

the Bill because I consider it will be a great mistake, and I hope it will never reach the statute-book.

On motion by Hon. J. M. Macfarlane, debate adjourned.

### **BILL—VERMIN ACT AMENDMENT.**

Received from the Assembly and read a first time

*House adjourned at 10.43 p.m.*

## **Legislative Assembly,**

*Tuesday, 17th November, 1925.*

	PAGE
Questions: Coal Mining, English Capital ...	1927
Perth Hospital, nurses' hours ...	1927
Select Committee, Bills of Sale Act Amendment Bill, extension of time ...	1927
Bills: Vermin Act Amendment, 3a. ...	1927
Bush Fires Act Amendment, Report ...	1927
Annual Estimates, Votes and Items discussed ...	1927

The SPEAKER took the Chair at 4.30 p.m.; and read prayers.

### **QUESTION—COAL MINING, ENGLISH CAPITAL.**

Hon. G. TAYLOR asked the Premier: Have the Government any knowledge of an English company with a working capital of approximately £100,000 who are prepared to open up a new coal field in Western Australia, provided the Government will assure to them 25 per cent. of the Government coal consumption?

The PREMIER replied: No.

### **QUESTION—PERTH HOSPITAL, NURSES' HOURS.**

Mr. PANTON asked the Minister for Works: 1, Is he aware that reduction in the hours of nurses in the Perth Hospital is being delayed through want of extra accommodation? 2, Do the department intend to

proceed with the extension of the building? 3, If so, when will the work be started?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, Yes. 2 and 3, The commencement of this work depends upon money being available, and is being considered in the framing of the Loan Estimates.

### **SELECT COMMITTEE—BILLS OF SALE ACT AMENDMENT BILL.**

*Extension of time.*

On motion by Mr. Davy, the time for bringing up the committee's report was extended to 1st December.

### **/ BILL—VERMIN ACT AMENDMENT.**

Read a third time, and transmitted to the Council.

### **BILL—BUSH FIRES ACT AMENDMENT.**

Report of Committee adopted.

### **ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1925-26.**

*In Committee of Supply.*

Resumed from the 5th November; Mr. Lutey in the Chair.

*Department of Chief Secretary (Hon. J. M. Drew, Minister); Hon. S. W. Munsie (Honorary Minister) in charge of the Votes.*

*Vote—Chief Secretary, £16,282:*

HON. S. W. MUNSIE (Honorary Minister—Hannans) [4.37]: The Chief Secretary's Department, as the home department, is responsible for the conduct of what might be termed the domestic affairs of the State. I may be pardoned for drawing attention to the varied and important character of its component parts. There is no other department in the State that has as many branch departments. There are the branch departments attending to the welfare of aborigines in the southern portion of the State, to fisheries and game, to registration of births, marriages and deaths, under which also come the registration of friendly societies and statistical and actuarial work; to prisons and prisoners, to harbour and lights, a sub-de-

partment controlling the various ports and jetties except those coming under the administration of the Railway Department; to the care and treatment of the insane, to State children and outdoor relief, and to the State Labour Bureau. A perusal of this list of departmental functions suggests that the department is the one big spending organisation of the Government, rather than a revenue-producing one. Several of the branch departments call for heavy expenditure without giving any compensating return by way of income. It is not my intention to go into the details of revenue and expenditure.

Mr. Sampson: Some of the prisoners might be given a little more work.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: I know the hon. member believes in that. For some time the establishment of a prison farm has been under consideration. It was being considered when the hon. member occupied the office of Colonial Secretary.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: And when the Labour Party were in power, before that.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: Yes, it has been under consideration for quite a long time. A property down near Waroona was under offer for the purpose, and I believe the departmental heads reported fairly favourably on its purchase. However, at that time the finances of the State would not permit of the purchase. Still, the matter has not been altogether dropped and if and when the finances will permit of the scheme being carried out, I believe it is the intention of the Chief Secretary to support the establishment of a prison farm. I quite agree that in many cases prisoners could be put to useful work, not only in the interests of the State, but in their own interests also.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: If you could get them away from settlement, probably they could have more freedom.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: Had we been able to purchase that estate in the Waroona district the prisoners on the proposed farm would have been well away from present settlement. It will be noticed that on the Estimates there is an increase of £7,300 as compared with last year's expenditure. The department principally responsible for this is Lunacy and Inebriates and Dairy Farm, which it is estimated will cost £3,000 more than last year. Then the State Children Department asks for £2,500 more than last year, while half-a-dozen other branch depart-

ments are accountable for the balance. In a department such as that of Chief Secretary where day in and day out the work of looking after the helpless, the sick and the poor goes on, there is very little of interest and very few changes of importance to refer to nor do I know that I can mention any improved facilities that have not been already reported to the House. A new mental home for soldiers is now in course of erection at West Subiaco at the joint cost of Commonwealth and State. It is estimated that the cost will be £45,000 and it is hoped the building will be finished by about May next. It will accommodate 70 cases, and the institutional basis will be departed from as far as practicable. The cost to the State is reduced considerably from what it was expected would have to be spent. I believe that under the present agreement the State is getting a better deal than it was getting under the original agreement with the Commonwealth.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Each pay half, I suppose?

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: Yes, in respect of the buildings. There are several amendments in the present agreement which are a big advantage to the State. Still, I am not satisfied. When this proposal was brought forward seeing that the institution is being built for returned soldiers, the Commonwealth should have borne the whole of the cost. It was not fair that the State should bear any of it, but we have the best agreement we could get from them, and the work is now proceeding. It is also proposed to open a juvenile section of the Claremont Hospital for the Insane. The buildings were finished recently but funds were not available for furnishing. The children will be housed separately and have their own playground. The removal of the children will to some extent relieve the overcrowding in the female section of the hospital. Another male block is being opened also, and this will reduce the overcrowding. Provision is made for another assistant medical officer, and a part-time dentist. Last year, owing to the financial stringency the position of dentist at the Asylum was abolished. I am pleased to be able to say that arrangements are now being made for the employment of a part-time dentist. There is not enough work for a full-time man. It is anticipated that a part-time dentist will be able to do all the dental work required there.

Hon. G. Taylor: Is all the dental work done there as well as extractions?

**Hon. S. W. MUNSIE:** Yes. At the dairy farm in connection with the Asylum, provision is made for the acquisition of 15 pure-bred milking shorthorn cows at a cost of £525. This will enable the department to cease purchasing milk from outside, and the progeny of the cows will be useful in providing stock for the South-West settlements. Another reason for the increase is that the working hours of nurses and domestic servants have been reduced from 52 to 48 per week. The Government have decided to suspend the close season for opossums for five weeks. This has been proclaimed as from the 1st November. The estimated revenue from this source is about £4,000. The Fisheries Department has undertaken the fish acclimatisation work formerly attended to by the Acclimatisation Society. The Beadon Jetty is now in full working order, and under the control of the Harbour and Lights Department. The activities of the Labour Bureau continue to increase over the past years, to the advantage of the workers, the employers, and the State. I have in my possession details of these Estimates, and am ready to give to members any information they may desire. I have pleasure in submitting the Estimates of the Chief Secretary.

**MR. SAMPSON (Swan) [4.50]:** The details of these particular estimates are always of great interest, and none the less so on this occasion. It is a very important department, inasmuch as controlled by it are all these matters of domestic concern or of sociological importance. In common with the Honorary Minister I regret that no advance has been made with regard to the utilisation of prison labour. It is recognised the world over that if prisoners are to be reformed they must be employed. The idle, or partially idle, prisoner is certainly not being put in the way of being reformed. When a man, through some misdemeanour or crime first finds himself in the Fremantle Gaol he may have no great disinclination for work, but after a period of incarceration, with the very limited opportunities that offer for work, it is inevitable that dislike for work should be engendered in him. That man thus becomes a greater menace on his release from prison than he was before he went in. I know that small payments are made to prisoners in certain circumstances, but the main difficulty in our prison at Fremantle has been that there is insufficient work for those who are held there. This is not the case in certain

other States. I had the opportunity of visiting the principal prison in Queensland. The superintendent there informed me that his difficulty was not how to keep prisoners employed, but how to get through the work it was possible to give them. It is a pity the same position does not appertain here. I have always viewed this matter, and I know other members have done so, from a non-party standpoint. It is in the interests of the State generally and of the prisoners in particular, that they should be given every opportunity to reform. If, in the course of the reformation the evil of idleness is set up, there can be no great hope from the reformatory standpoint. It has often been suggested that the acquisition of a farm for the utilisation of prison labour should be taken in hand. No real progress, however, has been made. There are other opportunities whereby it would be possible for prisoners to occupy their time profitably, thereby lessening their charge upon the State, and reducing the incubus they are to those that are free. In New Zealand and New South Wales a good deal of work is done through afforestation. In New Zealand the prisoners do a great deal of road making work. When one realises the enormous difficulties that face the wide-flung areas of Western Australia in this respect, we might very properly take advantage of the labour that is held in comparative idleness in Fremantle, and utilise it in the way suggested. The people generally would like to see that done. It would be better to utilise the services of the prisoners in some way such as this, rather than continue as we are doing at present. I do not like the idea of the treadmill method of employment that was in vogue many years ago. The prisoners also used to pick okum. In most prisons that work is not now done. I do not say that okum picking is not better than idleness, for idleness is very trying, and dangerous. It would be possible at a low cost to clear a quantity of virgin land. The prisoners could be set to work on such a block, and render it suitable for cultivation. Possibly the Minister will take this suggestion into consideration. In other countries where work such as I have suggested, clearing land, quarrying, farming, etc., is done by prisoners the honour system is in vogue. It appears to be a strange method by which prisoners are controlled, but wherever it has been used it has proved satisfactory. It is rare for a prisoner who has given his word to do a certain

thing and placed on parole or on his honour, to fail to carry out the task. The same result would I am sure follow here. In respect to the State Children's Department, wonderful work is being carried out. A large number of women are discharging the duties of foster mothers. I believe there are between 300 and 400 such women in the State, or there were in my time. These women are doing excellent work. It is wonderful how earnest and sincere they become. It is a common belief that unless children are brought up by their parents they can never be properly cared for, but the service rendered to the orphans that are in the care of these foster mothers gives a full reply to that belief. The work of the secretary of the department, Mr. Watson, and that of Messrs. Meachen and Crew, and others, in respect of the adoption of children, is excellent.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: Do not forget Miss Smith, who does a large proportion of the work.

Mr. SAMPSON: Yes. I fully acknowledge the work of the women connected with the department. They are very sympathetic and practical and thoroughly sincere. I believe about 500 children are under adoption here. When one recalls the facts recorded in history, one realises that it does not do to neglect the children. Many good men and women have been developed notwithstanding that their birth has been what may be regarded as obscure. Many of the children under the care of foster mothers have lost their parents through accident or sickness. While they have had to face a heavy handicap through the loss of one or both of their parents, they have commenced life under the brightest of conditions so far as parentage is concerned. The arrangement that has been completed between the Federal and State Governments regarding the Hospital for the Insane is reasonably satisfactory, but no provision has been made for Imperial soldiers. The defence of the Commonwealth is the function of the Commonwealth. The circumstances that arose out of the aftermath of the war in respect to the mental disabilities of those who are in Claremont and elsewhere, should, I think, be acknowledged and met by the Commonwealth Government. I recall the fact that in the early days of consideration to the housing and special care of soldier mental patients I urged that that consideration should not be limited to men who enlisted in Australia, but that it should

be extended to Imperial men in Australia who were suffering from mental trouble as the result of the war, and that they should be looked after in the same building and under the same agreement. At the Hospital for Insane there is a State farm where good work is done with a dairy herd. An additional area of land, however, is necessary. Consideration was given to extending the existing area by 30 to 50 acres, in which there is a swamp and permanent water. Unfortunately the recommendation was not finalised. While the ground in view is not of great value from the aspect of fertility, it does afford added accommodation for the cattle, and the inclusion of the swamp would improve the farm greatly. I hope, accordingly, that this ground will be added to the area of the farm. The Honorary Minister referred to the fact that the State Labour Bureau is doing good service. While I recognise that that is so, I regret that these Estimates did not afford the Honorary Minister scope for drawing comparisons between the work of the State Labour Bureau and that of private employment agencies.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: There is nothing on the Estimates in that regard.

Mr. SAMPSON: Unfortunately that is so. Nevertheless I venture to say that the services rendered by the State Labour Bureau will be none the less efficient if private labour bureaux continue. The Chief Secretary's Department generally is one calling for a good deal of expenditure. Its ramifications are such as to render difficult the bringing about of improvements. However, as regards prisons and one or two other matters to which I have referred, there is, in my opinion, opportunity for improvement.

MR. THOMSON (Katanning) [5.5]: In view of the splendid success achieved by private trawlers in New South Wales, it would be advisable for our Fisheries Department to bring up to date the reports they have available on the subject of trawling, so that copies of those reports may be sent to the Old Country for use in proper channels. When I was at Home I got in touch with certain people on this subject, but upon my return to Western Australia I did not receive as much support as I would have liked. There is undoubtedly an excellent opportunity for establishing the trawling industry here. The grounds have been sur-

veyed, and we should embark on the industry. As regards migration, we are directing our efforts principally toward land settlement. There is, however, in the north of Scotland a fine type of people who make their living by trawling, following practically no other occupation; and I commend to the earnest consideration of the Government the possibility of encouraging such people to come out here and establish themselves in the fishing industry. To-day that industry is, unfortunately, entirely in the hands of people known as "dagoes." It includes very few British people, and we might direct our attention to bringing out here, with an eye to the establishment of the trawling industry, an excellent class of people who during the war played an important part in helping to keep the seas clear of mines and other dangers. If—which God forbid!—we should at some future time find ourselves forced into another war, we could depend on these Scottish fishermen in case of emergency. It would be much better to assist those people to come out here and establish themselves in the fishing industry than to leave that industry entirely to foreigners.

The Minister for Lands: Perhaps they might be engaged in your part of the State, where all the foreigners find employment.

Mr. THOMSON: I do not know to what the Minister's interjection refers, as in my district there is no fishing, it being purely an agricultural district.

Mr. Sleeman: I suppose the Minister is thinking of land sharks!

