, Forrest, Busselton, Bridgetown, Manjimup, and Mitchell shall cease to function under the Stipendiary Magistrates Act, 1930?

2, In view of the size and importance of these towns and their districts, will the Government give this matter further consideration, with a view to restoring to them the services of a stipendiary magistrate?

The MINISTER replied:

1, Because a resident magistrate who has spent many years on the Goldfields is anxious for a transfer to the coast for health

reasons, and this cannot be done without removing the restriction contained in section 9 of the Stipendiary Magistrates Act as it is not desired to extend the officer's retiring age to 70 years. The gazettement of the proclamation does not in any manner affect the status or prestige of any magistrate or any of the magisterial districts concerned.

2, Yes.

FOX MENACE.

As to Measures for Combating and Bonuses Paid.

Mr. SEWARD asked the Minister for Agriculture:

1, Have any methods been taken by his department during the past three years to cope with the fox menace?

2, If so, what were they?

3, Have any steps been taken to ascertain the best way of dealing with foxes?

4, What steps were taken towards making the information gained available, or known, to farmers?

5, What sums have been paid by way of bonuses for foxes during the last three years?

The MINISTER replied:

1, Yes.

2, (a) The department employs trappers whose main duties include poisoning wild dogs in unalienated country. Baits so laid account for numbers of foxes also. (b) The uniform bonus of 4s. per head is paid from central funds for each scalp submitted to the vermin authorities and local vermin boards. (c) Landholders are advised regarding the laying of baits on and in the vicinity of their properties so that they may protect their stock (and also comply with their responsibilities under the Act).

3, Yes. Wholesale poisoning has proved effective.

4, Information is available in departmental Leaflet No. 438 or by inquiry direct to the Department of Agriculture; publicity has been given by Press paragraphs and broadcasts.

5, 1943-44, £8,276 8s. (41,382 foxes); 1944-45, £9,856 12s. (49,283 foxes); 1945-46, £8,419 8s. (42,097 foxes).

BILLS (5)—FIRST READING.

1, Economic Stability.

Introduced by the Premier.

2, Purchasers' Protection Act Amendment.

Introduced by the Minister for Justice.

3, Government Railways Act Amendment.

Introduced by the Minister for Railways.

4, Coal Production.

Introduced by the Minister for Mines.

5, Supreme Court Act Amendment.

Introduced by Mr. McDonald.

**MOTION—STANDING ORDERS
SUSPENSION.****THE PREMIER** (Hon. F. J. S. Wise—Gaseoyne) [3.38]: I move—

That during the remainder of the session the Standing Orders be suspended so far as to enable Bills to be introduced without notice and to be passed through all their remaining stages on the same day, all messages from the Legislative Council to be taken into consideration on the same day they are received, and to enable resolutions from the Committees of Supply and of Ways and Means to be reported and adopted on the same day on which they shall have passed those Committees.

I wish to inform the House that I do not think that the first part of the motion will be called into application at all. There is only one more Bill I can call to mind of which notice will be given, so that it will not be a case of the Government seeking to introduce Bills without notice. This is the motion usually moved about this time of the year, and it will expedite the consideration of small Bills, of which there are still a few on the notice paper and their passage to the third reading stage and transmission to the Legislative Council, particularly if they pass through Committee without amendment. It is really to facilitate the business and to have it flowing more freely that I am moving the motion.

MR. WATTS (Katanning) [3.41]: I have no objection to the motion. It is customary at this time of the session to move in this way. From some aspects I regret the necessity for doing so, but I am afraid that if the motion were not passed there would, as the Premier has said, be unnecessary delay in

the handling of small Bills, to which no exception can be taken, because everyone is agreed that they should be passed in the form in which they are introduced.

The Minister for Lands: Hear, hear!

Mr. WATTS: I am referring to such Bills as, for example, the Financial Emergency Act Amendment Bill, the Farmers' Debts Adjustment Act Amendment Bill, and others of a like character. I do not want the Minister to be under any misapprehension. I am not referring to some Bills that might come before us in the near future. I am satisfied with the Premier's assurance that there will be no undue haste in dealing with measures of importance. On that assurance I rest, because it is not reasonable that important measures should be ill-considered.

Question put and passed; the motion agreed to.

**BILL—WHEAT INDUSTRY
STABILISATION.**

Third Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE
(Hon. J. T. Tonkin—North-East Fremantle)
[4.43]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

MR. DONEY (Williams—Narrogin) [3.44]: It is considered by members on this side of the House to be still desirable to say a few words on this Bill before it passes the third reading. I do not complain because the Minister in charge of the Bill did not reply to the second reading debate, because I consider that he did not have much scope for profitable comment. In any case he probably reflected, the same as I do, that the Bill is essentially a Federal measure drawn, as I see it, in a manner that most benefits the Federal Treasury. It certainly confers no discernible assistance on the wheatgrowers of this State, or of any of the other Australian States. It seems to me, therefore, that we in this Chamber need display no sentimental attachment to it. It lost its one claim to usefulness when the Minister in charge of the Bill in the Federal House declined to accept the good advice to delete the provisions dealing with the proceeds of the 1945-46 harvest.

What sound ground can there be for naming this a stabilisation Bill? No one

can pretend that it will, if enacted, bring stability to the wheatgrowing industry—as a matter of fact it will do quite the contrary. Is it possible to bring stability to an industry by guaranteeing for a period of five years 4s. for a commodity that costs at least 5s. 5d. to produce; especially when the market price of that commodity stands at about 13s. per bushel? So it is quite proper to ask whether a bigger mess was ever made of a big job than has been the case with the Bill now before the House. The measure, as it stands, is a tragically bad one with the result that the most promising opportunity for, possibly, the last half century of putting one of the largest and most important industries of Australia upon a stable basis has been dissipated; or rather, having regard to what happened when we last discussed the Bill, would have been dissipated had the Government not seized the opportunity offered by this side of the House when we moved for a referendum.

The Minister for Agriculture: That is not so.

Mr. DONEY: The Bill now has a chance of saving itself and of being of some use. If we allow the claim that this will stabilise the wheat industry to be a just one, how do we explain away the bitter disappointment, and the anger and perturbation that blazed up in the wheat world, and the decision, as the result of a number of meetings, to fight the Bill to the last ditch? It will be recalled that meetings took place throughout the wheatbelt for the purpose of blocking the Bill. I believe that similar meetings took place in South Australia and Victoria; I am not sure about New South Wales. It seemed to the wheatgrowers in those States, as it does to us, that, stripped of all pretence, what the Bill actually does is to safeguard the interests of the consumers, the stockbreeder, the poultryman, the distiller, the maltster, the dog-biscuit manufacturer, the breakfast-food manufacturer and others. We, on this side of the Chamber do not object to consumers, stock and poultry men being protected to the end that meat, poultry and eggs may be made available more cheaply to the public and, in particular, to the starving people of Great Britain. But following on that, one naturally asserts that if the Commonwealth Government wants credit for distributing gifts, let those gifts be ones that have previously been a charge on the Federal Treasury and not something that

has been fleeced, under cover of legislation, from the pockets of the wheatgrowers.

Again, if this Bill would—as is asserted—bring stability to the life and finances of the wheatgrower, why, when the matter cropped up at a recent record gathering of primary producers in Perth, was there that remarkable outburst of indignation against the major provisions of the Bill? All members here will have read Press reports of what transpired at that meeting. I think every paper in Perth and, for that matter, all those of consequence in the Eastern States, amply publicised the results of that meeting. Who could doubt for one moment the spontaneity, depth and reality of that indignation when, immediately afterwards, and within some ten minutes, a sum of no less than £1,250 was donated, without pressure of any kind, for the purpose of fighting the Bill? Those donations were in amounts of £25, £10 and £5, and it seems almost miraculous that within the space of only a few minutes that amount should have been raised. I ask the Minister whether there can be any more powerful argument than that, condemnatory of the actualities of this Bill. The raising of that £1,250 in ten minutes was no irresponsible act of overwrought men. Immediately following that, they set a target of £5,000 to be raised. That seems a large sum, even for a matter of this kind, but within a reasonably short time not only had that sum been raised, but a figure coming very close to £6,000. Victoria and South Australia—I cannot speak as to New South Wales—have separately raised amounts, possibly not as large as that raised here, but nevertheless of some substance.

Of course there is only one inference that the Minister could draw from the facts that I have put forward, and I cannot help thinking that he must be impressed. It has been agreed by members on this side of the House that the Minister, in tackling the Bill, faced a position of considerable difficulty. He was required to strike a balance, as it were, between loyalty to the Commonwealth Government—and I suppose also to a majority of the State Cabinet—on the one hand, and his personal view of what was best for Western Australia, on the other hand. The best that can be said of the result is that the Minister made

a decision that seemed proper to him in the circumstances. I have no doubt that had any member on this side of the House been placed in the position in which the Minister found himself, he might conceivably have acted as the Minister did. Yet it is surely impossible for the Minister to be wholly satisfied with the Bill that he is handling and has handled so ably on behalf of the Commonwealth Government. He was frank enough to admit that when he and other Ministers for Agriculture were discussing the draft Bill in Canberra, he wanted certain major alterations made to it, but it transpired that he was dealing with a man even more obstinate than himself.

The Minister for Lands: That is saying something.

Mr. DONEY: It is saying a good deal. He found he was dealing with a man even more obstinate than himself, and of course he failed to have made the changes that he sought. Plainly, therefore, the Minister is quite dissatisfied with the Bill, and that is rather hard to believe when one now reflects upon the enthusiasm that for some strange reason he was able to infuse into his speech upon it. But I know, as do all members here, that the Minister is one who holds to his opinions with exceptional tenacity, and if he was of the opinion three or four months ago that it was a bad Bill, I think we may take it for granted that he is equally dissatisfied with it now. I would imagine that had anyone here moved to delete from the Bill reference to the taking into account of the proceeds of the 1945-46 harvest, the Minister would have been found voting with us, on this side of the House. Part of my purpose in rising was to make known to the House certain comparative figures that tend to show the 4s. offered by the Commonwealth Government in a very mean light. So that there may be no misapprehension as to the source of these figures, let me say that they were used by the Hon. Mr. Dunstan, ex-Premier of Victoria, in a debate in the State House of Victoria a little earlier than the 15th November, 1946, which is the date upon which this paper was published.

The Minister for Agriculture: Is it a reputable newspaper that you have, or just some pamphlet?

Mr. DONEY: It is a highly reputable journal, "The Countryman," of Victoria.

The Minister for Agriculture: You did not know that until you looked it up.

Mr. DONEY: In the course of his speech, on the occasion to which I am referring, Mr. Dunstan said—

Let us make some comparisons in prices. This Bill provides for the payment of about 4s. per bushel at country sidings. In the United States of America the authorities have guaranteed a price of 12s. 6d. a bushel.

I know the Minister is wondering whether that is in American or Australian currency, so I will inform him that it is on the basis of Australian currency; 12s. 6d. per bushel in America, as opposed to 4s. per bushel here. According to Mr. Dunstan's figures, in Canada there is a guaranteed price of 8s. 3d. per bushel until 1950. The Minister knows that there is a stabilisation Act there. At the time of Mr. Dunstan's speech it may have been merely a Bill, but I think it has now become an Act, and that the 8s. 3d. per bushel is guaranteed until 1950. The price of wheat sold in Canada to any country other than Great Britain is 12s. 6d. per bushel in Australian currency. Great Britain pays 9s. 9d. per bushel for all wheat produced in that country, and that is done to encourage farmers to produce to the maximum. In the Argentine the farmers are paid 7s. 7d. per bushel, but there is an export price provided, in order to bring the figure up to 17s. 6d. per bushel for wheat sold overseas. The New Zealand Government has guaranteed farmers there 7s. 1d. per bushel.

There is a great deal more here touching on the matter of wheat costs and values, but it is not particularly applicable to the measure before us, so I will not refer further to the statement. Surely I have said sufficient, in giving these comparisons, to make it plain to the House that Australia has today the unhealthy distinction of having surely the meanest Government on earth in the matter of the price offered for wheat. In circumstances much the same as ours, Canada, in a Bill for much the same purpose as this measure, decided that not less than 8s. 4½d., would be sufficient to make their farmers financially safe for five years, yet we have made the mistake of imagining that 4s. is ample to that end. No-one, I am sure, will consider that the

Canadian Government thought so little of the stabilising business that it was prepared to throw away 100 per cent. more money that was necessary in the circumstances. Fortunately there has been acceptance by the Government of the suggestion by means of a resolution of the House to allow the farmers of the State to decide the question of stabilisation at a referendum.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. J. T. Tonkin—North-East Fremantle—in reply) [4.2]: The member for Williams-Narrogin will have his joke; we cannot deny him that. He stated that I would draw an inference from what he was saying. I certainly had no difficulty in drawing that inference. It was obvious that he was taking advantage of the opportunity to indulge in some propaganda against the stabilisation plan. That plan will eventually be decided upon by the growers and therefore he took advantage of the opportunity to put in some work against the proposal. In doing so, he quoted some Canadian figures which were not a fair basis for comparison at all. He said the figure for Australia was 4s. 2d. whereas the figure in the plan is 5s. 2d.

Mr. Seward: It is not.

Mr. Doney: It is 4s. at sidings here, in Victoria and elsewhere.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The hon. member did not say that the price was at sidings. When he quoted the Canadian figures he did not say whether the wheat was for delivery at Montreal or elsewhere.

Mr. Doney: I was quoting.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The comparison was not fair and was certainly not reliable. If the member for Williams-Narrogin were to take the trouble to work the figures out on a comparative basis, he would discover that the Canadian price is not much different from our own.

Mr. Seward: There is 4s. a bushel.

Mr. Doney: Did you not mean that it was 4s. a bushel for wheat at the seaboard? You could not have meant anything else.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: This is not the time to debate the merits or demerits of the Bill seeing that we have already done so, but I cannot allow the hon.

member to put forward his views without indicating that there is another side to the question. What Western Australia has to decide is this: Is it likely that in future the world parity export price for wheat will exceed the home consumption price? If it will continue to do so, there will be no value in the stabilisation plan.

Mr. Doney: Obviously!

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: If the world parity price should be less than the home consumption price, then the wheat-growers have something to gain from support of the stabilisation plan because during the years when the world parity price will be less than that for wheat for home consumption, the deficiency in price will be made up to them from Consolidated Revenue to an extent sufficient to provide them with more than the world parity figure. There has been a suggestion recently that it would be to the benefit of the growers in Western Australia if this State had a scheme of its own quite independent of the Commonwealth. That would all depend upon what we think is likely to be the trend in oversea markets. It is true that the major portion of our crop is available for export and therefore, if the growers in Western Australia are in the scheme, they will lose if world parity keeps above the home consumption price. If world parity falls below the home consumption price, however, they stand to gain.

Mr. Doney: Do you think there is any danger of the export price being less?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes, there is a definite chance, particularly when we have regard to the experience of Australia in the years before the war. The hon. member as a wheatgrower, or as a representative of the wheatgrowers, ought to know the tremendous difficulty that confronted the farmers in the years when the price of wheat was so low. Because of that experience, successive Governments have endeavoured to devise a plan to enable the wheatgrowers to continue in the industry with something like stability. This House has decided that the question must go before the wheatgrowers themselves for decision. They can pronounce whether or not they want the plan. I trust that neither the members of this House nor those of another

place will deny them that opportunity. They are the men most concerned and should have the opportunity to say whether they approve of the plan.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—COMPANIES ACT AMENDMENT.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—STIPENDIARY MAGISTRATES ACT AMENDMENT.

Third Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR JUSTICE (Hon. E. Nulsen—Kanowna) [4.12]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

MR. ABBOTT (North Perth) [4.13]: Whether or not the Government intended it, this Bill can have a very effectual result in changing the policy regarding the appointment of stipendiary magistrates. The principal Act was introduced because it was thought that an improvement should be made regarding the security of tenure of magistrates who were to be appointed to the senior districts in the State and to make their conditions of appointment more akin to those of the higher judiciary—the judges of the Supreme Court. The most important of these is that once appointed a magistrate would enjoy security of tenure and could not be removed from office by a Government that might not approve of decisions that had been given. Their removal was placed in the hands of Parliament. That was a very wise step. Now we have before us a measure that may lead to an alteration of that policy if the Government so desires. When I heard the answer by the Minister for Justice to the question asked by the member for West Perth this afternoon, I concluded that it was the settled policy of the Government in future to have no more stipendiary magistrates, but that magistrates would be appointed by the Public Service Commissioner and could be removed at the will of the Government.

