

it should be dealt with mainly by the technical members, and we should not attempt to divide the responsibility of the members of the commission.

Hon. G. FRASER: The presence of non-technical men on the commission will be a definite safeguard. The technical members may disagree and the lay-members will be able to decide the matter at issue.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: For the very reason that Mr. Fraser has stressed, I desire the amendment to find its place in the Bill. There is no more dangerous person than the layman with a little knowledge.

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

Ayes	9
Noes	7
Majority for	2

AYES.

Hon. L. B. Bolton	Hon. H. Seddon
Hon. J. A. Dimmitt	Hon. H. Tuckey
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. F. R. Welsh
Hon. W. J. Mann	Hon. E. H. H. Hall
Hon. H. S. W. Parker	(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. C. R. Cornish	Hon. W. H. Kitson
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. G. Fraser	Hon. G. B. Wood
Hon. E. H. Gray	(Teller.)

Amendment thus passed; the clause, as amended, agreed to.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 6.15 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 22nd November, 1945.

	PAGE
Questions: Wheat transport delays, as to maintaining supplies for milling	2135
State Government Insurance Office, as to contributions to Fire Brigades	2136
Main Roads Department, as to Lake Grace-Pingrup-Ongerup-Borden-Albany Road	2137
Galvanised wire and netting, as to supplies	2138
Australian-made tractors, as to negotiations for manufacture	2139
Land settlement, as to possibilities east of Pingrup	2137
Poultry food, as to pollard supplies and substitutes	2137
Licensed plumbers, as to granting permits for work	2137
Leave of absence	2138
Bills: Timber Industry (Housing of Employees), 1A.	2138
Criminal Code Amendment, report	2138
Industrial Development (Resumption of Land), 2A.	2138
Public Works Act Amendment, 2A.	2143
Public Service Appeal Board Act Amendment, 2A.	2143
Building Operations and Building Materials Control, 2A., Com.	2146
Commonwealth Powers, returned	2152
Electricity, returned	2157
Railways Classification Board Act Amendment, returned	2157
Air Navigation Act Amendment, returned	2157
State Government Insurance Office Act Amendment, Council's Message	2157
Medical Act Amendment, Council's Amendments	2157
Annual Estimates: Votes and Items discussed	2158

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

QUESTIONS.

WHEAT TRANSPORT DELAYS.

As to Maintaining Supplies for Milling.

Mr. GRAHAM asked the Minister for Transport:

1, Is he aware that flour mills are working only two instead of three shifts owing to insufficient supplies of wheat?

2, Is he aware that the railways are unable to haul, or in any case are not hauling sufficient wheat to keep the mills fully occupied?

3, Is it a fact that road transport is at present keeping mills going, but this will cease on the 22nd November unless an extension is granted?

4, Is he aware that the British Government has offered to take 500,000 tons of flour at a price equivalent to 9s. 8½d. per bushel of wheat?

5, Will he take steps to have the present road transport contract extended; and rearrange existing railway facilities in order to assist in the urgent production of flour for export, so that advantage can be taken

of the present favourable price and also to supply urgently required food supplies for oversea consumption?

The MINISTER replied:

1, 2, and 3, Flour mills in this State were reduced to two shifts at the request of the Commonwealth Government who wanted wheat released for export to the Eastern States because of the shortage of fodder resulting from drought conditions. There was an understanding that a reversion to three shifts would take place on 30th November. If this is to be achieved, there must be a considerable reduction in the export wheat programme of the Commonwealth, as it is not possible to haul sufficient wheat to satisfy the requirements of the present programme, the demand for stock feed, and to keep mills working three shifts.

4, No.

5, Extension of road haulage will be temporarily extended for the purpose of having a thorough investigation made into the whole position.

STATE GOVERNMENT INSURANCE OFFICE.

As to Contributions to Fire Brigades.