Mr. THOMSON: The Honorary Minister mentioned that the department had done good work in the way of acclimatisation. That excellent activity was first promoted by a committee under the direction of the present Senator Kingsmill, who travelled the country at his own expense. For the existence of many fish in our rivers we have to tender our thanks to that gentleman. I am glad that the good work is being continued. I myself had hoped to form a trawling company and bring out Scottish fishermen here; however, as I have said, I did not receive the support I thought I would have got. I commend to the Honorary Minister's notice the good service rendered by the Chief Inspector of Fisheries. On my return I received from that official every assistance and encouragement. Certainly it was not his fault that my efforts to establish a local trawling company ended in failure. The

Honorary Minister, referring to another activity of the department, stated that the period for trapping opossums was being extended and that a revenue of £4,000 was expected. In many of the country districts great dissatisfaction exists owing to the fact that the Government protect kangaroos. Numerous requests have been made to the department for the removal of the protection, especially in the farming districts. Deputations have adduced instances where kangaroos have done immense harm, at times making a clean sweep. The department's reply has been, "Very well, if you can prove that, we will give you the right to shoot as many kangaroos as you like." The farmer, however, is not in a position to devote all his time to safeguarding his property from the kangaroos. In my district the general opinion is that much good would result if the Government would for a period relax the protection of kangaroos and so afford an opportunity for thinning them out by the ordinary trapper. I know this is like King Charles's head: I believe the proposal has been continually before the department during the whole of this year. I have sent in letter after letter on the subject, and various deputations have waited upon Ministers, when in my district, to urge the destruction of kangaroos. I agree with the Honorary Minister that the hospital being erected for soldier mental patients should have been a Commonwealth responsibility. Certainly, the care of such cases is just as much a Commonwealth responsibility as is the payment of war pensions. The pensions of soldier patients, of course, are continued. I regret that the previous Government, which included the member for Swan, did not insist that the care of soldier mental patients was entirely a responsibility of the Commonwealth Government.

Mr. Sampson: I have already pointed out that that was done.

Mr. THOMSON: There is an impression that if the previous Government had insisted, recognition of the responsibility might have been obtained.

Mr. Sampson: We insisted for months afterwards, and still the position remained the same.

Mr. THOMSON: The fact is to be regretted.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: We may easily regret that the Commonwealth did not do more, but we cannot help it.

Mr. THOMSON: The responsibility in question belongs to the Federal Government. However, we in fact have the responsibility, and must carry it out. I would not for one moment say that the State should not do its duty by these unfortunate afflicted men. It would be interesting to know how many of the cases in the Claremont Hospital for Insane are classified as incurable. In this connection it seems to me that we are not completely civilised. I have to say, and I say it with sorrow, that if we have anything belonging to us which is incurable, we do in all human kindness put it out of its suffering. I know it is a dreadful thing to say, but we realise that there are unfortunate people who are so insane that there is no possible hope of their ever regaining their mental balance. From experience I know that there are terrible things to be seen in the Asylum. It does seem to me, therefore, that, in all common humanity, it would be a wise thing to let these people go quietly to sleep. I know that when this subject is mentioned, people raise objections and say that we have no right to interfere with life. For my part I would go further and say that there are many people suffering from most dreadful diseases and it would be in the interests of those people themselves, as well as of others, if they, too, were put quietly to sleep. Dealing with our gaols, I support the remarks made by the member for Swan (Mr. Sampson) when he suggested that we should utilise the services of those unfortunate persons who have to be looked after by the State for a time, by finding some avenue of employment that will be remunerative. If that were done these unfortunates would not be confined wholly to the gaols. If what has been suggested were adopted, I would go further and advocate the prisoners being allowed to earn a few shillings so that when the time comes for them to be released from prison, they will have a few pounds to their credit and thus give them a reasonable chance to secure a position. I understand that at present they are paid something like 2d. a day in respect of their earnings while in gaol. If prisoners were engaged on prison farms, more healthy employment would be provided for them and they would be given an opportunity to do good work. Those men could receive a considerably higher rate of pay than they are getting under the existing conditions. That would be of advantage to them when they were released.

Mr. Sampson: Part of the money could be used for the sustenance of a prisoner's family.

Mr. THOMSON: Yes. Years ago I suggested that it would be wise to utilise the services of good conduct prisoners on road making, or some other suitable employment.

Mr. George: That question has been debated half a dozen times during the last 20 years.

Mr. THOMSON: That may be so, but it does not mean that the question should not be mentioned again. Possibly when a member of Parliament is placed in charge of a department, he is able to realise that there are greater difficulties to be overcome than the ordinary member of Parliament or a private citizen realises. However, if prisoners were used in the way I have mentioned, they would have a healthier life and it might encourage in them a fondness for the country and induce them on being released to work in the open air. I hope that before the present Government go out of office, whether that time be long or short, they will take into consideration the establishment of prison farms. I propose to ask the Minister one or two questions dealing with harbours and jetties and will not deal further with that branch of the departmental activities. What little experience I have had of the State Children Department and the system of outdoor relief has shown me that the departmental officers and the various Ministers who have been in charge of that branch of Government work, have always been sympathetic in their consideration of the various cases I have brought under their notice. This phase of the departmental work plays an important part, and whoever initiated the scheme for outdoor relief did good work in the interests of the community. It has helped mothers who have been widowed to bring their children up in a proper way, and even if that is not possible the department has assisted the mothers in many directions. There are one or two questions I desire to ask under this heading when we are dealing with the items.

MR. NORTH (Claremont) [5.21]: I wish to refer to the activities of the Fisheries Department and to draw the attention of the Minister to the fact that a lot of "dagoes" are accustomed to fish with nets in Freshwater Bay. That is against the law, and I hope the Minister will look into the question and have increased protection afforded

to prevent the continuation of the practice in those waters. Another matter I desire to refer to is the rejection of Randall's transport tender between the Claremont Railway Station and the Hospital for the Insane. I wish to bring before the Minister's attention the curious circumstances under which the lowest tender was not accepted. I hope he will explain why Randall's tender was not accepted. About a year ago I wrote to the department protesting against the fact that Randall and secured the tender and the bus drivers were jealous because it had been given to Randall. At that time I received the following reply—

In reply to yours of 12th inst., addressed to the Hon. Colonial Secretary regarding the above, I have by direction to advise that advantage was taken by the department of a motor bus service inaugurated along Davis-road, Claremont, by a motor car proprietor of Claremont, who held the hospital motor car contract expiring on the 31st December, 1924. By mutual consent this contract was cancelled and the present linking-up arrangements with the motor bus service entered into, with the approval of the Tender Board, for a period of twelve months. The arrangement is advantageous to the department.

Twelve months later tenders were again called and instead of the arrangement with Randall being advantageous to the department, his tender was turned down, although it was the lowest, and that received from a man named Best was accepted. The file dealing with this question was placed on the Table of the House a little while ago and this document discloses that an officer of the department wrote a minute which was favourable to the acceptance of Randall's tender. It is extremely hard to understand why that tender was not accepted. The officer's minute was as follows:—

These tenders have had the careful consideration of the board, and despite the ambiguity of Mr. Randall's tender, they are of opinion that same is sufficiently clear to enable a firm and binding contract being entered into. In the circumstances, and as Mr. Randall's tender is the lowest, the board recommend same be accepted, but before finalising the contract, which is a periodical one, I have been directed to forward same on for the approval of the Executive Council.

The Minister for Lands: There was another recommendation before that one.

Mr. NORTH: The file is a long one.

The Minister for Lands: There is another minute saying that Randall's tender was informal.

Mr. NORTH: Perhaps so, but it is a long file and I cannot waste the time of the House.

The Minister for Lands: Of course you cannot!

Mr. NORTH: I am anxious that the Minister shall reply to my question, if he can.

The Minister for Lands: You know the tender was informal!

Mr. NORTH: I have read the minute from the officer concerned, who was the clerk in charge of the Tender Board, who said that, as Randall's tender was the lowest, the board recommended that it should be accepted.

The Minister for Lands: Be honest and read the first one.

Mr. Teesdale: But that minute should have ended it!

Mr. NORTH: There is no question of honesty about it.

The Minister for Lands: I do not wish to impugn your honesty, but read the first minute, where it is pointed out that the tender was informal.

Mr. NORTH: I have read the minute, which recommended the acceptance of Randall's tender. I notice that the Premier came into the matter with a long minute, and the upshot of it was that in the end Best received the contract at a higher rate. Then this letter was written some three months afterwards—

In reply to your letter of the 27th ult., I beg to inform you that Mr. Randall's tender was lower on one item but not on the major portion of the contract, besides which he was unable to comply with the expressed conditions in regard to date of commencement of a charabanc service. As regards Mr. Randall's present contract for a motor passenger service, the board has not received any complaints regarding the manner in which this is being carried out.

It would appear that there were some other conditions that counted, but I have not been able to ascertain what they were. In the end, however, the upshot has been that Best has handed over the contract to Randall again, and I am told that Randall is carrying it out at the different rate. It is not a question of the difference between 3s. 6d. and 2s. 6d., but of principle. I hope the Minister will explain why Randall, who was giving good service, was turned down.

**MR. ANGELO** (Carnarvon) [5.26]: Hon. members know that millions of pounds are being spent in an endeavour to settle the southern portions of the State, the object being to minimise the huge amount spent on imports, principally butter and dairy produce, that are brought into Western Australia from the Eastern States each year. The point is not stressed, however, that each year Western Australia imports about £150,000 worth of fish. About £20,000 worth of that total is imported from the Eastern States. That is not a very desirable position, but so far as I know steps have not been taken by the Government or anyone else to obviate it. Steps should be taken to see that that money is not sent away but is kept here. The clearing of land is necessary before dairy produce can be available for the people, but on the other hand we have the fish in enormous quantities along our coastline from Albany to the North-West.

The Minister for Lands: We had an expensive trial in some parts of the North-West.

**MR. ANGELO**: I am aware of that, and intended to refer to that aspect. Some time ago the Government started a fishery, but, unfortunately, they commenced at the wrong end. They should have provided the transport and left it to private enterprise to catch the fish.

The Minister for Lands: That is not what you put up. You got me for a fool that time when I was on the telephone.

**MR. ANGELO**: I do not know about that.

The Minister for Lands: I know. All you wanted was the money.

**MR. ANGELO**: The boat that was provided for bringing the fish down the coast was too small, and it did not get the fish down in time to keep them fresh. Another matter of concern is the high price the people of the metropolitan area are asked to pay for their fish. In Sydney I saw schnapper cutlets sold at 9d. a lb. Here we are asked to pay 1s. 6d. a lb. or 100 per cent. more than they have to pay in Sydney. Again we have to pay 1s. 3d. a lb. for mullet.

**MR. TEESDALE**: You are lucky to be able to buy it at that. I cannot afford to do so.

**MR. ANGELO**: Millions of tons of mullet are available, but no attempt is made to catch the fish. I do not say that the Government should subsidise anyone to undertake this business or even to start another State enterprise. Some expert opinion should be obtained as to the quantity of fish we have

along our coast line and recommendations secured as to how the fish should be caught and treated. It is ridiculous that such huge quantities of preserved fish should be imported from Scotland, and even from South Africa, and retailed here at 10d. per lb., while consumers have to pay 1s. 6d. a lb. for our own product. There is something radically wrong. The suggestion of the Leader of the Country Party should be adopted. We should promulgate, amongst people in the northern part of Britain, who are accustomed to the fisheries life, the knowledge that we have all this fish available.

**MR. PANTON**: Fishermen who know this coast do not agree with your argument that it is available.

**MR. ANGELO**: But how far north do the fishermen go? No distance. They fish in the waters around Fremantle and Geraldton, while nearly all the big fish come from Shark Bay. Shark Bay, however, is not the limit of our coastline. Beyond that is another 2,000 miles of coast teeming with fish, and yet no attempt is made to secure for the public that foodstuff which is so essential to general health.

**MR. GRIFFITHS**: What about the trawling grounds of the Bight?

**MR. ANGELO**: I do not know much about them, but the experiments carried out by the trawler, of which we had a loan some years ago, were very satisfactory and established that we had some wonderful grounds, especially in the North-West. These have not even yet been explored. The matter should be thoroughly investigated. We want the opinion of experts who can report as to the quantity of fish available, the best methods of catching them and of retailing them to the people of the metropolitan area at a reasonable price. I feel certain that, if something of the kind were done, three or four times the quantity of fish eaten to-day would be consumed, and the health of the community would benefit considerably thereby. Another subdepartment is that of Harbour and Light. Last year the Government increased the land tax on the understanding that a set-off would be provided by way of a reduction of railway freights. There are no railway freights in my district, but I strongly urge the Government that a reduction be made in the wharfage charges at North-West ports as a set-off to the higher land tax that the North-West people have to pay.



Hon. S. W. Munsie: Have you any idea what difference it would make to the cost of living if the charges were totally abolished?

Mr. ANGELO: I should imagine that it would make a considerable difference. Every penny added to the cost of goods makes a difference.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: It would make a difference of not 2d. per lb. to the North-West.

Mr. ANGELO: The Government year by year are increasing the revenue derived from the North-West ports. In 1911 the loss on the Carnarvon jetty was £170. In 1922 there was a profit of £852, and according to the harbour master's report of last year, the revenue over and above expenditure was no less than £4,817. Surely some concession should be made to the people of the North. I wish to refer to the difficulty of dealing with goods landed from steamers at North-West ports. The department, as a rule, take no responsibility for goods landed before 8 a.m. or after 5 p.m. Unfortunately, the steamers nearly always arrive at Carnarvon by night. That is due to the hour of departure from Fremantle.

The Minister for Lands: It is the same in every port.

Mr. ANGELO: The department take no responsibility, and will not even look to see whether the cases are intact when landed on the jetty. Some amendment should be made to the regulations, so that the people of the North-West might receive a little fairer treatment than they are getting at present. Their interests should be more fully protected by the Government. It could easily be arranged by having an extra watchman to inspect the goods on being landed and see the condition of the packages. Then, if the cases were damaged, a protest should immediately be made to the ship's officers. I urge the Minister to give this matter consideration.

