

ployment for its workers and the retarding of development in the Yampi area." Yampi is not an area capable of development; it is an island. I have already made it clear to Mr. Thomson that if he had taken the trouble he could have learned that there was no chance of tropical or cultural development in that part of the State and that anyone would have to fall back upon cattle, sheep, etc.; also, that if there had been any possibility of doing anything more than grow cattle, sheep and peanuts, I am quite satisfied that the present Minister for the North-West, who for many years was tropical adviser to the Government, would not have spent so many years in the North without having found a solution of the problem that Mr. Thomson tells us can be solved. I have nothing more to say except to oppose the amendment.

HON. C. H. WITTENOOM (South-East) [8.52]: While I intend to speak to the amendment, I may find it rather difficult not to trench on the motion. When the motion was first submitted, my definite intention was to oppose it, for the reasons that have already been advanced by several members, the principal one being that there is a shortage of iron ore in the Commonwealth. Figures have been given, however, and the opinion has been expressed that the supply of iron ore will last a good deal longer than the periods that have been mentioned. Another reason for my opposition to the motion is that it is not advisable that the Japanese should be supplied with the ore. As conditions appear to be turning out, it seems that the Federal Government was entirely justified in imposing the embargo. The Federal Government must have had good reasons for taking the action it did. A suggestion was advanced that the embargo would interfere with vested interests. I do not take any notice of that. When Mr. Thomson moved his amendment, I thought there was something in it, that we in Western Australia were being deprived of an industry that would have been of inestimable advantage to the State, and that its development would have turned out to be something that was urgently needed to assist in opening up the northern areas. Had the circumstances been ordinary instead of extraordinary, I might have voted for the amendment to request compensation. I am inclined to think that

had that suggestion been put to the Federal Government in normal times, consideration might have been given to it. Circumstances are, however, entirely altered, and we are on the verge of an emergency. For that reason I intend to vote against the amendment and the motion as well.

On motion by the Chief Secretary, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 8.55 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 28th September, 1938.

	Page
Questions: Eggs, pulp imports	1099
Lotteries Commission, agencies in starting-price betting shops	1099
Dairy Products Marketing Board, Manjimup Dairy Produce Co.	1100
Motions: Rural Relief, Commonwealth funds, to re-allocate	1100
Education System, to inquire by select committee	1105
Bills: Basil Murray Co-operative Memorial Scholarship Fund, 1A.	1100
Companies Act Amendment, 2B.	1119
Marketing of Onions, 2A, Cont.	1120
Jury Act Amendment, Cont.	1132

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

QUESTION—EGGS, PULP IMPORTS.

Mr. **THORN** asked the Minister for Agriculture: What quantity of egg pulp has been imported into this State during the past six months?

The **MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE** replied: 186,151 lbs.

QUESTION—LOTTERIES COMMISSION.

Agencies in Starting-price Betting Shops.

Mrs. **CARDELL-OLIVER** asked the Minister representing the Minister for Police: 1. Is he aware that hundreds of shops dealing in starting-price betting throughout the

State sell lottery tickets and exhibit lottery posters? 2, Has the Lotteries Commission the sanction of the Government to grant licenses to shops carrying on an illicit trade? 3, If not, can the Government guarantee that such licenses will be discontinued?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, No. 2, The appointment of agents to sell lottery tickets is not the function of the Government but devolves entirely upon the Lotteries Commission. 3, Answered by No. 2.

QUESTION—DAIRY PRODUCTS MARKETING BOARD.

Manjimup Dairy Produce Co.

Mr. McLARTY asked the Minister for Agriculture: 1, Is he aware that a statement published in the "Manjimup Mail" last week credits him with having called a conference of the Dairy Products Marketing Board and the Manjimup Dairy Produce Co., and having advised the company not to sign any agreement with the board? 2, Did he call such a conference? 3, If so, why were the producers' representatives on the Board not invited? 4, Is the statement that he advised the Manjimup Dairy Produce Co. not to sign any agreement with the board correct?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE replied: 1, Yes. 2 and 3, In view of an urgent need to confer with the chairman and some members of the board in the presence of representatives of the Manjimup Dairy Produce Company, the matter was discussed at short notice with the chairman. At my request, in an endeavour to end the dispute and with the chairman's concurrence, the meeting was arranged. 4, My advice to the Manjimup company was that the agreement should not be signed at that stage, if they needed any proviso, or to sign with reservations which might tend to defer finality in the dispute between the parties.

BILL—BASIL MURRAY CO-OPERATIVE MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP FUND.

Introduced by the Minister for Agriculture and read a first time.

MOTION—RURAL RELIEF.

Commonwealth Funds, To Re-allocate.

MR. BOYLE (Avon) [4.36]: I move—

That the Commonwealth having tentatively allotted to this State the sum of £1,560,000 for

rural relief purposes under the Loan (Farmers' Debts Adjustment) Act, 1935, it is the opinion of this House that £350,000 should be re-allocated for rehabilitation purposes such as the replacement of machinery, etc., it to be understood that the present total allocation to Western Australia shall not be exceeded by reason of the suggested re-allocation.

Mr. SPEAKER: The motion the hon. member proposes to move may, in some circumstances, be interpreted as influencing, if not directing, an appropriation. The special circumstances of this case have, however, been examined, and they are not considered to involve that interpretation. The hon. member may proceed.

Mr. BOYLE: I do not know whether I am entitled to comment on your remarks in accepting the motion, Mr. Speaker, but when members move a motion of this description they certainly intend to give a lead or a direction. I would indeed be sorry if any member were prevented from bringing forward such a motion. In any event, I desire to express my appreciation of your action in this matter. In 1935 the Commonwealth Government passed the Loan (Farmers' Debts Adjustment) Act, the purpose of which was to deal with the tremendous overload of indebtedness carried by the farmers of Australia, and to enable the States, by means of funds advanced by the Commonwealth Parliament, to secure, through uniform Acts, the compounding or suspension of those debts. The amount allotted under the Commonwealth Act was £10,000,000, with a reserve or contingency fund of £2,100,000, making a total of £12,100,000, which was allotted proportionately to the States to enable the State Governments to compound the debts of the farmers. The Royal Commission on Flour and Wheat pointed out that the indebtedness of the wheat farmers of Australia aggregated the colossal sum of £151,000,000, while their assets, which, of course, were merely book assets, represented £136,000,000, leaving a deficiency of £15,000,000. That means to say that, virtually, the wheatgrowing industry of Australia, from an accounting point of view, is bankrupt. In the circumstances, the Commonwealth Government, in its wisdom, decided to pass a Loan Act to raise £12,000,000, and the States were allotted various sums. In Western Australia its proportion was handled under the provi-

sions of the Rural Relief Fund Act, and by that means good work has been done. The secured debt position has not been attacked to any great extent but the individual farmer has been relieved of many irritating unsecured debts. The amount of money we in Western Australia have received under the Rural Relief Fund Act out of the £1,560,000 authorised is £764,000, and this year a further £300,000 has been allotted. That brings the amount to £1,064,000. I think I am safe in saying that the trustees have practically finished their work. They have gone as far as they can go and the reason is not far to seek. What has been cleared up is the unsecured debt position. The secured debts remain virtually untouched. Some second mortgages have been cleared up, as have some secured debts, but in the main the secured debts position is unchanged. The Commission pointed out that the Associated Banks and the trustee companies of the State have advanced about £8,500,000, and that debt remains practically untouched to-day. That is largely the non-governmental secured debts of the farmers or the wheatgrowers in Western Australia. We have in Federal loan reserve the amount of £496,000. There is nothing original in my suggestion. If members glance at the annual report of the trustees—a very valuable document, which is lying on the Table—they will discover that the trustees are very emphatic in this regard. They have pointed out the illogicality of adjusting the debts of the farmers, and at the same time giving them nothing with which to carry on; particularly difficult is it for the farmer whose machinery is obsolete or worn-out. The adjustment of debts has been of great benefit to the creditors of the farmers, but the benefit to the farmers themselves has been of a rather negative kind. Their debts have been adjusted but they have not themselves received any help at all to enable them to carry on. Having that in mind, the trustees, in the concluding portion of their report, said—

The position is still difficult in connection with machinery replacements and the trustees again express the opinion that their activities would be much more effective if a portion of the fund could be utilised for rehabilitation purposes in addition to debt adjustment.

Incidentally, I might inform the House that the expenditure incurred in administering the Rural Relief Fund Act last year was

£7,023 19s. 11d. The revenue from the farmers received by way of fees and other charges amounted to £4,383 13s. 9d., leaving a balance of £2,640 6s. 2d. against the Government for one year's administration in the disbursement of £300,000. That is less than 1 per cent. of the total amount distributed. The £300,000 distributed has gone into the commercial channels of the State. Thus the Government, through that particular department, has called upon the farmers to contribute £4,383 13s. 9d. out of a total of £7,023 19s. 11d. It seems remarkable that in all farmers' legislation—and I will be candid enough to add, particularly Federal farmers' legislation—there is an inherent weakness. Under this particular Act £12,100 has been tentatively allotted. Quite recently with less than half the money raised the Commonwealth Government calmly proposed that there should be no further borrowings for this particular purpose, and a good deal of effort was required to change that view. I will say this to the credit of the Minister for Lands, that he did advocate that a certain portion of the money should be used towards the replacement of machinery. I recall another piece of legislation that was passed by the Scullin Government—I hold no brief for any particular Government—and that legislation provided for the farmer to receive 3s. per bushel f.o.b. That Bill passed through the House of Representatives and was agreed to by a majority of about 30. It was also agreed to by the Senate and was placed on the statute-book. But we never heard any more about it. Upon making application, we were told that some constitutional issue was involved.

Mr. Warner: We were told not to be inquisitive.

Mr. Patrick: We were told that the bank would not pay the money.

Mr. BOYLE: The fact remains that the National Parliament of Australia agreed to give the wheatgrowers 3s. f.o.b., and it was the responsibility of the Federal Government, and not the responsibility of the bank, to carry out that particular promise and to adhere to the solemn contract entered into.

This State had this year to fight to obtain £300,000 for the adjustment of farmers' debts. Victoria is also having considerable trouble. If the request that £350,000 out of the total allocated should be used for rehabilitation purposes

is granted, it will certainly mean that an amendment of the Federal Act will be necessary, but in view of the three years' work that has been carried out under that Act, and in view of the fact that the trustees of the Rural Relief Fund Act in Western Australia have practically completed their work—and I emphasise that they have done a good job—it is only logical that they should be allowed to provide for those farmers whose debts they have adjusted, the means of purchasing tools of trade. Members may be interested to know that every year the cost of agricultural implements to this State averages £550,000.

Mr. Sleeman: We should make them here.

Mr. BOYLE: We are making them in Australia. I remind the member for Fremantle (Mr. Sleeman) that it is in this respect that the wheatgrower is particularly at a disadvantage. He has to buy his tools of trade from the dearest markets.

Mr. Sleeman: They should be manufactured here.

Mr. BOYLE: Of the £550,000 worth purchased, about £525,000 worth comes from the Eastern States. Those implements are purchased by men who are able to finance themselves. Those farmers alone expend over half a million pounds per annum in the purchase of tools of trade for agricultural purposes. If the Federal Government could be induced to make available £350,000 of this loan money, the position would be made easier for those who are endeavouring to carry on their farming operations under adverse conditions, as well as with obsolete machinery. No man in his sober senses would put men to work on a building, and no factory owner would have his operatives working with obsolete or worn out machinery. No individual in his private life but would throw away some useless tool, and replace it with another that gave him a reasonable chance of doing the job well. I doubt whether five per cent. of the 10,000 wheat farmers in this State are equipped as they ought to be. It is with the object of endeavouring to overcome that situation that I bring forward this motion.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: Harvesters are wasting half their wheat.

Mr. BOYLE: That is not uncommon. One has only to go through a paddock in a reasonable season to see self-sown crops. Harvesters are throwing out their wheat. Many farmers cannot afford to spend any money to bring the most important implement they

have on the farm up to date. This makes all the difference between success and failure in the harvesting of a crop. Dr. Earle Page, as associate Prime Minister, brought down a Bill, and stated that the necessity for debt adjustments was urgent. The position is just as urgent to-day as it was in 1935. He also referred to the export of our primary products. He said, "as we know, our farmers were able to do this only by drawing to a large extent upon their capital reserves, in other words, they were exporting their capital." In normal years the wheat grower is the second largest exporter, in value, of primary products from Australia. He was told in 1931 to grow more wheat, and he did so. A great deal of his capital was exported abroad in bags. For ten years, from 1923 to 1933, wheat was exported to the value of £230,000,000. That money was used for the payment of goods and services abroad as well as interest charges.

The Minister for Lands: It has all gone.

Mr. BOYLE: Yes, but the man who produced it should have some little consideration. His work in those years was poorly paid. The people of Australia had their bills abroad paid to the extent of £230,000,000 from that source. When we contrast the position with that of the secondary industries of Australia, which annually produce £420,000,000 worth of manufactured goods, and only export three per cent., members will realise the extent of the pressure and the weight that fall upon the primary industries of Australia to keep in operation the essential services of the Commonwealth. Dr. Earle Page also said that a grant was to be made for the adjustment of farmers' debts, and not for the purpose of making advances for plant. That was an extraordinary attitude for him to adopt. When making provision for the adjustment of debts, Dr. Earle Page said that the money was not to be used as advances for plant. The endeavour was to throw the whole responsibility on indigent States, such as Western Australia and South Australia.

The Minister for Justice: What did the Country Party have to say about it?

Mr. BOYLE: I am afraid the Country Party, like any other party, or the Labour Party, holds contrary opinions on these points. I would not accept any responsibility for what the Federal Country Party did, nor for what the Federal Labour Party

did. Mine is an independent attitude. Not only is it the Country Party and not only is it the United Australian Party, but on occasions it has been the Federal Labour Party that has acted in this way. I have already referred to the Scullin Bill. That was allowed to go by the board and represented an absolute betrayal of the farmers of Australia. The Act received the Royal assent and under that measure the farmers were to receive 3s. a bushel f.o.b. It was, however, allowed to go into the discard. I do not apologise to anyone for attacking the Federal Country Party or any other Federal party in a similar position. Dr. Earle Page brought down a Bill to provide for a loan of £12,000,000. He was definitely wrong when he said that none of the money was to be used for plant. He declared it was not for rehabilitation purposes, but for the adjustment of debts. To correct that I am bringing forward this motion.