Mr. McDONALD asked the Minister for Labour:

1, Does the State Government Insurance Office make any contribution under the provisions of the Fire Brigades Act, as to contributions to costs of fire services by insurance companies?

2, In the event of the proposed extension of the activities of the State Insurance Office to insurance business for local authorities and friendly societies, is it the intention of the Government to make provision, if necessary by the amendment of the Fire Brigades Act, for the State Government Insurance Office to be assessed for contributions on the basis applicable to private insurance companies?

The MINISTER replied:

1, The State Government contributes two-ninths of the Fire Brigades Board's expenditure in spite of the fact that the State Government Insurance Office has no power to engage in general fire insurance business.

2, The obligations of the State Government in this matter are recognised. The position regarding future contributions to the board is being examined.

MAIN ROADS DEPARTMENT.

As to Lake Grace-Pingrup-Ongerup-Borden-Albany Road.

Mr. WATTS asked the Minister for Works:

1, Is it correct that the Main Roads Department proposes to declare the whole, or any portion, of the Lake Grace-Pingrup-Ongerup-Borden-Albany Road a main road?

2, If not, are any funds being made available to local authorities en route for improvement to such road, and if so, what amounts and to which local authority or authorities?

The MINISTER replied:

1, No.

2, Yes—Kent Road Board, £200. If any other local authority concerned considers the department should make financial assistance available in connection with this road, it should submit its case for consideration.

GALVANISED WIRE AND NETTING.

As to Supplies.

Mr. WATTS asked the Minister for Agriculture:

1, Can he give any indication of the time when galvanised fencing wire and/or wire-netting will be available in quantity in Western Australia?

2, Does he know when the galvanising of such wire can commence in factories operating in Western Australia?

3, In view of the pressing need for such supplies to be available in Western Australia, is every effort being made to enable factories to turn out these products?

The MINISTER replied:

1, and 2, Western Australia for a very considerable time will be almost entirely dependent upon local production for supplies of galvanised wire and wire-netting. There is sufficient raw material available at present to enable production to be commenced but a regular supply to the manufacturers of an additional 60 tons of coal per week is essential.

3, Yes.

AUSTRALIAN-MADE TRACTORS.

As to Negotiations for Manufacture.

Mr. WATTS asked the Minister for Industrial Development:

1, Are any Australian-made tractors other than the McDonald Imperial Diesel tractor used in Western Australia?

2, If so, what are the makes of tractors concerned?

3, Do these Australian manufactured machines compare favourably (as to price) with the imported articles?

4, Is it desirable to limit the importation of machines of these kinds into Australia if such machines made in Australia give satisfactory service here?

5, Does he consider it desirable to open negotiations with Australian manufacturers for the manufacture of these machines in Western Australia? If not, will he give his reasons?

6, If so, will such negotiations be entered into in the near future?

The MINISTER replied:

1, I have no knowledge of any other Australian made tractor operating in this State.

2, See answer to question No. (1).

3, Yes.

4, Yes, provided the Australian industry is capable of turning out the machines in sufficient quantity and they are satisfactory in price and service.

5, and 6, Negotiations have already been undertaken.

LAND SETTLEMENT.

As to Possibilities East of Pingrup.

Mr. WATTS asked the Minister for Lands:

1, Have further reports been received in connection with the possibilities of settlement in the area north-east and east of Pingrup, last referred to in a letter from the then Minister for Lands to me dated the 26th April, 1945?

2, If so, will he table these reports in this House?

3, If not, or if no further reports are to hand, will he state what progress has been made in the area mentioned regarding investigation of—

(a) the suitability of the land for settlement;

(b) water conservation;

(c) soil classification?

4, Has the work been completed or are further investigations proceeding?

5, If the investigations are completed, what are the proposals in regard to the land in question?

The MINISTER replied:

1, Yes.

2, Yes.

3, Answered by (2).

4, Further investigations are to be made.

5, Answered by (4).