MR. GEORGE (Murray-Wellington) [5.36]: I wish to deal briefly with the tender for the motor service to the Hospital for the Insane. Sometimes when people do not get all they expect, they feel they have a grievance, and perhaps they might speak rather wildly at times. It seems to me that the Minister slipped somewhat in dealing with this matter. It is true that when the Tender Board reported on the tenders, reference was made to an ambiguity

in Mr. Randall's tender. Judging from the way in which it was put, the board did not regard the ambiguity as of great importance, but directed the Minister's attention to it in order that a remedy might be sought. From the papers on the file, the ambiguity consisted of this: While Randall was not prepared to put on a charabanc straight away, because he did not have it, he submitted a price for which he would supply a charabanc, which would be ready for use about the 1st December. His price was £40 per month, the same as Best and Son's tender, but his price for a motor car was 2s. 6d. as against Best's price of 3s. 6d. I do not suggest that any favouritism has been or should be shown, but if a person makes a mistake in the forms and it is an absolutely clear mistake, and not one for trickery or anything of that kind, he should receive consideration. Randall, instead of submitting his tender for £40 per month for the charabanc on a white form, put in his tender for motor cars accurately, but attached a statement in the following terms:—

Mr. Randall is prepared to place a motor bus for the service on 1st December, 1925, carrying from 10 persons upwards, at £40 per calendar month, or 10 persons upwards at 3s. per trip.

The member for Claremont (Mr. North) took up the case with the Tender Board and asked them a straight-out question. The reply he received was as follows:—

In reply to your letter of the 27th ultimo, I beg to inform you that Mr. Randall's tender was lower on one item but not on the major portion of the contract, besides which he was unable to comply with the express conditions in regard to date of commencement of a charabanc service.

That is a letter of a kind sometimes sent officially. Perhaps we have all done it at times, but it is not quite a fair thing. It says that Randall's tender was lower on one item but not on the major portion of the contract. It is true he was not lower on the major portion of the contract, but his tender was exactly the same for the charabanc as the tender of the Messrs. Best, and on the other portion he was lower by 1s. I state my point of view that he should have had the contract. If through inexperience he put in his tender on the wrong form, that in itself was not sufficient to result in his not getting the contract.

The Minister for Lands: If you call tenders for one thing and a man tenders for

an entirely different thing, you must either call tenders again or accept the offer of the man who tendered correctly for the work.

Mr. GEORGE: This case is not parallel. Randall put in his price for the motor service at 2s. 6d. and submitted it on the white form. He could not supply a charabanc on the day it was wanted, but intimated that it would be available in about two months' time. His tender was not lower on the major portion of the contract, being exactly the same as that of his competitor, but it was 35 per cent. lower on the motor car service. I contend that Randall's tender should have been fairly considered. I do not want offence to be taken at what I am about to say, but the following statement appears on the file. It is a letter from Mr. W. H. Kitson, secretary of the Fremantle District Council of the Australian Labour Party, dated 27th December, 1924, and reads:

At the last meeting of this council a further report was received in regard to the contract let to Mr. Randall of Claremont for the conveyance of passengers to and from the Mental Hospital, and after further consideration it was resolved, "That the Minister be requested to cancel the contract with Mr. Randall of Claremont, and that tenders be called through the Tender Board, one of the conditions to be that union wages must be paid. Trusting you will give this matter your early consideration."

That was sent to the Colonial Secretary. Just before that time someone representing himself to be from the Trades Hall had gone to Mrs. Randall and demanded to see her book showing the wages paid and all the rest of it. She promptly refused, because she said she did not know what authority the man had to ask for the information. She then received from this emissary a reply distinctly threatening in regard to the contract. On the 17th February, 1925, the following letter was sent to the Colonial Secretary from the Fremantle District Council of the A.L.P.—

I have to advise that your letter dated 12th January, in reply to mine of 27th December, was placed before a meeting of this council last week, when I was instructed to forward a letter of protest against the continuance of this contract. It is noted that it is not practicable during the currency of the existing contract to comply with our request that it be cancelled, and my council trusts that when same expires due consideration will be given to our representations in this matter.

Personally, I should not take any notice of such a letter if the individual who called

upon Mrs. Randall had not represented himself as coming from the Trades Hall. He may not have come from the Trades Hall, but he impressed upon Mrs. Randall that he did so, and because she refused to let him see her books, he threatened her that "she would see" when the next tender came along.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: He was secretary of the organisation and he had a right to see it.

Mr. GEORGE: Yes, but first he must show his bona fides. I am not making any insinuations. All I wish to say is that this business caused so much conversation around Claremont as to justify its being brought under notice. First it was referred to Mr. North and then to me. The minute sent by Mr. Drew to Cabinet on the subject is a long one and I will not read it, but the effect of it is that Mr. Drew evidently formed an opinion which the papers do not quite warrant. On going through the file it will be seen that Randall was asked to supply the service to the Claremont Hospital last year and did so apparently satisfactorily. Then the officers required some other work done which was outside the contract. He was asked what his price would be and he gave it. The officers recommended that the amount should be paid to him. If it had been in the contract, it would not have been recommended. Mr. Drew in his minute, went on to speak of the satisfaction given by Randall, but I cannot find anything in the file that is sufficient to justify what is running through the minute. I know Mr. Drew to be an honourable man, but I think he must have been in some way misled, but by whom I cannot say. We know that it is not possible to satisfy everyone, but what we can do is to avoid giving people a peg upon which to hang a grievance. Here we have not only a peg, but a whole row of them. A man puts in a tender and his price is the same as that of another man, and yet we are told by the letter I have read, which evidently deceived Mr. North, that the tender was lower in one part, but not for the major portion. Being 35 per cent. lower on the motor prices, and equal on the other part and was giving satisfaction, I contend that Randall, in the interests of the State, should have been given the contract. I learn from Mr. North that the man who did get the contract has transferred it to Randall, and I presume that Randall is getting 3s. 6d. from the State. If that is so, the State is losing a shilling a trip. That is not good for anyone. The case is a glaring one

of misplaced judgment. I am not accusing anyone, but I do think that the file discloses that more care and discretion should have been exercised.

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS** (Hon. W. C. Angwin—North-East Fremantle) [5.50]: I did not intend to speak on these Estimates, but having perused the file, I gather that there was a good deal of complaint at the time the contract was let, because it was thought that tenders should have been advertised and other people given the opportunity to tender. Randall went on with the work and some of the duties he was supposed to carry out were not attended to. The member for Murray-Wellington (Mr. George) said that Randall claimed payment for certain work and that the officials recommended it. If my memory serves me well, one of those duties was in respect of meeting late trains which, it was understood, in accordance with the contract, he had to do. But the number of passengers at that hour was so small that he found it did not pay him and he stopped running at the late hour, and the officers kicked up a row. The question was then raised, and it was thought to be unfair, that the contractor should go to the asylum with only one passenger, and a recommendation was made that he should be paid something additional. The member for Murray-Wellington said that it must have been all right otherwise the recommendation would not have been made that Randall should be paid. The fact was that the contract did not pay Randall and it was reported then that the man was not satisfied with what he was receiving. The time arrived for tenders to be called again, and in a minute, Mr. Drew expressed the opinion that it would have been better to have complied with the request of the member for Claremont in the first instance. Tenders were called and instead of a motor service being instituted a charabanc service was decided on. That was the only tender that complied with the conditions of the contract.

Mr. George: I explained that.

The **MINISTER FOR LANDS**: No; the hon. member said that tenders were called. Randall wrote on a slip of paper that he had complied with the contract to a certain date.

Mr. North: The officer recommended it.

The **MINISTER FOR LANDS**: No, he sent word to the Chief Secretary that he considered the tender was ambiguous. The re-

sult was that it went back, and afterwards, on the second occasion, its acceptance was recommended. I have had deputations from people in regard to treating outside the tender board. There was a case only the other day where tenders were invited for the supply of plaster sheets, and where the tender accepted was for the supply of a sheet called "fibrolite." Then a complaint was made because we accepted the tender for the supply of a material different from that which was advertised. I would not have agreed to it if I had known that, and I said that in future, if a certain article was wanted and tenders were invited for that class of article, nothing but that should be accepted. It is a very difficult job to depart from advertised tenders. Immediately you do so you create a lot of trouble. That is just what happened in the Claremont case. But is there anything at the back of it? The hon. member suggested that a certain proposal came from the Trades Hall. The Trades Hall had the right to consider a matter of this kind, when it was found that the terms of the contract were not being fulfilled. In respect of the plaster contract something was said because a member of this House connected with the particular business happened to be the lowest tenderer. Someone considered that underhand work had been going on because a member of the House had been connected with the contract. It was the tenderer that submitted the lowest price that got the contract. Whenever there is a difficulty about a contract, it is always better to call fresh tenders. In the case of the Claremont contract, one man quoted a reasonable rate, in accordance with the conditions laid down, but his was for a charabanc and not a motor service. The other man who tendered should never have been considered. I do not know anything about the other matter, as to whether or not Randall is doing the work.

Mr. George: I do not know whether he is or not.

**MR. GRIFFITHS** (Avon) [6.0]: I listened to the remarks of the member for Gascoyne (Mr. Angelo) with interest. I find that we are importing £450,000 worth of butter annually, and that we are spending millions of money in trying to produce that and other commodities that are necessary for our welfare. There is a great deal in the hon. member's argument in respect of doing something to improve our fish supply. We

are aware that efforts at trawling along our coast have been made, unfortunately without great success, but there should be inquiries in regard to the possibility of exploiting our waters where we know immense quantities of fish exist. The Minister, I know, has been very sympathetic in respect of better provision for widows left dependent almost upon charity. Some years ago he and I were fellow members of a select committee dealing with this very question, and I am glad to hear that the solution recommended by that committee has given such general satisfaction. All the various matters I have brought before the department have been dealt with sympathetically. Something has been said about the kangaroo as a pest. Recently I was down in the district between Lake Grace and Pinguip, and extending to Ravensthorpe. There I heard many complaints about the depredations of the kangaroo. The settlers there suggest that if it could be arranged to remove the protection of kangaroos for a period, until their number was reduced, it would mean considerable relief to those trying to raise crops in the district. In my electorate, fortunately, there is no need to remove the protection, for the kangaroos are becoming quite scarce, except in the outer areas. I had expected to hear from the member for Coolgardie (Mr. Lambert) his annual humorous speech about the Observatory. However, I myself have nothing to say about that institution. I merely rose to testify to the sympathetic consideration one meets in the State Charities Department. I am trying to get some children restored to their parents at Tammin. I have had considerably difficulty. The department might well consider whether it would not be wise to allow those children to go back to their parents, if only for a probationary period while it was seen whether or not they would get the treatment their parents promise. However, I will personally submit the case to the Minister.

**MR. SLEEMAN** (Fremantle) [6.4]: The agricultural and pastoral industries are not the only industries that have their pests. The fishing industry also has a pest in the cormorant or shag. We prevent fishermen and others from taking fish during close seasons, but we allow the shags to devour fish in huge quantities all the year round. In early mornings on the river the sky is black with swarms of shags. If something were done

to destroy those pests our fish supply would be more abundant. It is a waste of time preventing men from trying to get their food out of the river by means of a fishing net while we allow these birds to destroy huge quantities of fish.

**Mr. Angelo:** There used to be a bonus of 6d. per head on the shags.

**Mr. SLEEMAN:** The bonus system might be the best way of dealing with them. For less than 6d. the department could get incredible numbers of them. Coming to the Prisons Department: When I was over at Rottnest a few weeks ago, I found that the gaol authorities were practically running the island. I have nothing to say against that in itself, but I object to the regulation under which every dinghy at the island has to be padlocked. We sent ashore to get a dinghy, but the man in charge of her found he had mislaid the key, and it was an hour before the dinghy was made available. It is all very well to see to it that prisoners do not escape from the island, but it would be far better to have an occasional prisoner get away than to have an occasional life lost for want of a dinghy. I protest against the action of the department in compelling every dinghy at the island to be securely padlocked. I hope that regulation will be amended.

**MISS HOLMAN** (Forrest) [6.7] I should like to know from the Minister if there is any possibility of having the allowance for State children increased. A deputation formally waited on him and asked that the amount be increased. The Minister has had representations from all sections of the community asking for an increase in the allowance. In many cases 9s. weekly is not sufficient to keep a child clothed and fed. Actually, when the child is smaller the allowance is greater, and as the child grows the amount is decreased. I think the amount required for a growing child is in many cases more than that required for one of younger age. Then I would draw attention to the age at which girls are allowed to go to work in shops and factories. The allowance ceases at 14 years of age, but a girl may not go to work until she is 15 years of age, and in the country there is not work at all for girls of that age. I should be glad to hear the Minister say that he thought of increasing the weekly allowance and increasing also the age up to which the allowance is given from 14 years to 15 years.

**MR. MANN** (Perth) [6.8] : I want to bring under the notice of the Minister the conditions of the mental ward situated on the Wellington-street frontage of the hospital grounds. I can understand the necessity for an observation ward in respect of the patients who will be occupying it for, say, 24 hours, or up to even three days, but when it is found necessary to detain patients for anything up to a fortnight or three weeks they should be confined in more suitable premises. There is a school close by, and the school children frequently hear disgusting language from the ward, and even stand about watching insane patients scrambling up the bars of the windows and calling to passers-by. This has been frequently brought under the notice of the Minister, and he has said that while regretting the unsuitability of the ward he finds there are no funds available for the establishment of a more suitable place. Certainly there could be no more unsuitable premises than those in use to-day. The ward is occupied practically all the time, and men and women are kept under observation there for long periods. It cannot be good even for the patients themselves. I see no reason why the ward should be there at all, except for the convenience of the doctor at the Perth Hospital; and since motor transport is available it would mean but very little time to convey the doctor to patients situated in a more suitable locality. Frequently a score or more of school children are to be seen standing outside the ward listening to the patients calling to passers-by, and using bad language and indulging in unseemly conduct. Even the licensee of the hotel opposite has frequently rung up the hospital authorities and made complaints.

The Minister for Lands: Some of the hotels have had a lot to do with putting the patients there.

**MR. MANN**: That is no reason why the patients should be kept in an unsuitable place. While I am voicing the complaint of the licensee of the hotel, I am voicing also the complaints of those parents who have children at the school.

The Minister for Lands: Well, you have been here for years, and this is the first time you have voiced the complaint.

**MR. MANN**: If the Minister has known of the complaint for years it ought not to be necessary for me to bring it under his

notice now. Still, the evil is going on and I should be continuing to fail in my duty if I did not mention it now.

**MR. PANTON**: The board has been complaining of it for six years.

**HON. SIR JAMES MITCHELL** (Northam) [6.13]: It is very easy to lodge complaints and ask the Minister to spend money, but it is not always so easy to find the money. We should like to have these observation wards the most perfect in the world, but unfortunately we are unable to find the necessary money. When the member for Swan (Mr. Sampson) was Colonial Secretary he was continually appealing to me for money for all sorts of things. Not thousands of pounds, but tens of thousands of pounds are wanted for various things. We were endeavouring to find the necessary money bit by bit to provide all that we should like to provide for those who come under the vote we are now discussing.