The Minister for Lands: Was it a £12,000,000 Loan Bill?

Mr. BOYLE: The amount in question was £12,100,000. I am sorry the Minister is sceptical. Section 3 provides that the Treasurer may from time to time under the provisions of the Commonwealth Inscribed Stock Act, or under the provisions of any Act authorising the issue of Treasury bills, borrow money not exceeding £12,100,000.

Mr. Warner: The Minister was only fishing.

Mr. BOYLE: The same set of circumstances that faced Australia is found in the United States. I have here the report of the Secretary for Agriculture in America for 1936,—Mr. Wallace. He said: "More short-term credit is required for productive purposes, and less of it for the emergency financing of old debts." In other words, short-term loans were granted for the provision of machinery and other essential services connected with production. Too much fuss is made of what the farmer owes. One would think he was the only one who owed anything. Another war is looming up, though we must all pray that it will not occur. Nevertheless, war is threatening, and we have not yet paid for the last one.

The Minister for Mines: We have not yet paid for the Crimean War.

Mr. BOYLE: In connection with the American Civil War between 1861 and 1865

many of the States of America owe money to Great Britain to-day. Great Britain has not yet paid in full what it owes America over the Great War.

Mr. Marshall: I thought Germany had to pay for the last war.

Mr. BOYLE: I hope Great Britain never does pay the United States. All this fuss is made of what the farmer owes. One would think he was the only person who had the distinction of owing anything.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: Something is also owing to him.

Mr. BOYLE: Less fuss should be made about the farmer's debts. His capital has all been exported. He does not owe this country anything, but has kept the essential services going and has paid the interest on our last war loan in England. I do not apologise to anyone, whether the Federal Country Party or any other party in a case where an act of common justice is involved. I am of the opinion that the £350,000 that has been authorised can well be applied for the purchase of machinery in Western Australia to enable the farmers to carry on their work. After three years' experience of the Rural Relief Fund Act I can speak with a little authority in this regard. The trustees of the fund say definitely in their annual report that there should be a sum of money made available. Therefore I have pleasure in submitting the motion.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. M. F. Troy—Mt. Magnet) [5.2]: It is not necessary to move the adjournment of the debate on this motion, because it can be disposed of this afternoon. I have no objection to it, and I hope no other member will offer any opposition to it. It endorses my own attitude. An agreement was arrived at at Canberra between the Commonwealth and the States as to the means by which debt adjustment might be brought about. At that conference I proposed that portion of the money be utilised for rehabilitation, the provision of water supplies, fencing, and the purchase of stock and machinery. I pointed out that the depression had caused serious losses, and there was urgent need for attention being given to the matters to which I referred, particularly fencing, water supplies, and the purchase of stock and equipment. My remarks were well received and though it was considered that something might be done in the direction I had indi-

cated, it was thought that it suited the majority to expend the money on debt adjustment only. There has always been some sort of understanding, though no resolution was ever passed to that effect, that the £2,000,000 in excess of £10,000,000 might be utilised for the purchase of agricultural machinery and for stock and equipment, in the manner that I had suggested. More than once I declared that the money should be utilised for that purpose. In Western Australia we have completed more debt adjustments than have all the other States combined. The Leader of the Opposition referred last evening to a motion that had been carried at the Returned Soldiers' Conference complaining of unsympathetic treatment. I made inquiries, and learnt that one of the persons who criticised had participated in the adjustments. I think £500 was advanced from the funds to adjust his debts, and therefore the motion should never have been submitted. However, one finds such ingratitude in every walk of life. No fewer than 2,500 claims have been adjusted, and as there are 10,000 settlers in the wheat belt, about one-fifth of them have had debt adjustment under the Rural Relief Act. That is not a bad percentage. Furthermore, the work is still going on. I gave the figures a few nights ago when I introduced the Estimates of the Lands Department, and the member for Avon (Mr. Boyle) has also given the figures this evening. It is not correct to say that only the unsecured debts were adjusted. Secured debts have been reduced by £1,018,000.

Mr. Boyle: Agricultural Bank debts?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The Agricultural Bank has reduced debts to the extent of £869,000, but I was referring to other secured debts under the Rural Relief Act. Under Section 65 the Bank has carried out adjustments to the extent of millions of pounds, but under the Rural Relief Act it has made sacrifices to the extent of £869,000. That is in excess by £125,000 of the whole amount found by the Commonwealth Government. Machinery debts have been reduced from £408,000 to £103,000, a reduction of £305,000, and those were all secured debts. Thus the secured debts have been subject to considerable adjustment. I am right in saying also that the private banks have carried out adjustments, although at first those institutions were reluctant to do so.

Mr. Patrick: Are there many applications still to be dealt with?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I do not know.

Mr. Boyle: About one thousand.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I do not know the number just now, but the work is up-to-date. The trustees are waiting for additional funds. There will be a £300,000 advance this year, and I think the trustees will then complete their work. Although many settlers who have already been assisted are still suffering from the effects of drought, there is nothing to prevent their making application again. The hon. member spoke about what the farmers had done. That is not denied. He also made reference to the manner in which money can be raised for war purposes, and how it can be raised for the object he has in view. It is no use stressing that. Money must always be raised in time of war, and people who fear the consequences of war do things that no one would think of doing at any other time. Our lives and liberty are then at stake, and so the future is mortgaged. It is because we have mortgaged the future that our financial position is so difficult. Consequently, there is nothing of a helpful nature in talking about what people do in war-time. If another war should happen goodness only knows what will follow. There might be capital levies, and the resources of the nation may become exhausted in that way. In the Eastern States of Australia where the farmers are in a much better position than are those in our State, there is not the same need to render them assistance as indicated in the motion under discussion, and at the conference none of the other representatives urged the matter as I understood it. There is no reason why this House should not endorse the motion, and also why Federal Country members should not also support it. If they do we might possibly get something from our representatives.

HON. P. D. FERGUSON (Irwin-Moore) [5.10]: There cannot be much difference of opinion about the motion. Notwithstanding what the Minister has said about the Eastern States it is conceivable that their viewpoint might be different from ours. The Eastern States have settled their agricultural industry over a much longer period than we have in Western Australia. Their farms

have been handed down by two, three, or perhaps even more generations, and there is not the same necessity there for rehabilitation as there is in our State, where agriculture is comparatively a new industry. That probably accounts for the difference in the viewpoint. If the Minister will continue to press for the principle embodied in the motion, it is not likely that the Eastern States authorities will be selfish enough to say, "We do not want the money here, and therefore we will not let you have it for Western Australia." They may see the reasonableness of the suggestion, and so this money may be made available to be expended in the direction we desire. No one knows better than we do that the money can be spent here to reasonable advantage. I intend to support the motion because I have had quite a lot of experience during the last year or two of the enormous loss occasioned to individual farmers, and, through them, to the State as a whole, by their having to use derelict machinery for cultivation. Ploughs, in particular, are in a derelict state. They have been used for a period of years until they are now beyond repair, and, in spite of the best of attention and the most practical use on the part of the farmer, are not capable of doing efficient work. When the land has been broken up by an inefficient plough, there is inefficient cultivating and drilling machinery to put the crop in the ground. That is the case with 50 per cent. of Western Australian farms. To cap all, we then find that the harvest machinery for taking the crop off is so old and decrepit that a large percentage of the crop is wasted—of the hay crop as well as the wheat. The binders and mowing machines in use in Western Australia are no credit to anyone; 50 per cent. of them should have been on the scrap-heap years ago. Some of them look as if they had come out of the Ark. The grain harvesting machines which are used in the great bulk of our wheat-growing areas are so worn out that it is impossible by purchase of duplicate parts to make decent machines of them. It is because of the severe losses to owners of such machinery, and through them to creditors and the State as a whole, that urgent necessity arises for a percentage of this money being made available for the purchase of new machinery, in place of that derelict machinery. Therefore I support the motion, and wish the Minister

for Lands success in his efforts at any conference he may attend in the Eastern States to deal with this problem, which is of such vital importance to so many of our farmers.

Question put and passed.

MOTION—EDUCATION SYSTEM.

To Inquire by Select Committee.

Debate resumed from the 21st September on the following motion by Mr. Boyle (Avon):—

That a select committee be appointed to inquire into the educational facilities afforded by the State with a view to formulating practicable recommendations for the institution of a more adequate system of education.

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION

(Hon F. J. S. Wise—Gascoyne) [5.18]: The member for Avon (Mr. Boyle) has moved for a select committee to inquire into many avenues of education which give us cause for a great deal of consideration. In moving his motion, the hon. member spoke with great enthusiasm. Undoubtedly, in some respects, he made an interesting review of some of our current difficulties. However, the hon. member is not alone in his enthusiasm. I suggest that all members of the Chamber are earnest enthusiasts with regard to education facilities provided in their respective districts and in any part of the State. The Government, too, shares in that enthusiasm, and, as I hope to indicate, has done its part fully and well with the material at its disposal. The member for Avon, however, in his enthusiasm made some statements which call for correction and certainly for much modification. I hope to show that whilst the hon. member proved some of his contentions, he did not prove to the House any need for a select committee. But before dealing broadly with the subject, I should like to be permitted to reply to one highly extraordinary assertion concerning country children condemned to an entire lack of education. The hon. member said—

Are we to submit to the spectacle of 30,000 children representing those outside the metropolitan area, being condemned to inefficient education, and in many cases an entire lack of education?

No matter how good the case of the hon. member might be, it was certainly not im-

proved by such unwarranted language. In making that statement the hon. member knew full well he included every town outside the metropolitan area. In fact, he included every child attending our schools outside a radius of 15 miles from the General Post Office, Perth. The statement, therefore, is not only extravagant, but indicates that the hon. member did not, in spite of the earnestness of his appeal for sections of his district, make himself acquainted with the working conditions of even a small country school. For, if that were so, he certainly could not have made many of the statements that his speech contained. He suggested that a fishing inquiry is not desired by him. For my part, when a slur has been cast on the department and on the efficiency of those who control it and those who are employed by it, my duty shall be to counter the suggestions and the statements made.

The 30,000 children to whom the hon. member referred as outside the metropolitan area actually number 27,600 as against 28,500 within the metropolitan area of the radius of 15 miles. In spite of that fact, although the figure is 27,600, all but 7,000 of these children have educational facilities almost identical with those obtainable in the metropolitan area, and those other 7,000 children are included in Class VII. schools and in assisted schools. Whilst the hon. member knew full well that such towns as Collie, Bunbury, Geraldton, Northam and Kalgoorlie were all included in his figure, he made no attempt to show the House that his argument centred upon a very small proportion of children who are not so fortunately situated. The hon. member took a great deal for granted in building up his case, for it can be conclusively shown that some of the best of our teachers are in country districts, that some of the most highly qualified teachers in the department give their services in schools mentioned and included by the hon. member. Moreover, the majority of the teachers in the service are stationed in the country.

Mr. Doney: But you would not say that there was an even distribution of good teachers between country and city?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Yes, a very fair distribution. That statement can be completely analysed to show that in schools where post-primary instruc-

tion is undertaken—or in all schools, if we take the records of the department by and large—the distribution of good teachers is fairly even. Some of our best inspectors have come from country schools included by the mover in the general title of providing inefficient education. I wish to show that whilst it is conceded that great difficulties exist in providing all the education we desire to provide, yet we do spend a very large sum of money in an endeavour to take to the children of the outback some reasonable measure of education. Without going into details with figures, a comparison between metropolitan costs and country costs—the latter for a lesser number of children—shows that £245,120 is spent in the metropolitan area on 29,000 pupils as against £326,000, roughly, spent in country districts on 26,800 pupils. Those figures include salaries and equipment only. The cost per head, of course, is seriously increased when applied to country schools.

Mr. Doney: We cannot escape that, of course.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: No, but I wish to show how unfair were the comparisons made by the member for Avon in spite of his mentioning that £20 per child was spent in the country as against £6 in the metropolitan area. That certainly does not support his statement that country children are condemned to inefficient education. The hon. member also said—

It is doubtful whether there is a post-primary school outside the metropolitan area.

Let us analyse that assertion, together with the statement as to inefficient education. Although there are no high schools in the far outskirts of country under development or at present developed to any extent, the children there are certainly catered for. The four high schools in country districts have an enrolment of 1,138 pupils, as against an enrolment in metropolitan high schools of 474 pupils. We hope next year to be able to cater in Geraldton for an additional 200 pupils. Is it reasonable to generalise in this matter and to assume that simply because in every town of a few hundred inhabitants or more there is not a high school, country post-primary facilities are neglected? It can be definitely stated that there is opportunity provided in all but the smallest country schools for pupils to continue to the junior standard. If the hon. member had made a very few inquiries, he could have as-

certained that fact. It is true that, generally speaking, there is no demand for post-primary work in many country districts. The inclination is to withdraw from the school at 14 years of age. This action is dictated by several reasons—parents' circumstances, opportunities, and what the parents may desire as a career for their child. Whilst it is undisputed that some of our best teachers are in the country, it is also an indisputable fact that some of our best teachers in post-primary education are stationed in the country.

I wish to explain in a progressive way just how the State enters for the country child. To begin with, we supply equipment and stock and a subsidy for assisted schools where even only five children are available. If eight pupils can be obtained, a Government school is established and a trained teacher and equipment are provided. If an average attendance of ten pupils is obtainable, a school is built. Where the average attendance is 21, a head teacher and a monitor are supplied; where it is 41, a teacher and a trained assistant are supplied. Further, in schools where the average attendance is under 40, the scholar may proceed on a clear-cut track to the University, if he has the ability. The teachers assist in post-primary work, and if the pupil gains a junior certificate the department grants £24 per annum to enable the child to attend a district high school. The leaving certificate, which is essential to entrance to the University, can be gained at the high school. It can be stated, and the statement can be successfully defended, that Western Australia is the only State in the Commonwealth making this particular provision in schools which have such small attendances.