POULTRY FOOD.

As to Pollard Supplies and Substitutes.

Mr. KELLY asked the Minister for Agriculture:

1, Is he aware that poultrykeepers and persons with backyard poultry pens, particularly those rearing ducks and ducklings, are undergoing a very trying period endeavouring to sustain their stock, because of the scarcity of pollard, and that substitutes such as Dukko, Quick Lay, Chick Starter, Chick Pellets, Laying Mash, Chick Grower, and others, are far from satisfactory?

2, Is it possible to take steps to make a greater quota of pollard available to urgent and essential users, as much unnecessary poultry mortality is already taking place?

The MINISTER replied:

1, The commercial poultry farmers have been on a reduced ration for some months owing to the scarcity of pollard. They are, however, able to substitute gristed wheat in the proportion of three parts gristed wheat to five parts bran or branato. No. 1 ration, as set out in the Agricultural Department's leaflet on laying mashes, has been used in the Egg Laying Trials at Muresk since 1935 and the results compare more than favourably with competitions in the Eastern States. The other substitutes mentioned are considerably better than pollard, as they contain proteins (vegetable) that have proved satisfactory. The basis of the poultry food mentioned is wheatmeal.

2, Under present milling operations it is not possible to make a greater quota of pollard available. Poultry mortality cannot be attributed to the shortage of pollard, when there are ample supplies of gristed wheat available.

LICENSED PLUMBERS.

As to Granting Permits for Work.

Mr. GRAHAM asked the Minister for Works:

1, Is he aware that a plumber who is licensed by the department is charged a fee of 10s. a year in addition to lodging a deposit of £5, and yet cannot on his own ac-

count get a permit lay on water in a sewered area although the pipes are not being connected with the sewer?

2, Is it a fact that a number of plumbers have certificates from the department indicating that they are qualified to perform the work, yet they cannot get permits in their own names in order to do the work?

3, Does it not appear that such a policy compels plumbers to work for others instead of being able to carry out the work for themselves?

4, Is not all work performed by a licensed plumber or other plumber whose work is supervised, subject to being passed by an inspector?

5, During the past five years (a) how many tradesmen have sat for the general plumbing license, (b) how many have passed, (c) how many years has it taken for them to pass?

The MINISTER replied:

1, There are two classes of plumbers licensed by the Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Department—

(a) Water Supply and Sanitary Plumber.

(b) Hot Water Plumber.

The holder of a Water Supply and Sanitary Plumber's license may carry out any water supply or sewerage plumbing or drainage work within the department's area, and only plumbers holding such license shall do, or cause to be done, plumbing or drainage work within areas open for sewerage house connections. The holder of a Water Supply Plumber's license may carry out water supply work only outside any area open for sewerage house connections. Plumbers licensed under each heading pay an annual license fee of 10s. and lodge a deposit of £5, which is retained during the currency of the license.

2, Permits are issued to licensed plumbers qualified to perform work as detailed in (1).

3, A plumber desirous of operating within a sewered area can do so by qualifying and obtaining the necessary certificate from the Board of Examiners set up under the appropriate bylaw which would enable the department to issue him with a Water Supply and Sanitary Plumber's license.

4, Yes.

5,

(a) Candidates for Water Supply and Sanitary Plumber's Certificate, 56; Candidates for Water Supply Plumber's Certificate, 1.

(b) Water Supply and Sanitary Plumber's Certificate, 8; Water Supply Plumber's Certificate, nil.

(c) Two—eight years; one—seven years; two—five years; one—three years; two—two years; total, eight.

BILL—TIMBER INDUSTRY (HOUSING OF EMPLOYEES).

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

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

On motion by Mr. Doney, leave of absence for one week granted to Mr. Mann (Beverley) on the ground of urgent public business.

BILL—CRIMINAL CODE AMENDMENT.

Report of Committee adopted.

BILL—INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT (RESUMPTION OF LAND).