**MR. SAMPSON**: You provided £7,000 for the site at Point Heathcote.

**HON. SIR JAMES MITCHELL**: Yes, and there is a great deal more still to be found. Notwithstanding that, there is so much to do in so many places in respect of hospitals, that any Government will find it difficult to satisfy the people's demands. Members have a perfect right to voice their opinions on the subject.

**HON. S. W. MUNSIE**: I voiced the same complaint pretty often from that side of the House.

**HON. SIR JAMES MITCHELL**: But not in the moderate way that members now sitting on this side voice it.

*Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.*

**HON. SIR JAMES MITCHELL**: Funds have always been the trouble. Everyone has been wanting more suitable buildings for many of our institutions. The vote this year is £25,000 greater than was the estimate of last year, which was higher than was expected the year before. It really means that this vote has increased by £25,000 for this year.

**HON. S. W. MUNSIE**: Not for the actual expenditure.

**HON. SIR JAMES MITCHELL**: No, but the estimate of last year was exceeded by £17,000. The vote was £263,000, and the expenditure last year

was £280,000. This year the vote was £288,000. I am not finding fault. Expenditure under this heading cannot be altogether controlled, but it does need watching. It is a considerable increase for the 12 months.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: The net increase is only £7,638.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: That is the increase, on the actual expenditure of last year, but last year the Minister had only £263,000 on the Estimates. The Treasurer has to find £25,000 more this year than he had last year.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: Then he was supposed to have found.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Than he had to provide for on the Estimates of last year. The Minister exceeded his Estimates last year, and will probably do so this year. With the greater number of people there are greater demands upon the Minister. He has provided only £2,000 more for State children and outdoor relief, but he exceeded his vote by £8,600 last year. Money must be found if people are to be helped, but the Minister should watch the expenditure under this heading. It is easy to expend more under each item than is set down upon the Estimates. It does happen that officials are willing to expend money. Something has been said about the fish supply. I wish we could get a plentiful supply of fish. The experiments we made were pretty disastrous. We fitted out the "Penguin" and bought trawling gear. She did some good work, and located fishing banks off Albany, but she did not do much that was of practical use because she was lost. The work was not gone on with.

Mr. Thomson: She proved there were good trawling grounds.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes. There is a rocky bottom along our coast, but she proved that there was useful trawling grounds outside Albany. Another vessel also located some useful trawling grounds. The work done outside Albany gave indications which were favourable, and the fish taken there was good, and contained some varieties we do not ordinarily get. We need a plentiful supply of fresh fish and of smoked fish. It seems ridiculous that it should cost so much to get fish when we have a coast line of 5,000 miles in extent. Our population is small, but we do not get even enough fish for the city.

Mr. Thomson: The business is all in the hands of foreigners.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Our own folk do not seem to appreciate life on the ocean, and they leave the work to the foreigners almost altogether. If it were not for them we should not have much in the way of fish. The Government trawlers in New South Wales and Queensland have been unsuccessful, and a great deal of money has been lost there. That will probably always be the case. It should be possible for private people to make money by trawling along our coast, especially in the southern portions where the fish is of better quality than it is anywhere else. I hope that when a prison farm is established, is it must be, it will be placed as far as possible from present settlement, and be in such a position that will enable the department to give these unfortunate people as much freedom as possible. Not many prisoners can be sent to such a farm, but some would be eligible and could be trusted not to leave the place. I visited two or three farms in New South Wales, and saw what was being done there. It is better that the people should be placed on a farm than be kept in Fremantle. Gaoling means a good deal of expense, but all the prisoners could not be put on a farm. Those who are suitable would have to be selected.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: The answer that was given to a question showed that there was a fairly big percentage of prisoners who could be utilised on a farm.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I suppose there are some. Years ago something was done and certain clearing was carried out by prisoners. I daresay they could be used in the country. I do not know that it would be of much use putting out men if they had to be kept under lock and key, and carefully guarded by warders. Possibly some of the good land inside our forests could be used for this purpose. It would cost a good deal of money, and there would be delays in consequence. We cannot do these things without spending money. One never knows what such a work will cost, or what it will cost to control and run the farm when it is established. These Estimates do not lend themselves to a discussion on the items, because they are nearly all salary items. The items represent expenditure which grows more or less automatically, and which, again, represents expenditure in small sums. No

Treasurer can avoid year by year finding a little more for these items. I hope that proper care is being exercised in the expenditure, without depriving those who are in need of assistance. It is always difficult to avoid spending money in the wrong direction. We cannot expect foster mothers to keep children at their own expense. There are 400 of them all doing good work. I have seen and met them. They are fond of the children and are keeping them splendidly. The babies are a credit to them. I do not know whether the deputation that waited upon the Honorary Minister did so in connection with any of these votes. It is reported that a deputation waited upon him with regard to State children.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: Yes.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Honorary Minister was decidedly unsympathetic. Ladies have often waited on me, and I have found them very charming. The Minister did not seem at all pleased to have the deputation.

Mr. Teesdale: And the ladies were not pleased.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: The Estimates say nothing about deputations.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The deputation desired to ask the Minister to do something concerning State children. It would help the discussion if we knew what took place. I regret that we do not know what was said on that occasion. I am glad the Premier is able to find this additional money, and hope it will be spent fairly and that the right people will get assistance.

**MR. TEESDALE** (Roebourne) [7.45]: While we do not avail ourselves of our wonderful marine wealth, other nations are willing to do so; and I do not envy them at all. They are perfectly justified in availing themselves of something on our coast that we do not value. It is pleasing to know that the Norwegian Whaling Company has done so well that another Norwegian company is about to embark on the business. Certainly our coast has been a happy hunting ground for the Norwegians. They kept their profits to themselves, except when information leaked out. In 1914 they got 3,000 casks of sperm oil on our north coast very quietly. The catch was not advertised, but was simply shipped to Norway, where it returned about £25 per ton. Towards May or June thousands upon thousands of whales go north,

returning about August to colder climates. Only in the old days did our pioneers go out whale fishing. They went out in leaky schooners and hooked on to five or six tun fish and dragged them ashore by sheer strength. The old boys stuck to the sport till they died. They took risks. In those days the bush was dangerous too. There were no motor cars then; travelling had to be done per boot, with a water bag. Another industry, I learn, is to be added to the large number now flourishing in the North—the industry of shark fishing. One need not go North for the sake of that industry. Nevertheless, a company with a capital of £175,000 is being floated to carry on the industry of shark fishing from Camden Harbour to Bunbury—a far cry. An experienced shark fisher has been got from Venezuela—why I do not know. We have seen Western Australian ladies catch sharks. However, so far as the company is concerned, our North is merely a subsidiary matter. The company's headquarters are in Persia, I believe; and the proprietors have the Australian rights up their sleeves. It is a pity that we hawk about privileges in such a slapdash fashion. We do not take advantage of our own opportunities. The company in question propose to make shark skins into leather for women's shoes and handbags. It is strange that there should be such a big opening for leather handbags, since at present ladies' handbags are made of silk, and previously they were made of silver. After the oil has been extracted, the dried fish will be exported to the Far East. The industry should prove extremely valuable to our North, as the leather will no doubt take the fancy goods world by storm, and the oil extracted will prove very valuable, and the dried fish will be shipped to the Far East for consumption by the poor heathen there. Further, the teeth are to be converted into manicure sets. All this information is highly gratifying. Again, the crushed fins will be marketed as fertiliser. When in Singapore the Premier and I inquired into several of these matters. I lost him one day, and so I went into a shop and asked the price of shark fins. I was told it was from £1 down to 12s. 6d. per pair, but for food, not for fertiliser. These figures show the prospective value of the industry. Still, one can never tell where so enterprising a crowd as this will finish. After all, though, such staggering novelties

are welcome. We must bear in mind, at the same time, that the shark fishing industry will not be started in the North until it has proved a failure in other countries. I may say that I have crossed swords with these people before. When the chief promoter was in the North, he spent most of his time being towed behind a mission steamer on the tidal creeks, where he discovered those startling natural features which are unknown even to the member for Gascoyne. Wonderful indeed are the discoveries made by a pseudo-veterinary surgeon! Heaven save the North from such friends!

**HON. S. W. MUNSIE** (Honorary Minister—Hannans—in reply) [7.55]: I thank hon. members for the way they have received the Estimates. As regards the suggestion of the member for Katanning, that prisoners should be utilised on roads, I am not the Minister controlling gaols, which come within the province of the Chief Secretary, but personally I am opposed to any such scheme, and I do not think it is likely to be adopted while the present Government hold office. The member for Claremont had two complaints. The first referred to net fishing in the bay at Claremont, with regard to which I will make inquiries. The second was as regards Mr. Randall. I shall not attempt to reply to that matter. The member for North-East Fremantle has seen the file and read it, which is more than I have done. From my own personal observation, however, I can say that there were repeated complaints with regard to the carrying out of the contract.

Mr. Mann: You have given the same man the contract again.

Mr. Latham: There are no complaints on the file.

**Hon. S. W. MUNSIE**: I do remember the official visiting committee to the Claremont Hospital for Insane complaining to me of the contractor's attitude to them. The member for Avon referred to the question of State children being allowed to return to their parents. Where it is possible I always adopt that course. I frequently get applications of that nature in connection with which inquiries disclose that it is not always in the interests of the children that they should return to their parents. I always have the most careful inquiries made in such cases. My first thought is for the child.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The children should not be kept if it is not to their interest.

**Hon. S. W. MUNSIE**: No. The member for Forrest wanted to know whether anything had been done in connection with increasing the amount of 9s. per week allowed for the maintenance of children. The matter has been discussed, but is not yet finalised. I hope that something may be done in the new year. The hon. member also brought up the question of continuing the present allowance until the child is 15 years old, instead of discontinuing it at the age of 14. There are now numerous cases in which the Government do extend sustenance until the age of 15—for instance, where a child is reported as doing exceptionally well at school and as likely to make good if permitted to continue there for another six or twelve months. The question of extending the age limit for sustenance generally from 14 years to 15 is one that wants fairly serious consideration. I have information indicating that if we were to do that and extend the age from 14 to 15 it would cost over £8,000 this year alone. The member for Perth (Mr. Mann) raised an objection to the present mental observation ward at the Perth Hospital. I recognise that it is very unsuitable indeed, but we cannot do everything at once. Pressure was brought to bear from all sources regarding the expenditure for a new home for the unfortunate returned soldiers who are suffering from mental troubles. The State has to find £20,000 for that this year and this position has been responsible for the Government not going on with the provision of a new observation ward.

Mr. Mann: Do you not think you could get a better place?

**Hon. S. W. MUNSIE**: I have already had inquiries made in that direction, but without success so far. It is not so easy as some hon. members seem to think to find a suitable place.

The Minister for Lands: Especially for such cases.

**Hon. S. W. MUNSIE**: That is so. There are very few places in Perth that would be suitable, even if we could get them. I think there is only one way out of the difficulty, and that is to build a new ward altogether. I get requests for all sorts of provisions and I realise that many other institutions are not all that they should be. However, they are



all we can possibly provide at the present time.

Mr. Mann: But the mental ward is an outstanding instance.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: I admit that, but we will have to put up with the present position for some little time yet. As soon as it is possible to make other arrangements, the matter will be attended to.

Mr. Mann: Could you not have the walls raised or shades put over the windows, in order to prevent the unpleasant sights that are seen so often there?

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: I admit that those sights are to be seen, but the patients must have some ventilation.

Mr. Mann: Raise the walls.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: I am not favourable to making the walls any higher.

Mr. Mann: Even to-night there was a man hanging on the wall in an undressed condition shouting to the people. That happens every night.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: That happens frequently, but not every night. The only other matter that I have to reply to was raised by the Opposition Leader. His statement is true that the expenditure this year will be £24,217 more than was estimated as the expenditure for last year. When introducing the Estimates I pointed out that £7,368 is the actual increase in the amount that will be expended this year.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I do not know anything about the actual expenditure.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: That is what we estimate and I think we will keep within the estimate this year. A good deal of the increase on last year's expenditure was due to the Supplementary Estimates passed by this House.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I am not complaining.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: No, but I think hon. members should know the position. Last year the estimate was £263,785 and the expenditure £280,634. Included in that expenditure was the amount of the Supplementary Estimates which provided for the annual increases to civil servants. Those were not included in the original Estimates.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That would be a small amount in your department.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: No, a very big amount throughout the whole of the department. On top of that there was the board that was constituted to fix the wages of the employees at the Claremont Hospital for the

Insane. The award of that board meant an increased expenditure of slightly over £8,000.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Yes, I was not thinking of that.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: Those two items alone provide for a large proportion of the amount over and above last year's Estimates.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: What about the lease you propose to give to a Norwegian company in the North?

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: There is a company already in existence that has the right to fish off the North-West coast. That company has only recently ceased operations for the season because all their available space was filled with oil.

Mr. Teesdale: That is very satisfactory.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: There is now another company.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: A Norwegian company?

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: No, not the second one. The greater proportion of the money provided for that company is Australian money, while a fair proportion of it comes from New Zealand. The company, however, is mainly Australian or Australasian.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It should be a British company.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: I quite agree with that contention.

Mr. Teesdale: It should, but if the British won't come up to the scratch, what then?

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: The promoter of the company was the same individual who operated on the North-West coast last year.

Mr. Teesdale: A good few of the employees in the old company, particularly at the shore station, were Britishers.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: Nearly all were. Only the expert men on the boats were Norwegians.

Mr. Teesdale: Yes, the harpooners.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: The others were paid according to Australian conditions.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That is all right so long as the profits come to us in Australia.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: The same agreement prevailed this year as prevailed last year. Actually a loss was made on the operations last year and a representative was sent to Norway on the present occasion in order to raise more money. A new company was formed in Norway and that company operated this year, and under the con-

ditions governing the operations, the Australian shareholders in the earlier company get 5 per cent., which will leave practically nothing. Some of the shareholders in the original company are desirous of getting their money back by putting some into the second company. I believe they will get exactly the same conditions as the Norwegian company got when they fished on the North-West coast.