The member for Avon mentioned that he had been unable to secure successful attention to a bus contract he was seeking for a part of his electorate. We have endeavoured to foster the idea that it is better to have our children educated at the larger schools. We have to-day 29 bus contracts in existence, under which 800 children are conveyed to the larger schools. That has involved us in a big responsibility financially in recent years. All this has been done in an endeavour to give the children of the outback at least the same opportunity of obtaining educational facilities as is extended to the metropolitan children. At all schools with over 40 pupils, qualified teachers, who are paid

an allowance for the work, give post-primary instruction; and I think the opinion of the department is that some of its best teachers engaged in that work are at country schools. In addition, a greater number of scholarships is awarded in the country. I do not know whether members are aware of the fact that of the secondary school scholarships awarded—50 in number—ten are specifically set aside for country children; and country children have an equal opportunity with city children to compete for the remaining 40. Fifty high-school scholarships are awarded by district inspectors, besides 12 for the Narrogin School of Agriculture. The inspectors' scholarships are restricted to small country schools. Of the 134 scholarships current, 88 are held by country pupils. Therefore, to say that the country child is condemned to insufficient education is quite idle. It is no use insisting that the attitude of the department and of all Governments has been against the country child and in favour of the metropolitan child. In no other State are distances and difficulties comparable with ours; yet we can claim to have done more than has any other State in catering for the education of the country child. Admittedly, funds have been insufficient, but the allocation of them shows that a fair and just apportionment has been made. In the metropolitan area, only eight schools are post-primary, while at schools in towns such as Merredin, Narrogin, Katanning, Harvey, Kellerberrin and many others, pupils definitely have the opportunity of taking post-primary courses. However, very little desire to continue beyond the junior standard is apparent in the case of the country child. Although the attendances at the district high schools show a very fair proportion of country children, 1138, not a great number is in the leaving class.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: That may be due to stress of financial conditions.

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Yes. To some extent it is due to the parents.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: No.

Mr. Doney: That seldom operates.

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: If the cause is financial strain, nevertheless the opportunity is provided by the department for the country child to receive equal educational facilities with the metropolitan child. We also frankly admit that many of our country buildings are not suited to our re-

quirements. We are not proud of some of the buildings that we are forced to use.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: You have no cause to be.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: And the Government of which the hon. gentleman was a member had no cause to be, either.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: Quite so.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: However, we make the best of the buildings we have. Many of them have been renovated and improved. While we are doing our utmost to provide all the facilities we can within our means, consideration is now being given to the provision of a better and different type of building, more suited to our climatic conditions. The hon. member said that our education system caters only for the children of the metropolitan area. That is a serious statement to make. The hon. member said also that the University was merely a metropolitan institution. That statement cannot be allowed to pass. University requirements are dictated by the density of the population. There are not many parts of the world, even in America, where universities are built except in big cities.

The Minister for Lands: Should we build a university in the Kimberleys?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: If that were done, the hon. member would have cause for complaint, and I am afraid travelling allowances would have to be materially amended. I am not sure that we could provide for such an institution in the Kimberleys.

Mr. Doney: I think we said that such an institution is more conveniently situated in Perth than elsewhere.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Then you concede that?

Mr. Doney: It should be in Perth.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Why, in all fairness, was not that said before?

Mr. Doney: I do not know.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: It must be accepted, in any analysis, that the place for a university is in the city, where it can cater for all the children of the State. True, many country children do not pass the junior standard; perhaps it is not the desire of the parents that the children should undertake the study of subjects for the leaving examination. Would it not be reasonable to expect that country children

would rather attend the agricultural colleges, or even technical schools and the School of Mines? That is reasonable. An analysis of the total number of pupils at the University showed how surprisingly small is the number of metropolitan pupils in comparison with country pupils. Certainly, our children are not condemned to an inefficient education if they live outside a 15-mile radius of Perth.

I referred to driving allowances and driving contracts. These two items cost, with the inspectors' scholarships, a sum of over £18,000 per annum. The regulations provide a payment of 6d. per day per child, except where a child uses a bicycle. The hon. member mentioned a family of three children who received 3s. 6d. a week, but I think that is probably a quite honest error on his part. A family of three children would draw 2s. 6d. each as driving allowance. Recently much agitation has taken place about the driving and bicycle allowances. Complaints have been received which show that apparently some capable bicycle salesmen have been travelling our country districts and doing very well. Hon. members will have had similar complaints. As soon as a child gets a bicycle and the horse-drawn vehicle is dispensed with, the driving allowance is discontinued. That is the complaint which the department receives. So many have been the complaints that some person must have been very successful in selling a large number of bicycles on the plea that the family would still be able to draw the 2s. 6d. a week allowance, which could be applied in reduction of the purchase price of the bicycle. The bicycle allowance is only 6d. per week. While I admit that that allowance is disproportionate to the driving allowance, we have the matter under review should an adjustment be deemed necessary, or should we think injustice is being done. At the same time, I think the bicycle allowance, although it was ridiculed by the member for Avon (Mr. Boyle), is not to be sneered at as a contribution by the State towards getting the country children to school.

Mr. Boyle: The allowance is 6d. a week.

Mr. Sampson: It is a ridiculous allowance.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Even if such matters were investigated by a select committee, what good would result? Would it be advisable to appoint a select committee to inquire into minor matters,

such as these, which seem to be agitating the minds of members? Members could urge a greater appropriation, but that is always done; there would be nothing new in doing that. It will be noted that this year the furniture vote to the department has been increased from £6,000 to £10,000; a large proportion of that increase has been earmarked for the replacement of old-type desks now used in country schools.

Mr. Doney: Are many old-type desks found in metropolitan schools?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: There is the country bias!

Mr. Doney: I merely asked a sensible question.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Where the opportunity has occurred to replace old-type desks, it has been availed of. More has been done in this way during recent years than was ever done by the Government of which the hon. member was a supporter.

Mr. Doney: That may be so, but what about the question I asked?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: We are dealing progressively with such matters and we are intensifying that work. As I have said, the furniture vote this year has been increased to £10,000. No intentional differentiation has been made in the treatment of country and town schools so far as equipment is concerned. Wherever it has been possible to effect an improvement in the standard, that has been done. As regards manual training and household management, these are matters of the State's ability to pay. They are being honestly considered and wherever possible centres are being established. We hope during the current year to establish at least two manual training and domestic science centres in country districts, so the solution of the whole problem would seem to be an increased vote to enable additional educational facilities to be provided. The proposed select committee would no doubt make recommendations along those lines, but as we are steadily progressing along those lines, there would be nothing for the select committee to do. In all these things we must be reasonable and fair in our criticism. It is no use to say that the country child is totally neglected. No State has gone so far as we have in the provision of correspondence classes. We pioneered the work and have achieved some remarkable re-

sults. This unique contribution to educational practice was initiated by Australia and we should not try to discount it. Today the figures are 1,887 children taught in their own homes, and others are taken to the advanced type of work under the three different schemes operating. Members will find some pertinent remarks on this subject in the annual report of the Education Department, showing the extent to which the department is catering for the advancement of every country child. If he is attending a school where a teacher can supervise his work even to the junior standard, the encouragement is given and the teacher is paid for that work.

I should like to quote from a publication dealing with the correspondence system of education in Western Australia written by the founder of the system, Mr. J. A. Miles, an inspector of education, who not long since retired from the service. He describes the difficulties and yet the accomplishments in carrying out the education system in this State—

Rural expansion is largely dependent on the educational facilities provided by the various centralised Governments of Australia for the children of the pioneer settlers; the small school must follow close upon the new settlement, otherwise parents would not remain there long. This is why all Australian Governments have adopted a liberal policy in regard to the establishment of rural schools. In Western Australia, for example, wherever a new rural community can guarantee an average attendance of ten pupils, a Government school is established; and even when fewer children are available a school may be established, provided that parents supply a suitable building and guarantee the teacher a salary of at least £54 per annum over and above the cost of her accommodation. The Government subsidises such schools to the extent of £12 per annum per pupil in average attendance, and equips the school free of charge to the parent. Such schools may be established wherever there is a likelihood of an average attendance of six pupils.

Mr. Patrick: That would represent more than one family.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: But the hon. member will concede that sympathetic consideration is given to the claims of all children in the outback parts, no matter how circumstanced and no matter how many there may be in a family. Mr. Miles proceeded to say—

The (correspondence) school was opened during the last term of 1918 with an enrolment of 45 pupils under one teacher. There are now

about 2,000 pupils enrolled, while the staff comprises a headmaster with over 40 assistants, two typistes and a junior despatch officer.

In this very interesting and informative article Mr. Miles deals with the objection of the Commonwealth authorities to the carrying through the post of personal letters from the teacher to the pupil. A very strong case was presented to the Postmaster-General to get the objection overruled, but we experienced great difficulty, and only as a very great concession, the authorities submit, have they permitted a child even to write a letter to his teacher and enclose it with his school work in order that it may be carried at a cheaper rate.

Mr. Doney: That is a stupid attitude for the Commonwealth to take.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: A very stupid attitude. Unfortunately, the Postmaster-General remains quite adamant, and we cannot get the full concessions to meet the necessities of the children.

Mr. Doney: Was the system abused in any way?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The practice of letter-writing from child to teacher and the personal touch thus established with the child is one of the great factors in the education of the child.

Mr. Doney: Did the Postmaster-General allege that the practice was being abused?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: He suggested that it was quite improper that letters should be transmitted as second-class matter. Mr. Miles said—

Superintendents of the correspondence system of primary education throughout the Commonwealth are of the opinion that this system is just as effective in the instrumental subjects as is the ordinary State school system. I share their views after 50 years' experience in primary education, including 18 years' superintendence of the correspondence system in Western Australia, and 25 years' experience as an inspector of all types of schools from infants' to central schools inclusive.

He says that the correspondence system throughout the Commonwealth is just as effective in the instrumental subjects as in the ordinary school routine. Those are very definite words from the founder of the correspondence system, a man of great experience, who fostered in every possible way the extension of that privilege to the children, even to those beyond the outskirts of civilisation.

While the member for Avon may contend that the child outback has opportunity minus,

a great deal of that opportunity is due to his very environment—not to lack of facilities made available by Governments, but to the circumstances in which he lives. No select committee could overcome the relationship between the opportunity plus in the metropolitan area and the opportunity minus in the country area. I may pertinently observe that many of the prominent men in Australia, who have contributed in no small way to making the nation what it is, received hardly the rudiments of education. Some of them had the great gift and power of self-education, but many who rose to great prominence received barely the rudiments of education.

The Minister for Lands interjected.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: One must honour such achievements, particularly when one realises the poverty of the education existing in those days as compared with the education available to-day. There is no poverty of education to-day; it is simply a matter of adapting what we have at our disposal to the best use of the children. I am not suggesting that the self-educated people, or the people who made good in spite of having received no education should be regarded as the standard; but their achievements serve to show that in the days in which we live, we have much to be thankful for in the opportunities made available by the State to all the children within reach at least of a post office.

I wish to quote briefly from a book edited by Percival R. Cole entitled "The Rural School in Australia." I commend this book to the attention of members. My object in quoting from it is to show what other people think of our education system. It contains an extract from a work "Australian Schools through American Eyes" by J. F. Cramer as follows:—

Australian educationists have given their attention to making the country schools meet the same standard as the city schools. The general excellence of rural education is one of the greatest achievements of the Australian system.

The writer of the chapter "Rural School Administration" remarked that an American administrative officer, who visited Australia recently and found reason to compare somewhat unfavourably with American city schools the buildings, the equipment and the staffing of Australian city schools, spoke in favour of rural education in the terms I have just quoted. The same work contains a deal

of comment on the education systems of the various States of the Commonwealth. The new curriculum for the elementary schools of Western Australia is described as very fine, "in some respects the most up-to-date in Australia and in harmony with modern educational practice in the United States and other overseas countries." I could quote at greater length, even to the point of becoming wearisome, but those passages indicate the views of authorities well qualified to speak.

In addition to making facilities available, as I have mentioned, I wish now to show that there is perhaps no subject on earth into which select committees and committees generally probe more deeply than into the subject of education. I can safely say that select committees or committees of selected people—people who are qualified not only to judge the results of education, but also to sum up its requirements—are almost constantly sitting throughout the world. If we consider the matter from the very bottom rung of the departmental activities, we find that the work is constantly being reviewed by various organisations—at conferences, by reports, and by such bodies as the Inspectors' Institute, Parents and Citizens' Association conferences and the Teachers' Union, which body keeps in touch with departmental activity and interests itself in the welfare of the children as well as the teachers. In the wider sphere we have the annual conferences of teachers throughout the Commonwealth, of inspectors of education and directors of education. We have the organisation known as the Educational Council; we have conferences of Ministers for Education, and perhaps overshadowing all in importance in a world sense is the New Education Fellowship.

To stress those very obvious facts is useless unless members realise that within each State and acting conjointly with all those committees are the various Governments not only ready to agree to practical suggestions, but also ready to put into effect on behalf of the children anything that can be immediately adopted for their benefit. While these matters receive the searchlight focused on them by experts, I submit that the work is one for experts. All our improvements may be costly in terms of money, but many practical suggestions made by those bodies have been adopted. In investigating the advancement of education, we

must appreciate that the time is not long since the State assumed the very great responsibility for education, and only in the last 30 years have the old schoolmaster days of the private schools practically disappeared and the States infringed upon the monopoly of private enterprise in the realm of secondary education. In spite of any bias in the matter, we must admit that great progress has been made, at least in the responsibility accepted by the States, in their attitude to the future citizens.

Since investigations by professionals demonstrate the difficulty of arriving at practical conclusions that can be put into effect, I suggest that the task in the hands of amateurs would be not only difficult, but inconclusive. If the hon. member, after the subject has been fully ventilated, withdrew his motion for a select committee and submitted one stressing the need for a mutual policy of Empire education, emphasising the urgency of the Commonwealth Government's recognising its responsibility for education, and requesting every citizen to join in a movement to get that responsibility recognised, I would support him. The hon. member stated that the claim for Federal aid was one of the reasons for moving the motion. There is nothing new in that claim. That has been thoroughly investigated by many organisations, and although education has been reserved as a function of State Governments, in my view it should be a matter of great concern to the Federal Government.

Mr. Doney: We might agree with that.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Being a reasonable proposal, it was suggested to the Federal Grants Commission. The recommendation was advanced by organisations such as the Parents and Citizens' Association and the Teachers' Union. In fact, the latter body presented a complete case to the Prime Minister for a recognition of the necessity for aid in connection with rural education. They analysed the position very thoroughly, and submitted that the Federal Government of Australia stood alone, as a central Government, in not subsidising education in the States. In the "Teachers' Journal" of August last will be found a complete review by the Teachers' Union of the submission it made to the Federal Government regarding assistance for rural education in Western Aus-

tralia. When giving evidence before the Federal Grants Commission, the then Director of Education, Mr. Klein, said—

The Government was doing everything possible in maintaining primary, secondary and technical education on an efficient basis, but was cramped in its efforts through lack of funds.