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. A. R. G. Hawke—Northam) [4.40] in moving the second reading said: This Bill proposes to give power for the resumption of land for industrial purposes, and is therefore part of the general policy of the Government to encourage and assist the expansion of secondary industries within the State. It is true that secondary industries in Western Australia have not during past years expanded to any extraordinary extent. The main reasons for that are well-known, I think, to most members. But while it is true that no extraordinary expansion has taken place, it is a fact that there has been a considerable building up of secondary industries in this State. This building up was accelerated following the 1930-33 depression until the beginning of the war, and in some avenues was expanded much further during the war years. The result is that today many established industrial enterprises have outgrown their ability further to expand upon

the sites which were originally chosen and upon which the particular industries were built.

The position of those particular enterprises is that they now face the necessity of obtaining further land adjoining their present sites or adjacent to them, or the alternative of opening up a branch enterprise in some other district, or another alternative of transferring entirely their industries from their present sites to new sites in other areas. This, of course, is the story generally of many activities within a community. Many things have small beginnings, and at the commencement they are planned upon a certain scale. Those who establish them at their commencement are quite happy to think that the time might some day come when they will have developed on those sites industries operating to the full capacity of the sites and the enterprises established thereon. The passage of time, however, brings about progress far beyond the anticipations of those who established the activities at the beginning.

There are several instances in the metropolitan area at present of established enterprises that can extend no further on the land which they hold. In some of those cases it would be much preferable from every angle for adjoining land to be obtained. Endeavours have been made by some of the owners of those industries to obtain adjoining land, but for several reasons they have not achieved success. Usually there is the difficulty of price. If anyone owns land adjoining an industrial enterprise and the owners of the enterprise seek to obtain that land for industrial expansion, the price asked is usually quite prohibitive. There is also the factor of inconvenience to those who might own the adjoining land. For instance, the owner of adjoining land might have upon it a home in which he and his family live. He might have a shop or some other activity which he is operating; and from the point of view of inconvenience as well as that of price, he is not in any way anxious to dispose of the land, because its disposal would entail the transfer of his activities to some other area.

There is sometimes, too, the question of prejudice. When thinking of and discussing the question of industrial development, we are all 100 per cent in favour; we all

advocate it very strongly; we all believe in it, and we are all prepared to do a great deal to achieve further industrial expansion. But if we happen to live in a locality, and there is some proposal on the part of a factory or industrial enterprise nearby to extend its activities over a wider area of land and thus bring its activities closer to where we might live, we develop either a quiet or a medium or a violent antagonism to industrial development, and we place our own convenience and our own interests as individuals high above the interests of the State in regard to any policy of expanding second industries.

Mr. Doney: That is an attitude to which we are all prone, of course.

The MINISTER OF WORKS: I mentioned a moment ago the possibility of a person's owning land adjoining a factory site upon which a factory has been erected and having a house upon that land and not being at all anxious to dispose of the land because its disposal would mean also the loss of the house. That is an important factor, especially in these days because of the difficulty of a person in such a case being able to obtain suitable or even any housing accommodation elsewhere. Therefore I am not suggesting that the State Government or anyone on its behalf should in an all-powerful way just grab any land which might adjoin or be adjacent to an existing factory for the purpose of placing that land at the disposal of the owners of the factory.

This Bill does not propose that any system of that kind should be established. So far I have referred to secondary industries already in existence, but there is also the problem of obtaining suitable new sites for entirely new industrial enterprises. We have already had many inquiries under both headings, in the Department of Industrial Development. There have already been several inquiries from existing industries for additional areas of land, and many inquiries from those anxious to establish entirely new industrial enterprises within the State. Some questions were raised here during the year as to the possibility of existing munition factories and annexes being utilised fully in the post-war years. This afternoon I can tell members that there will be no difficulty in having those factories and annexes occupied and used to the maximum degree.

we had more of them we would still have no difficulty in their being used to manufacture goods in this State from now on.