Mr. Teesdale: Quite right, too.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That should be so. [3½]

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: The company has home stations at Albany and Shark Bay and intends coming further south to operate off Albany.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: But that will be a British company.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: Yes, almost wholly Australian.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That is good.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: Although it does not come within the scope of my department, I believe that the company will have exactly the same conditions and the same rights as the Norwegian company has.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The company should not get any less surely.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: Naturally the other company is objecting, because it is said that if we lease the right to the second company to fish in southern waters, the latter will get the first of the catch as the whales go north and the first company will only get the leavings.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: But on the other hand, when the whales are coming south, the Australian company will get the leavings, after the Norwegian company has had the first of the catch. Thus it is a question of fifty-fifty. I shall be pleased if the company does as well as the Norwegian company did this year, and if it does, the profits will be distributed in Australia.

Vote put and passed.

*Vote—Aborigines (Southern portion), £10,455:*

Mr. THOMSON: At the foot of the Estimates it is set out that the estimated revenue amounts to £888. How is that made up?

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: It is anticipated that that revenue will be derived from ordinary collections on account of permit fees, the sale of produce and from other sources.

It is anticipated that the same amount will be raised as during 1924-25.

Vote put and passed.

*Vote—Fisheries, £5,763:*

Item—Chief Inspector, £600:

Mr. ANGELO: In view of the scathing indictment by the member for Roebourne (Mr. Teesdale) regarding the company floated to fish for sharks, as he said, I wish to know whether the chief inspector has neglected his duty in that he did not point out this position. Perhaps, if the Minister were to ask the chief inspector for his opinion regarding this company, he would gain information totally different from that supplied by the member for Roebourne.

Mr. Teesdale: There is the cable, and that is good enough.

Mr. ANGELO: Shark catching was only one of the avenues for the company's operations. They intend to deal with turtles and other valuable marine products in that part of the State.

Mr. Teesdale: You may be behind the scenes. There was nothing in the cable about dealing with turtles, but only a lot of tosh.

Mr. ANGELO: To say that the gentleman concerned in this company knows nothing about the North-West and has only been there once, is not fair to the promoter.

Mr. Teesdale: You cannot deny it.

Mr. ANGELO: The gentleman referred to, together with a financial friend, went along the North coast at his own expense and spent thousands of pounds in an endeavour to open up the resources there. He travelled for months along the coastline.

The CHAIRMAN: This item deals with the chief inspector.

Mr. ANGELO: And I am wondering if the chief inspector has been doing his duty.

Mr. Teesdale: You will get through all right.

The CHAIRMAN: I will ask the hon. member to confine himself to the item.

Mr. ANGELO: I do not know how I can draw attention to the dereliction of duty on the part of the chief inspector if I do not refer to it on this item.

Mr. Teesdale: Tell us something about the sharks.

Mr. ANGELO: The expedition took a valuable camera up North and hon. members have seen the wonderful educational pictures that were obtained.

The CHAIRMAN: There is nothing in this item about educational pictures.

Mr. ANGELO: I enter my protest against the member for Rockbourne talking on something he knows nothing about.

Item—Temporary Inspectors, Messengers and other assistance, £332:

Mr. STUBBS: During the last few years the supervision over the rivers, which are valuable for the fish like they contain, has not been adequate. Poaching has been carried on in a barefaced manner, thus preventing the fish from coming in to spawn. The inspectors employed by the department are doing excellent work, but it is impossible for one inspector stationed at Mandurah to exercise oversight over all the estuaries and rivers that flow into the Peel Inlet. This means a couple of hundred miles of water for one man to travel, and it is impossible for him to do it. Each year during the last 30 years fish has been diminishing at an extraordinary rate, and it is difficult to get a decent haul with a rod and line in a whole day. This is due to two causes, one of which is poaching and the other is the presence of about 10,000 cormorants, which destroy three to four lbs. of fish per head per day. It was the practice of the department to supply ammunition to local fishermen to destroy these pests, but lately that practice has been abolished. This matter should be brought under the notice of the inspector, or it will be only a little time before the public, instead of pay 1s. for fish, will be paying 2s. I trust some effort will be made to increase the number of inspectors to check the men who deliberately stretch their nets across the rivers at night time and remove them at daylight. I am informed they have signals to communicate with each other when an inspector is approaching. When an inspector reaches the upper end of the lakes near Pinjarra, they are at the mouth casting their nets all night long and destroying fish by the hundred. They do not send the small fish to the markets; they destroy them. Thus it will be only a matter of a little time before our waters are depleted.

Mr. LATHAM: I endorse what the member for Wagin (Mr. Stubbs) has said, particularly regarding the rivers in the South-West. We have a most beautiful spot on the Blackwood River, and the whole of the fish has been netted out by people who travel thither in motor trucks. This should be an

attractive spot where our own people could get enjoyment, but it has been spoilt. This applies also to Denmark. I hope the Minister will have additional inspectors appointed to preserve the fish in the interests of our own people. In the South-West we have one of the most beautiful spots in Australia. We should preserve the fish for line fishing, and prohibit the use of nets in those rivers.

Mr. THOMSON: Will the Minister indicate how the estimated revenue of £16,540 is made up?

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: I will bring the request of the members for Wagin and York under the notice of the Minister controlling the department. Something should be done to prevent poaching.

Mr. Stubbs: Two months ago I seized two nets valued at £30 that were stretched across the mouth of the Murray River, and handed them over to the authorities.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: In reply to the member for Katanning, the revenue last year was £12,530. We expect to get extra revenue this year on account of opening the opossum season for six weeks from the 1st of the month.

Mr. Thomson: From what will the revenue be derived?

Hon. Sir W. MUNSIE: I have not that information available.

Mr. SAMPSON: What is the royalty proposed to be levied on opossum skins? Two or three years ago there was an open season for opossums and a very large number were taken, so large that many people thought the opossum had been wiped out. I hope the Minister will increase the royalty. It would be a paying proposition if an additional 6d. were charged. This increase would not unduly diminish the interest taken in securing opossum skins.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: I believe the royalty to be charged this year will be the same as that charged on the previous occasion.

Mr. THOMSON: Has the Minister available details of the revenue derived from the royalty on kangaroo skins? I should like to know the districts from which revenue was received and what would be the loss if the department suspended the royalty for six or 12 months in order to thin out the kangaroos.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: I have not the particulars.

Vote put and passed.

*Votes—Friendly Societies and Registry, £9,292; Gaols, £23,620—agreed to.*

*Vote—Harbour and Light and Jetties, £22,352:*

Item—Wharfingers, Jetty and Tramway Wages, etc., £11,000:

Mr. THOMSON: Where is this amount expended for salaries?

Hon. S. W. Munsie: I cannot say.

Vote put and passed.

*Votes—Lunacy and Inebriates, £100,169; Observatory, £1,581—agreed to.*

*Vote—State Children and Outdoor Relief, £102,685:*

Item—Payment to Women on whom children are dependent, £58,000:

Miss HOLMAN: Can the Minister arrange not to reduce the amount paid to women when they go out and do a little work? From the information I have, if a woman is given an allowance for two children and herself, which would amount to 27s. a week, and goes out and does a day's work, the amount she earns is subtracted from the amount that she would otherwise receive from the department. If she had a daughter of 13 or 14 who was able to look after the other children, and the mother went out to work, the allowance would be reduced.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: I recognise there are hardships in many cases, but it is necessary to lay down some principle under which to operate. I have laid down the principle that 9s. per week per person, including the mother, is to be the maximum. I realise that 9s. is probably not enough, but it is all I can spend at present. I cannot get any more funds. With regard to the earnings of a family, it is not an absolutely rigid decision that where the mother earns anything the amount she is receiving from the department, is reduced. In some instances I admit it is, and it must be.

Hon. G. Taylor: It is not in all cases.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: No. I have had applications which have resulted in a good deal of argument, letter writing, and deputations. In one case I proved that no less

than £6 14s. per week was going into the house. There are many cases in the metropolitan area where the husband is at work every day of the week and where sustenance has to be given.

Mr. Mann: Those are exceptional cases.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: Yes, but it is in regard to those cases that there is often a good deal of outcry. I can quote a case to-day where a man is earning £4 a week and where the wife is getting sustenance. They cannot live without assistance. It is instances of this kind that prove that we have no rigid rule.

Mr. Teesdale: How many children are there?

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: Seven, and the eldest is twelve. The husband is working away from home and has to pay 30s. weekly for his own keep. His wife has to live in the metropolitan area, pay rent, and support the children. I am endeavouring to induce the husband to take his family where he is working. I have even gone so far as to endeavour to get them and their goods and chattels taken free of transport charges to where the husband is. Recently I agreed to a further extension of sustenance for eight weeks in the hope of bringing this about. It must be recognised that the department has to stop somewhere. Otherwise, the vote instead of being £56,000, will be swelled to perhaps £80,000.

Mr. Teesdale: It is any disadvantage for an applicant to have a home of her own?

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: None whatever. We take into consideration the earnings that go into the home, the actual expenditure in rent and rates and taxes. There are hundreds receiving assistance to-day that glory in the fact that they are able to go out and earn something. They have that independent Australian spirit that they want to earn for themselves.

Miss Holman: In some cases the children are too young to earn anything.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: Quite so. Generally speaking, the department in this State will be found to compare more than favourably with similar departments in other parts of the Commonwealth.

Mr. TEESDALE: I know of cases that bear out exactly what the Minister has said. A widow with four children who had a home in one of the suburbs and earned a little money as a charwoman, took a position in the North, and it happened at times that she had to cook in a kitchen where the tempera-

ture was 116 in the shade. It can be imagined the kind of life that woman had, frying chops in the kitchen under such conditions. In the end she found she could not remain another summer and came down. While she was in the North she had her children down here in a home and sent various small sums of money to an agent to expend it to the best of his ability. This we know agents always do; we can always be certain that an agent will give 19s. 8d. value for every pound! Unfortunately there was not much done for the money sent down and on her arrival in Perth the woman found that there was £115 arrears in sustenance to be made up in respect of the children. For some reason or other they came under State control and they looked to her to pay. I happen to know that Mr. Watson has the case before him, having been submitted by the member for the district. Mr. Watson intends to do the best he can for the woman. As soon as she gets a home together and is able to make it fit to live in, she will take the children from the institution and look after them. I hope the Minister will treat the case leniently and so give her a chance to get on her feet. I feel certain there will be no more thankful widow in Western Australia and she is a nice widow too, I don't mind telling you.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: I do not know the case to which the hon. member has referred, but I do not think he need worry at all about the lady not receiving sympathetic treatment. We are not hard hearted, though in some cases it is necessary to take a firm stand.

Item—Outdoor relief, including services incidental thereto, £7,400:

Mr. SLEEMAN: Is there any way by which a man, who is unable to earn his own living, can obtain outdoor relief under this vote? There is at Fremantle a man who lost his sight whilst fighting under the Australian flag. Nothing but starvation seems to be facing him unless the State is prepared to render assistance. The Federal Government will not do anything for the man. Can the State do anything until the Federal Government are approached again to induce them to stand up to their obligations?

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: Has application for assistance been made to the Federal Government? The case quoted has not come under my notice. Outdoor relief is for such cases as that particular one. We have laid

it down, however, that where a man is receiving an invalid or old age pension we do not assist.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Apart from which Government is in power, I know that if a genuine case can be advanced, the gentlemen administering the department will always treat it sympathetically and fairly. The Minister for Lands was one of the first in the State to stir himself in this direction. There is no doubt, however, that care must be exercised, otherwise the department will be imposed upon.

Vote put and passed.

*Vote, State Labour Bureau, £2,691:*

Item—Advanced fares not recoverable, £700:

Mr. LATHAM: This seems to be a big sum of money for fares not recoverable.

Hon. G. Taylor: You do not know much about it.

Mr. LATHAM: Last year £350 was voted and £426 was spent. This year we get £700. Apparently there is not quite the hold on that expenditure that there ought to be. In most cases it is recoverable. The department admits that. It is all right spending public money, but we require to see that it is recouped as far as possible. The item has been almost doubled in one year.

Mr. MANN: I am not surprised at seeing the amount of £700 for this item; I should not have been surprised if it had been double that amount. Probably I have been the means of increasing the amount by some hundreds of pounds.

The Minister for Works: Do you sign a guarantee?

Mr. MANN: You give notice of that question. Prior to becoming a member of Parliament I signed one guarantee, but the Government let me off. Frequently men who have secured positions in the country and have no means of getting there come to see me about it. In every instance, when I am satisfied with the applicants' bona fides, I approach the officials of the State Labour Bureau and they issue a pass.

Mr. Latham: But why not make the recipients refund the cost?

Mr. MANN: It frequently happens that when they are on their way up to the job they meet with some other employer who offers them a dollar a week more, and they go off to his job; so, not reaching their original destination, they are lost sight of

by the officials of the State Labour Bureau. There have been scores of such instances. When I found the bureau had stopped issuing passes I went and asked why; the officer showed me that it had been forced upon them, for the reason I have given.

Mr. Latham: But you are only going to encourage those who do not repay.

Mr. MANN: Even so, is it not worth while to get a man out of the city into a country job? I hope the Minister will not reduce the item, for if he does it will inconvenience me considerably when I want to get men away to the country.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: I do not think the member for York (Mr. Latham) has very much to be concerned about. The actual repayments are extremely satisfactory. For the first two months of the current financial year we issued credit fares to nearly double the total for the whole of last year; and last year we nearly doubled the figures of the previous year.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Because there were more unemployed about.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: No, because we were a little more liberal in granting credit fares.

Mr. Latham: Your vote was excessed by only £200.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: Because a very large proportion of the amount advanced was refunded.

Mr. Latham: You ought to collect 100 per cent. of it.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: That is not possible. The people for whom the hon. member fought so hard here a little while ago, and who take the last penny from the unemployed, are largely to blame for the item. If the hon. member would have something to say about them, and make them pay the fares, we should be able to reduce this item; for many of the credit fares issued have been required because the man looking for work had to pay the private employment broker for his job, and so bankrupt himself.

Mr. Sampson: You mean that, after paying the broker's fee, he would not have a penny left for travelling?

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: That has happened frequently during the last six months, and because of it the man securing a job from a private broker has had to come to me for a pass. Otherwise the policy of the department is not to advance a credit fare to a man who has secured a job from a private

employment broker. It is a bit impudent for such a man to come to us for a railway pass.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I was surprised to hear what the Minister had to say about the private employment brokers. I doubt if a man out of work for long has a fee to pay to the private employment broker; more likely is it that he would go to the State Labour Bureau. However, in his desire to damage the private employment broker, the Minister brings the private broker's client under the vote. The position is, of course, that if the State Labour Bureau cannot find work, men looking for work must go where they can get it. These credit fares have always been issued; in my time we did not allow men to walk to their jobs up country. I have known a man send back his fare five years afterwards.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: The same thing is happening to-day.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I remember a couple of men getting a railway fare to Cue, worth £8. Half way to Cue they took another job and sent down as refund £4, the first money they earned, and asked to be let off the balance. In the past the workers have repaid these credit fares very well; they have been particularly honest about it.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: I am pleased to hear you arguing against the member for York, who apparently has not much compassion for these men.