The Premier: That is not so.

MR. ABBOTT: I should like an assurance from the Minister to that effect. The Minister

was asked why a proclamation was gazetted declaring that several districts should cease to function under the principal Act, and the answer was that those districts were taken outside the provisions of the Act because the Government wished to move one magistrate. This seems to add up to the conclusion that the policy of the Government is as I have mentioned. Instead of the Government's coming into the open and saying so, it has apparently taken this circuitous method by repealing Section 9 of the Act and making other provisions which might enable it without difficulty to take the action I have indicated if so desired. I have spoken with the object of getting an assurance from the Minister that this was not the reason for bringing down the Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—CHARITABLE COLLECTIONS.

Third Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. A. H. Panton—Leederville) [4.12]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

Last night I undertook to make inquiries as to how far, if at all, churches would be implicated in this legislation. I am able to assure members opposite that the churches have never been regarded as organisations from a charitable point of view under this legislation, and that they will not be so regarded in future. I have been thus advised by the Crown Law Department and the departmental officers. I point out that Clause 6, Subclause (5) provides—

The Governor may by proclamation exempt collections in aid of any charitable purpose specified therein for the operation of this section.

That provision has been included so that if a church at any time was called upon to apply for a license, the Minister might grant exemption temporarily or permanently.

MR. DONEY: Unless the church overstepped the bounds of reason.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: No church would do that.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and passed.

BILL—FINANCIAL EMERGENCY ACT AMENDMENT.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—FACTORIES AND SHOPS ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Reported.

Report of Committee adopted.

Bill read a third time and returned to the Council with an amendment.

BILL—SALE OF HAY.

Second Reading.

MR. SEWARD (Pingelly) [4.15] in moving the second reading said: This is a very short Bill which seeks to bring about an alteration of a state of affairs that has existed over many years and has been entirely disadvantageous to the farmers. For years the sale of hay has been conducted in a haphazard manner without our having had legislation to control it. Those members who are familiar with the selling, buying and cutting of hay know that it has to be cut immediately it is ripe and is frequently sold before it is cut. The buyers, of course, know the prospects of the season and they go out and inspect crops. If they are suitable for hay-cutting, the buyers interview the owners, ask whether the crop is to be cut for hay and perhaps induce the owners to cut it for that purpose. A contract is signed whereby the farmer agrees to sell the buyer an unspecified quantity of hay of fair average quality at a set price. Sometimes these contracts are on printed forms; sometimes they are typed, but the whole business is so loose that probably such a contract would be practically valueless in a court of law in the event of a dispute arising between the buyer and the seller.

This condition has prevailed for years and has brought untold loss to farmers and nothing but discontent throughout the industry. The object of the Bill is to bring about an alteration which will have the effect of transferring the ownership of the hay from the seller to the buyer at the time the contract is signed. That is the great point of the Bill. At present a contract is signed whereby the purchaser agrees to take an unspecified quantity of hay on its being cut at a definite price. Unfortunately, it has to be f.a.q. hay or chaff, with the result that any damaged hay is discarded.

If any member has driven through the country districts in the middle or towards the end of the winter, he will have noticed on many farms great stacks of what appear to be straw. Those stacks, however, would be damaged hay discarded by the purchaser, and the unfortunate seller has had to lose the value of the hay. That is not a fair thing, and so I desire to bring about a change as I have indicated. When hay is bought and has to be stacked, farmers desire to get it cut up before the winter sets in. The damage occurs when the winter rains arrive. The farmer asks, "When do you intend to cut that hay?" The buyer is usually ready to convince the seller that it will be cut before the winter rains begin. If it is cut from the stook, there is no trouble; if it has to be stacked and is cut before the winter, there is no need to thatch it. Often the farmers in such circumstances do not thatch it and they are caught by the winter rains and it is then too late to do the job. Further, the stack might be thatched and the thatch broken.

I have had experience of a cutter pulling in on a Saturday morning in the middle of winter and putting his machine alongside the stack ready to begin cutting on the following Monday. Anyone knowing anything about weather conditions would realise that rain would fall before the Monday or it might be raining on the Saturday. The cutter, however, rips off the thatch half way across the stack, and then opens up the stack and pulls out some hay. I have seen rain start on Sunday or Saturday and continue for half the week, and therefore water would be pouring into the stack of the unfortunate farmer, who would thus lose an enormous quantity of the hay. A person going along will find, after the cutting has started, that the sheaves have been thrown off the stack and are lying all over the place.

The Premier: Do you think the buyers would get even with the farmers by paying them a much lower price?

MR. SEWARD: That is governed by the selling price of the hay. There is some call in that connection. I am not complaining that the farmer has to thatch his hay; he is paid for that work. As long as the ownership is transferred when the contract is signed, it becomes the buyer's job to look after the hay. He could go to the farmer and say, "I cannot cut this hay

until wintertime and consequently I want you to thatch it properly," and he could see that it was properly thatched. The onus is put on the buyer, instead of allowing it to remain on the unfortunate seller. Many requests have been made to me by farmers to bring down a Bill of this nature in order to alter the present unsatisfactory state of affairs, which has existed for many years past. If the ownership is transferred when the contract is signed, the conditions are known to the farmer. He knows how he is going to sell the hay. He need not sign the contract if he does not agree to the terms of it. He may decide to keep the hay.

The Bill defines a dealer as any person who carries on the business of dealing in, or of buying and selling hay, but does not include any farmer who buys or sells hay wholly in the course of his business as a farmer. Farmers frequently do this. In bad seasons a farmer might not have sufficient hay to meet his requirements and he buys some from his neighbour. Such farmers are excluded from the operations of the measure. The Bill defines "hay" as meaning the stalks, leaves and heads of any one or more of the following plants, namely, wheat, oat, barley, rye, lucerne, clover and pea. The question arises of the quantity of hay that is bought. If the hay is not stacked then, this is left as a matter of calculation by the buyer and the seller. When the hay is stooked, it is known what a sheaf of hay will approximately weigh. That can be tested, if so desired, and a fair estimate arrived at. The number of bales of twine used will be known, so the estimate will be fairly accurate.

If the hay is in the stack, then it is sold on measurement. I think that is the only proper basis in those circumstances. There are methods for arriving at the quantity of hay in a stack, whether the hay be old or new. A more reasonable deal can be obtained when the hay is in the stack than when it is sold on the outturn of the stack, because anything can happen if it has not been properly looked after. Straw will be eliminated from the measurement altogether. The seller of hay is also under another disadvantage at the present time. He must accept weights that are obtained by the weighing in the railway yards in Perth. A farmer may sell a quantity of hay and load it on to trucks and if by accident half-a-

dozen or more bags are dropped between his siding and Perth, he loses that quantity, because he must accept the weight over the weighbridge in the railway yards in Perth. That is a most unjust proceeding. The Bill also contains a provision permitting the farmer, if he so desires, to have the hay weighed on the weighbridge nearest to his siding.

I have outlined the provisions of the proposed legislation. I was not able to find another measure dealing with the sale of hay, except the South Australian one, which goes further than this Bill and includes chaff. That I do not desire to do. I have confined the measure simply to the selling of hay, with the intention of bringing about an alteration in the present unsatisfactory state of affairs. A farmer selling hay under present conditions is liable to lose anything from two or three tons out of 10 or 15 tons when it is eventually cut. Big stacks of hay can be seen in the country, which owing to carelessness on the part of the buyer or the seller, may be exposed to wet weather, with the result that the farmer suffers a loss. If the Bill passes, not only will the farmer secure a better return for his hay, but the buyer will get a better commodity. It might tend to reduce the price to the farmer by a few shillings a ton because he has to take precautions, but these are worth while. At present he is losing pounds, whereas if the Bill passes he will lose but a small amount of money. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by the Minister for Agriculture, debate adjourned.

BILL—CITY OF PERTH SCHEME FOR SUPERANNUATION (AMENDMENTS AUTHORISATION).

Second reading.

Debate resumed from the 27th November.

MR. SHEARN (Maylands) [4.28]: This Bill, which has been introduced by the member for Perth, seeks to amend the parent Act which was brought down by him in 1934. As he pointed out, the Bill does not affect the outside staff of the council. It specifically affects the officers of the council. As he indicated, when officers of the council enlisted in the various Services and went abroad, they could not continue to pay their

contributions to the fund, nor could the council find any authority by which it could make its contribution. This amending Bill is to regularise the position. Indeed, the Bill is a commendable one. It will give the council the opportunity to place its officers in the position in which they are entitled to be placed as a result of their services.

Another commendable feature of the Bill is that the City Council will make a contribution from the Electricity and Gas Department of a sum not exceeding £1,600 and a contribution from the other departments of the council of a sum not exceeding £1,400. Therefore it is more or less a matter of a domestic nature with the Perth City Council on the one part and the ratepayers of the City of Perth and the officers of the council on the other part. Superannuation is most commendable, and it would be good to find all civic bodies adopting it in principle, but there are many difficulties involved in doing so. The local authority with which I am associated has made many attempts to institute a superannuation fund, but various difficulties have arisen, most of which must be apparent to members, with the result that so far it has not succeeded. Therefore, it is very good to find a fund of this nature, and it is far better to see that what otherwise would be a tremendous disadvantage to the officers concerned will be rectified if this legislation is passed. I have pleasure in supporting the Bill, and I have no doubt that other members will give it equal support.

MR. McDONALD (West Perth) [4.32]: I support the Bill, the main intention of which is to enable the officers of the Perth City Council, who had service with the Forces, to be put in the same position as if they had continued their work with the department. In one sense they may be rather better off because the City Council proposes to make certain contributions which will assist the returned men in making up the payments that they ceased to make while they were on service. From inquiries I have made, it seems that the experience of the fund has been reasonably satisfactory, and the result has been that, by an amendment, one section of the recipients will be able to get benefits at the rate of one-sixtieth for each year of service instead of one-hundred and twentieth, so that the advantages of the

scheme will be somewhat increased. I can recall saying that while we commend this type of legislation, there is always a factor that one should have in mind, and that is that the ratepayers—and they include people who are occupiers and pay rent, because in many cases they pay the rates too—would be contributing to provide pensions for City Council employees whereas they, the ratepayers, would have no pensions themselves to look forward to. In one sense this is a generous gesture on the part of the ratepayers, and is to be commended.

Before this scheme can come into operation it must be passed by two-thirds of the members of the council. There is also a further precaution, and one that the ratepayers ought to know about, namely, that the ratepayers have the opportunity, before the scheme comes into operation, of demanding that a poll be taken to establish whether it shall be adopted by the City Council or not. The same procedure can be applied to a scheme of this kind as is applicable in the case of proposals to raise loans, that is, any dissentient or doubting ratepayers can require the loan, or the scheme, to be the subject of an expression of opinion by the ratepayers, at a poll. At the same time the original proposal appears to have had, for a number of years, the support of the council and the approbation of the ratepayers of the City of Perth, and I have no doubt that this addition to the scheme—which is mainly to protect the interests of returned soldiers—will be fully approved by the ratepayers and members of the council. I think, therefore, the Bill is a proper one and I propose to support it.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment and the report adopted.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—STATE FOREST ACCESS.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR FORESTS (Hon. A. A. M. Coverley—Kimberley) [4.38] in moving the second reading said: This is a

small Bill for the express purpose of assisting to establish two new mills in the South-West of the State. Members probably know that recently, under the Forests Act, two large areas of jarrah and karri forest were, in the usual way, put up for sale by tender. The State Saw Mills were the successful tenderers in one area, and the firm of Bunning Bros. in the other area. It is hoped that the mills, to be established, will have a very long life because the cutting and conservation will be controlled by the Forests Department in conjunction with the logging by the mill owners. They have to be built in the forest areas after the sites have been determined. This has been done and one site is on the Tone River and the other on the Shannon River. The sites are fixed there for the obvious reason that water supplies are necessary. Extra lengths of tramline have to be constructed.

In the case of the Tone River site where the mill is to be established by Bunning Bros., the total length of line to be constructed to the proposed mill site is 14 miles, of which $12\frac{1}{4}$ miles run through Crown lands and reserves, leaving $1\frac{3}{4}$ miles to be constructed through private property. With regard to the Shannon River site where the mill is to be run by the State Saw Mills, the length of tramline to be constructed is 21 miles, of which $17\frac{3}{4}$ miles will be through Crown lands and reserves, leaving $3\frac{1}{4}$ miles to be constructed through private property. The object of the Bill is to empower the Forests Department to resume the private property required so that the tramlines may be constructed.

Mr. Thorn: When will these mills operate?

THE MINISTER FOR FORESTS: It is hoped they will be in operation within 12 months. The object of submitting the legislation is to give the present lessees and permit holders an opportunity to go ahead with the work of building the tramlines while the mills are being erected. Members will realise that the private property to be resumed in each case represents merely a strip two chains wide for the purposes of the tramlines. Negotiations have taken place between the private property owners and the Forests Department. While the repurchase price to the department has not been definitely determined, it is understood

that the expenditure will represent approximately £1,000. I do not anticipate any trouble in that respect, but should there be any disagreement, then the land will be resumed under the Public Works Act and the matter will be finalised. If there is any further information that members desire I will endeavour to furnish it during the Committee stage. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Leslie, debate adjourned.

BILL—LICENSING ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR JUSTICE (Hon. E. Nulsen—Kanowna) [4.45] in moving the second reading said: This is another very small Bill and one simple to explain. The object is to amend Subsection (3) of Section 46 of the principal Act for the purpose of giving the Commissioner of Railways greater control over the sale of spirituous and fermented liquors in railway refreshment rooms. Some time ago it was decided by the Government to effect a change in the catering arrangements at railway refreshment-rooms, and to adopt a policy under which the Commissioner will assume control of most of the refreshment-rooms and run them departmentally instead of their being leased as in the past. It is desired to take the control of these refreshment-rooms from the Licensing Court and place them solely under the Commissioner of Railways. Formerly under the 1904 Act the Commissioner had control but in 1922 the measure was amended and the Commissioner of Railways was brought under the jurisdiction of the Licensing Court.

In the earlier days the Commissioner had power to sell spirituous and fermented liquors to bona fide travellers without the necessity of approaching the court for a license. At the time when that control was taken away from the Commissioner of Railways, it did not matter very much because most of the refreshment-rooms were leased. Now that it is the policy of the Government to run most of the railway refreshment-rooms departmentally, it is necessary that the commissioner should not be encumbered in any way and under the existing law he finds the position cumbersome, inconvenient and restricted.

Mr. Thorn: But the premises you refer to hold licenses.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Yes. Those in charge hold licenses as lessees, and that will not be altered in the future. Those that have been leased by the Commissioner of Railways will remain under the Licensing Act, but all the refreshment-rooms that will be controlled and managed departmentally will be transferred to his full control. It will not be necessary for the court to grant licenses in respect of those refreshment-rooms. Automatically the Commissioner of Railways will be his own court and he may provide for the sale of liquor in refreshment-rooms wherever he considers it advantageous. We merely wish to give the Commissioner powers similar to those enjoyed by the other railway systems of Australia. As I have said, the proprietors of leased premises on the railway system will still have to obtain their licenses from the Licensing Court. We do not wish to hamper the Commissioner of Railways, but to give him every chance to make a reasonable profit from the refreshment-rooms by placing them on a business basis.

Mr. Leslie: Will he be the sole judge of what are reasonable facilities to be provided?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: He will, but on the other hand, he must conform to Government policy.

Mr. Leslie: He has not done much in that regard in the past.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I am speaking of the future. I do not approve of all the criticism levelled against the Commissioner of Railways in this House. I often feel sorry for him when I hear such unjust criticism. If members knew the position in which he was placed, they would know the criticism was unfounded.