Mr. McLarty: What sort of goods?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Many classes of goods, the varieties of which I need not enumerate at this stage, more especially as negotiations are at present proceeding, between those anxious to establish these enterprises and the authorities that control the allocation of space within those factories and annexes, in an endeavour to obtain such space. In obtaining additional suitable land for industrial expansion we are also up against those who purchased land years ago and have continued to hold it solely for the purpose of speculation. That type of individual is always difficult to deal with, because he bought the land originally as a speculation and is always in a position to continue to hold it until such time as he receives for it the price that he wants to obtain. We have met several instances of that and it is considered that men of that type should be compelled to dispose of such land, provided always that a reasonable price is paid for it and, provided further, that any such person shall have the right of appeal to a court of law, first of all as to any compulsory resumption and, secondly, as to the price to be paid. Another, but not so great, difficulty in the way at times is met with in the bylaws of local governing authorities, and another would be the town planning schemes developed and applied by the Town Planning Board.

Mr. Watts: You do not propose to interfere with them?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: After I explain the contents of the Bill, members will see to what extent the measure proposes to impinge on the bylaws of local authorities or on any town planning scheme that might have been developed by the Town Planning Board and subsequently adopted by a local governing authority. I believe this State is going to enjoy a fairly long period of industrial expansion, from now onwards. This Bill provides for the establishment of a method of accelerating the rate of that expansion. Many other things can be done in the community to encourage and assist expansion. By the same rules, unfortunately, things can also be done to retard expansion and even to imperil the possibility of expan-

sion and development. This week we have, unfortunately, had one experience of that at Collie, in the non-production of coal.

Even at this distance from Collie it is quite clear, from reading the reports supplied to our newspapers, that the trouble should never have occurred. I think it can be said that all parties were to blame, to some extent, though it might be conceded that the men were perhaps more to blame than anyone else. It is a pity that the course finally decided on by the men was not followed before there was any hold-up, even in the Proprietary Mine, because the course eventually adopted by the men was to call in the aid of a board of reference, made up of three men at Collie, to hear and decide the case. That board decided in favour of the men, and I have no doubt that had that board been called in before any hold-up took place, the same decision would have been given. Whilst most of the blame in that case might be placed on the men, it is unfortunate that the company, when the men were making their claim, did not call in the board of reference to decide the matter. I have been trying to find out today whether the reference board could have moved on its own initiative to hear and decide the claim and the threatened dispute before it actually occurred. The policy of the Government, through the Department of Labour, has always been to take hold of these things before they develop. As soon as there is any rumour or suggestion of a possible hold-up in any Government department we send our officers immediately to investigate and consult and overcome the possibility of trouble before it occurs.

Mr. Abbott: That is a very wise policy.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I hope that course will be followed at Collie in future by the parties concerned. I thank you, Mr. Speaker, for having allowed me to stray a little from the subject before the House. I think I have indicated to members the necessity for some action being taken to enable land to be obtained for the purposes of industrial expansion. I think I have also indicated that suitable land cannot be obtained by the owners who desire to expand their enterprises or by those other people who desire to establish new industrial enterprises within the State. In this Bill it is proposed to give power to the Governor to resume land and to dis-

pose of it to those already engaged in secondary industries or those about to engage in such industries. The Bill proposes to establish a committee, to be known as the land resumption for industries committee. This committee will consist of the Surveyor General, the Director of Industrial Development and the chairman of the Town Planning Board.