He referred to our urban and rural needs and put up an excellent case. Some of the remarks made by members of the Commission were rather remarkable. Mr. Eggleston said—

The Commission could not make a grant for any specific purpose. The grant was made after the State position was viewed as a whole, and the State decided on the distribution of the money.

Again Mr. Eggleston said—

What we have to decide is whether costs of education services in this State are legitimately higher than in other States, and to what effect they disturb the balance of the costs of social services viewed as a whole.

While the members of the Grants Commission admitted they were struck by the case submitted by the State's representatives in connection with our isolation, it is remarkable that, although it was asserted that the "grant was made after the State position was viewed as a whole and the State decided on the distribution of the money," the fact remains that when the 1936-37 grant was made, Western Australia suffered a reduction of £188,000 because of our extravagance in social services, including education. What a startling position is disclosed there! In effect, the Grants Commissioners intimate that, in their calculations, they take into consideration all the needs of the State, its necessities, and the requirements of expenditure on education, health, and so on, and then virtually suggest that in our expenditure on social services we have been extravagant to the extent of £188,000. In the circumstances, it is apparently the view of the Grants Commission that in the extravagant expenditure is to be included that referring to education.

Mr. Doney: That is hardly a fair deduction.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Has the hon. member analysed the third report of the Grants Commission? If he does so, he will appreciate that it is a fair deduction. He will find that in dealing with expenditure on miners' phthisis and such

like, the Commission would not use the average basis for its computations but singled out the Victorian figures to demonstrate that in Western Australia we have been extravagant in our expenditure. However, this is getting away from my subject. There is proof that the Grants Commission did penalise Western Australia because of our expenditure on social services.

Mr. Doney: But it was not suggested that that applied to education.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: It is possible to make an unduly long speech on a subject such as this. I could quote from many authorities in support of the claims I have made. Before I conclude, I shall show that many attempts have been made to secure just recognition by the Federal authorities of our claims to financial assistance. Although comparisons have been made with the education systems operating in other States and countries, they cannot be regarded as comparable unless the bases of taxation and methods of financing are also comparable. The member for Avon mentioned certain educational activities in England. The attitude of county councils and cities in England towards education is interesting. For instance, in Manchester, for the provision of a school library, a tax of 4.17d. in the pound is levied as a library tax. I am certain that the section of the community in whose interests the hon. member submitted the motion, could not make any contribution on a flat rate basis for the provision of library or any other educational facilities. It is interesting to note that in Australia a school rate was imposed in other days. In 1802 the settlers at Hawkesbury bound themselves to pay an annual rate of 2d. per acre on all land for 14 years, in order to maintain a schoolmaster. That is the earliest record of a school rate in Australia, and its imposition preceded any officially imposed rates of the kind in England.

Mr. Patrick: When I first attended a State school, fees were charged.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Quite so.

Mr. Doney: That would be about 60 years ago!

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I have already mentioned that many approaches have been made to the Federal Government which, prior to last year, made

no such provision of any kind of which I am aware. In the course of his remarks, the member for Avon said that Federal aid was needed, and I think in those words he probably approached nearest to the solution of the problem. There was no unfair criticism of the methods adopted in the State nor did he ascribe deficiencies to the system of education provided in Western Australia. The solution is not to be found along those lines, but rather in those few words of his to which I have referred. It must be by way of an approach to the Commonwealth Government. From that standpoint, it is interesting to note that Ministers for Education in the various States approached the Commonwealth Government with the request for a grant of £2,000,000 for education purposes, but with no result. The Minister for Education in New South Wales, Hon. D. H. Drummond, advanced a very strong case for assistance towards education generally, but particularly for the advancement of technical education. If members have not read the publication in which he outlined his contentions, I can commend it to them. Its pages contain an excellent review of the responsibilities of the Federal Government and its proper attitude towards education. From various sources representations have been made to the Federal authorities for a proper recognition of their obligations. In Parliament and outside, in official, professional and education circles, from teachers' unions, from Ministers for Education, and from Directors of Education have been heard the same contentions, and all have united in endeavouring to secure official recognition of the educational claims of the States. I desire to show how recently has this matter been brought before the notice of the Federal Government. In the Federal Senate this year, Senator Collings, of Queensland, when speaking on the Estimates, said that on a previous occasion he had referred to the vocational employment of youth, and on the 22nd June last had asked certain questions regarding the requisitions of State Ministers for Federal assistance. In his opinion he received very unsatisfactory replies. On the 30th June, he asked the following question:—

Whether consideration has been given to the decisions of the conference of the Australian Teachers' Federation, held recently in Melbourne, to the effect (1) that education should be consummated on a national basis; (2) that

a grant of loan money to be used in the direction of relief of unemployment, while most welcome, is not all that is essential; (3) that education shall be a charge upon the Commonwealth as well as State Budgets, and (4) that the Commonwealth subsidise education.

The Acting Prime Minister supplied the following answer:—

Representations were recently made by the Australian Teachers' Federation urging that the matter of financial assistance for education be accepted as a Commonwealth as well as a State responsibility. The Federation was informed that the Commonwealth Government could not see its way to assume financial responsibility for grants for the purpose of education.

Members will observe that while the matter has been fully investigated and the position properly presented to the Federal Government, it has been definitely turned down by the Commonwealth.

I have endeavoured to show that the aim of the department is to reach every child in the State, no matter how far distant from centres of population, and that the department has earnestly endeavoured to overcome the disabilities that the member for Avon referred to as "opportunities minus." While it is idle to pretend that our education system can escape the criticism of experts whose daily task is associated with the teaching of children, it must be conceded that the development of education in Western Australia is a tribute to those associated with it. Although Australia is only at the beginning of the educational road, and much is yet desired by experts and enthusiasts, it can safely and definitely be claimed that since we know all our needs, no select committee comprised of members of this House could give the matter thought, concentration or focus of attention in a manner as adequate as could be devoted to the problem by those qualified to judge of the benefits of education and its functioning within the State. We can all afford to be enthusiastic about the matter, but in our criticisms we should at all times be fair. I am sure that some of the statements made by the member for Avon in the heat of his enthusiasm were for the purpose of strengthening the case on behalf of some of those children who, in his view, have not received the attention from the department that they deserve. While I am strongly opposed to the appointment of a select committee to inquire into the education system and to levelling out opportuni-

ties and possibilities, I am sure that the discussion on the motion will do a great deal of good.

MR. SAMPSON (Swan) [6.12]: I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

Motion put and negatived.

MR. TONKIN (North-East Fremantle) [6.13]: The Minister has provided a most effective reply to the motion moved by the member for Avon (Mr. Boyle). He has indicated that the department is fully alive to the educational requirements of the children of the State and that continuous efforts are being made in an endeavour to obtain Federal assistance to enable the State Government fully to carry out its obligations to our children. It is true that the very laudable object of the member for Avon is to institute a more adequate system of education. I trust there is no one so fatuous as to claim that the existing system is anything like approaching the adequate. Year after year when discussing the Education Vote, I have pointed out the shortcomings of the department and have claimed that children who were entitled to better treatment have been obliged to go without the training that was justly their due. In every instance it has been truly shown that the reason such children have been denied that education is that the State has not had sufficient money to enable it to make provision to that end. I have endeavoured to counter that by saying we should obtain Federal assistance. The Minister has indicated that continual efforts have been made along those lines, with no result whatever. That seems to be the position in all States.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. TONKIN: We can readily agree with the laudable desire of the member for Avon (Mr. Boyle) to give every child an opportunity to be educated. Country children, because they are in the country, suffer many great disabilities. Town children mostly live quite near to schools. Without much difficulty they are able to attend those schools; but country children are often obliged to travel great distances, as a result of which it is much harder for them to obtain the education to which they are entitled. We have to realise the existence of these grave disadvantages that make it almost impossible

to afford country children the educational opportunities enjoyed by town children.

While realising that, however, we must appreciate also that the facilities provided to-day are not availed of to the fullest possible extent, either in the towns or in the country. If members will turn to the report of the Education Department for last year, they will find that the percentage of average attendance to average enrolment in the case of straight-out State schools is 91.87. The average attendance at assisted schools in respect of which the department does not provide the whole of the cost is 97.64. A little thought will immediately reveal the difference between those two instances. When people themselves are obliged to pay some of the direct cost of education, the attendance of their children at school is better than is that of the children who receive what we call a free education. That indicates at once that it would be possible for the children who are attending the State schools to receive more education than they are obtaining at present. We know that they could attend more frequently, because the children at assisted schools do so. As a matter of fact, I suppose we can be quite satisfied with the percentage of attendance to enrolment. It is not a bad percentage. Taking into consideration all the circumstances, 91.87 per cent. cannot be considered a low figure. One is, however, compelled to ask why the attendance of children at assisted schools is much better than that at the State schools. My explanation is that parents who have to pay directly for the education of their children at assisted schools, make sure of obtaining the greatest possible advantage from the expenditure of their money.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: That is not the real reason.

Mr. TONKIN: What is the real reason?

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: The teacher lives with the children and takes them to school with her.

Mr. TONKIN: We can prove that that is wrong.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: It is absolutely right.

Mr. TONKIN: I am told that if all the children being taught belong to one family, the department will not grant assistance. Will the hon. member explain how it is possible for the teacher to live with two families or three families?

Mr. SPEAKER: I suggest that the member for Irwin-Moore should wait until his opportunity comes to address the House.

Mr. TONKIN: It is obvious that the reason given by the hon. member is not the correct one.

Mr. SPEAKER: It would be better if the hon. member addressed the Chair.

Mr. TONKIN: It is my opinion—I have to admit I cannot prove this, but it is a reasonable assumption from the facts—that because people have to pay directly for the education of their children they see to it that they obtain the fullest benefit. As a matter of fact, if we obtain anything freely, we do not value it very much. When we have to pay we take the fullest advantage of it.

The member for Avon complained that there was only one University, and that was available mostly for town children. Upon that assertion he based the further statement that our education system catered only for town children. If the hon. member would take the trouble to read the report of the Education Department, he would observe in it figures dealing with attendances at full high schools and district high schools. I draw his attention to page 16 of the report. The figures I am about to quote will indicate that while a large number of children take the first year of the post-primary course, in the following year not nearly so many are in attendance. The attendance decreases considerably year after year, until, in the fifth year, very few are attending. For all those children that take the first year course, continuance at the high school is possible. They could remain there for five years if they so desired. They do not, however, do that; so that the facilities available are not used by those children at all. No doubt there are very good reasons for that. I could give some of them, but the fact remains that the children do not continue at school and thus do not take advantage of the education the State provides. The table given in the report shows the number of pupils in years one to five at the different high schools on the 30th July, 1937. The table is divided into two parts, one dealing with the attendance at full high schools, and the other with that at district high schools. It is as follows:—

Year.	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	Total.
Full High	478	378	263	194	147	1,460
District High	164	79	56	6	5	310
Total	642	457	319	200	152	1,770

If we looked at the reports of the previous years we should probably discover that a similar situation has prevailed all along, and that each year many students have failed to continue with the course. One of the main reasons is probably economic. The parents find it increasingly difficult to provide for those children each year. The cost of books increases and as the children grow older the cost of clothes is greater. The burden eventually becomes so great that the parents are unable to allow the children to continue at school. Again, we have to realise that all children who commence a post-primary course have not the capacity to continue at the school for five years. Every child is not able to obtain the junior or leaving certificate or to proceed to the University for the purpose of obtaining a degree, because all children have not the necessary concentration or ability to do so. Some children will do quite well in the primary school and for one or two years in the post-primary school. Then they reach their limit and any additional education is decidedly irksome to them. Many of them begin to fall behind in their classes and consequently lose interest and, as a result, prevail upon their parents to allow them to leave.

The point is, we must remember that the facilities already provided are not availed of to the fullest possible extent. I am not using that as an argument against an improvement in education because I freely admit that the present system is not nearly adequate enough. I am endeavouring to show that some of the people who complain do not take advantage of the existing facilities. I am satisfied that the Education Department is fully alive to the needs of country children and is endeavouring as far as possible to effect improvements from year to year. Of that we can find evidence on page 14 of the report. Under the heading of "Post-Primary Education in Country Schools" we find the following:—

The Education Department has experimented this year in the introduction of post-primary education of pupils in Class VI. and VII. schools. Pupils who express a desire to carry on their education to the standard of the Junior Certificate examination enter upon a three years' course. The papers in selected subjects are forwarded from the Correspondence Classes to schools where pupils work them under the guidance and supervision of the teacher. These are returned to the Correspondence Classes for correction and are then forwarded to the pupils.

The results achieved so far have been gratifying.

That indicates that where children avail themselves of this opportunity they do quite well and this system of education is effective. The report continues—

To those pupils who successfully reach the Junior Certificate standard the Department makes an allowance of £24 to enable the boy or girl to attend a District High School. An ambitious child may, therefore, proceed to the University by a clear cut track and a number of pupils are proceeding along this course. By this means the Department has extended to country pupils further opportunities in the form of scholarships.