Mr. Thorn: Most of it comes from your side of the House.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I do not know whether that is so or not, but I do not think it is.

Mr. Thorn: It makes no difference.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: At all events, that has nothing to do with the Bill. I thought Mr. Speaker might have called me to order before. However, he has given me a little latitude as he knows I do not go

astray very often. I am not like other members.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I am not a lover of making speeches and do not use superfluous words. I commend the measure to the House and move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Leslie, debate adjourned.

BILL—MINES REGULATION.

In Committee.

Resumed from the previous day. Mr. Rodoreda in the Chair; the Minister for Mines in charge of the Bill.

The CHAIRMAN: Progress was reported after Clause 12 had been agreed to.

Clause 13—agreed to.

Clause 14—Inspector not to report or divulge information:

Hon. N. KEENAN: I move an amendment—

That in lines 4 and 5 the words “and in the case of a workmen’s inspector to his union” be struck out.

These words were not included in the section which this clause seeks to amend. They are an interpolation. If they are not struck out, a workmen’s inspector could make any report he chose to his union. He could say whether the mine was looking well or bad, or whether the reef was cutting out or becoming larger, in fact, information of a character which it would be most undesirable that he should communicate to anybody else. That would not happen in the case of a mining inspector, because he only communicates to his superior officer or to the Minister. He is under an obligation not to avail himself of knowledge that comes into his power by reason of his office for the purpose of making private gain or enabling others to make private gain. This provision, without the insertion of the words I am moving to strike out, has been the law for a great number of years and we certainly have never heard any complaint in this Chamber that it was in any way deficient. There appears to be no reason for the addition, which might be a very great danger.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Although there might be something in the contention

of the member for Nedlands, I point out that this has been the practice ever since workmen's inspectors were appointed by law. It is usual for a workmen's inspector to make a report to his union and no objection has been taken to that course by the mining companies. A refractory mine manager might, however, raise an objection and try to prevent a workmen's inspector from doing this. Personally, in my humble judgment, I do not think a workmen's inspector would adopt the course which the member for Nedlands said he might adopt. If he desired to convey some secret information about the prospects of a mine, he would not tell his union. If I am any judge of human nature, he would be more likely to go to the stock exchange in order to make an investment which would be profitable to himself. On the other hand, if his information showed that the value of the mine was deteriorating, he would, if he had invested in any scrip, dispose of it.

In all my years of experience in the mining industry I have never known a workmen's inspector to make a report upon any particular mine, or any part of a mine, that was not concerned with sanitation, ventilation, safety, etc. It would make no difference if these words were not included because, if a workmen's inspector desired to take advantage of the knowledge he had gained when inspecting a mine, he would do so, contrary to the law I admit, for some other purpose and for probable gain. The real object of the clause is, as far as possible, to prevent an inspector from giving written reports in order that prospective vendors or investors might use it to their advantage in speculation. It is to prevent inspectors from booming or depressing a proposition. Up till now, to my knowledge, companies and managers have not taken exception to a workmen's inspector reporting to his union, and I do not believe the companies have any objection, because the workmen's inspector understands his responsibilities, and one of those responsibilities is to see that those who elect him to the job obtain all the information they require in regard to the safety of the mines, either from the point of view of accidents or heat or ventilation and so on.

We do not know but that some individual may feel he has discovered a flaw in this important legislation and will take action against a workmen's inspector for reporting

to his union on the condition of a given spot in a mine where some men happen to be employed. From my personal experience, these reports by workmen's inspectors to the men concerned have done much to inspire confidence on the part of men in the places where they are working, which might not have been so had the inspectors not been allowed to make reports. Such reports are also an indication to the men that the inspector is doing his job.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 15 to 30—agreed to.

Clause 31—Notice of accident to be given:

Hon. N. KEENAN: I move an amendment—

That in lines 7 and 8 of Subclause (4) the words "accredited workers' representative" be struck out, and the words "workmen's inspector" inserted in lieu.

This subclause deals with the duty of a manager to cause to be kept at the mine a book of a type approved by the Minister, and called the "Accident Record Book," in which records of accidents must be kept. It proceeds to provide that the book shall be open at all reasonable times for examination by the inspector and the accredited workers' representative, or any other person authorised by the Minister. The reason for my amendment is that a workmen's inspector is a man with experience of mining; and consequently he would be a person who, when examining the record of an accident, would be able to bring to bear on the matter years of experience, whereas the accredited representative might be anybody—perhaps someone who had joined the union the day before and knew nothing, or next to nothing about mining. From the workers' point of view no-one could be suggested who was more capable of representing them and looking after their interests than would be the workmen's inspector.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: One might subscribe to the amendment if one could be sure that a workmen's inspector would always be in attendance, but a workmen's inspector travels very long distances. We have one at Cue who goes as far north as the Yampi iron-ore deposits. In the event of his being absent when an accident occurred, there would be nobody to give attention to the workers' interests if the

amendment were agreed to. What would the hon. member propose in that case? When a serious accident occurs—particularly a fatal accident—a representative of the union is authorised by the Bill to visit the scene, and he can go as far as to take evidence and to cross-examine. This subclause seeks to have a record kept of all accidents, and it is very important that the union to which an injured party belongs should have a full account of the nature of the accident, how it happened and where it happened.

The workers' representative has the sole responsibility of attending coronial inquiries and, if litigation takes place, of presenting the union's side of the case. He must have authoritative statements to present in order to give evidence that will be acceptable in court, and he is responsible, sometimes indirectly though mostly directly, for attending to matters affecting compensation for injured persons or their dependants. Without that authority, if the amendment were carried, the workmen's inspector might be at Marble Bar when required at Cue, and the whole case would go by the board because the union would have no one to represent it or to search the record book and obtain particulars of the accident. The accredited representative of the workers is a responsible officer of the union, generally the union secretary. He is the man usually appointed and only illness or absence from the centre concerned would prevent him being the union's representative in such a case. In his absence the union organiser, also an accredited official, would no doubt act as his proxy. It is only at more isolated centres that we would require to have a man representing the general secretary. He would also be an accredited workers' representative. Surely it will be realised that, if the amendment is carried, it will probably bring about a state of affairs under which, in the case of a fatal accident, the beneficiaries might be unable to obtain their dues in the matter of compensation through being denied opportunity properly to present their case. I cannot accept the amendment.

Hon. N. KEENAN: The Minister agrees that the workmen's inspector would be the suitable and proper person, but says he might not be available. That he is the proper person for this purpose will appear from Clause 12, which gives him the power to inspect and examine in all matters aris-

ing in cases of accident. Should circumstances arise where he is not available, there is power in the present clause for any other person authorised by the Minister to act. There would be no difficulty, in such a case, in getting someone appointed by the Minister. I do not think the Minister challenges the proposition that the workmen's inspector is the proper person to scan the record book and take any notes necessary for the production of evidence, should that become necessary at a future stage. I hope the Minister will reconsider his objection. The workmen's inspector would examine the record book, which remains the same even though some interval of time has elapsed.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: I agree with the contention of the member for Nedlands, up to a point. The reference he made to the powers of the workmen's inspector, and of the Minister to appoint another person, deals mainly with the accident itself. The workmen's inspector is not an employee of the union, though elected mainly by union members. He is responsible for seeing that the provisions of this measure are given effect. He is not employed by the union or interested in coronial inquiries unless called as a witness. He is not interested to the same degree as would be a union representative in matters of compensation. The workmen's inspector at Gwalia has to travel to outlying centres as far away, for instance, as Ejudina, and his responsibilities do not go further than those of supervision. I think the amendment, if carried, would impose hardship in some directions, and I must therefore oppose it.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 32 to 35—agreed to.

Clause 36—Hours to be worked:

Hon. N. KEENAN: I move an amendment—

That in line 3, after the word "emergency" the words "or in case of pumps requiring continuous supervision" be inserted.

An exception is made in cases of emergency but, apart from mines such as the Minister mentioned, where the pumps are controlled electrically, many mines have ordinary pumps underground by means of which water is raised to the surface and

the mines drained. Those pumps must be looked after. Under this measure there would be an interval, between the seven hours and 12 minutes and the eight hours, of 48 minutes before the next shift came underground. During that period the pumps would be unattended. The present practice is for the man coming on to take over from the man going off but, unless the amendment is carried, it will be impossible in future for the pumps to be supervised continually.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: What the member for Nedlands fails to understand is that no man works more than seven hours 12 minutes underground, no matter what his class of work may be. Under the award of the Arbitration Court men cannot be compelled to work underground for a longer period than that. In cases such as the member for Nedlands has referred to one pumper cannot leave his job until another relieves him. There has been a great improvement in the mechanisation of the mines and only on very small mines, and then rarely, would the pump have to be kept operating the round of the clock. Even where that was necessary, there would be no avoiding the provision in the award stipulating that men must not work underground more than seven hours 12 minutes in any day, and so it would be essential for the employer to make provision to overcome the difficulty. The pumps are usually such as can continue without attention for 24 hours. The hon. member probably has in mind the fact that the pitman sees that the pumps are kept operating so as to have the water well down when he finishes, thus guarding against any damage being done before his relief takes over.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 37 to 44—agreed to.

Clause 45—Power to inspector to authorise Sunday labour in certain cases:

Hon. N. KEENAN: I move an amendment—

That the words at the end of the clause "The inspector shall give written notice to the industrial union concerned of any such permits issued" be struck out.

The permit granted for Sunday work has to be conspicuously posted on the mine and

the men would know that some of their number were required to work on Sunday. On the second reading, I asked the object of providing for the union's receiving written notice. Is it suggested that the union has any power to control the inspector and say he is not to issue a permit? Of course not! Then what is the object of the provision? Every man on the mine would know of what was proposed and nobody else would be interested. So the only reason I can suggest for requiring the inspector to give written notice to the union is that the union's approval should be necessary for the act of the inspector to be effective. In the absence of such control, the obligation to give notice to the union is meaningless and ought to be struck out.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: This provision is essential. An inspector issues a permit allowing a certain number of men to be employed in a given place on a particular Sunday for emergency reasons. Frequently this opportunity to employ men on Sunday is abused. The inspector at Cue might issue a permit to a company far removed from the town, but might be 60 or 100 miles away when the Sunday arrives. Frequently advantage is taken of the permit to employ more men or put them to work at places different from those for which the permit was granted. The notice board on the mine might contain 15 or 20 notices and an additional one might not be seen. Then trouble arises.

Hon. N. Keenan: Is not the notice always posted at the brace?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: That practice is about 50 years old. The notices are posted on the notice board, but when the men complain and evidence is sought as to the number of men employed and the work they were on, the notice has disappeared. True, it could be obtained from the inspector, but it is then too late. The union should be given notice so that, if men in excess of the number are employed or put to work in a different place, the inspector could be notified and action could be taken. I do not know of anything that has caused more discontent than the abuse of these permits. In the larger centres, this does not happen but, in the isolated places, advantage is taken of the permits. Therefore the organisation existing for the pro-

tection of the men should be notified. There would be no difficulty in the inspector's making an additional carbon copy of the notice and sending it to the union.

Hon. N. KEENAN: Apparently the Minister justifies the provision on the ground that some employers have taken advantage of the absence of the inspectors to employ men in excess of the number set out in the permit. This would be an offence against the Act and punishable by severe penalty. If such an offence were committed, it would be known to every man on the mine and, as the men are members of the union, the offence could easily be proved, and completely sheeted home.

Mr. Triat: And the penalty for the offence is infinitesimal.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I know that there is a general penalty clause in the Bill. If the offence were committed by the manager of the mine the penalty would be the large sum of £50. Of what use would it be to the worker to have this provision left in? If the mine manager commits the offence every worker on the mine would soon know about it. I can see no legitimate advantage to the worker in the inspector being required to give written notice to the union.

The Minister for Mines: Can you see anything offensive in his not doing so?

Hon. N. KEENAN: I do not want the inspector to be loaded with those duties. Why should he be called upon to send written notices here and there that will not have the effect of protecting anyone engaged in the industry?

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 46 to 61, Schedule—agreed to.

New clause:

Hon. N. KEENAN: I move—

That a new clause be inserted as follows:—
“62. Before any regulation or by-law or any amendment to any regulation or by-law is gazetted the same shall be notified to all parties concerned and their views thereon invited.”

This new clause is designed to make a statutory rule of what the Minister has explained took place in the framing of the Bill. All parties were consulted with the result that except for a few very minor matters they were in agreement. That was a re-

sult so desirable that I suggest it should have statutory approval. I feel that the new clause will commend itself to the Committee.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I assure the member for Nedlands that the substance of the new clause is the practice today. Evidently the hon. member has failed to realise what his proposal would mean now. When I moved the second reading I said that all the general rules were coming out of the existing law. In this Bill it is proposed to take power to make regulations to replace the general rules. I understand the regulations have been prepared and are ready to be laid on the Table of the House immediately the Bill becomes law. Does the hon. member suggest they should all be sent to the parties concerned for an expression of opinion?

Hon. N. Keenan: Why not?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Because most of them have been the practice for as long as the hon. member can remember. The general rules have been in existence in many instances for 40 years. There have been very few regulations made under the existing law recently. The reason why they have been taken out of the Act and are being replaced by regulations is that from time to time certain things occur in the mines and lives are lost, and it was necessary to have power to make a regulation immediately to prevent a repetition of such an occurrence. The lives of some miners would be jeopardised if time were wasted in getting the opinion of both sides before any new regulation was issued. In the event of regulations being made in the future and the parties concerned failing to agree, the Minister would have the final say after consultation with the State Mining Engineer and others. In normal times in the case of emergency it has been the practice to allow the Chamber of Mines and the union to see the regulation and express an opinion before it is confirmed.

Hon. N. KEENAN: Perhaps the Minister will consider inserting in another place before the word “be” the words “if practicable.”

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I should like to give further consideration to the matter. Probably the hon. member's suggestion can be agreed to. If there is no

real obstacle in the way to our doing so I will give an undertaking that the proposed amendment is made in another place.

New clause put and negatived.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

Third Reading.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES (PROMOTIONS APPEAL BOARD) ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR LABOUR (Hon. A. H. Panton—Leederville) [6.0] in moving the second reading said: This Bill sets out to amend the Government Employees (Promotions Appeal Board) Act. Some difficulty has been experienced in the working of the Act where workers are not classified at a fixed rate. The Act, by Section 14, prescribes that seniority means—

(c) As between employees engaged in the same kind of employment at the same rate of salary or wages, when the positions or offices held by them are not graded or classified—Seniority of salary or wages.

(d) As between employees engaged in different kinds of employment at different rates of salary or wages, when the positions or offices held by them are not graded or classified—Seniority by higher rate of salary or wages.

In the Water Supply Department, a great deal of difficulty has been experienced in the working of the Act, principally because 85 per cent. to 90 per cent. of employees there—and they comprise the Metropolitan and Goldfields Water Supply Employees Union—are not permanent employees by virtue of the fact that they are interchangeable from day to day, first, as construction workers, and then as maintenance workers. The men permanently employed on maintenance work are looked upon as permanent employees. Construction workers are not, anywhere in the Government, permanent employees, and do not come under this Act. Because so many of these workers are interchangeable, and are on construction work, they cease to become permanent employees and are, therefore, not eligible to appeal when promotions are

made. Many of these men have been in their present employment for 15 or 20 years and, when promotion is made to the position of foreman or ganger, the questions of efficiency and seniority arises.

Cases have continually been creeping in where a man happened to be on 15s. a week margin at the time applications for one of these positions are called, while, at the same time, another man, much more his senior in length of service, happened to be engaged on work carrying only a 12s. margin. A man may be what is termed a service layer's assistant on a margin of 3s. per week and, owing to a rush of work, be employed tomorrow as a service layer on a margin of 15s. That is to say, in less than a week he goes from a margin of 3s. to 15s., and vice versa. What actually happens is that an engineer decides he wants another ganger, and applications are called. If two or more men, equal in efficiency, apply, the question of seniority arises and that is decided by finding out who gets the most money at the particular time. One man may be getting more money while, at the same time, being ten or 12 years junior in service to some other applicant. This trouble has been going on for some time, and the engineers are worried out of their soul-case as to what to do. The men say, "It is of no use applying for the job because we have no rights under the promotions appeal Act." Consequently, someone who happens to be on maintenance for that week has the greatest chance.