The fact that the chairman of the Town Planning Board is to be a member of the committee is, to some extent, a reply to the relevant point raised by the Leader of the Opposition as to any action that could be taken under the proposed legislation in an area where a town planning scheme was established. Any person or company that desires to obtain land for industrial purposes will have the right to apply to the Minister for Lands, who will be the Minister in control of this proposed piece of legislation. In any application made to the Minister it will be necessary for the person or company concerned to set out fully certain matters and I propose to read the particulars because I wish them to be clearly set out in "Hansard." Each applicant will be required to establish the following facts:—

- (a) It is in the interest of the industrial development of the State that he shall be enabled to establish and carry on his said business, and
- (b) the acquisition and use by him of such land is essential to the establishment and carrying on of his said business, and
- (c) the locality in which he proposes to establish and carry on his said business is, in relation to the industrial development of the State the most suitable locality for the establishment and carrying on of his said business, and
- (d) (i) he is unable to purchase land in the said locality which he requires as aforesaid for the reason that the owner of such land is unwilling to sell or to sell at a reasonable price the said land; or
- (ii) the use of the land (if acquired by such person) for the purposes of establishing and carrying on his said business is limited or prohibited by the provisions of a town planning scheme or by a by-law of the Local Authority made with respect to any of the matters prescribed in the Second Schedule to the Town Planning Act.

In its examination of any application, the committee will be bound to call upon the

applicant to attend personally before the committee. After the committee has interviewed the applicant and discussed the whole proposal with him, if there is any further information that it may desire the committee may call upon the applicant to supply that additional matter. If any application is rejected by the committee its decision is to be final. There is, therefore, no appeal with respect to any decision by the committee rejecting an application for the compulsory resumption of land for industrial purposes. No power is provided in the Bill for the Minister or the Governor to reverse the committee's decision when that decision is unfavourable to the applicant. Where the committee decides to recommend an application it must first give at least 30 days' notice of its intention to the local governing authority concerned, to the Town Planning Board, and to the registered proprietor of the land. Within 30 days of the receipt of that notice the two authorities concerned and the person in question must each submit to the committee in writing a statement setting out any objections they may have to the recommendation made by the committee with regard to the proposed compulsory resumption of land under review, and the committee must, of course, give consideration to any objections so lodged with it. The registered proprietor of land, in addition, will have the right of appeal to the local court nearest to the area where the land is situated.

The decision of any local court in respect of such an appeal is to be final and binding upon all the parties concerned. Where the owner of the land has not appealed or where his appeal is dismissed by the local court and the committee receives no objection from the local governing authority or from the Town Planning Board, or receives objections but over-rules them, the committee must submit its favourable recommendation to the Minister and the Minister, if he agrees, will forward that recommendation to the Treasurer who, of course, would have to find the money in the first place for the compulsory acquisition of the land. The Treasurer, in turn, if he should be prepared to make the money available, will take all necessary action on his part and finally the recommendation will go before the Governor-in-Council for his approval. He may approve of any such

recommendation notwithstanding the provisions appearing in any other Act on the statute book, or any town planning scheme or any by-law made by any local authority. The procedure then would be for the land to be resumed under the provisions of the Public Works Act as if it were land required for the purposes of some public work.

This procedure regarding the resumption would give the registered proprietor of the land the right of appeal in regard to the price, if he felt that the price being offered to him for the land was not as much as was warranted. The Bill also authorises the Governor to dedicate Crown land for industrial purposes. Furthermore the Governor may, where the committee recommends such action and the recommendation is supported by the Minister for Lands and the Treasurer, purchase or compulsorily acquire any land under the provisions of the Public Works Act and reserve it for industrial purposes related to the industrial development of Western Australia. These particular provisions in the Bill are there, firstly for the purpose of enabling the Government to dedicate suitable Crown land for industrial purposes and, secondly, to enable the Government to acquire land for industrial purposes and to reserve it until such time as it might be required in the future.