Thus, it is possible for a country child with any aptitude to proceed to the University, and the Education Department assists him to do so. The member for Avon pointed out—and quite rightly—that correspondence lessons cannot be wholly effective because in a number of instances the parents have not the time to devote to the children who are doing home lessons, and when they have the time, the education is not sufficient to enable them to understand the lessons. That is perfectly true, but the department has met that difficulty by forwarding correspondence lessons to schools. The children in the country districts can attend the schools and work the papers under the supervision of teachers, and those papers are not marked by the teachers in the schools but are forwarded to the correspondence centre in the city, where there are fully-trained and competent teachers who give their attention to the work. My experience has been that the results obtained by children studying under that method are equal to the results obtained by children studying under a teacher. The personal touch to a large extent is impossible, but so well do the correspondence teachers carry out their work that to a considerable degree they overcome that disability and achieve excellent results. We can be well pleased with the work that is being done. We have no cause for complaint against the officers of the department, and we cannot say that the Director is unmindful of the requirements of the department. Neither can this be said about previous Directors of Education. When we read the annual reports that are tabled from year to year, we find, almost without exception, that directors have drawn attention to the lack of accommodation, the shortage of furniture and material, and to the fact that

education is being retarded as a consequence. Every time the reason given for this is insufficient funds with which to meet the position. We are inclined to say that is the argument always advanced; that it is not possible to do this or that because of insufficient money. I have for a long time accepted that as the reason. We must face facts. Figures are put before us regularly, indicating the revenue of the State. We know where the money is going. Although the member for Avon (Mr. Boyle) suggests we ought to cut down expenditure in other directions and use the money for education, he did not say in what direction the cutting down should be done. I would be inclined to agree, if we could get away with it, that we should take a large sum from one department and transfer it to the Education Vote. That would suit me if it would suit the Treasurer. At the same time I cannot indicate which department should give up the money, nor do I think any other member could do so. Ministers are always anxious to obtain as much as they can for their own departments. The Minister for Education is no exception. Time and again, when propositions have been put to him, he has endeavoured to get money from the Treasurer, but has not always succeeded. The State by itself cannot find the money that ought to be spent on education. If we think the work is worth while—and it is—and if we agree that our education system is inadequate—no one can say otherwise—we must get the money elsewhere. It is just as much a Federal responsibility as it is ours. I have previously expressed the view that the education of the children of the Commonwealth is just as important as is the training of soldiers, for which the Federal Government has to find the necessary funds. The member for Avon is of the same opinion. He said that one of his objects in moving the motion was to urge the necessity for Western Australia demanding of the Federal Government that it should take a fair share of the burden involved in the education of the youth of Australia. A select committee is not required for that purpose. We all know it, and the Minister himself knows it. We do not need a select committee to find that out. The Minister for Education has said that repeated attempts have been made with the Federal Government not only by this State but by

all the States. He explained that a Minister of another State had made a special effort, by drawing up a particularly good report on technical education and by applying to the Federal Government for assistance. No help, however, was forthcoming. Our only hope is to continue to make application to the Federal Government. We must endeavour to impress upon our representatives in the Federal Parliament to take every opportunity to voice the necessity for Commonwealth assistance for education in all the States. It may be that in the end we shall receive help from that quarter. I admit reluctantly that it is beyond the capacity of the State to do all that ought to be done for education. I hope I did not misunderstand the member for Avon when he said that 30,000 children were condemned to inefficient education.

Mr. Cross: He said they were all in the country areas.

Mr. TONKIN: He said they were country children.

Mr. Cross: That is entirely wrong.

Mr. TONKIN: Did the hon. member mean that the country school teachers were inefficient? If so, he was doing a grave injustice to a large body of men and women. He could possibly say that some country school teachers were inefficient and that some town school teachers were inefficient. There are, however, inefficient members of Parliament, inefficient doctors, and inefficient people in all walks of life.

Hon. P. Collier: Even amongst the lawyers.

Mr. TONKIN: Quite so. If the hon. member meant that all the country teachers were inefficient, I am sorry for him. A big majority of them went to the training college. All teachers who have gone through their two years' course at the college have not gone straight to city schools, for many have gone to the country. Those teachers have proved their worth in country schools. Ample evidence is forthcoming of the excellent work they have done and are doing there. To say that 30,000 children are condemned to inefficient education is to say something that is unworthy of the hon. member. True, education throughout the State could be more efficient if we had more material, more furniture, better accommo-

dation and smaller classes. All these things would improve the standard of education. It is entirely wrong that the hon. member should have made such a statement, and I hope he will yet change his opinion. I can bear with him when he complains because of the long distance some children have to travel to attend school, and when he speaks of others receiving no education whatever. Some children at the ages of 14 or 15 are unable to say they have received any education. That state of affairs should not be allowed. Something is being done to remedy the situation, but the remedy is not wholly effective. In the case of correspondence classes some parents are not able to give instruction to their children. I do not think a solution lies in the direction of consolidated schools; I would not say that postulated a state of perfection. There are vast drawbacks to that especially in sparsely populated areas. When children have to travel a long way to school they are not in a condition to learn, and they have also to make a long journey after school. Consolidated schools are of advantage where travel is over a short distance. I have seen something of those schools, where good work is being done, but one could not apply that system as a remedy in sparsely populated districts. The correspondence system has done a great amount of good. It has enabled the department to take education into homes where previously there was none. If members will read the report of the department, and the section dealing with correspondence classes, they will agree that excellent work is being done. I see no reason for the appointment of a select committee, because it would discover nothing we do not already know. If I thought it would discover anything we did not know, or would indicate methods we did not know, I would support the motion. I cannot see that the motion is of any value and so I do not propose to vote for it. The hon. member, in taking the step he did, has undoubtedly drawn the attention of the people to our system of education. It may be that his endeavours will bear fruit later on. If the people can become imbued with the necessity for making greater sacrifices in the interests of education, perhaps they will bring pressure to bear in the right place, and eventually we may receive Federal assistance.

MR. CROSS (Canning) [7.57]: At the outset of his remarks the member for Avon (Mr. Boyle) said he was not embarking on a fishing expedition. He made a number of complaints. Amongst other things he said that last year only £50,448 was spent on new buildings or renovations. He also said that 30,000 children were being condemned to inefficient education, and in many cases to an entire lack of education. His figures must be wrong. The report of the Director states that the total enrolment for the year was 57,347 children. The report gives some interesting figures dealing with the cost of educating the children. The figures I will quote refer specifically to country areas.

Mr. Thorn: We have had all that.

Mr. CROSS: The hon. member will agree that most of the schools having in attendance 20 children or fewer than that number are in country areas.

Mr. Thorn: You usually make a speech by reading reports.

Mr. CROSS: And the hon. member cannot make one at all. On page 29 of the report members will find a statement by the Director that schools having an average attendance of 20 or fewer than that number show a cost per head for education last year of £20 7s. 7½d.

Mr. Wilson: Where do you get the three farthings from?

Mr. CROSS: That is the figure mentioned in the report. Even thus the department proposes to spend a greater amount this year. I regret that the member for Nedlands (Hon. N. Keenan) is not present. It would be interesting to know where he stands on this particular phase of the question, because in 1931-32 the hon. member was Minister for Education. The member for Avon (Mr. Boyle) complained that only £57,000 had been spent on buildings, but in the year to which I have just referred when the member for Nedlands was Minister for Education, that gentleman freely used the pruning knife to the vote, and though it was not applied to the country areas, it was applied to the metropolitan districts. In 1928-29 the Labour Government then in power spent £79,940 in renovations and new buildings. In 1931-32 when the member for Nedlands occupied the Education portfolio, the party of which he was a member reduced that sum to £50,599. But that is not the whole story. The average cost per head for

the education of children in 1927-29 was £12 10s. 10d., whereas the member for Nedlands three years later reduced that amount by nearly £3, the per capita figure being £9 11s. 3d. We also find that the member for Nedlands reduced the total vote in the same period from £314,829 to £549,115. The cost per head of education on the average attendance in 1932-33 was £8 14s. 7d. Last year, under the Labour administration, that figure was increased to £11 2s. 7d. In comparison with 1936-37 there is an increase of 13s. 2d. per head. I am beginning to wonder whether we are getting efficiency and value for the money that is being spent on the system. The member for Avon said something about the cost per head of the population. This, last year amounted to £1 10s. 9½d. Five years ago when the member for Nedlands was Minister for Education, the figure stood at £1 4s. 5¾d. The increase in the Education Vote has not been confined to the primary and secondary schools. There has been a sharp increase in the University Vote during the last few years. When the member for Nedlands was Minister for Education the University grant was £25,293. In 1936-37 it had been built up to £35,780, or an increase of slightly less than £10,500. I am beginning to wonder what will eventually be the limit in the cost of education and just how much the people will stand. The time has arrived when consideration should be given to the question whether we are getting value for the money being expended. There is one other subject with which I wish to deal. I am of opinion that the present system of education, if administered and carried out properly, should prove efficient, but there is a bugbear that has entered nearly every home in the State and it is the practice that is adopted of giving a considerable amount of homework to children to carry out at night. Steps should be taken to see whether that work could not be done, perhaps more efficiently, during the school-hour period. I know that there is considerable discontent amongst the parents of school children and that discontent is not confined to the metropolitan area, because of the habit of forcing children to take school work to their homes. The parents are dissatisfied and the practice should be stopped. I have reported the discontent to the Minister and have been informed that the children need not do home work unless they so desire. But in cases where they do not carry out the

home duties allotted to them by their teachers, on their return to school next day the teachers keep the children in school during playtime or the luncheon hour. I intend to test the feeling of members on this question by moving an amendment to the motion. I propose to add certain words to the motion on the question of homework. I move an amendment—

That the following words be added to the motion:—"and which will not require children to do any homework."

I am convinced that the motion itself will not get us anywhere; but with the amendment we may at least get a decision on something about which all mothers will agree.

MR. WATTS (Katanning) [8.8]: I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

Motion put and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	..	..	..	21
Noes	..	..	..	15
				—
Majority for	..	..	..	6
				—

AYES.

Mr. Boyle	Mr. F. O. L. Smith
Mr. Collier	Mr. Stubbs
Mr. Ferguson	Mr. Styants
Mr. Fox	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Lambert	Mr. Troy
Mr. Marshall	Mr. Watts
Mr. Millington	Mr. Wise
Mr. Patrick	Mr. Withers
Mr. Sampson	Mr. Doney
Mr. Sleeman	

(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Coverley	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Cross	Mr. Raphael
Mr. Doug	Mr. Rodoreda
Miss Holman	Mr. Shearn
Mr. Leahy	Mr. Welsh
Mr. McDonald	Mr. Willmott
Mr. McLarty	Mr. Wilson
Mr. North	

(Teller.)

Motion (adjournment) thus passed.

BILL—COMPANIES ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 21st September.

MR. McDONALD (West Perth) [8.14]: It is my intention to support the second reading of the Bill. It is true, as the member for Nedlands and the Minister for Justice said, there is real need for a comprehensive measure to re-enact and bring up to date the whole of our company legisla-

tion. I feel that the Bill before us, although it touches a part only of the legislation dealing with companies, may do something to protect the public from undesirable company operations. Certain amendments will probably be desirable to the measure in Committee, and notice has been given by the member for Katanning (Mr. Watts) of amendments which I propose to support. I am unable to share the opinion held by the Minister as to the difficulty of bringing our company legislation into modern form. An industrious gentleman named Pixley last year produced a book called "Australian Companies Acts," in which he sets out all the various Companies Acts of the Australian States. I think I am right in saying that all the States with the exception of Western Australia have modernised their Companies Acts within the last eight of 10 years. If the Minister's law advisers took any one of these modernised statutes, they could not go far wrong in applying it to Western Australia. I was surprised that the Minister opposed the second reading of the Bill. He does not seem to be entirely consistent. On Government business days nobody can exceed the Minister in youthful enthusiasm for reform, but when it comes to private members' days he sees in private members' proposals all sorts of visionary difficulties. On Tuesdays he is prompt to shatter the constitution of the Legislative Council, but on Wednesdays he throws his protecting arms around a statute which first saw the light of day in the British House of Commons nearly 80 years ago. I think the Minister should be more consistent, and should follow the member for Swan along the path of progress, even although the step proposed to be made by this amendment of company legislation is not a very big one. The measure, although far from our real and final objective in overhauling the Companies Act, justifies support for the second reading, and will do something to protect investors against those who may be adopting unfair tactics.

MR. NORTH (Claremont) [8.18]: I know it is the desire of the member for Swan to have as much support as possible for his Bill, and I am indeed pleased to be able to support the powerful arguments which have been adduced in favour of the measure, although I fully realise the need for a comprehensive amendment of the Companies Act.

The Bill, if passed, will lead only to a temporary tiding-over of a great evil with regard to sharebroking. The question which occurs to one is, why are people so willing to come forward and hand over money to canvassers at front doors? I was going through some taxation figures the other day, and I noticed that in Australia £118,000,000 is being taken out of the pockets of the people annually by way of taxation. Such an enormous amount of taxation must have the effect of gradually causing people to alter their whole outlook upon life and their ambitions. When one comes to consider what we are really being taxed for at the present juncture, it renders the idea of throwing away £10 on a speculative share deal quite a pleasure compared with paying out large sums in various taxes. The previous motion, which was on the subject of education, might well be introduced into this discussion, though of course you, Mr. Speaker, would not permit it. To me the Taxation Department in itself has become almost a second form of education. If we want to smoke, or consume liquor, or even purchase food, we find that all these things are now punishable by taxation. The whole direction of taxation seems to be to drive people to be abstemious, to live a simple life, to avoid doing anything, because they can hardly move without being taxed. Therefore when someone comes to the front door with shares to sell in a big new speculation, it must be a great temptation to people who submit to the enormous amount of taxation that burdens this generation to take the chance of getting a good return and so attempting to counterbalance the tremendous load to which they are subjected. I do not say that to justify such persons being trapped, but by way of supporting the view of the member for Swan that a move forward should be made. I have on occasion heard the hon. member charged with being a political troglodyte. The member for Boulder (Hon. P. Collier) has several times within my recollection been harsh in his criticism of the views of the member for Swan, describing them as dating back to the Stone Age. But to-night, and during the progress of the Bill, we have seen the member for Swan make a forward move to protect persons who are anxious to invest money speculatively with a view to getting back a portion of the thousands they have lost in a lifetime through

penal taxation. Therefore I have much pleasure in supporting the Bill.

On motion by Mr. Shearn, debate adjourned.

BILL—MARKETING OF ONIONS.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 21st September.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. M. F. Troy—Mt. Magnet) [8.25]: I have a few observations to offer on this measure. The hon. member who introduced the Bill in his opening remarks said he noticed in the Press recently that the Minister for Lands had returned to Perth from the Eastern States after attending a conference at which consideration was given to the necessity for stabilising the wheat industry, and that a scheme was also dealt with under which prices would be fixed for export wheat and for flour and bread, to be operative when the price of wheat fell below 3s. 8d. per bushel. I desire to inform the hon. member that the legislation I propose to introduce has very few features in common with the Bill under discussion. In no sense will it give the wheatgrower the privileges which this measure proposes to confer on the particular section whose interests the hon. member desires to advance. The hon. member mentioned other legislation in support of his proposal—the Milk Board, the Dried Fruits Board, and the board to control the price of potatoes, which, by the way, is not compulsory. The potato growers have been able to advance their price this year because of voluntary action, action which is not supported by any legislation. The hon. member has said that the Milk Board's activities had brought prosperity to the industry.