About three or four weeks ago, we were on the eve of a strike by the men at Loftus-street. I called together the engineers and the representatives of the union, and we thrashed the matter out. I also got the Solicitor General to give some advice, and we finally arrived at the conclusion that the best thing would be to give the Minister the right to remove the union from the provisions of the Act, or any other union that is in the position of being outside the promotions appeal board Act.

Hon. N. Keenan: What would be the result of that?

THE MINISTER FOR LABOUR: When applications are called for the position of ganger, the applicants will not go before the Promotions Appeal Board. Every man will be eligible to apply for the promotion and there will be no appeal to the Promotions Appeal Board. That board has to

comply with the Act, which deals with efficiency and seniority, and, under the Act, seniority applies to a man who receives the most money or, alternatively, who has been there for the longest period. These people want to revert to the position they were in before the Act was passed, and that is, that where there was a dispute as to whether Bill Jones or Jack Brown was entitled to the promotion, it was decided by an ordinary board, or the Minister appointed someone to settle the argument. The definition of "employee" in the Act is rather long, but is worth reading. It states—

"Employee" means a person employed under the State in a permanent capacity in any department, who is by the terms of his employment required to give his whole time to the duties of his employment, but does not include the Chief Justice or any Judge of the Supreme Court or the President or any member of the Court of Arbitration. For the purposes of this definition:—

(a) A person shall be deemed to be employed in a permanent capacity when he is regularly employed in the ordinary work of the department in which he is employed in circumstances which justify an expectation that, subject to good conduct and efficiency, his employment will be continuous and permanent.

That is not the position of the great bulk of these men. Those on the construction side are doing sewerage work, which may finish, and they will then be put off for perhaps two or three days unless there is some maintenance work for them. But, more often than not, such work is not available. When there is a rush construction job, maintenance men are put on to it, and they become, by an extraordinary set of circumstances, temporary employees. When they go back to maintenance work, they become permanent employees. Paragraph (b) of the definition of employee states—

(b) A person shall not be deemed to be employed in a permanent capacity when he is employed casually or intermittently or in connection with a particular work or undertaking the completion of which will put an end to his employment, or when he is employed as a temporary employee in the Public Service under the provisions of Section thirty-six of the Public Service Act, 1904-1935.

Most of these men are employed under that definition. The matter has been discussed many times, and the engineers and the members of the union feel that the only solution is to give the Minister the right to exempt any union defined in Section 6 from the operation of the Act. Provision is also made

so that the union can be put back again. The whole matter has been a real bugbear. The engineers would prefer to be able to say, "Bill Jones is the best man we have." In most cases, prior to their being controlled by the Act, there was very little argument, because all the men were eligible for promotion and they took the decisions of the engineer quite well. Where an argument did arise, the Minister would appoint someone to deal with it. The other day, in order to prevent a strike, I appointed Mr. Bateman, a magistrate, to deal with the trouble that had arisen, and he decided that a man that neither the union nor the engineers had thought of should get the promotion. Everyone was happy. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. North, debate adjourned.

BILL—INDUSTRIES ASSISTANCE ACT CONTINUANCE.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

MR. DONEY (Williams - Narrogin) [6.12]: There have been occasions when this continuance measure provoked quite a deal of heated debate, but those times have passed. There is nothing in the Bill to arouse heat, or even interest. The assent to this continuance Bill has become largely a routine matter; this is the 30th occasion on which we have dealt with it in this House.

The Minister for Lands: It is quite an old friend.

Mr. DONEY: I raise no objection to the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment and the report adopted.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

BILL—FARMERS' DEBTS ADJUSTMENT ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

MR. DONEY (Williams - Narrogin) [7.30]: I raise no objection to the Bill which is purely a continuance measure. Nothing else than that is involved. I agree with the Government that the provisions of the Act are too useful and valuable to be set aside just yet. I support the second reading of the Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment and the report adopted.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT (No. 1).

Council's Amendments.

Schedule of four amendments made by the Council now considered.

In Committee.

Mr. Rodoreda in the Chair; the Minister for Works in charge of the Bill.

No. 1. Clause 4, line 8, page 2: Delete the words "a vehicle licensed as."

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Solicitor General advises that these words are not necessary and, in relation to the definition of "taxi-car," may be misleading. As a result the Minister in charge of the Bill in the Legislative Council moved for their deletion. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

No. 2. Clause 5, line 3, page 3: Insert after the word "Act" the following words: "shall from and after the passing of this Act apply and have effect only outside the metropolitan area. Within the metropolitan area the following provisions shall apply."

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: This and the third amendment made by the

Council deal with the one principle, the aim being to exempt country local authorities from the operations of the proposed staggering of the licensing period. When the Bill was considered in Committee in this Chamber the plan was that the proposed new system of licensing should apply throughout the State. The Legislative Council has amended the Bill in an endeavour to make the new system operative only in the metropolitan area, leaving the old system to continue in the country districts. We debated this question at some length and a division was taken on the question as a result of which it was decided that the new system should operate throughout the State. I am still of that opinion. The argument in favour of exempting the country districts from the proposed new system was to meet the convenience of local authorities, who, it was urged, would have some additional work and inconvenience. I quite admit that, as far as is humanly possible, we should restrict the amount of extra work and inconvenience to be placed upon any local authority or individual. If the new licensing system is to be introduced, obviously someone somewhere will have some extra work. I do not agree that the country local authorities would have much extra work or inconvenience as the result of the new system of licensing in their districts.

Mr. Doney: Except during the first three or four years.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The new system has been proposed not necessarily to benefit or assist local authorities, but to meet the convenience of motor vehicle owners and operators. If finally it should be decided to apply the new system only in the metropolitan area, I am satisfied that with the passage of time—say, in a year or two hence—the demand from the motorist in the country districts will be sufficient to cause Parliament to extend the system to those areas. The opposition to the proposed new system developed in the Legislative Council because certain members there received letters from some country road boards opposing it, and automatically members voted for the limitation of the system to the metropolitan area. I do not think that many local authorities in the country asked that the system should be restricted to the metropolitan area, but even if they did, that is not the main point or even an important point. The system has been introduced to

assist and benefit motor vehicle owners in both the metropolitan area and the country districts, the members of which are many, whereas road boards are few in number. In this matter it is the duty of Parliament to consider the interests of motor vehicle owners rather than the convenience of certain road boards.

Mr. Perkins: The motor owners in the country districts did not ask for the change.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am sure the motor owners in both the city and country districts would prefer the new system.

Mr. Doney: You have no evidence of that; it is pure assumption.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is not assumption at all. I am a country motor owner and I opposed the exemption of country districts on the basis of practical experience. Another point is that it would be most unfortunate if we had two separate systems of licensing operating within the State.

Mr. Leslie: That could be easily overcome.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is easy to say that. In practice I think it will be found confusing and will lead to a great deal of misunderstanding, which should be avoided as far as possible. It would be much more simple if one system operated throughout the State. I move—

That the amendment be not agreed to.

Mr. DONEY: The Minister and I still disagree as to the value of the change he desires to make. It is true, as the Minister stated, that this matter was taken to a division in this Chamber, but that merely indicates that the Government exercised its majority in quite a proper way, with the result that members on the Opposition side of the Chamber were outvoted. That does not go to prove that the arguments we advanced were not without substance and I am sure our statements were not successfully controverted by the Minister.

The Minister for Works: That is an assertion.

Mr. DONEY: The Minister says he does not see why he should be influenced by what is a matter of mere convenience to country road boards and municipalities. I think the change was brought about after

considering the convenience of the Royal Automobile Club and the Traffic Department.

The Minister for Works: There was no consideration of the convenience of the Royal Automobile Club.

Mr. DONEY: Then the Minister took into consideration the convenience of the Traffic Department.

The Minister for Works: Plus a request from the Royal Automobile Club on behalf of the motorcar owners.

Mr. DONEY: In any case, the Minister did seek to placate the two bodies in the metropolitan area who were kicking up a row.

The Minister for Works: They were not.

Mr. Watts: Use the word "representations." You are using the wrong phrase.

Mr. DONEY: Then the Minister at last paid heed to the representations made by the Royal Automobile Club and the Traffic Department.

The Minister for Works: No.

Mr. DONEY: I am not quoting from "Hansard," Mr. Chairman, but I shall paraphrase what the Minister said. He intimated that he did receive objections and representations from local authorities and that he would take no notice of them. I do not think that quite right and proper. When a person from the country puts up a case—

The Minister for Works: We listen to his point of view.

Mr. DONEY: The Minister listened, but took no notice.

The Minister for Works: Yes. I did take notice.

Mr. DONEY: I favour the Legislative Council's amendment.

Mr. PERKINS: I am more than ever convinced that the statements put forward by members on this side of the Chamber did reflect widespread country opinion. The Minister seems to think that all of the objections came from country local authorities. Undoubtedly, these were the spearheads, because they knew that extra work would be thrown upon them which would ultimately have to be paid for by the rate-payers. When we interviewed individual motorcar owners in the country we could

find no desire for this change. The licensing of vehicles in the country is done at a time when the officers are not particularly busy, and so there is no congestion such as occurs in the metropolitan area. I still oppose the Minister's proposal. If the amendment is carried in its present form, it will leave the Traffic Act as it was so far as the country districts are concerned, whereas our desire was to bring it up to date.

Mr. GRAHAM: It has been submitted that extra work will be thrown on to local governing bodies, particularly in country districts, if this change is brought about. We all know, however, that individual local governing bodies would deal with five or ten licenses per week spread over the whole year.

Mr. Leslie: That is not the only work these local bodies have to do.

Mr. GRAHAM: Any road board secretary with commonsense could easily arrange his work so as to fit in the issuing of these licenses each week. If a motorcar owner leaves the metropolitan district to reside in the country, or if he sells his vehicle to some person in the country, the local authorities will have to issue an interim license to cover a period of two months, seven months, or some other irregular time.

Mr. Perkins: That is provided for in the Act.

Mr. GRAHAM: Quite so. Instead of the license being issued for the full term of 12 months, it would be issued for a shorter period. There will then arise the confusion that exists in the metropolitan traffic office. It is absolutely essential that this change should be made. Double work would be thrown upon country officers if they operated under a different system altogether.

Mr. Perkins: The country local authorities have considered that point and still want the present system.

Mr. GRAHAM: Would members opposite indicate clearly just what extra work would be involved if this system were State-wide?

Mr. Perkins: If you read "Hansard," you will see.

Mr. GRAHAM: It has been suggested that 50, 60 or 80 types of stickers would

have to be issued and that that would be ridiculous in the case of a small office. That is a grave distortion of the state of affairs which would exist.

Mr. LESLIE: The opposition to any alteration of the present system is because a change would be impracticable. The Committee must be aware of the nature of the work carried on in country road board offices. Besides issuing the licenses, the road board secretary is usually the traffic inspector. He is probably on the road making inspections two or three times a year; but if he has to issue licenses day by day it will be necessary for him to be on the road for at least a month in order to ascertain whether the vehicles are licensed.

The Minister for Works: That is ridiculous.

Mr. Graham: The stickers would tell the tale at a glance.

Mr. LESLIE: It would require a score of policemen to do the work. What is lost sight of is the fact that a road board secretary has an enormous district to look after and that he is usually responsible for policing the Traffic Act. Members have spoken about the public requiring this alteration but it is not going to impose any hardship on the present vehicle owner. Only new licenses will be affected. In the country districts, the position will be almost unworkable. The local authorities will lose a considerable amount of revenue because they will not be able to police the measure.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The member for Mt. Marshall seems to have very little confidence in the commonsense and ability of road board secretaries. He suggests the only way they will be able to police the new system is to be out and around all the time, travelling over the whole area of their big territories to see whether Bill Jones's motor vehicle has the right license on it! Obviously no secretary of a road board will go to all that useless bother and work. He will know from his office records when the vehicles are licensed and when renewals are due and he will concentrate on those vehicles that are due for renewal to ensure that the appropriate action is taken. He will do most of that by correspondence.

Mr. Leslie: He has to see whether they are on the road.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: He does not have to see with his own eyes whether they are on the road. Bill Jones's motor vehicle is due for renewal, say, on the 1st December, 1946. The road board secretary will know that from his office records.

Mr. Watts: But there could not be a prosecution unless the vehicle were on the road unlicensed and that fact could be proved.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am not suggesting the time for prosecution has arrived. I am suggesting that a road board secretary would know when a particular motor vehicle was due for a renewal of license and, if the license were not renewed on the due date, that is when he would have to be busy finding out whether it was on the road.

Mr. Watts: That would be every month, would it not?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I suggest it would happen very seldom, because most people with motor vehicles would want to renew their licenses and would do so when the due date arrived. There will be odd cases, of course, in which motorists will try to escape the financial obligation of renewing their licenses.

Mr. Leslie: That could be done very easily under this system.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I suggest it could not be done very easily at all, because the office records would show when each license was due for renewal, and it would not be difficult for the road board secretary or some other servant of the board, when a motor vehicle license was not renewed, to ascertain whether it was still being used.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment not agreed to.

No. 3. Clause 5, lines 3 and 4, page 3—Delete the words "is repealed and a section is inserted in lieu thereof as follows."

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: This is tied to the question we have just decided. I move—

That the amendment be not agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment not agreed to.

No. 4. New Clause—Insert a new clause after Clause 3 to stand as Clause 4, as follows:—

4. Section six of the principal Act is amended by the insertion after subsection (6) thereof of a new subsection as follows:—

(7) The person to whom a passenger vehicle or carrier's license is issued under this Part shall, within fourteen days of such issue, cause the vehicle to be plainly, conspicuously and permanently marked with the name and address of such person, and shall keep the vehicle so marked during the currency of the license as prescribed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I think it is desirable that the proposed method of having the name and address of the person operating a motor vehicle for carrying purposes should be established. It already applies under the Bread Act with regard to bread carts and advantages would accrue if the system were introduced under the Traffic Act in respect of vehicles operating under carrier's licenses. There will be advantages to the traffic authorities. There could conceivably be advantages in regard to accidents in which these vehicles might be involved. If the name and address of the operator of a vehicle so involved were conspicuously marked on the vehicle it is probable that anyone in the vicinity of the accident in which the vehicle was concerned would remember the name, whereas he might possibly have no chance of seeing or remembering the license number. I think, however, that the words "as prescribed" are not in the right place. I think they should come after the word "marked." I would like an expression of opinion from the Leader of the Opposition and perhaps from the Leader of the Liberal Party on that point. In the meantime, I move—

That the amendment be amended by inserting after the word "marked" in line 6 of proposed new subsection (7) the words "as prescribed."

Mr. Doney: Mr. Chairman—

The CHAIRMAN: Will the hon. member please resume his seat until I have stated the question?

Mr. WATTS: I think the hon. member is concerned as to whether he can, subsequent to this discussion, make some reference to the word "permanently." I do not want to stop him by speaking to the Minister's amendment.

The CHAIRMAN: If the member for Williams-Narrogin desires to amend the

Council's amendment from the word "permanently" onwards, he cannot do so unless the Minister withdraws his amendment.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I will temporarily withdraw my amendment.

Mr. Doney: There is no need to do that.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

The CHAIRMAN: The Minister will have to move some definite motion in connection with this amendment from the Council before I can allow any discussion.

Mr. DONEY: I do not propose to move an amendment. I have tried on two occasions to get an opportunity to explain.

The CHAIRMAN: Will the hon. member please resume his seat? There is no question before the Chair and I cannot allow a discussion to take place.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I was under the impression that the member for Williams-Narrogin wanted to move an amendment prior to the word "marked." I think most members obtained the same impression.