Mr. Latham: I did not say that.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: But why should this item be increased? The Minister shows a revenue of £25. I know that a great many of the workers repay their fares. Where is that repayment shown? The amount of £426 expended last year does not represent a fraction of the railway passes issued.

Lieut.-Colonel Denton: How many trips does one man have?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: If he does not make repayment he does not get a second trip, or not under his own name. After all, the department does not take very much risk. I was surprised to hear the Minister attack the private employment broker.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: I told you what has actually happened at least half-a-dozen times to my knowledge.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: However, the question is, has a man got a good job to go to, and will he repay his fare? In most instances the men do. The member for York did not object to the Minister issuing fares; what he objected to was the men having to walk about without work.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: That is not what he said.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: If I were the Minister I should not say much about the number of credit fares I had to issue.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: It is better to give a man a railway fare to take him to a job than to keep him in the metropolitan area.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Still, I cannot see why the item should be increased. The Minister certainly has not explained it.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: We expect to issue a greater number of credit fares, and we expect also to receive a lower percentage of repayments.

Mr. LATHAM: I repudiate the Minister's statement that I like to see men carrying their swags about the country.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: I did not say that. I ask for a withdrawal.

Mr. LATHAM: Very well, I withdraw. Actually I object to seeing men carrying swags about the country. However, there is no need to increase the item, for we ought to insist upon repayment of the money advanced. The Minister said in effect that I had barracked for the private employment brokers. I never have done so. If the Minister had introduced legislation compelling the employers to pay railway fares for their employees, his Bill would have had more support from this side.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: That is the law today.

Mr. LATHAM: Why is it not administered? If things are not as they should be the Honorary Minister should complain to Cabinet.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: We do not administer private registry offices.

Mr. LATHAM: They are controlled by Act of Parliament. Last year there was an excess of only £76 and now an additional £274 is being asked for. I do not mind that so long as we receive value for the money. People should be given railway fares who would otherwise be obliged to walk about the country.

Item—Goldfields lads, free fares, £108:

Hon. G. TAYLOR: The expenditure under this head last year was £209, and this year it has been reduced to £108. I suppose there is some reason for the reduction.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: Last year's expenditure covered two years.

Vote put and passed.

*Department of Education (Hon. J. M. Drew, Minister); the Honorary Minister (Hon. S. W. Munsie) in charge of the Votes.*

*Vote—Minister for Education, £594,509:*

HON. S. W. MUNSIE (Honorary Minister—Hannans) [9.3]: Members will realise that I am not in a position to give as much detail upon these Estimates as if I were administering the department.

Hon. G. Taylor: We do not expect it.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: The estimated expenditure for this year is £594,509, or £9,046 more than it was last year. For the years 1921-22, 1922-23, 1923-24, the department's net expenditure per head of the population amounted to £1 11s. 8d. or £1 11s. 9d. Last year it was brought down to £1 11s. 1½d., and this year it will be £1 10s. 9d. The number of children in the primary schools is at present fairly stationary. The effect of the diminished birth rate during the war is now being shown in the number of children of school age. While the number in some of the larger schools, especially at the goldfields, is declining, the number of small country schools is always growing. Small schools in many districts have been closed, arrangements having been made for driving children, generally in a motor van, to larger schools. While this provides the children with a somewhat better education it means very little reduction in cost. Children in small schools cost twice or three times as much as those in larger schools, and the growth of small schools must mean higher expenditure. There is one pleasing feature in connection with the Estimates, namely, that the qualifications of the teaching staffs, especially in the small schools, have constantly improved, and the number of unclassified teachers is decreasing. In the last nine years the percentage of unclassified teachers has fallen from 38.4 per cent. to 18.7. As the proportion of properly equipped teachers rises, the number of low salaries decreases. Additions to the wages of caretakers and cleaners have added about

£900 a year to the expenditure. Last year there was a long discussion on driving allowances.

Hon. G. Taylor: But not this session.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: There has been no cutting this year. The cost of driving children to school is estimated at £13,500.

Hon. G. Taylor: A nice sum, too.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: This includes £5,100 for contractors, and enables the department to close small schools or to avoid establishing them. It also includes £8,400 by way of allowances of 6d. a day to parents whose incomes does not exceed £400 a year, and who drive their own children to school from long distances, outside the radius of compulsory attendance. The correspondence classes represent another pleasing feature about the department.

Hon. G. Taylor: They are a great success.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: Yes. The information I have from the director of education is that the classes continue to grow. Over 1,100 children are being taught entirely by this means. Supplies of papers are sent out to small schools from which children will obtain the benefit after passing through the sixth class. By this means children in the smallest country school can obtain advanced instruction in English, arithmetic, book-keeping, mensuration, agricultural science, economic geography, and home economics. I am given to understand that the Education Department generally is working exceptionally well. I have a volume of information with regard to the various items contained in the Estimates, and shall be only too glad to afford members any information they may desire.

**MR. SAMPSON** (Swan) [9.7]: The best investment any country can make is in the education of its children. We are fortunate inasmuch as the department pays special attention to this question, and has developed a great sympathy for it, notwithstanding heavy disabilities. Each year the amount provided on the Estimates increases, but the increase is more than justified. It must be a matter of regret for every Government that more money cannot be found for this object. The report furnished by the department shows that the children are remaining at school longer than has previously been the case, and it thus shows an awakening conscience on the part of the people as to the importance of education. Unfortunately, however, the attendance has

slightly decreased. In 1922 the percentage of attendances was 89, in 1923 it was 88.22, and last year it was 87.26. The number of schools has increased, but I can only regret that we have not more schools. Remarkable progress has been made in the correspondence classes. Recently I had the privilege of going through the head office in Perth from which the work emanates, and of noting the methods adopted of providing this form of education for the outback children. By means of these classes excellent work has been done. At the end of 1924 over 1,000 children were receiving instruction by this means. Although the teachers do not come into actual contact with the children the personal relationship is developed. Instances are on record showing that the parents of these children have invited the teachers, whom they had never previously seen, to visit their farms or holdings out in the backblocks. The close intimacy that is developed is brought about to an extent by the writing of the story of the home, and also by means of photographs. Photographs are taken and developed, and by this means the teachers get to know their pupils and to understand and appreciate their surroundings, as well as estimate the difficulties with which they have to contend. More attention could possibly be paid to the establishment of rural schools. I visited the rural school at Nambour in Queensland. This is an important agricultural centre on the main Brisbane-north line, on the Maroochy River. At this school wood work, tin work, forge work and domestic science are taught. The scholars comprise both boys and girls. It is an interesting institution. At Wickiepin and Toodyay there are schools on similar lines, but I gather that although progress has been made, they have not yet reached the stage attained at Nambour. I mention this in passing, because I realise the outstanding importance of giving to the children of settlers, and indeed to all children in the State, the widest possible opportunity to become mentally equipped and thereby able to face the competition which inevitably awaits them in later life.

**HON. SIR JAMES MITCHELL** (Northam) [9.16]: I notice a small increase in the Vote and am surprised to find that £9,000 is sufficient to meet the expenditure consequent on the opening of so many new schools. Fortunately we have more children in the State now than we had a few years



ago. Year by year the number is increasing. I do not complain at all about the amount of the Vote. As regards secondary education, we have built high schools at Albany, Bunbury, Northam and Geraldton, putting up magnificent buildings in the three towns first named.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: Do not omit Kalgoorlie.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The high school at Kalgoorlie was opened years ago. I hope the school at Geraldton will soon be opened.

The Minister for Lands: Let us provide primary schools first.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Let us provide primary schools, and secondary schools as well. Children living in the country should certainly be afforded the advantages that are obtainable at, for instance, Northam. I know how the people there appreciate the opportunity of sending their children to the high school. The Northam High School, and high schools elsewhere, draw children from all parts of the State—from the goldfields and the North-West. As the Minister knows, the children receive a living allowance of £30 a year. It is a very good thing for those children to go into the agricultural districts, apart from the tuition they receive there. Their residence in the agricultural districts helps to give them a leaning towards agriculture. The trouble is that there is no place for those children to board at except private houses, where the teachers have no control over them. I consider that the Government should provide accommodation where the children can board together and be under the control of the teachers. It is only right that boys and girls of from 14 to 17 should be under proper control. Parents at a distance must be a little anxious unless they know that their children are well cared for. Many of the students want a little firmer control than can be exercised by the people who take them into their homes. The Minister might look into that matter and see whether provision cannot be made for the housing of the children. I am aware that this would involve the expenditure of a considerable sum of money. However, the cost can be met partly by the present allowance for board. The upkeep of the boarding-houses should not fall heavily on the Government.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: Do you suggest that the board should be free?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: No. The pupils pay now, and those payments would be enough to meet the cost of the board, though the Government would not get sufficient money to cover the interest on capital outlay. I know the teachers think it is essential that they should exercise control over the children to a greater extent than is possible now. The schools are doing excellent work. The State gets splendid value for the money expended on education. Certainly no one wishes to see this Vote reduced.

MR. BROWN (Pingelly) [9.24]: I am pleased that the Government have increased this vote by £9,000, showing that they realise the need for attending to the education of our children. I should have liked to see a much larger increase, as the country districts are growing by leaps and bounds. Land is being taken up far back, and often a settler has to take his wife and children with him. To leave the children without education at the period of their lives when they are most capable of acquiring it would be a great hardship. I congratulate the Government on having built schools in outback districts. They have shown themselves very sympathetic in that respect. With regard to consolidating schools, in one part of my electorate the department have recommended consolidation, and the parents are up in arms against the proposal, which they regard as unworkable. On the other hand, in another part of my electorate the people are petitioning for a consolidated school and the department will not agree to it. Where is the department's consistency? Are the consolidated schools a success or not? In larger schools education is likely to be more effective because of the number of teachers. In a country school with one teacher for 25 or 30 children it is not possible to give each child much individual attention. The Minister said that the department are gradually getting away from unclassified teachers. I can, however, certify that unclassified teachers have done a great deal of good in outback districts. A teacher just out of the Training College, probably a young girl, would get the blues in such a place. It is not altogether right that a young girl should be placed in charge of a number of children out in the bush, and that is where the unclassified teacher comes in. A farmer's daughter of 18 or 19, having had a fair education, is often able to take a school with great advantage. A qualified teacher prob-

ably would not stay there. In the back-blocks accommodation is often very poor, and in fact quite unsuitable for a young girl from the city. In a recent case I saw only a few bags and saplings available as accommodation for the teacher. That, again, is where the unclassified teacher comes in. As regards the driving allowance, I do not know how the department work out the calculation, but I understand that any man with an income of over £400 is not entitled to the allowance. I do not know whether a claimant of the allowance has to submit a statement of his financial position to the Education Department. However, when people send their children five and six miles to school, it is only right that they should be granted the allowance of 6d. per child per week.

The Minister for Lands: If a man has £400 a year, he should be prepared to pay to carry his child to school.

Mr. BROWN: As regards scholarships, the position is that the children of poor people in the country are sent to town with an allowance of £30, on which it is almost impossible to board them here. The result is that after a little while the parents have to take the children away, although possibly showing brilliant talents. Where a child displays exceptional promise, the whole of the allowance should be given by way of board. I congratulate the Government on being imbued with the necessity for looking after our children, and I would make a special plea for the child in the bush. In the cities we find splendidly equipped schools at every half-mile. I hope, therefore, that when application is made to the Government for a school outback, they will not turn a deaf ear but will give the settlers a chance to give their children an education.

Mr. NORTH (Claremont) [9.28]: I wish to pay a tribute to the work of the parents and citizens' associations who have done much to serve the interests of the children at our State schools. Excellent work has been done by the association in my district. I would like to touch on the necessity for inculcating knowledge regarding health matters among the rising generation. At present much time is spent in gaining knowledge that is of little use to them in the future. The result is that when the children leave school they do not know anything about the laws of health as they affect their bodies and their daily lives. We have only to look

around the streets and see the numbers of patent medicines and other prescriptions that are offered to the public, to emphasise the fact that it is only when people reach middle life that they begin to know how very important the question of health is to them. I would like to ask the Minister how far he has been able to carry out the promise conveyed in an answer to a question regarding brown bread. He said that he was prepared to consider the advisability of stressing the benefits that would arise from the introduction of a brown bread diet, by means of propaganda conducted through their schools. I trust that has been done. There are many other aspects in connection with health matters that could with profit be taught to the children when young but which, unfortunately, so many have to learn in middle life. We have only to look around to see that that is so. Many people reach the age of 45 or so before they commence to appreciate the position regarding health matters. Thus, it is largely a matter of chance in these days. I would suggest to the Minister that he should arrange for a series of lectures in order to deal with these questions. There is much in the old Latin edict about a healthy mind in a healthy body. At the present time the only part of that edict that is observed is that which relates to the healthy mind. The body is left to a great extent to look after itself.

Mr. ANGELO (Gascoyne) [9.31]: Several hon. members have pointed out the desirability of increasing the expenditure under the Education Vote. We must remember that a man can only cut his coat according to his cloth. As the custodians of the public purse we must remember that adage and see that this Vote, in common with others, is not increased unduly until we are out of the financial wood. We are still working on a deficit. The Education Vote has continued to increase alarmingly. In 1915 when our population was 318,766, the expenditure on education was £326,905, or slightly over £1 per head. In 1922 when the population had increased by 25,000 only, the expenditure on education had jumped up to £529,946, or just a little over 30s. per head, representing an increase of 50 per cent.

Hon. G. Taylor: And it keeps jumping, too.

Mr. ANGELO: Last year with a population of 365,222, the vote had still further increased to £594,509, or about £1 12s. 6d.

per head. Thus, an increase of practically 12s. 6d. per head has been shown over that period of 10 years. I am pleased to note that during last year the Minister was able to keep within his Estimates and to make a saving of £7,546. It is also gratifying to see that the Minister is asking for only £1,498 more than the Estimates for last year. I trust the Minister will continue to keep a tight rein on the expenditure of the Education Department. We do not want to be niggardly regarding money spent on education, but we must keep that expenditure in check.