Mr. Sampson: The dairymen can feed their cows now.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: Vested interests, the member for South Fremantle (Mr. Fox) stated, in the milk trade are now worth about £10 per gallon. That amount of £10 per gallon is a gift from the community. When the goodwill alone is worth £10 per gallon, the milk producers have been placed in a very happy position. The hon. member referred to the Transport Board, but the Transport Board does not fix prices, which his Bill proposes to do. It is urged on behalf of the Bill that its passing will enable growers to hold their onion supplies

and control and regulate the market; but almost in the same breath we are told that onions must be marketed promptly, as otherwise they become equivalent to a dead loss. Then how can this legislation alter the position, enhance the interests of the onion growers by enabling them to store their commodity, which, it is stated, cannot be held but must be sold promptly? I am now repeating the hon. member's own words. A commodity which must be sold promptly cannot be stored, and the supply cannot be regulated over a long term.

Mr. Sampson: I wish you would repeat your words of 1925.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Never mind my words of 1925. They are 13 years old. In the interim I have seen some of this legislation in operation, and I hope I have not lived the last 13 years in vain. The member for South Fremantle said that price-fixing is not contemplated in the Bill. It contemplates little else. If the Bill does not contemplate price-fixing, it contemplates nothing. The board which is to control this product under the Bill, if enacted, is to consist of five members, three of whom are to be growers elected by the growers, and the other two to be nominated by the Governor, one of them having commercial or mercantile experience. The member for South Fremantle has suggested that one member of the board should be a public servant. I am wondering what that public servant is going to achieve in that company? Three out of five will be the nominees of the growers, and three will outvote two; and so of what value can the public servant be on that board, except to give it a tone of respectability? Of course the three will decide all the time, dominate all the time. The three growers will work, as they should, in the interests of the growers.

Mr. Sampson: They would be open to conviction.

The Minister for Agriculture: No.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: All this talk about orderly marketing and providing the community in times of scarcity is meaningless.

Mr. Lambert: Why did you not give the farmers a farmer on the Agricultural Bank Board?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The main object of this legislation is to give the onion growers a statutory right to levy tribute on the community. The proposed

board may do other things, but that is the main object of this legislation. Members of the Opposition, especially Country Party members, welcome the Bill. They have congratulated the member for South Fremantle on its introduction. They say wholeheartedly, "This is a Bill to be welcomed." A few weeks ago we discussed in this Chamber an amendment of the Industrial Arbitration Act, but no member suggested that a court should be elected from the Trades Hall. Probably that was a great inadvertence. With legislation such as this in mind, what would be said in this community if Mr. Trainer, Mr. Mooney and another member of the Trades Hall were elected to the Arbitration Court to fix the wages of workers in industry, and such wages as the workers insisted upon? Would the Country Party agree to that?

Mr. Patrick: Do you think they could put that over us?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The suggestion has never been made in this House that the worker has the right to elect the members of the Arbitration Court. He elects one representative; the employers elect another, while the third is a nominee of the Government. Before a worker can secure an increase in his wages or a betterment of his conditions, he must explain to the Arbitration Court the details of his occupation and must adduce evidence to support his claims. There is no suggestion of that character in this Bill at all.

Mr. Sampson: Onion growers do not even earn the basic wage.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Then the grower suggests he shall fix the price of the commodity.

Mr. Patrick: There is a check on his price.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: What is the check?

Mr. Patrick: Onions from Victoria.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That is all provided for. Victoria has an Onion Board which controls the product there. All this proposed onion board would have to do would be to get into touch with the Victorian board. That is part of the scheme of this legislation: one board works in with another. I admit that in the last resort, control is in the hands of the people, who could abstain from purchasing onions. The onion

is not an absolutely necessary commodity, and so the people could control the board in that way. But I object to the principle of the legislation. Legislation of a similar character is urged for every commodity, and this House must lay down some principle with respect to it. I agree that the primary producer should get a fair price for his commodity, but he ought to prove his case in the same way as the worker has to prove his before the Arbitration Court. No section of the community is entitled to secure legislation for itself by which it can obtain a packed board and then exploit the community with respect to the commodity sought to be controlled. During the absence of my colleague, the Minister for Agriculture, the price of butter was raised. I am not sure any justification existed for the increase; in fact, many producers here would not admit justification. The excuse raised was drought conditions, but those conditions did not affect the Western Australian industry at all. The Consumers' Association wrote to me on the matter, and a protest came from the consumers' representative on the Dairy Products Board, but I found I had no power to interfere.

Mr. Sleeman: You had better repeal the Act.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I should be glad to help the producer to state his case to a court. There should be the fullest inquiry, such as is made in the case of a worker applying for an increase in wages and better conditions.

Mr. Patrick: The growers would welcome that.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: But they do not put it forward.

Mr. Sampson: Would you support it?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: If this legislation is persevered with, there will be grievous cause for complaint in the future which the Government will have to correct, if it can. The Country Party will not attempt to correct it, because that party stands for such legislation. The Country Party has propagated this type of legislation until people, not knowing the implications are beginning to say, "Yes, it is necessary that something should be done."

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: This Bill has been introduced by a Labour member.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: In my opinion, the primary producer is entitled to decent living conditions, and to a profit on his operations; but the suggestion made to me from time to time is that the primary producer must get a profit on everything he produces. If he grows wheat, he must have a profit on that; he must have a profit on his pigs, his lambs, and, if he is in the South-West, on his butter. The producer wants a board to control each item of produce. I propose to give members some instances of the earnings of farmers. These particulars were sent to me by a gentleman in the South-West who acts for some farmers. He did not send me the information for the purpose of this argument, but because he wished to let me know how these people were progressing.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: Are they onion-growers?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No.

The Minister for Agriculture: Nevertheless, the information will probably make you weep.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The information I wish to place before members is as follows:—One settler has a holding of 132 acres carrying 40 cows. His family consists of two girls, two boys, aged 18 and 15, and wife. His receipts from butter fat were £541; from 29 cattle, £74; and from 52 pigs, £116; a total of £731. His profit was £576.

Mr. Patrick: Would you call that man an average South-West settler?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Never mind the average settler. The Country Party argues that these men are entitled to a board to control dairy products and all other products, a board that must see to it that they get a profit.

Mr. Seward: Do you mean to say that man's total expenditure was under £260?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I can detail the expenditure: seed, £4; fodder, £9; super, £12; purchase of cattle, £6; purchase of pigs (32), £50; irrigation, £30; rates, £11; insurance, £3; repairs, £11; sacks, £2; travelling, £15; stamps, £2.

Mr. Sampson: Did he buy any food?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I will give another instance. Another settler has a holding of 232 acres and 35 cows. Three years ago he bought 160 acres, part of the total area, and paid £200 deposit. Last April he paid the balance out of the profits from

his farm. This man's income from butter was £448; 69 cattle, £494; pumpkins, £58; 18 pigs, £41; sundries, £39; potatoes, £209; peas, £79; chaff, £71; super bonus, £15; total, £1,454. He made a profit of £662.

Mr. Warner: Can you put me on to a block in that locality?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: These statements were sent to me. Perhaps this settler will welcome a potato board, a pea board, and a pig board; also a pumpkin board, a cattle board, and a butter board, to ensure a profit on all those items. Hon. members opposite have sometimes told me that we do not give the farmers sufficient to live on when we advance from £6 to £9 a month for sustenance. This settler must consume some of these products in his own home and thereby considerably supplement his living requirements.

Mr. Seward: Did you say he was on sustenance?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No. His expenditure is as follows:—Seed, £41; super, £153; purchase of cattle (37), £284; purchase of two pigs, £7; fodder, £33; stamps, £2; sundries, £10; bags, £20; travelling, £2; wages, £104; repairs, £35; licenses, £5; taxation, £24; rates, £10; irrigation, £62.

Mr. Patrick: You made a mistake when writing down South-West properties.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It is quite possible. I leave it to the Opposition to pay an occasional compliment. I am not concerned about the profit a settler makes, as long as he is not given statutory right to exploit the community. We certainly should not give protection to sections to enable them to exploit the community. Otherwise we shall be permitting exploitation to such an extent that the prosperity of other industries will be destroyed. The dried fruits section has legislation of this kind. I gave those producers that legislation. Members might think it peculiar that I should now be objecting to the principle. I admitted the necessity for the legislation at the time because Eastern States growers would have captured the local market. In giving the producers that legislation, however, I provided that the Minister should have the right to veto any action taken by the board.

Mr. Patrick: The veto has never been exercised.

The Minister for Agriculture: Yes, it has.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: When we go into a shop to buy raisins, we have to pay 1s. per lb. for very indifferent raisins. I am sure there would be a far bigger market for raisins if the price were more reasonable.

Mr. Thorn: You do not pay 1s. per lb. for raisins.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I buy them and that is what I have to pay.

Mr. Thorn: You are probably talking of dessert raisins. You pay 8d. per lb. for the others.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: There is no more prolific crop in this country than that of the grape vine, and the drying is done largely by the sun, though, of course, a little labour is required.

Mr. Thorn: The fruit has to be turned every day.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: That works out at only 3d. per lb. for fresh grapes.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Fresh grapes are cheap. I am talking of the processed commodity. There is no legislation conferring statutory rights upon the producers of fresh grapes.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: Four pounds of fresh grapes are required to make 1 lb. of raisins.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That does not matter. Raisins, however, are unimportant in that people can do without them.

Mr. Patrick: They can do without onions, too.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes, the community can counteract this legislation by not buying onions. However, I am not concerned about that; I am concerned about the principle, which is unfair. Members opposite, by flattery and suggestion, will hypnotise the community. The member for Swan (Mr. Sampson) is a perfect paranoic—if I may use the term inoffensively—on legislation of this kind.

Mr. Sampson: Better be a paranoic than change your coat.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I should change my coat whenever I find that legislation is having ill-effects on the community.

Mr. Sampson: It is quite satisfactory in Queensland.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I have felt worried about this type of legislation. When I introduced the Dairy Products Marketing Regulation Bill in 1934, it was Gov-

ernment policy, but I inserted a Ministerial veto. I could have abolished any board constituted under that legislation. That was the control I took. The desire of some producers at the time was to have statutory rights that could exploit the community, and there has always been an agitation for producer control.

Mr. Sampson: Not to exploit the community but to give the producers a living.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I do not accept the two examples I have quoted as an average sample of what is being accomplished.

Mr. Patrick: A pity they did not represent the average.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: But I contend that any legislation that gives a board the privilege to exploit the community—

Mr. Sampson: No, to give the producers a living.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: —whether it be a potato board, an onion board, an apple board, a butter board, a pea board, a chaff board, or any other board, is not a reasonable proposition. If a board is created comprising an independent chairman, a representative of the growers and a representative of the consumers, nobody can complain that it is not fairly constituted.

Hon. P. Collier: And with the veto of the Minister, too.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: If the Government appointed the chairman, the growers could appoint their representative and the consumers could appoint their representative. Then we would have a board somewhat resembling the Arbitration Court. That court is good enough for the worker; it is all that we give the worker; and a board so constituted should be good enough for the producers. Producers are not entitled to ask for special privileges that they are not prepared to grant to other sections of the community. That is where I take my stand on this legislation. I do not want to oppose the Bill. I should like the hon. member's constituents to get a reasonable price for their product, just as I should like to see other growers receiving a reasonable price for their products, but it must be by fair and reasonable means and after inquiry into all the facts. With these reservations, I give the Bill my benediction.

MR. LAMBERT (Yilgarn-Coolgardie) [S.51]: I commend the hon. member for having introduced the Bill. In view of the discussion that has taken place, he will probably reconsider his proposal to have a board of this kind.

Mr. Hegney: Are you supporting or opposing the Bill?

MR. LAMBERT: If I spoke at considerable length, I doubt whether the hon. member would understand. We have had a considerable amount of legislation of this kind. If we do not write into our political philosophy the theory of competition in the marketing of products of this sort, the only alternative will be the restriction of production and the regulation of prices by means of the creation of boards. I was pleased to hear the remarks of the Minister for Lands. On broad principles he believes in the Bill and has given it his usual benediction. That is what he does when he opposes anything. Apparently he is not prepared to restrict the production of shallots. Perhaps he has in mind the disturbed state of Europe and fears that Mussolini might adopt a strong attitude towards the production of garlic in Western Australia. The Minister indulged in a long ramble over an extensive field that had no application or relation to the question before the Chair. He quoted instances of pig products, butter and other commodities that in no way could be linked with the restriction of the production or regulation of the price of onions in this State. However, the Minister might, like Einstein, possess some knowledge of the law of relativity that I do not understand. He made a delightful speech about some producers who are prosperous in contradistinction to the onion growers at Spearwood. His contribution to the debate was certainly entertaining. If members of the Opposition approve of these principles of control, we must be prepared to say that competition must go, and in its stead we must set up boards to regulate the prices of commodities needed by the consuming public. To take a blind step towards the regulation of prices as opposed to the system of untrammelled competition would be very serious. The time will come when the creation of boards to regulate prices will have only one end, namely, the limitation of production. If we could sell our surplus commodities to some other country, the regulation of prices for home consumption

might be possible. When the Minister referred to the regulation of the prices of dried fruits, he courageously told us, "I gave you that legislation." I remarked to the member for Roebourne that if the Minister had given us that legislation, we might as well go home. I was under the impression that we had had at least something to do with the passing of the measure. Evidently the Minister meant that he had introduced the Bill and that we, rightly or wrongly, had supported him in getting it placed on the statute-book. Despite the good intentions of the member for South Fremantle, I do not want my Italian friends at Kurrawang to have their supplies of garlic cut off and I shall certainly shed copious tears if the spring onion requirements of Country Party members are not forthcoming. The member for Roebourne (Mr. Rodoreda), in a characteristic speech, said that the latter vegetable was the emblem of members who sit on the Opposition benches. The Minister for Lands indulged in a skirmish when discussing the Bill, but if we are to have legislation of this description, let us consider whether we are to banish competition altogether. If we are agreed that it is fair to regulate the hours and conditions of industrialists, it may also be arguable that we can do the same thing for the producers. If we are to attempt to accomplish that, it should not be by means of setting up boards here, there and everywhere. At any rate, if we are to do anything of that description, we should safeguard the interests of the consuming public upon whom the producers rely for their living.