The CHAIRMAN: I suggest that the Minister first move that the Council's amendment be agreed to. Then it will be competent for another member to move any other amendment desired.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If I move that the amendment be agreed to, can I then move that the amendment be amended, as I wish to do?

The CHAIRMAN: No, but the Minister can leave it to somebody else to do.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Was not the procedure that I followed at the beginning the correct one, when I moved that the words "as prescribed" be transposed?

The CHAIRMAN: That was quite in order, but the Minister withdrew.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, because I was under the impression that the member for Williams-Narrogin wanted to move an amendment prior to that.

The CHAIRMAN: Until some motion is moved in respect of this amendment, there is no question before the Chair.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Then I move—

That the amendment be amended by inserting after the word "marked" in line 6 of proposed new Subsection (7) the words "as prescribed."

Mr. DONEY: I could have prevented a good deal of misunderstanding had I been able to explain. All I wish to do is briefly to debate line 8 of the Council's amendment in which the word "permanently" appears. I do not mind the vehicle being marked plainly and conspicuously but I am concerned about its being marked permanently. A vehicle might easily change hands and would then be attached to another road board district. If these particulars are put down permanently, we shall have gone too far. I make that suggestion, without moving an amendment.

Mr. WATTS: I think the member for Williams-Narrogin is right. The words "plainly and conspicuously marked" are all that is required. The word "permanently" must mean for all time, and if the vehicle changed ownership, so would the name change. We should be careful of our choice of words in a matter of this kind. I move—

That the amendment be amended by inserting after the word "plainly" in line 5 the word "and."

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I think there is a good reason for the word "permanently" being included. The name and address could be plainly and conspicuously marked in chalk, but the word "permanently" would indicate that the name had to be marked on the vehicle in such a manner as to ensure some permanence.

Mr. Watts: That is why I agreed with the "as prescribed."

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am coming to that. Finally, I might agree with the amendment of the Leader of the Opposition, but I am now showing why the word "permanently" was included by the Legislative Council. If the vehicle changed hands, the new owner or operator would be legally obliged to have his name and address marked plainly, conspicuously and permanently on the vehicle for so long as he remained the owner and operator. I agree that the moving of the words "as prescribed" from the end of the amendment to a position immediately after the word "marked" will give authority to state how the name and address are to be plainly and conspicuously marked on the vehicle. I believe the amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition will make

the clause more legally correct and practicable in operation. I therefore support it.

Amendment on amendment put and passed.

Mr. WATTS: I move—

That the amendment be further amended by striking out in lines 5 and 6 the words “and permanently.”

Amendment on amendment, put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I move—

That the amendment be further amended by inserting in line 6 after the word “marked” the words “as prescribed.”

Amendment on amendment put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I move—

That the amendment be further amended by striking out in line 9 the words “as prescribed.”

Amendment on amendment put and passed.

Mr. McDONALD: The amendment says “and shall keep the vehicle so marked during the currency of the license.” Does that mean during the 12 months, or while the license is in that name?

The Minister for Works: While it is in his own name.

Mr. McDONALD: I think we should make it perfectly clear. However, I will leave the Minister to consider it.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment, as amended, agreed to.

Resolutions reported and the report adopted.

A committee consisting of the Minister for Lands, Mr. Doney and the Minister for Works drew up reasons for disagreeing to certain of the Council's amendments.

Reasons adopted, and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1946-47

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from the 29th November. Mr. Fox in the Chair.

Vote—Education, £1,143,540 (partly considered):

MR. McLARTY (Murray-Wellington) [8.33]: In common with other members, I

am glad to find an increase in this Vote. Unquestionably much more interest is being taken by the public in matters of education generally. Wherever one goes, one finds that people are showing a keener interest in education and are striving to obtain facilities in their respective districts. I hope the time is not far distant when we shall be told that we are to receive financial assistance for education from the Commonwealth. It is not possible for the State Government under existing conditions to provide the requisite money for the increased educational requirements and, unless we obtain help from the Federal authority, we shall have to do without much that ought to be provided for education generally. The Minister, when introducing his Estimates, gave a very interesting resume of the department's activities during the past year and also indicated the intentions for the future. I was particularly interested to hear his statement of what had been done to assist the blind and deaf children of the State. As a result of the department's activities, those children, so heavily handicapped, will be given a much better opportunity and enabled to take a much wider interest in life.

I should like the Minister to ascertain from children what they propose to do after leaving school. I am aware that the department is doing something along these lines and I believe it is the policy, when children have decided what calling they wish to adopt, to assist them in the class of work required for that particular calling. That this should be done is necessary for other reasons also. We are told that we are to have a migration policy and that a large number of people will be coming to settle in this country. It is requisite that every boy and girl should indicate what profession or trade he or she intends to follow as this would help in regard to migration problems. If we found that a certain trade or profession had sufficient young people entering it, we would know that it was desirable not to encourage immigrants in the idea that there were openings in those directions. Whether this information is collated by the department, I do not know.

It would be instructive to know how many girls intend to take up nursing or teaching and how many boys intend to be

bricklayers or carpenters, etc. I do not know whether the Minister, in the course of his reply, will be able to give us information along those lines. It should be easily obtainable and would be of considerable assistance. Quite a number of children, even when approaching the school-leaving age, have not decided what they wish to do and even their parents have no fixed ideas as to their future. This is not as it should be. Every effort ought to be made to obtain from parents, and from the children themselves information as to the walk in life they intend to follow.

The Minister informed us that it is the policy to continue the centralisation of schools. Most members will agree that this policy is the right one. On this aspect, I wish to refer to the present school bus routes. Before the department decides upon centralisation anywhere, the first essential should be to ensure that the routes over which the buses have to operate are in reasonably good order. Some of the bus routes are not in good order and, in the interests of the children, some of them ought not to be used. There is a difficulty regarding centralisation that will not be easy to overcome. One of these buses may travel 20 or 30 miles on a particular route and some of the children who have to travel by the bus are very young. We know that they start school at the age of six. To reach school at 9 o'clock, some of them would have to catch the bus at perhaps 7 a.m. or 7.30 a.m., but before doing that, they have to be up and dressed and have their breakfast and travel to the point where the bus picks them up. This is hard on very young children. The department should give further consideration to this aspect. Where some schools have been closed and there are sufficient young children to form an infant school, such school should be retained so that the very young children will not be compelled to travel long distances by the bus.

Reference was also made by the Minister to the living-away-from-home allowance paid to certain children desirous of taking a higher form of education. Most of these children, I understand, are required to hold the Junior certificate. The provision of this allowance is a very good thing and is certainly helping parents who would be unable, for financial reasons, to send their

children to a boarding school. Here is a suggestion that the Minister might well consider. At a certain class of school, as he explained, he proposes to do everything possible to raise the standard of education. We are all sympathetic with that object, but I suggest that he should ascertain how many children have taken the Junior examination at such schools. If he finds that very few children have been able to gain the Junior certificate at that class of school, he should consider providing the living-away-from-home allowance to them should it be necessary to send them further afield for their education.

The teachers in schools of this class have a very difficult task. A school may have about 100 children in attendance and probably only three teachers. Thus the average class would be 30 children and they would be of all ages. What chance would a teacher have of giving special tuition to those children who wanted to take one of the public examinations? The teacher in such a school is heavily handicapped, and I could not agree that it would be his fault if many of those children did not succeed in passing the Junior examination. Therefore I repeat that consideration should be given by the Minister to children in this particular class of school. I am glad that an organiser has been appointed for the formation of junior farmers' clubs. These consist of boys and young farmers, who have just left school, and are going in for rural activities. It is necessary that their education be continued. These clubs were very popular before the war and the young boys were particularly interested in them. Many adults, too, were interested, and they gave their time unsparingly. As a result, the clubs were doing a splendid work and the boys were benefiting. The Minister will find some excellent talent among these young fellows.

We are at present suffering from a shortage of skilled or professional people. The Minister for Agriculture has told us of his difficulties in obtaining the services of veterinary surgeons. Some of these boys, if they received encouragement, would aspire to become veterinary surgeons, and if assistance were made available to them we would do something to overcome the present shortage of veterinary advice. I know that what I am about to suggest cannot be

done at present, but I would like to see in the farming districts these young boys have their own clubs in a building known as the "Young Farmers' Club" where they could read when they wished to by being provided with literature, and where they could receive instruction. I would also like the Minister to tell us just what he proposes to do about manual training and domestic science in some of the larger country schools. Owing to the war these activities had, in many instances, to be closed down. That was inevitable. The teachers were taken into the Army and the necessary tuition could not be provided. In my district, and I am sure the same thing applies in others, we have fairly large schools but this kind of education is not available at the moment. I think arrangements could be made by which the children could be brought to some central point where teachers would be in attendance for the purpose of giving instruction. The country people are very anxious to see this work recommenced.

I have previously, when speaking on this vote, referred to the vandalism that takes place all over the State, and I suppose all over the Commonwealth. Only the other day I was taken to see some bathing sheds which were badly defaced and generally knocked about. I have also seen beautiful young trees growing in parks and alongside public roads, that have been just torn down with the result that years of work have been destroyed in a few minutes. That sort of thing is not done only by children. In fact, I know, from my personal experience, that vandalism is committed by adults. The necessity for preventing vandalism of any kind, either to public or private property, should be instilled into the children. They should be taught that they are part owners of all public property and that it is their duty to protect it. This is done to a certain extent, but if it were stressed a little more it would do something towards preventing much of the vandalism that occurs.

The Minister paid tribute to the work of the parents and citizens' associations throughout the State, and we all join with him there. The public spirited people who form these associations are doing a great job. There is a growing demand for increased secondary education. The Min-

ister knows that in my district there is a body that has been particularly active in this direction. It claims that the education of the children is not complete while it is so difficult for so many of them to receive secondary education. I read where one child in 40—I think that is the figure—receives secondary education. That is a very small percentage, and it is hardly likely that we will keep up with the educational standard of other countries unless we get a much higher percentage in this State. To do that we must have decentralisation by having secondary schools established in the country districts.

I am not too sure whether the question of an agricultural college is dealt with by the Minister for Agriculture or the Minister for Education, but it seems to me that it is concerned with education. Any college must be concerned with education. Some time ago the Minister informed me that it was intended to establish an agricultural college in the South-West, and that has been advocated for many years. Ever since I have been in Parliament I have heard members suggesting the establishment of such an institution. The Minister informed me, some months ago, that it was proposed to establish this college in the Harvey district. The news was well received there and I hope the Minister will be able to tell us where and when it is proposed to carry out this project. No difficulty will be experienced in getting students for the college, and there is no better part of the State in which to establish it than the Harvey district where we have irrigation and dry farming, and mixed farming generally. Once again I stress my pleasure at seeing an increased amount on this Vote. I hope the Commonwealth Government will come to our aid by providing us with extra money so that we can make available those additional educational facilities and requirements that the people are asking for.

MR. NORTH (Claremont) [8.55]: I wish to refer to another aspect of education, and that is, what are the end products that we get from the system? The first point, apart from the capacity to earn a living, is, I would suggest, the development of personality of the members of the community and, better still, the collective commonsense of the community. When we go

around the country we see the effects of the educational system, whether it is good, bad or indifferent, by judging how the products of it exercise their faculties and judgment. During the last few years we have had a change in the electoral system which has brought about compulsory voting. That imposes on our present Minister for Education a new duty in having to see that all the people receive, if possible during their educational career, some instruction to bring out their commonsense at election time. In the past it was not necessary because we simply had a voluntary vote and the question arose, who was the brainy one—the one who voted or the one who did not vote?

The Minister for Lands: I think they have been well educated in the last few years.

Mr. NORTH: There is this important question, what is the end product today? When we go down Hay-street we see a narrow thoroughfare. If the Minister is successful in the next few years we will find, no doubt, that Hay-street will be widened. That is one instance. If he is not successful, the same botch will go on, and whenever leaders of thought come forward to improve the situation the mass support will fail, and the street will remain as it is. Another simple instance is that of street collections. How can an educated community, under the present Minister, permit such an absurd system of collecting money? How could this Parliament tolerate it for five minutes if it had the support of educated electors for reform behind it? We would have that system abolished tomorrow and the money that is now collected would be paid, with groans, by the community, as it pays the rest of the taxation. We do, it is true, have a collection only once a week, and that is permitted. That shows the desire of this Chamber to reduce the system from a collection a day to one a week, but I feel that the present Minister will be able to bring to bear on the system the benefit of commonsense in every child. If he does we will have many of our present worries made much lighter. Let me give a third illustration of my point.

During this week members received a very well prepared pamphlet on health. I trust I was not the only one to receive it. This pamphlet was published by the life

assurance companies to ensure that we live a little longer and so pay a few more premiums. It states that the common cold can be cured if people would not pass it on at work. That is a well-worn theme. It has been the opinion, for generations, that if people, when they get a cold, would stop away from work, millions of pounds would be saved to the community. Figures to that effect have been published. As things are at present there is not sufficient conscience apparent in the community to bring pressure to bear upon Parliament to legislate so that those suffering from common colds shall be prevented from mingling in crowds, and thus help to suppress the spread of a complaint that it has been computed has meant the loss of millions of pounds to Australia. There is another matter involved, and that is the question of elections.

The Minister for Lands: Why bring that up?

Mr. NORTH: If the rising generation could be developed along right lines under the methods adopted by the Minister for Education, I feel sure that in the future we shall not have the spectacle we notice at election time when thousands of people stand outside booths and hand out cards to electors telling them how they should vote for this or that candidate. When we analyse the effort that goes into the preparation of those cards, the organisation that is involved in arranging for people who stand outside booths and endeavour to influence the electors, the preparation of luncheons and the engaging of taxi-cars, we must ask ourselves—all for what purpose?

The Minister for Lands: Where do they do that?

Mr. NORTH: All this is done in order to show people how to vote for the various candidates. If we could alter the law under pressure from the community as a whole in a direction that would make for the exercise of commonsense, there would be the necessity for all these signs only in polling booths directing electors upon how they should exercise the vote and all the shilly-shallying that goes on during election day would be avoided. All that unnecessary effort could be obviated. These are just a few instances that could be multiplied over and over again to show what a job there is ahead in the building up of

commonsense in the people, so that in turn we in Parliament shall reflect that commonsense in legislation and administration along lines that today we cannot adopt because we would not have the support of the people. Leaving these questions aside with those brief references, I feel that the increased Education Vote represents a very big advance on the part of the Minister, and I congratulate him accordingly. In my electorate there are one or two schools which, by way of his answers to letters and requests, the Minister has indicated he will attend to in due course. If he is able to improve the collective commonsense of the community as a whole he will do a great work for this State.

MR. HILL (Albany) [9.3]: I am pleased to note the increase in the Education Vote, but nevertheless it is still a long way below what it should be. The problem of education is one of the most important that the State Government has to deal with because in tackling it the future of the State is involved. I am also pleased to see that the Education Department at least is one that can look as far afield as the 35th parallel of south latitude. By doing that, it benefits the State as a whole. During the course of his introductory remarks the Minister referred to the camp at the Albany Quarantine Station. In the early part of this year, as a member of the honorary Royal Commission on outports, I travelled through various parts of the State, out to Mullewa, through Kalgoorlie and down the Coolgardie-Esperance line. During the journey I saw many of the inland homes. Bearing in mind my own surroundings in the South-West, I was impressed by the fact that I had viewed that side of the life of the community from one extreme to the other. I appreciated to the full that the dispatch of children from those inland areas to the seaside camps during the summer months is well worth while.

The last time the Albany Quarantine Station was used for quarantine purposes was in 1920, but the buildings and equipment have to be maintained in first-class order and condition. When the children occupy the camp during the summer months they know they may be turned out at short notice, but the possibility of the station being required for quarantine purposes is

very remote. I hope the camp there will be extended and that other camps will be conducted at the various coastal towns throughout the State so that the children from the inland districts may have the benefit of a holiday by the seaside.