**MR. WITHERS** (Bunbury) [9.34]: In the country districts, where the population is small, difficulties are experienced in connection with educational matters. I realise the benefits of schools such as are in existence at Harvey and Donnybrook and there is room for further extension in the provision of such schools in our country districts. I hope the Education Department will take that into consideration, bearing in mind that the South-West is developing rapidly. Although there may be instances where difficulties stand in the way of making necessary provisions for educational facilities, much could be done to benefit the lot of the children. I know difficulty is experienced in some instances in securing a sufficient number of children within a radius of four miles so as to allow of a school being provided. Everything possible should be done to get good accommodation for the children. I trust the department will continue with the good work and see that, with the provision of extra money, greater advantages are provided for the country children. I realise the value of correspondence classes, but in many directions that value does not apply to country households. The parents have not the time to assist in the tuition, although satisfactory results are obtained where the older children help along the younger ones. The item relating to manual training appeals to me. We have not progressed far enough in connection with the High Schools, particularly in regard to manual training. Boys who attend High Schools, such as those at Albany and Bunbury, come from scattered areas, whereas the boys who can attend the Technical School or the Modern School in Perth come from a more concentrated part where there are advantages that are not available to the children in the outlying areas. That was proved recently when applications were called for positions in the Midland June-

tion workshops. It was found that, owing to the greater advantages available in the metropolitan area, the boys from the country districts had to take second place to those of the metropolitan area. I trust the Minister will regard this matter seriously. I hope increased expenditure will be available along the lines I have indicated, so that the country children may get more consideration than they have received in the past.

**MR. LATHAM** (York) [9.37]: The money we are asked to vote under the heading of education is twice as much as that of any other Vote, apart from those relating to public utilities. I am rather surprised to hear hon. members say that they would desire an increase in the Vote. We have to realise that the whole of this money has to be found by way of direct taxation. Very little revenue is raised to meet the expenditure unless it be from such institutions as the High Schools and the Narrogin School of Agriculture.

**Mr. Thomson**: No fees are charged at the High Schools.

**Mr. LATHAM**: That is so, but revenue is derived from the Narrogin School of Agriculture. I propose to ask the Minister what is the revenue received from that institution. We have to educate our children, but at the same time we have to be very careful regarding the expenditure of the money. We must realise that the expenditure grows very rapidly. The member for Gaseoyne has pointed out how rapidly it has grown during the past 10 years. I understand that with the revenue received from the sale of stock and produce and as a result of money raised in other directions, the School of Agriculture is practically self-supporting. I am anxious to see the accommodation at the school increased in order that the country children may gain the advantage of the elementary technical knowledge that is taught at the school. When teachers are sent into the country districts they should not be kept there, but should be transferred to the city after some time. I do not think it is right that a girl should be sent out into the country and kept there. It is a quiet life and it would be better if the country teachers were transferred back to Perth after a while and the Perth teachers sent out into the country. There is little social enjoyment for them and some consideration should be shown to the girls who are located in the country areas. The accommodation for teachers in the coun-

try districts should receive attention. There are girls at Bruce Rock who have to pay £2 15s. a week for accommodation at the Bruce Rock State Hotel. That is a very unfair impost, more particularly as there has been an increase of 10s. comparatively recently. It is only right that girls in the country districts should look for the best accommodation available. Naturally they will not go to a cheap boarding house where the accommodation may be suitable for men only. More consideration should be shown to the girls than is extended to them at, for instance, the Bruce Rock hotel. Some time ago they had to pay £2 5s. a week. I think the Minister should take up this matter with the Minister in charge of State hotels with a view to making the charge £2 5s. It is too much to ask girls to pay £2 15s. a week.

Mr. Teesdale: What salary do they receive?

Mr. LATHAM: From £4 to £5 a week. We do not wish to give the girls charity, but I think they should receive the same consideration and get the same concessions as other civil servants.

The Minister for Agriculture: How long has this been going on?

Mr. LATHAM: For three or four months. I discussed this matter with the Minister, but I do not seem to be able to get on the sympathetic side of his nature.

Mr. Thomson: Surely the girls could get decent accommodation in private homes.

Mr. LATHAM: That is difficult in many country districts. It is all right in places like Katanning and Wagin where there are plenty of private houses, but it is different in a centre like Bruce Rock where there are mostly business premises. Frequently women do not like taking into their houses young girls who want a certain amount of consideration.

MR. THOMSON (Katanning) [9.42]: I am inclined to support the remarks of the member for Gascoyne (Mr. Angelo). Anyone who suggests a reduction in the Education Vote runs a risk of making himself unpopular. I sometimes wonder whether we are getting good value for the money expended in this direction. Educationists will contend that knowledge of all kinds is not waste. I will not argue that point, but in view of the figures quoted by the member for Gascoyne, hon. members should realise that we have our deficit with us still and, judging by the way the returns are showing

so far, the Treasurer will probably succeed in the deficit he has budgeted for. The annual report of the Director of Education is an interesting one and hon. members will find on page 5 the following information:—

The numbers in the Industrial Course have risen by 18, and are nearly equal to those of the boys in the commercial and professional courses together. Boys who have been through these classes have a good groundwork for subsequent study of any skilled trade, and have also a most useful equipment for work on the land. The difficulty of obtaining suitable employment in skilled trades has deterred some parents from enrolling their boys in this course. A scheme has now been started for enabling the city boys to get employment on the land, and this should provide openings for boys who cannot obtain apprenticeships in skilled trades.

I do not wish to give a dissertation on the apprenticeship question because it would give rise to a very keen debate, but there is a very pregnant statement made by the Director of Education. He points out one of the great difficulties with which parents in Western Australia are faced, namely, to know what to do with their boys. I regret to say that the restrictions placed on apprentices in many trades are detrimental and do not give our boys an opportunity to the extent desired to earn a living as artisans. The member for Bunbury (Mr. Withers) mentioned the difficulties confronting country boys regarding the educational test, and those who know the facilities provided in the metropolitan area, as compared with the country districts, realise that the boy in the country is very much handicapped as against the boy bred in the metropolitan area. When we reach the Railway Estimates, this is one phase that I shall touch upon. When the call for apprentices is made for the Government workshops, I shall urge that a certain number of vacancies be reserved for boys from the country. As the member for Bunbury pointed out, the country boys are invariably outclassed by the boys in the city, who have enjoyed better opportunities. A scheme has been submitted to enable city boys to get employment on the land. That seems to be an excellent scheme.

The Minister for Lands: What scheme is that?

Mr. THOMSON: I presume it is Mr. Chandler's scheme.

The Minister for Lands: I do not see much in that.

Mr. THOMSON: Whatever the scheme may be, the Director of Education has seen fit to include a reference to it in his report.

The Minister for Lands: I suppose he means the Narrogin school farm. That is the only scheme in operation to-day.

Mr. THOMSON: No, that is a distinct scheme. Outside of that a scheme has now been started to enable the city boys to get employment on the land, which should provide openings for boys who cannot obtain apprenticeships in the skilled trades.

The Minister for Lands: You can take it from me that no such scheme has been started.

Mr. THOMSON: Then the Director of Education is misleading the House.

The Minister for Lands: There is an agitation for a scheme.

Mr. THOMSON: The Narrogin school has been in existence for some years. At the beginning of 1924 there were 70 pupils, of whom 63 remained at the end of the year. The director's report states that the students, under the guidance of their instructor, had in the previous years built a carpentry shop, a saddlery shop and a dairy. During 1924 they built a blacksmith's shop, a meat store and a slaughter house. During 1925 it is hoped to build a machinery shed and a garage. That has no reference to the other scheme. Any scheme that will provide means to take boys out of the blind alleys and give them an opportunity to become independent will have my support.

Mr. Sleeman: You want to give them all equal chances.

Mr. THOMSON: In theory, all boys and girls receive equal chances but in practice it does not work out that way. The Director of Education states—

The numbers in the domestic course for girls showed a decrease of 67. The course is undoubtedly one of great value for the future housewives and mothers. The attention of parents has been drawn to the importance of this training, but many of them are doubtful about the possibility of its leading to directly remunerative work. There is still a large field to be explored in connection with home industries for women. The course comprises cookery (including special cookery for invalids), laundrywork, dresscutting, millinery, knitting and needlework, upholstery, general housewifery, and principles of home-making, sick-nursing, and the care of infants. Three hundred and eighty-nine girls took the full domestic course, while 544 girls, who selected the commercial course, all received a training, though not on such an extensive scale, in domestic subjects.

If one advertised for a domestic to-morrow, he would be very lucky if he received one application. If he advertised for a typist, a stenographer or an office assistant, he would receive probably 300 or 400 applications.

Hon. G. Taylor: The same applies to men.

Mr. THOMSON: That is so. The unfortunate part is that, as the outcome of our education system, honest, hard toil is looked upon with disfavour. By our education system we are training the young people to look for what are called the soft jobs. I do not blame them for that. Naturally each one is desirous of getting a soft position. But there is something wrong with our education system.

The Minister for Lands: We are getting old and some of them will get our jobs shortly.

Mr. THOMSON: There is something wrong with a system that creates that desire. The member for York (Mr. Latham) dealt with the position of girls who go into the country.

Hon. G. Taylor: When they go to York, they all get married!

Mr. THOMSON: I recognise that quite a number of girls who go to country districts do not have the comfort they would have in their own homes. A majority of country people who take in teachers do so, not because they desire to have a boarder, but because they desire to have a school teacher in the district. In my opinion quite a lot of trouble arises through the girls not fitting into the country homes. At their own homes they have, perhaps, been accustomed to a careful mother who did everything for them, and when they go to the country they find that the woman of the home is probably overworked. Thus, they become dissatisfied, and so does the woman of the home. The Education Department should provide for a few more male teachers and make the work in the outback districts more attractive. If I had a daughter, I should prefer to keep her at home rather than send her to some new district.

Hon. G. Taylor: It is not right to send them out.

Mr. THOMSON: Where people are in the pioneering stages, they have not the comfortable homes that are to be found in more settled areas. If more male teachers could be provided for the outer districts, probably a great many of the difficulties would be overcome. I have a good deal of sympathy

for the Education Department and for many of the teachers, and I have a lot of sympathy for many of the people who have taken teachers into their homes. We have no fewer than seven high schools. What amount has been expended in their erection, I do not know. I wish to draw the attention of the Minister to the position in which some of our country children are placed. It is recognised that the Perth Modern School is one of the best secondary schools in the State and that the facilities there provided are second to none in Western Australia. In my district quite a number of parents, whose children had won scholarships, desired that their children should attend the Perth Modern School, as in some instances at any rate the children could stay with their grandparents. Unfortunately we had a high school at Albany, and it was ruled that all the children in my district who won scholarships must go to the Albany High School. In practice that is probably correct.

Hon. G. Taylor: That obtains everywhere.

Mr. THOMSON: Quite so. Let me refer to the director's report where he says that a scheme has now been started to enable the city boys to obtain employment on the land.

The Minister for Lands: I tell you that is not so. No scheme has been started.

Mr. THOMSON: That is merely a statement on the part of the Minister.

The Minister for Lands: I know better than does the Director of Education. There is no scheme started. It would come under my control.

Mr. THOMSON: There is a general desire for such a scheme, and meetings have been held at which a scheme has been propounded by Mr. Chandler.

The Minister for Lands: It was propounded by the secretary of the Labour Bureau years before Mr. Chandler took it up.

Mr. THOMSON: I am prepared to give the secretary of the Labour Bureau credit for that; it shows that there are other people thinking along the same lines as is Mr. Chandler. There is a desire in the metropolitan area that city lads should be given an opportunity to go on the land. I consider that we in the country should have a proportion of the vacancies in the Perth Modern School. The examination could be made harder, if necessary, but a proportion of the vacancies should be allocated to country children who win scholarships. At the same time we should give city children an

opportunity to go to the country high schools and interchange. In that way we inculcate into the youth a desire for country life.

Mr. Davy: Is it not best that a child should be reared in the country?

Mr. THOMSON: That is one of the reasons why I advocate that children reared in the country should come into the metropolitan area for their schooling, and then at the end of its educational course the child could go back. We know, of course, that excellent schools are provided in the country districts, though heaven help us if those who live in the metropolitan area were obliged to send their children to some of the schools that are mere shacks. It is not fair either to send girls into the country to teach in those galvanised iron buildings that are designated schools.

The Minister for Lands: There are very few of them now.

Mr. THOMSON: I can show the Minister quite a number in my district, where the roof can be touched by raising the hand, and where the wind whistles through the weatherboard in winter time, while in summer the buildings resemble a furnace.

The Minister for Lands: All I can say, then, is that they have not a good representative in Parliament.

Mr. THOMSON: Some of these schools were built 30 years ago and at that time we were grateful for anything that was given. I am pleased that there is a high school at Albany. The average attendance there is 107, but to provide accommodation for that number it was necessary to spend over £20,000. I have no objection to that, but compare the accommodation provided there with the shacks that still exist in some parts of the country. I recognise the Government's difficulty but I feel that we should appoint a committee to investigate the working of the Education Department. A Royal Commission was appointed a few years ago, and whilst I pay a tribute to the work the then Minister did, he was astute enough to select as chairman of that Commission a man from another State whose system was similar to ours. His finding, of course, was written practically before he came here.

The Minister for Lands: That is hardly fair.

Mr. Teesdale: Go on; any criticism is good enough for the Mitchell Government.

Mr. THOMSON: I have not criticised the Mitchell Government and I am surprised at

the interjection, which is uncalled for and unjust. I have grave doubts as to whether the State is getting full value for the money being expended by the Education Department. I cast no reflection upon the officers of the department. The system has grown up and we can only deal with it as we find it. I am pleased that the agricultural college is about to be started. In the past we have not paid as much attention to agricultural education as we should have done, but that position has now been remedied. I hope the Minister will make a note of my request that room should be found in the Modern School for some of the country children, and that if there is not sufficient room there, some of the metropolitan children should be sent to country districts.

**MR. LINDSAY** (Toodyay) [10.12]: The Minister told us that the cost of education had been reduced from £1 11s. 9d. per head in 1922 to £1 10s. 9d. per head last year. It stands to reason that whilst we increase our population the cost of education must also increase. I am sorry to hear that the cost per head has been reduced because from my experience I am sure the people who will be likely to suffer are those in the country districts. I represent a large area in which there are a number of new districts and I give the Education Department credit for trying to meet me whenever I have submitted a request for a school. My wishes have been met by schools that have been pulled down elsewhere being re-erected in my electorate. I suppose if that had not been done I should not have got any schools at all. I take exception to these remarks in the report of the Director of Education—

Of course there is a great deal more that might be done if the money were available, but at least there is no justification here for the statement that everything is done for the town child, and nothing for the country child. While the average child in a large school costs £8, the average child in a small school costs £19.