MR. SLEEMAN (Fremantle) [8.56]: I do not desire to cast a silent vote on the Bill, otherwise I may be regarded as associating myself with a profiteering proposition. I believe the Bill will have the effect of increasing prices and at the same time reducing prices during times of scarcity. If it is considered that the constitution of the board is unsatisfactory, that phase can receive consideration in Committee and provision can be made for representatives of the consumers and the growers. If the Bill is amended along those lines, I cannot see that any harm can result. I shall certainly vote for the second reading and when the Bill is in Committee I hope to have it amended along the lines I have indicated. In fact, I believe it is time the Government

gave attention to the appointment of another board, one that will deal with the price of bread. With wheat costing 2s. a bushel and bread 5½d. a loaf, it is about time the Government took action.

Mr. Patrick: What about when wheat is 7s. 2d. a bushel?

Mr. Raphael: Who gets the profit?

Mr. SLEEMAN: I do not think the farmer is getting it; I believe the miller is getting the benefit of the wide margin. If a price-fixing tribunal were set up, the housewife would be able to purchase bread at much less than she has to pay to-day. If the Bill is amended in Committee so as to alter the constitution of the board and to deal with the veto question to which the Minister referred, it should prove of benefit to the public.

MR. WATTS (Katanning) [9.1]: I support the second reading of the Bill and possibly do so with a little more enthusiasm than the Minister for Lands. If it becomes law, it will represent the first Bill exactly of this type to be passed in Western Australia. I admit that the measure is probably not ideal. Members will agree that it would have been far better had the Bill been introduced by the Government, for there is an obvious weakness when such a Bill is brought forward by a private member. Nevertheless, the Bill in principle, as the Minister for Lands admitted, is worthy of support at the second reading stage, leaving the House to consider in Committee what it will do with respect to the various clauses. I rose principally to pass a few remarks on some observations by the Minister for Lands when referring to the Bill. He quoted financial returns, which he stated had been supplied to him from the South-West regarding two farmers who were obviously persons of some considerable prosperity on properties that were undoubtedly capable of intense cultivation of a variety of products. The impression that the Minister's remarks would have conveyed to anyone listening to him who had no general knowledge of the circumstances of primary producers in the South-West, would probably have been that the information was fairly representative of the majority of the farmers in that part of the State.

Mr. Patrick: I wish it were.

Mr. WATTS: The position of the great majority of the farmers in the South-West is nothing of the kind. The circumstances of a fair majority of those farmers is very far removed from that suggested by the Minister. The majority of those farmers, particularly of the newer settlers in the South-West and also, I venture to suggest, in the electorate represented by the member for South Fremantle (Mr. Fox), are very far removed from the circumstances quoted by the Minister.

Mr. Seward: And it applies to the wheat belt.

Mr. WATTS: Exactly. And to other parts as well. The farmers are in very different financial circumstances. The details quoted by the Minister for Lands conveyed the idea that some progress has been made in the South-West and there is obviously some from the point of view of the two gentlemen he referred to, but that does not mean that his remarks can be applied to all primary producers in Western Australia. And so we can, I think, for the purpose of the consideration of this Bill at any rate, ignore the Minister's observations in that particular regard. He had quite a lot to say concerning the desire of the primary producer to make a profit out of every item. He said that the producer wants a profit on his turnips, his pumpkins, his pigs, his orchard, his butter and so on. May I ask, is the primary producer not entitled to demand that each branch of his industry should return him some profit? Do we expect our traders and manufacturers to sell any item of their trade or production at a loss? I do not think we do. Nor would they continue much longer to sell or produce the item if they were obliged to do so at a loss. They would shortly tell us that there is no need for them to continue losing money on their job. Then why is there any occasion for the Minister to suggest that the onion growers at Spearwood and elsewhere should continue producing commodities at a loss? The member for South Fremantle has stated that the present position means that they very often do produce at a loss.

In answer to an interjection the Minister for Lands also suggested that the Onion Board of Victoria, or elsewhere, in collaboration with an onion board that might be established in this State, would soon fix the business so that

the price of onions imported from Victoria would naturally be so high that the price of onions in Western Australia would also be kept up, thereby apparently overcoming the trade and commerce laws of the Commonwealth, which the Bill purports not to infringe. However, from the particulars supplied to the House by the Minister for Agriculture regarding the Onion Board of Victoria, it does not seem to have much prospect of disposing of its own onions at a particularly high price, but would be glad to dispose of them at almost any price. In the particular circumstances of Victoria the figures show that there is obviously an over-production and overplus available for export. The fact is that the Victorian growers would have been very glad indeed to accept any price for that proportion of their onion crop which, after picking it over, they were obliged to destroy. So that section of the Minister's argument does not seem to have any weight at all against the Bill. Indeed, it seems spurious in its nature.

Mr. Patrick: The Minister was supporting the Bill.

Mr. WATTS: Allegedly he was. It is allowable, in the circumstances, to contrast the observations he made in support of the Bill with those which he made otherwise. I do not suggest, as I said at the beginning, that the Bill is perfect. In my opinion, it is capable of considerable improvement. For example, I would be prepared to meet the Minister to some extent in regard to protecting the interests of consumers if the board to be appointed showed itself unreasonable. I would suggest to the Minister that in the State of Victoria that matter has received consideration. There, when circumstances arise in which the Minister considers there has been improper behaviour on the part of the board, he is entitled to appoint a committee to inquire into the matter, and then to take action on the report of that committee if he finds that the position is getting out of hand. That provision, if incorporated in a Bill of this nature, would be quite reasonably satisfactory. The point we have to consider at the present time is whether the position of onion growers in Western Australia is such that some regulation for the sale of their production is required, whether in the absence of such regulation their position is likely to become even

worse than it is now. On the information before us we can be satisfied that that is the case. We have yet to find out what the effect of passing a Bill of this kind would be on the particular commodity. So far as one can see, however, the Bill itself, subject to certain amendments, will have a good effect as regards the producer and will have no undesirable effect on the consumers of this community. In the circumstances I see no reason why the second reading should not be supported.

MR. THORN (Toodyay) [9.10]: I intend to support the second reading of the Bill, and with other members I offer my congratulations to the member for South Fremantle (Mr. Fox) on having introduced it. The hon. member is making a very real effort to provide for the orderly and proper marketing of the onion crop. A year or so ago we endeavoured to pass legislation for the marketing of eggs on behalf of the poultry farmers. I feel sure that we on this side of the Chamber could very well do with a man of the calibre of the member for South Fremantle to assist us in forwarding such legislation. All these requests for marketing facilities point distinctly to the necessity for the bringing down by the Government of a comprehensive marketing Bill for all primary products. Such a measure is long overdue, and will have to come. In the Conservative Old Country to-day it is felt necessary to introduce this type of legislation for the protection of producers. The Minister for Lands, to my way of thinking, made a somewhat glaring comparison. He picked out two highly prosperous cases in the South-West with a view to making the House believe that the producers of Western Australia are highly prosperous to-day. Some of the production costs of one of those properties are well worth going into. The cost of super in one case is stated at £12, and in the other case at £150. The figures quoted by the Minister were to that effect. One can only surmise that the methods of fertilisation must be very different. I believe that if we had a comprehensive marketing Act we could have one board with one cost, instead of having the costs of various boards.

The Minister went to great trouble to explain to the House how the worker of to-day gets his working conditions. Undoub-

tedly the worker has secured improved working conditions. His hours have been shortened, and he has a definite wage, fixed on the cost of living, to provide for himself and his family. But to-day we find that the majority of producers in Western Australia do not receive anything like the basic wage for their work. Consider the position of the vegetable growers. It is utterly disastrous. How they exist I do not know. There are causes for that situation, and one of the causes is that large numbers of settlers from overseas engage in the vegetable growing industry. This fact further strengthens the case for some method of orderly marketing. There is no eight-hour day in the vegetable growing industry. In my electorate and in that of the Minister for Works, Mount Hawthorn, one sees husband and wife and family working in the vegetable garden trying to make it pay. There is a definite case in which, if a board were set up, some restriction on planting could be introduced. Such restriction is highly necessary. Representatives of the industry the other day assured me that the position is so desperate that any move to organise will result in 100 per cent. organisation. I sincerely hope that the 100 per cent. organisation will be secured, as that will assist these growers to conduct their industry profitably. Westralian Farmers I believe are very successfully marketing potatoes to-day for the growers, and I hope their efforts will result in permanent success.

The Minister for Agriculture: It would be a different tale on a falling market.

MR. THORN: I do not know. Orderly marketing goes a long way towards securing for the producer a stabilised price. The argument that applies to the fixing of prices for onions also applies to the fixing of prices for potatoes. There is a definite check on price-fixing. The member for South Fremantle (Mr. Fox) and other members know that if an attempt were made to fix the price of onions at a ridiculously high level the result would be that a market would be provided here for Eastern States growers. The same argument applies to the fixing of a price for potatoes. If Westralian Farmers placed a ridiculous price on potatoes, the commodity would immediately come in from the Eastern States, and thereby the whole of the marketing arrangements would be upset. In a very good speech the other evening in

which he gave a clear explanation of the position of sections of primary producers, the Minister for Agriculture mentioned that one grower had sent 600 dozen cauliflowers to the market. I believe the Minister often visits the markets in order to obtain first hand knowledge. I too have been going there for the last 25 years and therefore know something about what is taking place. How ridiculous it is for a person to market cauliflowers in that way! Does it not pay the grapegrower better to send in ten cases of fruit for which he can obtain a reasonable price rather than to send in 20 or 30 cases and get a low price that will not pay him? Rather than send in fruit for which he does not obtain a reasonable return he prefers to allow the grapes to hang on the vine. The same applies to uncontrolled marketing of cauliflowers and other vegetables. A board would assist the growers; it would advise them; it would furnish statistics of the requirements of the market and organise the growers to plant in a reasonable manner, rather than allow them to produce hundreds of thousands of one particular commodity, thus flooding the market and obtaining nothing for all their labours.

I admit that the drafting of the Bill before us is not complete. The power of veto is very necessary. That power has been useful when applied to other industries in the past. Such control by the Minister is necessary. If he were given that control the Government would probably be more favourably disposed to the measure because it would then feel itself in a position to prevent any exploitation of the public for the reason that if the board fixed prices at a too high figure or did anything else as ridiculous, the Minister would be able to veto the action. Another disadvantage of the Bill is that it does not include a clause containing the definition of a grower.

The Minister for Agriculture: You will find a definition in Clause 2.

Mr. THORN: The definition is not complete. There should be something to the effect that a producer of say 5 cwt. of onions or over should come under the provisions of the Act. The figure must not be too low or the hon. member will lose the control that he desires. Hundreds of growers who produced a few cwt. of onions would not come under the provisions of the Act, and that would have the effect of upsetting the orderly

marketing and so frustrating the desires of the mover of the Bill. The introduction of measures of this kind provides a clear indication of the necessity for our seriously considering in the near future the introduction of a comprehensive general marketing Bill that will give the producers some protection and a reward for their labours such as is being given to the workers through the Arbitration Court.

MR. FOX (South Fremantle—in reply) [9.20]: I have no apology to make for having introduced the Bill. Within the last couple of years, in company with market gardeners from Spearwood, I waited on the Minister and urged the necessity for the Government to introduce a measure to deal with the produce of market gardeners. Unfortunately, the Minister has not taken any action in the matter and, having so many market gardeners in my district I was requested and gladly consented to bring down this measure in the hope that, if passed, it would afford them some relief. The Minister for Lands said that I mentioned when speaking on the second reading, that he had introduced a Bill of this description. I did not mention the Minister for Lands at all, but another member said that the Minister for Lands had introduced a marketing Bill under which it would have been possible to create a board similar to that proposed in this Bill. I agree with the member for Yilgarn-Coolgardie (Mr. Lambert) that the time is fast approaching when we shall have to appoint boards to control all produce. The Minister for Lands said the worker has to go to the Arbitration Court. I would not mind if everybody had to go to the Arbitration Court, if it was a price-fixing tribunal. At present the baker does not have to ask anybody at what price he shall sell his bread. Nor does the butcher have to ask at what price he shall sell his meat. It is time that legislation was introduced to provide an improved standard of living for those producers who are having a hard struggle and whose earnings do not approximate the basic wage. The Minister for Agriculture when speaking on the second reading said that the obstacles to the fixing of quotas for perishable commodities were almost insuperable. Those with a lifelong experience in the industry do not take that view. As I said previously, the time is fast approaching when it will have to be done. In fact, it

would be a good idea if at the present time all market gardeners were registered and no more were admitted to the industry until conditions improved. The requirements of the people are well known at the present time. Records could be obtained from the Metropolitan Markets showing the amount of produce consumed in the metropolitan area and throughout the State, and no difficulty should be experienced in fixing a quota with a liberal margin to provide for crop failures or other adverse circumstances. Market gardeners have a right to the same consideration that has been given to milk producers and distributors, those that are engaged in the transport industry, and others having the assistance of legislative enactments. Some growers with whom I have been in conversation consider that one way to deal with over-production would be to fix a minimum price for all produce sold in the markets. I do not mean a price that would be remunerative to the grower, exactly, but a price below which certain goods should not be sold. It would not be the maximum price. This would have the effect of keeping the low-grade vegetable off the market, and people would have a chance to get a better article than they get at present.

The Minister for Agriculture: The minimum price might become the maximum.

Mr. FOX: I do not think so. That is not the case at present. There are great variations in the price.

The Minister for Agriculture: If you fixed a minimum price it might become the maximum.

Mr. FOX: I am giving the opinion of prominent growers in the industry.

Mr. Thorn: A better article might be produced, too.