The Minister referred to the Denmark School for Agriculture. I must differ from the member for Murray-Wellington, because I consider it is by far and away the best site for a school in Western Australia. The buildings that are nearing completion are very fine indeed; they are well laid out, well constructed and in a beautiful situation. The school is on the banks of a river so that the boys have the advantage of swimming, boating and other pleasures in addition to their regular school work. It has a very fine staff and the good feeling that exists between them and the people of Denmark is extremely cordial. I wish members could have seen the exhibits of the boys' work at the Mt. Barker and Albany shows; these will be on view again at the Denmark show next Saturday. The carpentry, blacksmith and other exhibits of work by the boys were a credit to the school. I trust the Denmark institution will not be the only one of its kind in the State.

With regard to the Albany High School, additions to which were opened this year, I suggest to the Minister and the Government that they consider the resumption of the land between the school and Middleton-road. If that were done now it would cost much less than it will in a few years' time. The progress of Albany as a town has been hampered in the past but the time will come when it will be a big city, and the Government could well consider the resumption of that land at the present stage. I desire to pay a tribute to the work of the correspondence classes. I have had some personal experience in that regard and in Mr. Eakins we have an outstanding man. The system is a very fine one for children who cannot attend schools.

This brings me to the question of school bus services, the establishment of which, in my opinion, has been a step in the right direction. I am afraid, however, that people are rather hesitant when starting out upon anything new. It was a long time in my district before we could get sufficient sup-

port to inaugurate bus services for the school children. At one stage when the matter was under discussion there was some little trouble, and I came to Perth in order to interview the Director of Education, Mr. Little. I saw him just as he was leaving to catch the Albany train and while walking down Murray-street with him to the station, I discussed the situation. When he had caught the train, I sent a telegram to a friend of mine asking him to meet Mr. Little and as a result of that interview the first bus service in the Albany district was established. I can assure the Committee that the people of the district are very pleased in consequence. East of Albany, where I am particularly interested, we have two bus services that are doing a very good job.

A few days ago I could not help noticing what an advantage the system was to present-day school children. I saw the young people waiting on the bitumen road and very soon afterwards a luxurious parlour coach arrived and they were driven off to school. We must not, however, overdo it and, as the member for Murray-Wellington pointed out, we must ensure that the services are run over safe roads and the journeys are not too long for the children. As to the school at Albany, it is just the same as when I went there about 50 years ago. It was built in the old style and built to stay. It does not lend itself to additions. It would certainly be a pity to demolish it completely and what the Government will do about it I do not know. Something will have to be done in the near future because the accommodation problem is serious and halls have to be hired in another part of the town to accommodate the overflow of children. When we get our central school, the provision of meals for the children should receive consideration. It is not fair to expect the parents and citizens' association to do the work voluntarily. As a parent interested in this matter, I would be prepared to pay a reasonable amount every week in order that a midday meal might be provided at the school. I trust that the increase provided in the Vote this year is only a start, and I emphasise the point that in promoting education we are dealing with the future of our State.

MR. READ (Victoria Park) [9.10]: The increase in the Education Vote is a matter for congratulation, and is indicative of the determination of the department to undertake further activities. I notice that during the debate a variety of subjects has been discussed under the Vote, and I assume that they can be linked with the matter of education from the standpoint of the development of intelligence necessary to deal with the construction of buildings, railways and so on. The member for Claremont went to the extent of suggesting that the narrowness of Hay-street was attributable to the lack of education of past generations. On the other hand, I can inform that hon. member that there are varying views respecting the width of thoroughfares which are used purely for business purposes. In almost every large city the ideal street from the point of view of the business community is the narrow thoroughfare, leaving the wider streets for transport purposes. That is borne out by the fact that where there are narrow business streets, there we find the greatest values and the highest rentals. In such streets, the shops face each other and the outlook of one business concern is towards another similar undertaking.

The **CHAIRMAN**: I do not know what this has to do with the Education Vote. The hon. member had better get back to it.

Mr. READ: Mention was made of one of the activities of the Education Department—a small but most important activity. I have in mind the kindergarten schools and the efforts made to educate rubella children. I have taken great interest in the movement, which is most commendable. Following upon an outbreak of German measles or rubella seven years ago, it was noticed that there was a great increase in the number of children born with partial or total blindness or partial or total deafness. The mothers of these rubella children contracted German measles in the early stage of pregnancy, with the consequence that the children were born with defective hearing or defective sight. When these children reach the compulsory age for education—six to seven years—the parents have the choice of putting them in the Deaf and Dumb Institution to get a manual form of education, or they can be put to school to be taught to speak by aids. It

was discovered that the children who had a certain amount of hearing could be taught by these aids and that ultimately they could be absorbed in the ordinary school classes and educated with the normal children.

We owe very much to those who developed the system by organising and collecting money. The first classes were started by private citizens, who had to devise means by which their children could be educated. They were unable to discover education systems that would be of assistance to them. Many of these children had not a single word in their vocabulary; in fact, some of them could only make shrill noises. Yet, as the Minister told the Committee, when put into the special kindergarten with like children of the same age, they were able to be taught. The first thing was to teach them to control their breathing. Before they can be taught to talk, they must learn to breathe correctly. Of course, they can breathe mechanically and cough, but they have no idea of forming the mouth so as to blow. When the teacher formed her mouth in order to exhale and blow, it was found that the children would only copy the motion. The teacher therefore put some white powder, or talc powder, on the palm of her hand and blew it; and by this means the children were taught to do more than move the muscles of the mouth. From such small beginnings the children are now becoming almost normal. The Education Department now has about five such classes in various schools.

In the Victoria Park school there are 14 rubella children in charge of Miss Wanless. The parents are very grateful to her for the work she is doing. It is not ordinary teaching, as she must continually make signs and act. The work is strenuous, but it is valuable. It is work quite outside the ordinary work of a primary school teacher. If members would take the trouble to inspect one of these classes to see the actual work being done by these teachers under the most trying circumstances, I am sure their visit would be much appreciated by the teacher. It would show that her efforts were—apart from salary—considerably appreciated by the people of the State. Many of these children live in scattered areas. Some live in

Victoria Park and South Perth; others live as far away as Orange Grove, Wattle Grove, Guildford, Belmont and Cannington. I have some figures showing the time involved in travelling to and from school. The time varies from 2½ hours a week to eight hours a week. It must be borne in mind that these children are more or less helpless, and the mother has to accompany her child to school and return to take him home again. The rubella children are in special classes. What I intended to put before the Minister was that possibly in the New Year a school bus or a motorcar could be engaged to take these children to and from school.

I am aware that it would not be possible to transport all the children to and from school. I therefore propose to interview the Royal Automobile Club to ascertain whether motorists living in the same districts as these children could undertake their transport at least to school; the mothers could take them home. An extra burden is put on the people who are so unfortunate as to have rubella children. They must travel as far as 15 miles per day down to 2½ miles. I refer to the children outside Victoria Park and South Perth. The travelling expenses vary from 3s. 9d. to 17s. 6d. per week. Miss Wanless, the teacher, lives in Fremantle. It takes her two hours per day to travel to and from school and the cost to her is 10s. per week. I hope that the Minister will be able to overcome this disability. If members would visit some of these classes, they would be struck by the intelligence of the children once they commence to understand the actions and the necessary effort required of them. They will certainly become normal scholars and ultimately be absorbed in the ordinary classes. In time they will doubtless become useful citizens, and not a charge on the social services of the community.

MR. TRIAT (Mt. Magnet) [9.26]: I, together with other members, desire to congratulate the Government and the Minister on the increase in this Vote, the extra amount being approximately £144,000. I suppose, like every other member from the outback, I have a grouse, as they have, regarding the school facilities in our electorates. The big centres on the Goldfields cannot complain to any extent; at least, I am not prepared to say that they can, but certainly they have not the same grounds for

complaint as have people in the smaller outback districts. In Kalgoorlie and Boulder there are ample facilities for education; there are many good schools, including a high school and a private school, the Christian Brothers' College. But when one goes to the back country, one finds the facilities rapidly deteriorating. The teachers in the back country are exceptionally competent but, unfortunately, the school surroundings are deplorable. The buildings have not had any attention for years past and are sadly in need of renovations and repairs. During the war years they were not painted or repaired, with the result, as I say, that today they are in a disgraceful, deplorable condition.

Most of the children in the back country begin their education there, and I think their surroundings should be clean and bright. I drew the attention of the Minister some time ago to the fact that at the Gwalia school the washbasins were yellow with age. They have lost their enamel, are cracked, disreputable and deplorable. The school interior had been painted with some dark paint which, after many years, has become dingy, thus making the interior dark. I think the painting and cleaning up of these schools should be put in hand at once; probably it will be now that the Vote has been increased. I sincerely hope the department will see that the schools are painted in light pastel colours to make for better lighting. We in this Chamber would be quick to grumble if our lighting facilities were bad. In fact, we did so, with the result that bright intense lights were installed. Our own surroundings are bright.

Then there is the question of school fences in these outback districts. Most of them are in disrepair. As a matter of fact, it would be better to pull down the fences and leave the blocks open; but if they are to be fenced, the fence should be a proper one and kept in good order; otherwise the children will imagine that fences should always be broken down. If the children have clean and bright surroundings, they will grow up with the inclination to be clean and tidy. I would like the Minister, when he can break away from visiting the South-West, to come to the backblocks with me. He does a great deal of travelling. I know he is a Goldfields man; I believe his early life was spent at Kalgoorlie. If he would make the trip I suggest, he would not need any convincing

about the facilities which should be made available to the children. I drew his attention some time ago to a miserable shelter-shed at Agnew. There are only 20 children at the school. They are little children and they walk $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles to their lessons. They do not have rides, for there are no vehicles, and they have to walk.

I received a telegram the other day to the effect that the temperature was 103 degrees at 10 o'clock in the morning. When these children have their lunch they eat it on the front verandah of the school, in temperatures of that kind! They have not even a shelter shed. After a long discussion, the department agreed to build one, but it was to be a bough shelter made of timber. When one considers that these children are of tender years, and thinks of their being in possession of wax matches, one can imagine what would be likely to occur. Someone would probably throw a match and set fire to the place, and the children would be badly hurt, if not fatally burnt. It is wrong for the department to suggest erecting a bough shelter. The Minister tells me he intends to overcome the problem. It may be overcome some day, but it has not been up to date. The children are still without a shelter shed. That sort of thing should not be ventilated in this Chamber; but if I do not speak about it, the people I represent will say that I did not voice my opinion when the opportunity offered. That is the reason I mention the matter here in addition to having spoken to the Minister and to members of his department.

I hope that when the department is spending money on new desks and equipment, some of the £15,000 proposed to be expended will be utilised in providing the requirements of some of the small schools. I have visited schools in the metropolitan area and nearby and have been very pleased with the type of buildings and their contents. In the farming districts, too, the big schools are exceptionally good; but in the mining districts, away in the wilderness, the schools are disgraceful. If the Minister will come through my electorate for a week or two, I am sure there will be no need for me in future to ask the department to do anything in the way of renovations and painting and the provision of various facilities. I congratulate the department on the increased expenditure proposed and hope that some of it will be spent in the Mt. Magnet area.

MR. ABBOTT (North Perth) [9.32]: The number of members who have spoken on this Vote serves as an indication of the importance with which the education of children is regarded. I consider it one of our major duties to see that children have the best opportunity we can give them in the way of education. That is the aim of most parents, and it is an objective that they will make very great sacrifices to attain. I do not think that any member, or even the Minister, is satisfied with the present position; but, of course, it must be realised that improvements can be made only gradually. I hope, however, that there will be a sudden jump forward in the near future as a result of material assistance being received from the Commonwealth Government, and that many of the aims of the Minister and of us all will be achieved. We are not in the vanguard of education in this State. I do not think our system is as good as the British one, and certainly it is not as good as systems in many other parts of the world. I know the Minister is anxious to raise the school age to 15 years. So are we all. When that is done, I hope that other improvements will accompany it.

I do not consider that the health of children is given sufficient attention. That is one of the things that will have to be dealt with in the future. Children should be examined at least twice in their school career: when they enter school and before they leave it. Many a child suffers a great disadvantage in after life owing to misplaced teeth or other deficiencies which could have been set right or materially improved if they had been discovered early enough. I would very much like to see better medical and dental attention given to children at school. Unfortunately parents do not always notice these faults, whereas one glance from a skilled person would enable him to realise the position. Large sums of money were spent on members of the Services to ensure that they were dentally fit and were constantly medically examined. That was done because it paid. When we realise how many people are constantly refused admission to the Navy and other branches of the Defence Department because they are not fit, we can see how urgent is this need for medical attention in the schools.

Again, I would like to see the introduction of a mid-day meal at schools. That is an innovation that must be introduced some

day. When it will come about I do not know, but it will come. Such a mid-day meal has been provided in England and the time will come when it will be supplied in Australia, so that children attending school, instead of having a miserable, starchy meal of sandwiches will be able to obtain a nourishing repast and one that contains those food elements, such as vitamins, that are so necessary for good health and which are not obtained in the normal diet. I agree with the member for Mt. Magnet that the environment of many schools is not good. Very little painting has been done for many years. I would not have taken the Government to task had it concentrated all its painting on the schools. I notice that a good many public buildings are being painted today, and it would have been preferable had this work been undertaken exclusively on schools. I know that each department has its own Vote, but I feel that it is not that which has prevented painting being done, but rather the limitation of manpower and materials.

I hope there will be a concentration on the painting and brightening up of schools, even if it has to be done at the expense of other Government departments. I would like to see neat and tidy playgrounds. I doubt whether very much expense would need to be incurred in order to re-gravel many of our school premises. In wintertime there are pools in some school grounds; and in the summer, dusty holes. If money is required for this purpose, I hope that before many years have passed we shall be able to find it. Some private institutions are waiting to enlarge their premises in order to provide additional facilities for teaching. I know that in the new year the controlling authority is going to consider the question of priorities, and I hope that as far as possible facilities will be made available to the institutions I have mentioned that wish to enlarge their buildings. I know it does not come within the department of the Minister for Education, but if he could give an impetus in that direction I think he would be doing something of advantage to the community. However, we must advance slowly; and I have only spoken on this matter because I feel it is considered to be of very great importance by the people of Western Australia and is one in connection with which they would not grudge the highest possible expenditure.

MR. BRAND (Greenough) [9.40]: It is not very often I rise in this House, but I do so on this occasion because of the pressure that has been brought to bear as evidenced in the number of letters I have received from parents and organisations interested in education. Much has been said of the gratification occasioned by the increased grant for this year. I feel that is only a product of the times. Over the years there has been an awakening to the fact that we are slipping behind and that there is need to stir up a department such as the Education Department. One of the essentials to progress, of course, is money; but I feel sure, without throwing any bouquets, that our Minister, who was a teacher, himself and is not of any great age, will view matters through the eyes of youth, and that we will progress at a greater rate in the future.

It was interesting to learn what is being done for the poor unfortunate children who, through no fault of their own, cannot help themselves; and I trust that provision will be made not only for those children, but also for the children of parents who are on the basic wage. I am not going to debate that subject but would stress the point, because I often wonder how people on the basic wage live and educate their children in ordinary circumstances. The hope was expressed that the facilities for blind and deaf children would be extended to the country. I trust that will be done and that all facilities available to city children, as a result of the large population here, will be granted to country children on a larger scale than has been the case in the past.

The member for Murray-Wellington mentioned the question of child delinquency and referred to the damage that children did to parks and so on. I think much of that is the result of children attending such schools as have been mentioned by various members—schools which have not seen a paint brush for years and the playgrounds of which consist of sand and dust. Particularly is this so in the country; because, in the city, buildings must be kept up to a certain standard. On the Goldfields, and in far away areas of the wheatbelt, especially in the North, one will come upon a small building which one afterwards learns with surprise is a State school. It is abso-

lutely neglected and it is no wonder that children attending schools such as that grow up without any civic pride. I trust that some attention will be given to that aspect by the Education Department. How much easier would it be to create the right environment and train children along proper lines! I believe that children would be more absorptive, that they would learn more quickly under the right conditions.