I do not know whether he suggests that we should all leave the country and live in the city. Until such time as every child has received primary education we should not spend any money in other directions. Every child of school age should have the right to receive primary education. Therefore we must do everything we can to keep the children at present in the country, in the districts in which they live with their parents.

The practice seems to be that if children come to the city their parents follow them at a later date. I have said before that the system of education in Western Australia is not suitable for the State inasmuch as the great majority of the people are earning their living from the soil. Our educational system does produce shorthand writers and typists, and even doctors and lawyers, but it teaches the children nothing of agriculture. Yet the bulk of our children are living in the country, and their life work will be in agriculture or in pastoral pursuits. One of the chief reasons why people will not live in the country is that educational facilities for their children are not there. In our locality we have never had a school within seven miles, and in consequence I and my neighbours have to send our children to the city for their education. If one has any feeling for his children he will not send them to a small country school, but will send them to the city, where they can get a better education. The department should do more for the country children than it is doing. I went to the School of Agriculture at Narrogin for a fortnight, and I there learnt quite a lot that has been of great advantage to me since. It is a very fine school. It is a pity more of our farmers do not make use of it. One goes in there and learns in theory why one does certain things in practice. As for the teachers there, I never met a body of men to equal them. Their great ambition was to teach us as much as possible within the time. I hope that nothing will be done to stint that school, but that, on the other hand, everything will be done to still further improve it. The correspondence classes have resulted in good work, but it is not all parents that have the temperament to teach their children. In order to do the correspondence class justice, the mother requires to put in three or four hours per day with her children, and very few women on the farm can do that, seeing that they have to look after the house and cook, not only for their husbands and families, but also for the men on the farm. Some years ago I put up to the Director of Education the scheme that, in order to provide for children in scattered districts, a series of school hostels should be established. Then, instead of having to send our children to Perth and give them a city education, unsuited to them for the country, they could be sent to country centres where

these school hostels were to be found. The parents would pay for the children's board, of course, but the education would still be free. It would overcome a serious difficulty and preclude the necessity for sending the children to the city. Our country districts are becoming depopulated because parents who have been successful on the land send their children to the city to be educated and, quite naturally, come down with them, and so we are losing the cream of our country population. Because of that I say our educational system is not suited to Western Australia.

**MR. SLEEMAN** (Fremantle) [10.21] : The annual report of the Education Department shows that dental treatment has been recommended for 27 per cent. of the children examined. I should have been pleased to see on the Estimates provision for dental officers to visit the schools.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: If you have not seen it you have not looked very closely through the Estimates.

**Mr. SLEEMAN**: If it is there I am pleased to know it, and to know that the children are to have their teeth attended to. It is of no use educating our children if their health is going to be impaired. It is nonsense to inspect the teeth of children and instruct little Willie to tell his parents that his teeth must be attended to, when perhaps his parents have not the money to pay for the attention.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: If they have not the money to have it done privately they can send their children to any of several Government institutions, or to the Children's Hospital, and have their teeth attended to.

**Mr. SLEEMAN**: That is not so. I have known parents who, because they had not the money for the private dentist, were unable to get their children's teeth attended to. In South Australia there are eight dental officers going around the schools, and what can be done in South Australia we can do here.

The Minister for Lands: South Australia has nearly double our population.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: And in other directions we are doing double as much as South Australia is doing.

**Mr. SLEEMAN**: Since South Australia has eight dental officers touring the State, with half her population we ought to have at least four dental officers here. Then, per-

haps, our children's teeth would be attended to. I do not want any preferential treatment for the metropolitan area; the same facilities should be extended to country schools. I find the provision on the Estimates is for one school dentist for six months in the year. That will not see us far. One dentist will about cater for Perth. I want to see the rest of the State catered for as well. Recently my own little chap came home with a report about his teeth, and had to go the dentist and take chloroform. I do not want the use of a State dentist, because I can afford to pay for attention to my children; but had it been the child of a man on the breadline the child would have had to go without the attention, and so suffer in health. The operation cost me £2 10s. We should look after the health of our children, as well as their education. We pay inspectors to go around and drill our children, but it is far more necessary that their health should be looked to. The departmental report does not say how many of the children have had their teeth attended to.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: Very few.

**Mr. SLEEMAN**: And 27 per cent. of them require attention. It is the greater reason why we should have dental officers to attend to the children's teeth. Again, the department might well give some instruction in voting. The boys and girls of to-day will be the men and women of to-morrow, and they should be instructed in voting at elections. We all know how many informal votes are cast at every election.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The electors did very well this time.

**Mr. SLEEMAN**: The department could well include instruction in voting in the curriculum for children in the higher classes.

Hon. G. Taylor: They might give them a few lessons with the sliding ballot box.

**Mr. SLEEMAN**: The hon. member has had plenty of experience of such devices, but so far I have had none.

**MR. TEESDALE** (Roebourne) [10.27] : I ask the Minister whether this dental business is being taken advantage of to any great extent? Twenty-seven per cent. is a very poor average. How long has this free dental service been in vogue?

**MR. MANN** (Perth) [10.28] : While several members have complained of the increase in the Estimates, my complaint is that provision has not been made for an institu-



tion for the treatment of mental deficients. I mentioned this last year, and the Minister was very sympathetic.

The Minister for Lands: We are ready to be sympathetic with all these things, if only you will tell us how to get the money.

Mr. MANN: The member for Toodyay (Mr. Lindsay) spoke at considerable length of the necessity for giving children a primary education. But it is impossible to give a child primary education if that child's mind is not capable of receiving it. We would save hundreds of thousands of pounds later if we were able to give proper treatment to the mentally deficient to-day. While we are forward in many matters, we are backward in this. We are the only State that has not made some forward movement in the treatment of the mental deficients. Apart from the subsidy of the children at the Seaforth Home, I am not aware of anything the department is doing in this respect. The Minister may be able to tell us of something else that is being done. The teachers are concerned about the matter, and have discussed it annually at their conferences. They are keen about taking it up. I have discussed it with many of them individually, and they realise their responsibility. It may be that the calling I followed for many years led me into avenues where I was probably better able than most people to observe the necessity for the treatment of mental deficients, and the benefit that would be derived by them and the State. It would not, I think, require a great amount of money at the beginning. As the benefit was appreciated, probably the Government would see the necessity for further expenditure. Quite lately an international conference has been sitting in London dealing with the matter. I have the report here. It says—

Both feeble-mindedness and dementia precox can be detected by skilled psychologists in the public schools before 10 or at the outside 12 years of age. And at this age they can be readily dealt with either by special education or by segregation in happy farm colonies and industrial villages, planned for children who never grow up.

It is interesting to see the children at the Seaforth Home, and find a boy of 15 whose mind will never develop beyond that of a boy of 8 or 10. These children are getting the best treatment that can be given to them, but the numbers are very small. Only a limited number can be treated there.

Mr. Sampson: They are under a capable man.

Mr. MANN: Yes, and under a capable matron. These teachers are patient, and their attention to the children is having good results. It is only by frequently mentioning this matter that ultimately some attention will be paid to this aspect of education. I was going to mention the James-street school, which is out of date and unsuitable.

The Minister for Mines: How long has it been out of date?

Mr. MANN: It is not large enough. It will not hold the children who are there, for they are scattered around the neighbourhood in private houses.

The Minister for Lands: It is wanted out in the suburbs now.

Mr. MANN: There are hundreds of children there, and there is no ground for them to move about in.

The Minister for Mines: Children are coming in from the suburbs to the school.

Mr. MANN: Of course, because they are receiving higher education there and are profiting from it. If the Government were to consider the position they might utilise the building to better advantage for public offices, and establish the school in a suburb or away from the centre of the city where larger grounds could be obtained. This would be of benefit to the Government and to the children. The buildings would perhaps be more suitable as public offices, because they are in touch with the city. The surroundings are not at all suitable for teaching and for the children. We have our public offices scattered all over the city, and it might be possible for the Government to concentrate them more by using this school building.

The Minister for Lands: Where are they scattered now?

Mr. MANN: We have the Public Works Department here, the Water Supply Department there, the Stores Department in Marquis-street, and so on.

The Minister for Lands: It would be the same thing if you put them in another place.

Mr. MANN: Probably three departments could be housed there.

The Minister for Lands: No fear.

Mr. MANN: The school is doing wonderful work. It is giving advanced education and the children are doing well, but the building is not suitable, nor is the district.

**HON. S. W. MUNSIE** (Honorary Minister—Hannans—in reply) [10.35]: I am pleased that members have accepted the Estimates in such a generous way. They have not given me much to reply to. The Leader of the Opposition brought up the question of accommodation for scholars at secondary schools. He asked if I would make representations to the Minister for Education or the Director upon the subject. All requests put up by members or suggestions made by them will be placed before the Minister. I agree with the member for Toodyay in the view he has taken. I believe it would be the duty of the Government, if they had the money to spend, first of all to provide school hostels for the primary schools, before attempting to build accommodation at secondary schools. The member for Pingelly evidently misunderstood me with regard to what I said about unclassified teachers. I said it was pleasing to find that the number of unclassified teachers was diminishing. I recognise the splendid work done by them, but I am glad the number is falling off. In many instances we have often to keep schools open where the number of scholars have fallen below 10, by appointing an unclassified teacher to take charge. In one instance an unclassified teacher had three or four children of her own, and she was sent to a district for the purpose of keeping the school open because she had these children of her own to educate. The department is not lax in its recognition of the unclassified teacher. The member for Claremont asked if anything had yet been done with regard to brown bread. Nothing has been done, but the matter has not been lost sight of. That question and many others dealing with the health standpoint of the children will be taken into consideration. The member for York wanted to know whether I could tell him the amount of revenue received from the Narrogin farm school. I am unable to reply to that question. He also complained with regard to the amount charged to teachers for board at the Bruce Rock State Hotel. I know something about this question. I admit that for some time the State Hotel Department did give a concession to school teachers, because there was no other place at Bruce Rock at which they could get suitable accommodation. At that time there was accommodation not being used at the State Hotel. Things have altered since then. If the information I have obtained from the department is correct, there are now two or three other places

in Bruce Rock where suitable accommodation is to be obtained.

Mr. Latham: There is not.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: The hotel is there particularly for the travelling public. I do not see why the department should be asked to cater for permanent boarders at less than the ruling rate at which they can accommodate those who are willing to pay it. That is not a fair proposition. I do not know that private hotels give concessions to school teachers.

Mr. Latham: They do for permanent boarders.

Mr. Heron: It costs more to go to the State hotel for a week than it does to go as a casual.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: Not at Bruce Rock. The hotels department did give concessions while there was no other accommodation available.

Mr. Latham: It has been given to civil servants for years.

Mr. Chesson: Why should civil servants get concessions?

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: The member for Katanning wants to know if a certain percentage of those places for children who are admitted to the high schools cannot be reserved for the children from country districts. I believe it is correct to say that if a child in any portion of the State passes the examination and is one of the first 50, irrespective of where he comes from he can go to the Modern School.

Mr. Heron: Quite correct.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: There is no necessity to reserve any proportion of the places for the country children to go to the Perth Modern School.

Mr. Thomson: Children who pass the ordinary examination in Perth can also go to the Modern School.

Mr. Heron: You are not right there. They have to take their junior first.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: There are children in the metropolitan area who pass the examination but are not amongst the first 50, and there are children from the country districts who go to the Modern School because they are amongst the first 50. The regulations provide that any children within the next 100 go to the nearest high school. They are first-class regulations. Why should we build secondary schools in country districts if everyone who is entitled to a secondary education wants to go to Perth? There would be no incentive to build high schools in the

country if that were so. There are children from the metropolitan area who go from some of the secondary schools to the country.

Mr. Latham: Some city children are attending the high school at Bunbury now.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: That is so. The hon. member also drew attention to the increase in the expenditure for the Albany High School. There is, however, no real increase in this year's expenditure over last year's. The apparent difference is due to the fact that in the last financial year the school was not opened until the 6th February. The seeming increase for the current financial year represents merely the salary payments for the full 12 months. Had the school been open for the full year 1924-25 the expenditure would have been exactly the same as that now estimated. The member for Fremantle referred to dental treatment of school children, a matter that comes under the Medical rather than the Education Vote. However, I agree with the hon. member that it would advantage the State even to spend less money on education and more money on caring for the health of children during school age. I was under a misapprehension as to the free dental treatment available for children: it is obtainable only at the Public Health Department in Perth. There is, however, free medical treatment of school children at all public hospitals and Government hospitals throughout the State. Parents resident in the metropolitan area are asked to send their children to the Children's Hospital, but children are also treated at all other hospitals, as I have mentioned. The Public Health Department have issued tens of thousands of pamphlets urging parents to take note of the medical examinations made in schools. Attention is drawn to the detriment suffered by children from an educational standpoint if they are permitted to continue to be under a defect that is curable. The pamphlet ends thus—

You are asked to fill in the upper portion of the accompanying report fully and return it to the school as early as possible. All information is regarded by the department as strictly confidential. The medical officer is glad to interview at the school any parents who desire it. The medical officer will also be pleased to give to Parents' and Citizens' Associations a lecture on health of children, illustrated by lantern slides.

The department have gone to that expense.

Join your Parents' and Citizens' Association. "Many hands make light work."

The member for Perth wanted to know what was being done as to education and treatment of mental defectives. Here, again, I have to admit that but slow progress is being made. However, since the Estimates came before Parliament I have agreed to the appointment of a qualified psychologist. There is going to be established in this State a psychological department, and I know this means that before long a vote will be needed for the treatment of children.

Mr. Mann: It is a step in the right direction.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: Yes, but these things have to come slowly. I have agreed to the proposal and I believe that in last week's "Government Gazette" there appeared a notice calling for applications for a psychologist for Western Australia.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Is that position provided for on the Estimates?

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: Yes. Therefore we have done something, even if it is only a small thing. I consider we have accomplished as much as could reasonably be expected during the time we have been in office, and allowing for the opportunities we have had to make the necessary inquiries.

Vote put and passed.

Progress reported.

*House adjourned at 10.53 p.m.*