In some respects these provisions will have immediate application but in other respects they form part of a long range policy, the objects of which is to ensure that sufficient suitable land will be available in future years so that no unnecessary hold-up will take place in industrial expansion because of difficulty with respect to the obtaining of suitable land. The disposal of Crown lands so dedicated and of land compulsorily acquired by the Government and reserved for industrial purposes, will be carried out in very much the same way as with land resumed compulsorily from private owners, but there is perhaps one important exception. I have already mentioned that where the committee rejects an application for the compulsory resumption of private land for industrial purposes, its decision is final. That will not be so with regard to applications for Crown land dedicated for industrial purposes or approved land resumed by the Government and reserved with that object in view.

In connection with any land of that type, the Minister will be able to review any decision of the committee rejecting an application. It is thought that the Minister should have the right of that review in regard to land which will at the time be owned by the Government, because it will then be almost entirely a matter of Government policy as to whether such land should be made available to any applicant for industrial purposes. The Bill includes very severe restrictions against dealings in any land obtained under the provisions of this proposed legislation. No person or firm that obtains land under the provisions of this measure will be permitted to sell, exchange, transfer, assign or encumber with any mortgage or other security, or sublet or lease the land or any portion of it, without the written consent of the Minister.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: Without a mortgage?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Not without the consent of the Minister in writing. Where any offence of such a nature is committed, the transfer of the land is to be null and void, and if the land should be leased it will be liable to immediate forfeiture. A penalty of £100 is provided and, in addition, a daily penalty of £5 for every day or part of a day during which the offence is continued after notice thereof has been given by the Minister in writing to the person concerned. The Bill lays it down that any land made available to any applicant for industrial purposes may be made available either by way of sale on the basis of freehold ownership or by way of lease. Thus there will be the two alternatives, and the question as to whether any such land is to be made available on the freehold basis or by way of lease will be decided at the time in the particular year the land is made available for the purposes of this legislation.

Broadly speaking, those are the main principles of the Bill. It represents for Western Australia at any rate a new type of legislation for the purposes of encouraging industrial expansion—although there is nothing new in the principle of acquiring land compulsorily for certain purposes. We have in Western Australia more than one Act that provides the right of compulsory acquirement of land by the Government, and such compulsory acquirement takes place fairly frequently.

Mr. Abbott: Is there similar legislation in any other State?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am not aware whether similar legislation exists in other States but I should say that it is quite possible that in Victoria, New South Wales and probably South Australia similar legislation may have been enacted. Naturally the Government in connection with a Bill of this description is not bound beyond the possibility of any alteration to the Bill as presented. We will be prepared at the Committee stage to give every reasonable consideration to suggestions or amendments submitted with the object of improving the Bill, provided always that such suggestions and amendments are calculated to improve the measure and to make it more effective in its operation.

Mr. McDonald: Have you in mind any particular areas to which it shall apply?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes.

Mr. McDonald: You cannot state them now?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I would prefer not to mention them. I think it would be most undesirable to mention them publicly at this stage. The Government is anxious—as I am sure Parliament will be—to ensure that adequate steps shall be taken to have land available for industrial expansion purposes. There is already a fairly substantial hold-up for expansion because no power is available to obtain land as it is required. This applies not only to those who desire to expand their existing enterprises, but also to others who are anxious to establish new undertakings. Therefore, I think we can all agree that some action must be taken. The Government believes that the methods proposed in this Bill are, largely, at any rate, the most suitable and most effective. We will appreciate to the full any suggestions put forward to improve the measure; and where these are considered likely to better it, we will gladly embrace them. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Abbott, debate adjourned.

BILL—PUBLIC WORKS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. A. R. G. Hawke—Northam) [5.17] in moving the second reading said: This Bill

proposes to make only two amendments to the principal Act. The first one aims at making the Minister for Works a body corporate, with perpetual succession and a common seal. It might be a matter for some wonderment why this action was not taken years ago, but the fact remains that it has not been taken, although both the Minister for Lands and the Minister for Education are, by statute, bodies corporate. Considerable difficulty has been experienced in the Public Works Department, as well as some trouble and embarrassment, because over the years the Minister for Works has not been a body corporate. During those years, and at the present time, the person occupying the position of Minister for Works and signing documents and leases relating to easements over private properties for public purposes, has acted in a more or less personal capacity. This applies also to contracts. The result is that the Minister who signed the original contract has been required to sign other documents, although no longer the Minister. When a Minister has died, other difficulties have arisen.