During my short experience here, I have endeavoured from time to time to obtain replacement of rainwater tanks. It took over two months to have a certain tank replaced, and one officer of the department apologised for the time taken. I realise how difficult it is to work through the various departments, but in districts where the winter is short it is essential that provision for conserving water be made before the rains begin. In the event of a teacher applying for a new tank, for instance, he first of all writes to the department, which then gets in touch with the Public Works Department. That department then either approves or disapproves. If it approves the matter goes back to the Treasury for endorsement, and having got that far the matter is then passed to the district architect, who is already an overworked man and who, in our case, lives at Geraldton. His district extends down to Wubin, a distance of 150 miles. He is required to go to Wubin to look at the job, and then tenders are called for. If no tenders are received he endeavours to have the job done privately. That all takes a great deal of time, and in the meanwhile other jobs along that line are accumulating. I do not wish to criticise, but surely that system can be put aside. I have already discussed with the Minister a means whereby the difficulty could be overcome. If a vehicle was equipped with the right tools and staffed by the right men it could do a circuit throughout the area and keep the buildings well maintained, instead of as at present allowing them to fall down before they are repaired. That suggestion is worthy of consideration.

The member for Murray-Wellington, also mentioned agricultural colleges, and suggested that one might be placed at Harvey. There are already agricultural schools at Narrogin and at Denmark, and I trust that in future there will be a possibility of having such a school in the northern

area. Lads anxious to learn something of agriculture have a long distance to travel from the northern areas to Narrogin. A school to cater for 30 or 40 boys in the northern areas, and to deal with those aspects of wheatgrowing and sheepraising encountered under the difficult conditions of the North is, I think, essential. The area I represent verges on the pastoral country and natives are inclined to come down to the towns of Mullewa and Morawa. Therefore we have attending the schools a large percentage of coloured children. I know this is a vexed question, but I wish to press once more not only the case of the natives but of the white children who attend such schools. If the natives were segregated and placed under special teachers they could be taught at a rate which would allow them to absorb the knowledge as their intellects would permit. That would be better than keeping the white children back with the natives. When speaking of new schools for the future the Minister said he trusted he would get as far down as Katanning next year. I hope—without being parochial—that he will get as far north as Carnamah, at least.

Mr. J. Hegney: If he does not get to Carnarvon there is not much chance for Carnamah.

Mr. BRAND: There is something in that. I heartily congratulate the Minister, on what he has done, and am glad to say we have been successful in obtaining one new school in my area. I take this opportunity of putting in a word for the North, which seems to be so little represented—not Carnarvon, but the little portion between. Once again I hope the matters I have mentioned tonight will receive some attention in the immediate future. I support the Vote.

MR. McDONALD (West Perth) [9.50]: At this late hour I will not deal with matters of education at length, important as we must recognise them to be. The Minister knows that I have for many years been interested in the pre-school education of our children. I would like to acknowledge the assistance and co-operation of the Victoria Park school in an experiment that has been tried between that school and the Lady Gowrie Child Centre. There is

now proceeding a system under which children from the Lady Gowrie Centre, who receive the advantages of a very well-equipped kindergarten, are tested in various ways and compared with a control group of children of the same age of the Victoria Park school, who have not been to a kindergarten centre. It is yet too early to appraise the results, but in three or four years we hope that some interesting information will be available as to the health, physique and mental progress of the children of the Lady Gowrie Child Centre, which is indebted to the Victoria Park school for its co-operation in this arrangement.

I think with the member for Greenough, that there is a renaissance taking place in education in our State. It is a hopeful sign which has been permeating the whole State of late. Not only the teachers, but the parents and the Progressive Education League of Western Australia, a movement most commendably inspired by the Teachers' Union, are taking part, and parents are beginning to realise that they are part and parcel of the educational system of the State. Once they realise that they are all bound together and are all able to help, we will have gone a long way towards improving our educational system. I have recently had occasion, as have most members, to travel a great deal in the country, as well as in the various towns, and I think it is as well for our teachers to know that members in this House have some knowledge of the difficulties with which they have to contend, especially in remote country areas and that we have a deep appreciation of the idealism and hard work shown by the teachers in our State system. They are an exceptionally fine body of men and women and have a real vocation for their profession. There is now an increased spirit of hopefulness in our educational system in both town and country, and it remains for us, as far as we can, to second their efforts and help them in the work that they desire to do and can do in promoting better education throughout the length and breadth of the State.

MRS. CARDELL-OLIVER (Subiaco) [9.55]: I wish to compliment the Minister on the work he has done since assuming his present office. He has done as much

as he could with the amount allowed to him, and I am only sorry that it has not been twice as much. I was struck by the remarks of the member for Claremont, and the little dig he gave the member for Subiaco when dealing with the education that should be given to children so that they would not take part in street collections. I think he was referring to the recent street collection for the purpose of supplying milk to children in the schools. I would point out to the Minister that the Education Department of New South Wales has taken that scheme under its wing, and the children there receive milk at the schools. England is spending £12,000,000 per year on milk for school children, and £48,000,000 per year on meals for them. Such expenditure is all the more necessary when it is realised how many of our men were rejected by the Army during the recent war—nearly 400,000 of them, or one in five—on account of malnutrition, as it was suggested, when they were young.

I would like to see a greater number of domestic science classes in our schools. They are necessary if we are to have young women equipped to become good wives and mothers. Our girls should be taught how to cook. I would like also to see nursing classes in the schools. In the high schools throughout Victoria there are nursing classes. I understand that the Minister said the other day that the Education Department could not undertake kindergarten classes, but I do not think the education system will be complete until kindergarten classes are attached to every school. In these days, when young married people live in flats, they cannot attend to their children in the same way as was done in former days. The children must necessarily go uncared for unless they can go to school at an early age. I would also like to see the schools opened in the mornings—some members mentioned child delinquents—with prayers, a hymn or two and a short address by the headmaster or by a minister appointed by the united churches. I believe that would help the children to realise their responsibilities, not only in civic life but in the spiritual world. I commend those suggestions to the Minister.

MR. J. HEGNEY (Middle Swan) [10.0]: I congratulate the Minister upon the very able manner in which he presented his Esti-

mates and the highly informative way in which he dealt with the special work of the department in the interests of various classes of children who are not altogether normal. His account of the work in that direction was very interesting and I am certain that the efforts of the department will bear fruit a hundredfold in the not distant future. As the member for Nedlands said, we now have a Minister who is able to take a very active interest in his work. Formerly he was a teacher and consequently has an intimate knowledge of all the ramifications of the department. Whilst his predecessors in office brought to bear the best of their administrative ability, he has come to the department with an expert knowledge of what is required and a keenness to do the best he can for the department. We are fortunate in having a Minister who understands education so thoroughly and is so desirous of raising it to the highest possible standard. Unquestionably, by raising the standard of education, we must produce a better type of citizen and a more enlightened community.

As the member for Subiaco remarked, the Minister could, with advantage, spend twice as much money as he now receives from the Treasury—an amount of a little over £1,000,000. If education is to be developed, the Commonwealth Government will have to give the States substantial assistance to enable them greatly to increase their activities. Twelve months or more ago, Ministers for Education held a conference and submitted to the Commonwealth Treasurer a proposal that £10,000,000 be made available for increased expenditure on education in Australia. Our share of that sum would have been £1,000,000, and I am satisfied that the Minister could have spent the money with great advantage to this State. In fact, one-half of the money could have been spent in the Middle Swan and Guildford-Midland districts in order to provide for the many activities required there, such as a new technical school, a new high school, better equipment for all the schools and improved playing areas.

These requisites are definitely needed and are really only the bare essentials of a modern educational system. Whoever is Minister for Education in future—and I hope the present occupant will continue in the office—I trust he will repeat his representations to the Commonwealth with a view to getting a sub-

stantial sum to supplement the State vote. We are in the predicament that our population is not increasing to the extent we could wish, and an additional disadvantage is that about 40 per cent. of the revenue has to be paid out for interest before any money can be provided for the departments, so the amount available for education is definitely restricted. I know that the Minister frequently requests the Treasurer to provide increased amounts for education and, to extend the system of adult education and secondary schools, much more money is required. If this money could be provided, the results from its expenditure would be highly beneficial.

Country children for the most part experience great difficulties in obtaining education. I have travelled through many districts in the south-west part of the State and some 12 months ago I accompanied the Minister to Carnarvon and to the pastoral areas and saw how the correspondence system operates. While excellent work is being done by means of the correspondence classes, the students on reaching the age of 10 or 11 would be much better if they could be put into classes in an up-to-date school and come into contact with other children. In the final analysis, of course, it all comes down to a question of finance. Having regard to the funds made available to the Minister, I am satisfied that he is doing a good job.

According to this morning's newspaper, the Commonwealth Government is providing £6,000 for inquiry into means for improving the posture of children. This relates particularly to the adoption of a better type of desk. Desks are being made to improve the accommodation for senior children. This is an important phase and I am pleased that the Commonwealth is taking some interest in it. When the inquiry is completed, it should be possible to determine the right class of desk that should be provided. In some of the schools the lack of seating accommodation presents great difficulties. Schools are overcrowded and to seat some of the children is difficult. My attention has been drawn to the fact that, in two schools in my district, some of the children had to use boxes for seats. This, however, was remedied when brought to the attention of the department.

There are a few matters that I wish to bring under the notice of the Minister. Most Ministers for Education since the time

the member for Nedlands occupied the office are aware of the problems that I propose to submit tonight. First of all, I wish to allude to the Bayswater school ground. Just before the war, some improvements were effected, but unfortunately the ground was not surfaced. As a result of the tremendous flow of water from the roof of the school, the gravel was washed away and a certain portion of the playing area rendered dangerous to the children. This was remedied, but the whole of the ground needs to be surfaced. I have not pressed this matter too strongly because of war conditions and because I realised that bitumen was in short supply. The playing grounds of one or two other schools have been surfaced. I again bring to the notice of the Minister the need for attending to the playing area at Bayswater. There are over 500 children in attendance at the school. The site of the school is a poor one, situated as it is on the side of a hill, and it forms a watershed in winter, washing out the gravel. I understand that these matters are referred to a grounds committee for investigation and for determinations as to relative urgency.

Another matter is the Rivervale school ground. The previous Minister approved of money being spent on this work, which shows that a satisfactory case has been made out. That school is situated within three miles of the city and is attended by children from the Victoria Park and Middle Swan electorates. Under the Commonwealth housing scheme, some 40 houses have recently been erected in the vicinity and a large building programme is contemplated in the near future, so the time is not far distant when increased accommodation will have to be made available at the school. I stress particularly the need for improving the playing ground. Under date the 26th August, 1943, I received a letter from the then Minister for Education as follows:—

In reply to your letter of the 16th instant re improvements required to the Rivervale school grounds, I desire to advise that this matter was investigated by officers of the Public Works Department in 1940, which revealed the necessity for collecting the water for delivery to the main drain and for erecting a retaining wall along part of the school boundary, which would involve replacing the fence along the boundary on the new brick foundation, reconditioning gravel and providing a new sealed area, surface drains and necessary connections.

The position has been reviewed this week on receipt of representations made by the Belmont Park Road Board to the Public Works Department, and I regret to find that, owing to the impracticability of procuring the necessary materials, the Principal Architect has recommended that no action be taken at the present time.

I may say that the cost of the necessary improvements is now estimated at £500.

Under date the 29th November, 1943, I received a further communication from the then Minister for Education, which reads—

I am pleased to be able to inform you that it is proposed to make certain improvements at the Rivervale school, at a cost of £543.

In addition, the provision of new lavatories at an estimated cost of £600 has also been approved.

So this work has been outstanding for a long time. Some months ago I was informed by the Education Department that the work had been approved and that it was now a matter for the Public Works Department. I thereupon wrote to the Minister for Works enclosing a copy of the correspondence and urging that the time had arrived when the work should be carried out. New lavatories were constructed, but the levelling of the ground and other necessary work not yet been put in hand. I trust that this will be the last time when I shall have occasion to bring this matter to the notice of the Minister.

I wish now to refer to Morley Park, a district that is progressing rapidly. When the school was opened, there were only enough children to warrant the school, but a stage has been reached where the one classroom is wholly inadequate and additional accommodation will have to be provided. In recent weeks the local Progress Hall has been used to accommodate children. I understand that a building site has been secured on which to erect a new school. During the winter months, many complaints were made to the local authority of some of the children being taught in the school shed. I made inquiries from the schoolmaster and he informed me that sometimes children were caught in the rain and had to stay in the shed. However, there is no question that the time has arrived when increased accommodation must be provided.

I have mentioned the matter of seating accommodation, and the department has given attention to it in the various schools. There are 13 schools in my electorate, and many of them are fairly large. Some are

increasing in size. I wish to refer to the facilities for serving Oslo lunches at the Rivervale school. Some time ago the women there started catering for the children in this way and they now complain that they have not a suitable room for their purpose. They want a room that could be made fly-proof, where they could have a refrigerator, and that could be locked up each day. Their present room was used as a washroom, and in the summer it is still so used. The time has arrived when something should be done to assist them. If members could see these Oslo lunches, they would realise that there is no comparison between them and what the children get at tuck shops. I doubt if a mother could give her child a cut lunch cheaper than an Oslo lunch. The children get good wholesome food, which must be of great value to them in the days to come, and the women doing this work are deserving of every encouragement and support. I urge the Minister to give them better accommodation. There are many other matters we could discuss on this Vote, but I know the Minister is doing a good job and I feel certain that he will continue to do so.

MR. OWEN (Swan) [10.18]: There is no doubt that this Vote will receive the support of all members of the Committee. We are pleased to note that education is receiving an extra grant this year. Unfortunately I was not in the Chamber when the Minister introduced his Estimates, and, as we have not received copies of "Hansard" for a considerable time, I have not had an opportunity to read his speech. But, from what I know of him and the opinions I have heard expressed by officers of his department, I am sure that he is alive to his responsibilities. In spite of some opinions to the contrary, I feel we are making progress in education in this State, although, in trying to read the writing of some of the children who have recently passed through the schools, one becomes doubtful as to whether they appreciate the need for being au fait with the three R's. To my mind, the three R's are not everything. The children should be taught the application of their reading, writing and arithmetic. Even those who have left school do not seem to understand why they have been taught these things. We should lay further stress on that application. I consider we are making progress and, even

though it is slow, it is better to progress by evolution than by revolution. We can consolidate as we go along.

There are one or two points I would like to touch on, although most of the ground has already been covered. I would like first to deal with the school teachers. The department has some excellent teachers, and I think that every encouragement should be given to those who wish to further their studies. Unfortunately in the past the practice has been too often for a teacher, once he has been allotted a school, to say, "I am a teacher now and that is as far as I need go." It is essential that all teachers should keep their knowledge up to date, and every opportunity should be given to those in the lower ranks to improve their status. I would like to mention one or two cases that came under my notice last year; they were of young teachers who were endeavouring to do their University studies part-time. I realise that at that time there was an acute shortage of teachers, and it was necessary for some, who were stationed in the metropolitan area, to be sent into the country, but I know of at least two young teachers who had already enrolled at the University and were taking part-time subjects, and they were, fairly late in the year, posted to country schools. I would like the Minister, if it is at all possible, to give to young teachers, who are willing and anxious to extend their knowledge, the opportunity of staying within easy distance of the metropolitan area and the University.

The member for Mt. Magnet mentioned the poor state of school buildings and equipment in his electorate. Well, we do not have to go to the backblocks to see school buildings and equipment in a dilapidated condition. There are many such buildings, even if not in the metropolitan area at least very close to it. I know that building material is at a premium, and we cannot expect that the schools will be brought up to date immediately, but I do hope—and here more than the Minister for Education is concerned, because most of the buildings are under the control of the Public Works Department—that every endeavour will be made to bring these schools into a good state of repair. The member for Greenough touched on a subject that has been mentioned by me and others in this Chamber, and that is the need for some sort of mobile workshop, run by the Education

Department, so that all equipment could be kept in good repair. In my electorate, two windows in one school were broken or blown out by gales during the winter, and for some months the children had no protection from the wind and rain. The teacher, in an endeavour to prevent the rain from coming in, placed bags over the broken windows. This made the room so dark the children could not see and, as a result, they had to endure the dampness of the rain and the coldness of the wind.