Mr. FOX: The article of poor quality could not then be sold in the market, because the buyers would only purchase products of a higher standard. At present all kinds of products are dumped on the market and a lot remains unsold. The method suggested would weed out the careless grower. The Minister said that the advent of irrigation or spraying had greatly increased the area under production. That is so to a certain extent, but modern transport methods have also been an important factor in that respect. At one time practically all the vegetables consumed in the metropolitan area were produced within 20 miles or so of Perth, and a person could bring into

Perth a ton of products by means of a horse and dray. To-day a motor vehicle can transport five or six tons a distance of 50 to 70 miles. This has had the effect of bringing a larger area under cultivation. Unfortunately for the grower there has always been over-production. That represents a great problem. The commodities in question cannot be processed because the growers have no machinery with which to do that. Possibly beans, peas and cauliflowers could be processed, and if the Government could assist in that direction it would be of advantage both to the grower and the State. The Minister stated that in times gone by men had made sufficient money out of market gardening to retire. From inquiries I have made in the Spearwood district, I am satisfied that in the last 20 years no one has made much money, and no one has retired. Both the Minister and the member for Toodyay (Mr. Thorn) referred to one grower having placed 600 dozen cauliflowers on the market in one day. I have been told by market gardeners that this particular grower specialises in cauliflowers. He was so incensed at the competition against him that he flooded the market. He is reported to have said, "I will teach them to grow cauliflowers." He grew an extra quantity, and dumped the whole lot on the market, with the object of cutting out the competition. No doubt he was successful. Growers have not a large area of land to cultivate. When they have a failure with one crop, they are not anxious to continue it in the following year. That is very noticeable in the district I represent. In one year a certain vegetable may bring a good price, and many growers cultivate it in anticipation of a favourable season in the following year. When that time comes it is found that all have a surplus of the vegetable, and there is a slump in the price. That is not likely to happen with cauliflowers next year, for I should not be surprised if this product brought a high price. The Minister also said that the value of a commodity depended on the state of the market which, in turn, depended on the needs of the consumer. A man's labour is the only commodity he has to sell. Thousands of people have only that to dispose of. Market gardeners have only the product of their labour to sell. If a hundred men were required for a job and a thousand men applied for it, the Minister would not argue that the thousand should undercut each other to see who

would fill the positions. In a sense, that is what happens with the market gardener. To meet such a position the trade union movement was established in the closing decades of the 18th century. Most workers are now brought under various arbitration awards. With certain modifications the market gardeners stand where the early trade unionists stood. It is the duty of every trade unionist to hold out a helping hand so that he may obtain better conditions.

There is no surplus of locally-grown onions. It would, therefore, be an easy matter for the board to regulate the sale of that commodity. If the consumption is 50 tons a week, it is no use putting 100 tons or 200 tons on the market. The Onion Marketing Board could follow the same procedure that is followed by the board which disposes of apples. The requirements of the market are known and are regulated so that there is always sufficient for the needs of the consumers, but never a glut. The Minister could find no record of anyone buying onions for storage on the ground that they would not keep. That is a libel on the local article. Growers are definitely of opinion that onions can be stored for three months without loss or deterioration. I have been told that the local product keeps better than the early Victorian onion, known as "the Globe," which comes in first, but does not keep as well as the "Brown Spanish," which takes longer to grow and comes in later. One grower in Spearwood told me he had kept onions for six months. He lost only 20 per cent. because they started to grow. Local onions will keep at least three months. Some have been sent to Singapore. Last year a small shipment of onions was exported there and others have been sent to Sydney and have carried well. If a board were appointed, it might be able to export onions during the season without unduly raising the local price. If it were able to export a fair quantity without raising the price beyond £10, it would be doing a service to the growers as well as to the State. The Minister said it would be incumbent on the board to store any excess, and this would be likely to involve the organisation in heavy loss. Those who want the board established have had three years' experience of the voluntary pool, and should be in a position to see that it properly carried out its functions. It is not intended that the board itself shall store onions. The board would require no premises for this

purpose. The task would devolve upon the growers. They would be directed to send a certain quantity of onions to a particular merchant or store. In the event of a complaint from those who received the onions, either as to the quality or any other defect the board would immediately make investigations, and if the complaint was found to be justified, a deduction could be made. The intention of the board will not be to erect extensive storage buildings and thereby incur heavy expense. The Minister stated that no person was making a living out of growing onions alone. That is correct, but in the Spearwood district the main crop of the market gardener is onions. Onions are the main source of his income. The Minister said there were 63 growers in the Spearwood district, but I have the names of 95 persons growing onions at the present time in the Spearwood and Coogee areas. The number may be greater, so the figures given by the Minister are not correct.

The Minister for Agriculture: My figures are official.

Mr. FOX: Officials often make mistakes.

The Minister for Agriculture: Possibly your figures are not correct.

Mr. FOX: The man who gave me the figures would not make a mistake. He lives in the district. I can give the Minister the names and addresses of the 95 growers, so that he can check the figures himself and ascertain whether or not they are correct. I cannot say of my own knowledge that they are accurate.

The Minister for Agriculture: Are you including growers with a holding of a quarter of an acre upwards?

Mr. FOX: I do not know the area.

The Minister for Agriculture: My statement was definite: I said 65 growers with holdings of a quarter of an acre upwards. There may be 105 growers if some of them have a holding of less than a quarter of an acre in extent.

Mr. FOX: The growers whose names I have, produce considerable quantities of onions. The person who supplied me with the names had in mind growers with a holding of half an acre and upwards, because those growers would be entitled to a vote for members of the board. The growers generally have holdings of half an acre to three acres.

The Minister for Agriculture: Would you be willing to include such a qualification in the Bill?

Mr. FOX: After the discussion that has taken place to-night, I shall have another talk with some of my constituents to ascertain whether the suggestion by the Minister is acceptable. Perhaps the area I have mentioned is too large, but the growers ought to be the best judges of their business. Our growers produce practically all the onions consumed in Western Australia between December and March; the imports during that period are negligible. Immediately the local onions go off the market, however, the price goes up. That is noticeable. The price of our onions is controlled by the Eastern States price; so, even if the proposed board has power to fix prices, the chance of the consumer here being exploited is not great. The Minister quoted some figures of losses in Victoria. The Victorian board made advances to many growers on their own estimate of production. In Victoria, to inspect the whole onion crop of the State would be very difficult, but to do so in Western Australia is a simple matter, because nearly all the local onions are produced in a very limited area, within 12 or 15 miles of Perth. The board would make an investigation of the crop and advance the grower a certain sum on his estimated tonnage. That would enable the grower to meet some of his pressing obligations. At present, each grower is pitted against the other. A grower desirous of selling his onions usually approaches a merchant. The merchant inquires the price, and having been told what it is, usually says, "I can get them cheaper elsewhere." The result is that the grower's price is beaten down and he does not get a fair price. If the board were constituted, it could make an advance to the grower and consequently he need not approach the merchant in an endeavour to sell his crop, or a few tons, at a price below what is reasonable.

The figures quoted by the Minister in regard to the production of onions in Victoria show the absolute necessity for some control of production. He said that of the 1936-37 crop 11,000 tons were destroyed and 10,000 tons remained unsold, so that 21,000 tons represented a waste of effort. If some workers went out on strike for better conditions and remained unemployed for two or three days, we would be swamped with statistics showing the number of hours lost and the amount lost by the workers; but we do

not get statistics in such a case as the Minister mentioned, showing the hours of labour lost in producing the 21,000 tons of onions that were unsaleable, nor particulars of the expense of sorting the crop and carting it into storage sheds. I venture to say that if we could obtain direct particulars of the amount so lost, it would be found to be much greater than the loss sustained in a strike such as I mentioned.

Member: It is a criminal waste.

Mr. FOX: Yes. The Government's duty is to see that over-production and waste of that description are avoided, especially if the commodity is produced here for local consumption. Of course, if the surplus can be exported, that is a different matter.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: It would not be waste if people had the money to buy the commodity.

Mr. FOX: If we could nationalise production, distribution and exchange, we would be able to make everything go round. The member for Toodyay said that I ought to be on his side of the House. I think some of my ideas would be too advanced for him. I do not think he would subscribe to them.

Mr. Thorn: We would keep you in order.

Mr. FOX: The system I have mentioned is the only system under which there would be no waste of production. Each man would produce his quota and there would be no waste at all. The Minister also said that the board was too large. The Minister for Lands suggested a board that he might be prepared to support. When we reach the Committee stage perhaps the Minister's suggestion will be adopted. I have no objection to a smaller board; in fact, I think five members are too many. I do not think the expenses of the proposed board will amount to anything approaching the expenses of the Victorian board. In fact, the expenses should be very light. The season lasts 13 or 14 weeks and a secretary could be employed for that period at an appropriate salary. He could do other work, as the job would be a part-time one only; he should nevertheless be well paid for it. There would be no necessity for the board to meet more than once a week; perhaps once a fortnight would be quite sufficient. I have no hesitation in saying that the expenses of the board would not represent more than 2 per cent. of the value of the

whole crop. The growers merely require a fair deal, and I am satisfied they would be content with a price approximating £10 a ton. Such a price would not inflict any hardship on the community, nor would it affect the cost of living. The consumption of onions is about 14 lbs. per head and, taking the average family as comprising four members, that would mean a total consumption for that family of 56 lbs. in a year, which, at wholesale prices, would represent an expenditure of less than 5s. per family per year.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am afraid the hon. member is introducing new matter, and he must not do that.

Mr. FOX: I am not introducing new matter. I understood both the Minister for Lands and the Minister for Agriculture to say that the board might fix the price as high as it liked.

The Minister for Agriculture: That statement was not made. I said that the board would fix the price.

Mr. FOX: The Minister for Lands said the board could fix the price as high as it liked.

The Minister for Agriculture: At any rate, I did not say that.

Mr. FOX: I earnestly appeal to members to support the Bill. The onion producers are entitled to a decent standard of living, and they are not enjoying that at present. During the week, I read a report in the Press in which it was stated that at a conference of market-gardeners, one grower said men in the industry were working seven days a week and 18 hours a day. No member of the House should stand for such conditions. Ever since I have been in Western Australia, I have taken a prominent part in industrial matters, and have endeavoured to do what I could to assist those with whom I have been associated. In view of the position of the market-gardeners, I felt it my duty to do what I could to improve their conditions. I hope members will support the Bill, so as to provide market-gardeners with a fair deal, improve their conditions and enable them to pay their employees better wages and give them better conditions.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Sleeman in the Chair; Mr. Fox in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.
Progress reported.

BILL—JURY ACT AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

Resumed from the 21st September. Mr. Sampson in the Chair; Mrs. Cardell-Oliver in charge of the Bill.

The CHAIRMAN: Progress was reported on Clause 3 to which Mr. Sleeman had moved an amendment to strike out the words:—"who has the property qualification required of a male juror under the preceding subsection."

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. NORTH: I move—

That progress be reported.

Motion put, and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	..	..	..	13
Noes	..	..	..	23

Majority against .. 10

AYES.

Mr. Boyle	Mr. Seward
Mrs. Cardell-Oliver	Mr. Shearn
Mr. Ferguson	Mr. Waits
Mr. McDonald	Mr. Welsh
Mr. McLarty	Mr. Willmott
Mr. North	Mr. Doney
Mr. Patrick	

(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Coverley	Mr. Raphael
Mr. Cross	Mr. Rodoreda
Mr. Doust	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Fox	Mr. F. C. L. Smith
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Stryants
Mr. Hegney	Mr. Thorn
Miss Holman	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Lambert	Mr. Troy
Mr. Leahy	Mr. Wilson
Mr. Marshall	Mr. Withers
Mr. Millington	Mr. Wise
Mr. Nulsen	

(Teller.)

Motion (progress) thus negatived.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I move an amendment—

That in the proposed new subsection the following words be struck out:—"and who notifies in writing addressed to the Resident or Police Magistrate of the district in which she resides that she desires to serve as a juror."

Amendment put and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	..	..	..	21
Noes	..	..	..	12

Majority for .. 9

AYES.

Mr. Coverley
Mr. Cross
Mr. Doust
Mr. Fox
Mr. Hawke
Mr. Hegney
Mr. Lambert
Mr. Leahy
Mr. Marshall
Mr. Millington
Mr. Nuisen

Mr. Raphael
Mr. Rodoreda
Mr. Sleeman
Mr. F. C. L. Smith
Mr. Styaute
Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Troy
Mr. Wilson
Mr. Wise
Miss Holmar
(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Boyle
Mr. Doney
Mr. McDonald
Mr. McLarty
Mr. North
Mr. Patrick

Mr. Seward
Mr. Thorn
Mr. Watts
Mr. Welsh
Mr. Willmott
Mrs. Cardell-Oliver
(Teller.)

PAIRS.

AYES.
Mr. Collier
Mr. Willcock
Mr. Needham
Mr. Panton

NOES.
Mr. Keenan
Mr. Latham
Mr. Warner
Mr. Stubbs

Amendment thus passed.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 10.3 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 29th September, 1938.

	PAGE
Questions: Police Act Amendment Bill, discussion	1133
Youth employment, Federal grant	1133
Leave of absence	1133
Resolution: Yampi Sound iron ore deposits, Commonwealth embargo	1141
Bills: State Government Insurance Office, 2A.	1133
Health Act Amendment, 2A.	1134
Fair Rents, 2A.	1135
Industrial Arbitration Act Amendment, 2A.	1138
Lights (Navigation Protection), 2A., Com. report	1144
Alsatian Dog Act Amendment, 2A.	1144

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

QUESTION—POLICE ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Hon. L. CRAIG (without notice) asked the Chief Secretary: Will he give the House an opportunity next week to discuss Order of the Day No. 10 (Police Act Amendment Bill).

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: Provided that time is available, yes.

QUESTION—YOUTH EMPLOYMENT.

Federal Grant.

Hon. A. THOMSON asked the Chief Secretary: 1, Is the following statement, which appeared in the "West Australian" on the 24th September, 1938, correct:—

Unemployed Youths:

Distribution of Federal Grant:

Canberra, September 23.—Details of the distribution of money made available by the Commonwealth Government for the technical training of unemployed youths in the various States last year, and the extent to which this amount totalling £200,000 was subsidised by State Government grants, were given by the Prime Minister (Mr. Lyons) in the House of Representatives to-day.

New South Wales received £79,000, Victoria £55,000, Queensland £25,000, South Australia £19,000, Western Australia £14,000, and Tasmania £8,000. The New South Wales Government provided an additional £100,000, Victoria £55,000, South Australia £15,000 and Tasmania £8,000. The Queensland Government undertook to provide £25,250 and the Prime Minister is awaiting information regarding Western Australia?

2, (a) What steps are being taken to implement the technical training of unemployed youths in Western Australia; (b) when can the Federal Government expect the desired information of the proposals of this State?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 2, (a) Extensions in the system of technical training at the Perth Technical College, Kalgoorlie and Wiluna Schools of Mines, and Muresk Agricultural College, have been effected, and plans for further extensions are now being prepared; (b) information was forwarded to the Hon. the Prime Minister on the 20th September.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Hon. E. H. Angelo, leave of absence for six consecutive sittings granted to Hon. G. W. Miles (North) on the ground of private business.

BILL—STATE GOVERNMENT INSURANCE OFFICE.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. J. M. MACFARLANE (Metropolitan-Suburban) [4.35]: This session marks the seventh occasion when this Chamber has been asked to legalise the activities of the