I made representations to the department, and also to the Minister, about the matter, and shortly afterwards tenders were called and a contract was let to have the school repaired. But it is only in the last week or two that the contractor has been on the job. If there had been a mobile workshop, such a small, but essential, repair could have been done immediately and the children spared much of the discomfort that they had to endure. Mention has been made of the desks, many of which need to be overhauled and put in good condition. Many of the dual-type desks, with hinged seats, soon wear at the hinges, so that the seat, instead of being level or tilted slightly backwards, slopes down in front and the children have difficulty in sitting in a comfortable posture while doing their work. It has been said that in some schools boxes have been used for the children to sit on. Well, they are preferable to seats that slope in the wrong direction.

I am pleased that the department has purchased land in two of the larger centres in my electorate for area schools, but I feel that unless those schools are proceeded with very shortly, it will be necessary to enlarge many of the smaller schools round about. There has been an increased attendance at these places, and in some instances one can find 50 children, and sometimes more, in one small room. The number of children within the space allotted might come within the specifications, but when we consider that there are two persons engaged in the one room teaching two lots of children and that the space around their desks occupies a considerable portion of the floor, it seems that the youngsters are rather cramped. I hope the Minister will apply himself to the work of education, and that the increased grant will be spent. I would have no objection if the amount of the Vote were exceeded during the year.

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION

(Hon. J. T. Tonkin—North-East Fremantle—in reply) [10.27]: The Estimates for this department have certainly had a flattering reception, and I would be less than human if I did not experience some pleasure as a result. Members have mentioned certain matters that require attention in their electorates. That is to be expected. Many schools need renovations, and many school grounds need attention. I have a complete list of the requirements of the various schools so far as grounds, internal and external renovations, and additions are concerned, and an attempt is being made to deal with them as quickly as possible, having regard to the needs of other departments. Various works will be dealt with in order of urgency, and where children are housed under bad conditions—where we are using shelter-sheds, or premises or halls belonging to other people—we will first endeavour to provide them with proper accommodation before giving attention to what I would regard as some of the frills of education, desirable no doubt but which must give place to the more essential requirements.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Agriculture, £192,112:

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE

(Hon. J. T. Tonkin—North-East Fremantle) [10.30]: This is one of the very important departments of the State, because so many of our people are engaged in earning their livelihood in some activity connected with it. Now that the war is happily behind us, we can review the position and endeavour to see in what way we can improve the agricultural development upon which this State so largely depends. Conditions in 1939 were somewhat unfavourable, but during the war the prices of various primary products rose considerably and, had it not been for reduced production, primary producers would have experienced a happy time. The shortage of manpower—which was grave—lack of machinery, lack of fertilisers, and a number of other difficulties, made normal production impossible and therefore the full advantage could not be taken of the ruling high prices. However, a considerable degree of stability was given to the incomes of primary producers through the various

schemes for maintaining price levels, schemes that involved subsidies or the acquiring of the product and the selling of it in an organised way.

Such plans made it possible for stability to be maintained and, though incomes in many cases were reduced, producers were nevertheless relieved of the fluctuations that were the order of the day prior to the war. Primary producers generally had a good idea from year to year how they would stand, albeit that in some cases their incomes were on a much reduced scale. As is well known, we in Western Australia depend largely on the use of superphosphate, and when the supply was seriously diminished we immediately found ourselves in difficulty. That of itself would have reduced acreages, even had there been no other factors operating. The war brought about close co-operation between the State Governments and the Commonwealth Government with, I think, considerable advantage to the primary producers. We can take as an example the marketing of the apple and pear crop.

A good deal of adverse criticism has been heard from time to time against the Apple and Pear Board. We heard of fruit rotting under the trees—fruit that might have been made available to people who were anxious to consume it. We heard of all sorts of things occurring which, taken by themselves, were not satisfactory. But, nevertheless, it is now freely admitted that the apple and pear acquisition scheme saved the industry from ruin. The producers, who are the best judges, have stated that definitely, and their attitude in requiring the continuance of the scheme, under State legislation if necessary, proves that the plan was indeed the saviour of the industry. It was unavoidable that under that plan there was a good deal of wastage. The export market was almost completely closed and the crop, which was far too large for local consumption, could never be disposed of in the local market, even had it been possible to handle it. However, there was insufficient labour to pick the crop and insufficient cases in which to market it. Therefore there was inevitably considerable waste of the product. The growers, though they had reduced incomes, nevertheless received a return that enabled them to carry on. Their orchards suffered through lack of fertiliser, but that was a condition that could not be prevented.

What happened in that industry through controls is indicative of what happened in a number of other industries which were looked after in much the same way. The maintenance of prices was one of the outstanding achievements of organisation during the war. Prices of all sorts of primary products, which, had the producers been left to their own devices, would have meant serious losses, were maintained and a serious impact on the Australian economy was averted. Various schemes were introduced and followed through with a good deal of efficiency, though not always with complete satisfaction to all concerned, and because of those schemes we were enabled to weather the difficult period.

We now find ourselves striving against difficulties brought about by numerous shortages, but nevertheless in a sound position to make some improvement as soon as conditions alter. The apple and pear industry is still seriously hampered, not because of any failure in the crop—the indications there are excellent—but because of the grave shortage of fruit cases. Though steps have been taken to increase considerably the production of such cases, the industry is still faced with a serious shortage, which must mean that not as much of the crop can be exported as is available for export. However, the industry is improving its position and as the fruit case supply is improved in the future so will this difficulty be removed, and Western Australia will derive considerable benefit.

The wheatgrowing industry is one upon which this State depends largely, and it is therefore of great concern to us. During the war period the shortage of superphosphate brought about a compulsory reduction in acreage. When the superphosphate position improved difficulties were encountered due to excessive rain during certain periods of the year. When speaking on the introduction of the Estimates, the Leader of the Opposition complained that he had previously made reference to a reduction in licensed acreages in Western Australia, as compared with what he termed tremendous increases in Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland. He said that though he had drawn attention to the matter his words had been ignored, and that no information had been vouchsafed. I have taken the trouble to have a table drawn up showing what the true position is. There are no grounds what-

ever for the statement of the Leader of the Opposition that there has been a great reduction in licensed acreage in Western Australia, as compared with tremendous increases in Victoria, New South Wales, and to a lesser degree in Queensland. Although I have no intention of reading the whole of the table, which is available if any member desires to peruse it, I shall mention by way of illustration a few of the totals in order to indicate the true position. The basic acreage relating to the year previous to 1941-42 was taken as follows:—

State.	Acre.
New South Wales	5,096,000
Victoria	3,195,000
Queensland	481,000
South Australia	3,058,000
Western Australia	3,205,000

and a negligible acreage for Tasmania, so small that we may disregard it. In 1941-42 the areas licensed were as follows:—

State.	Acre.
New South Wales	4,286,000
Victoria	2,877,000
Queensland	461,000
South Australia	2,497,000
Western Australia	2,687,000

I have the figures for the following years right up to and including 1945-46 for all the States and also the figures for 1946-47 for Western Australia. Here are the totals for 1945-46—

State.	Acre.	Approximate Increase.
New South Wales ..	4,380,000	600,000
South Australia ..	2,829,000	700,000
Victoria ..	3,570,000	60,000
Queensland ..	524,000	300,000
Western Australia ..	2,559,000	—

Of the total of 2,559,000 acres licensed for Western Australia in 1945-46, we were able to sow only 1,800,000 acres, which was 700,000 acres less than the area licensed. For 1946-47 our licensed area rose to 3,362,000 acres which was 100,000 acres in excess of our basic year. Despite that very large increase in the licensed area, we were able to sow only 75 per cent. of it, or 2,520,000 acres.

The reason for the inability of the State to sow its full licensed area lies in the fact that in the previous year, 1945-46, we had a very wet winter and a good deal of the ground was so waterlogged that it could not be fallowed. Therefore it was not available for cropping this year. Further, seeding could not be proceeded with on account of

the wet season. There was also difficulty in acquiring the necessary agricultural implements. This was a very serious obstacle that we could not overcome. We are dependent very largely upon the availability of shipping, and although many agricultural implements are on order and Western Australian firms had the implements lying on the wharves in the Eastern States, the greatest difficulty was experienced to get them delivered here. In this connection I have, through the department, made repeated representations to the Eastern States. I have had the assistance of the Department of Industrial Development, which has a liaison officer, and that officer has been able to give very material assistance and, from time to time as a result of his efforts, I have received advice of certain numbers of implements having been loaded on certain ships.

Mr. Seward: You are not referring to tractors, are you?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: No. Only last week I received further advice of another success achieved in this direction and of certain implements which had been placed on board ship for transport to this State. I am hoping that we shall be able to overcome these difficulties in time so that there will be progressive improvement in the industry and we shall be able to help the farmers out of difficulties which are seriously restricting the cropping they could undertake.

It is most unfortunate that this season, which opened so propitiously, should have tapered off rather badly and that the early promise is not to be realised, although, as compared with the experience of New South Wales, I suppose we have a good deal for which to be thankful. Our harvest, though down considerably, is by no means a failure, and in some districts has turned out particularly well, so that although the production is below what we expected to get, there is no reason to be downcast. Considering all the circumstances, we have emerged satisfactorily and in a much better position than has New South Wales. That State will have to import wheat from Victoria, not only for consumption in New South Wales, but also to keep its mills going to provide the requisite flour. Consequently, it looks as if there will not be a great deal of Australian wheat

available for export overseas, a fairly large proportion of the Victorian crop being required for New South Wales and there being no wheat in New South Wales available for export. At a time when the world is crying out for foodstuffs, it is most unfortunate that the Australian harvest should be so reduced, but this has resulted from conditions over which we have no control and so we have to put up with it.

Whether the wheat industry can look forward to a continuance of high prices in the years to come is a question upon which there is a considerable difference of opinion. My own view, having regard to what has happened previously and also to the capacity of countries like America and Russia to produce wheat, is that we must expect the future to be a repetition of the past. Despite the fact that the people in some countries have been educated to consuming wheat, whereas previously they consumed other cereals, which fact has resulted in a large market for our wheat, I believe we shall reach the stage where the production of wheat will be in excess of consumption. That will inevitably mean a reduction in price. The Washington agreement was formulated because of the belief that the time would arrive when there would be considerable over-production and it would be necessary to take certain steps to maintain a price level which would not be ruinous to producing countries.

Mr. Perkins: Are you sure that the Washington agreement was not designed to aid the consuming rather than the producing countries?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: There are differences of opinion on that point. My own idea is that it was definitely designed to look after the producers in the producing countries. If it were a matter of safeguarding the interests of consumers, of course over-production would be an advantage, not a disadvantage.

Mr. McDonald: There were four producing countries to one consuming country.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: That is true. It is patent that the conditions which existed 10 or 15 years ago will be found to occur again in the future. The question which arises is, how soon will such a state of affairs come about? While we might endeavour to forecast, not one of us

can say with certainty when it is likely to happen, because the best of calculations can be quite easily upset by an occurrence such as we had this year, when the season opened with promise, but did not turn out so well in the end. Then, too, a condition such as occurred in Great Britain might arise. Great Britain's crop was ready to harvest when there was a terrific storm which levelled many of the crops to the ground and prevented the harvesting of any grain whatever. Such possibilities may happen and they will upset the best of calculations. Despite those occurrences, if we take normal trends as being an indication I would say that the rapidity with which the American people have been able to increase their wheat production is an indication of the possibilities in that direction. We have to face the chance that, much sooner than we expect, the world production of wheat will be such as to menace a stable price level, unless steps are taken to safeguard it.

Mr. Perkins: A lot will depend on the condition of international trade.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Certainly. With regard to wool, the long-term outlook is by no means clear, but it is pleasing to note the activity of the Commonwealth in this connection. Considerable money is being expended on research into wool and the uses of wool, with a view to enlarging the market and therefore ensuring the future. Western Australia has been seriously affected because of the disease known as infertility in sheep in certain parts of the State. This is a problem which is proving most difficult to solve. A good deal of progress has been made with it, but we have to admit that so far we have not found the solution. Nor is the problem confined to Australia. Research into it has been undertaken in Great Britain.

Mr. McLarty: Does the trouble occur there?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes. Considerable research has been undertaken by an eminent professor with a view to finding a possible solution. This Government has been in negotiation with the C.S.I.R. with a view to enabling one of the officers, who has been engaged for some considerable time on this research, to go to London to work in collaboration with the professor. He will take with him the results that we have achieved so far. We cannot

proceed further with the investigation here, but I hope that with the collaboration of the professor, a solution will ultimately be found.

Mr. Seward: Who is the officer?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I have forgotten his name for the moment. Within recent days, negotiations have been carried on between the Government and the C.S.I.R. with a view to establishing in the southern portion of the State a research station for the purpose of investigating pastures and dystokia. The establishment of the station will, I hope, be a step along the road of pasture improvement in this State, with consequent benefit to producers. While on the subject of wool production and sheep, I would like to say that this morning I was reminded, when I had an opportunity to visit the meatworks at Robb's Jetty, that the policy of those works and the works at Albany is such as to give to producers a very distinct benefit.

Numbers of sheep which are marketed are of very plain quality. These would have the effect of depressing the price if the meatworks did not take the sheep from the market at a satisfactory price to the grower and turn them into smallgoods. The sheep are boned and the meat made available for smallgoods. In that way a market is provided for the producer and the price he receives is much better than it would be if this policy were not followed. When prices are buoyant there is no need for sheep to be bought for this purpose, as the grower can realise his price without this aid. That is one way in which the Government policy is helping the producer in the marketing of his products. Many requests are received for the establishment of research stations and experimental farms. It is not possible to secure these in every district that asks for them. We must endeavour so to space them as to serve the needs of many districts. Members will realise that if the department were to accede to every request for an experimental farm, these would be spaced a mile apart along the road and of course that is not possible. Therefore no attempt will be made to do it.

I wish to refer to the tobacco industry. The Leader of the Opposition said, to use his words, that the industry was in the doldrums. That is not so by any means. It experienced a period of decrease in production because

certain men in the industry decided to go in for something else. I believe a number of them did not enter the tobacco-growing industry in the first place with any intention of remaining in it. They had other reasons. But those men who have remained in the industry had their reward this year when the quality of the leaf was very considerably improved and when the return for the crop was very much enhanced, fully justifying the belief of the Government that there was a future in the industry and that if the right men remained in it there was nothing in it to fear so far as the production of leaf in Western Australia was concerned.

There are indications that the extension of this production to Karridale will give still better results than have been achieved elsewhere. The soil and climate appear to be very suitable for the production of high quality leaf, and a good deal is expected from production in that area. The assistance that has been rendered to the industry so far has been fully justified and will be continued; and this is a subject that will receive consideration at the next meeting of the Agricultural Council. The Commonwealth Government is most anxious that the industry, which was assisted in the early stages of the war, shall be enabled to continue, and I have no doubt that a satisfactory scheme will be finally drawn up that will enable the industry to continue to flourish.

Progress reported.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

THE PREMIER (Hon. F. J. S. Wise—Gascoyne): I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till 7.30 p.m. tomorrow.

House adjourned at 11.3 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Thursday, 5th December, 1916.

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

QUESTION.

COMPREHENSIVE WATER SCHEME.

As to Wellington Dam-Narrogin Area.

Hon. G. B. WOOD (for Hon. H. L. Roche) asked the Chief Secretary: On page 20 of the report issued by the Minister for Water Supplies in connection with the Comprehensive Water Scheme, 80,000,000 gallons of water per annum is shown as provided for the area between Wellington Dam and Narrogin.

As this area does not appear to be included in the proposed reticulation, will the Chief Secretary advise the House how it is anticipated this quantity of water will be consumed in that area?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

The 80,000,000 gallons per annum is the estimated quantity required to meet any direct draw-off from the main itself over this section.

MOTION—STANDING ORDER SUSPENSION.

On motion by the Chief Secretary, resolved:

That Standing Order No. 62 (limit of time for commencing new business) be suspended for the remainder of the session.