There is nothing revolutionary in this amendment and I do not consider it necessary to say more about it at this stage. The Bill also proposes to make two amendments to the definition of "Public work" and "work", as set out in Section 2 of the principal Act. Section 2, as members are doubtless aware, is the interpretation section. In that definition there is a rather formidable list of things and activities which come under it. One of the additions which it is proposed to be made to the definition is to give power to procure, from private land, timber, stone, gravel, earth and any other materials required by the State for the carrying on of any industrial or other undertaking being operated by or for the State under statute. Section 112 of the Act already gives power to the Minister to do those things where it is necessary for them to be done in connection with any public work or work as now defined in the Act. The appropriate part of Section 112 reads—

The Minister may temporarily occupy and use any land for the purpose of constructing or repairing a railway, or any other public work, and may do the following things thereon—

- (a) May take therefrom stone, gravel, earth, and other materials.

Because the definition of "Public work" and "work" does not include any reference to industrial or other undertakings conducted by the State the Minister could not do any of those things with respect to any industrial undertaking or other activity carried on by the State. Members are aware that in recent years the Government itself has developed secondary industries of a very important character. Firstly, there is the alunite or potash industry at Lake Chandler; and, secondly, the important secondary industry now being developed at Wundowie for the production of wood distillation products and charcoal-iron. For both of those undertakings it will be necessary, as time goes on, to obtain timber, ironstone and perhaps other materials.

Naturally, the Government will not want to purchase land merely to obtain timber from it, or ironstone, and so it becomes necessary for the Government to obtain power to enable it to acquire timber, ironstone and perhaps some other materials, without having to buy the land. It is quite sure, too, that landowners would not desire to dispose of their land as well as their timber or other materials on it simply because the State wanted to obtain only the timber, or only the ironstone or only the limestone, as the case may be. The Government does not anticipate any difficulty in negotiating voluntary agreements in the great majority of cases. The Government has already done so in some instances and has found the landowners to be quite reasonable. They have been anxious, indeed, to assist in the development of these undertakings; they have taken the broad State view and realise fully the value of those industries to the State, not so much today as in the future.

Undoubtedly, however, the Government will come up against a snag here and there. It is as certain as anything can be that somewhere, at sometime, we will strike a landowner who will try to exploit the Government and who will hold the Government up to ransom, as it were, by trying to obtain for the timber or other materials required a price altogether out of reason. As members are aware, there is unfortunately among all too many members of the community a tendency to believe that it is not only clever but right to exploit the Government. I am afraid that that is a growing tendency.

Mr. Doney: Like jumping the rattler or beating the income tax man!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Those are some of the methods. It is extraordinary how many otherwise entirely honest and fair-dealing people consider the Government to be fair game for exploitation and even robbery. It is a tendency which must be controlled until such time as it can be completely eradicated or almost completely eradicated. In that respect, I think most of our faith will have to repose in the activities of the Minister for Education, through the education system which is under his control.

Mr. McDonald: Some people think it is the other way round.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I think the Government almost always gives people fair value for their money, although I know it is a fairly popular belief that Ministers of the Crown and members of Parliament are hopelessly overpaid. Section 113 of the Public Works Act enables the owner of any land to recover compensation for any damage which might be done to his land wherever the land in question is occupied temporarily by the Minister for the taking therefrom of the materials to which I referred a few moments ago. Those provisions, which are already in the Act, of course, will apply with equal force to this proposed amendment. The owner of land who feels that the prices offered to him for timber, ironstone or limestone compulsorily taken, will have the right of appeal, and thus he will obtain a fair decision as to the value of what has been taken and what damage was done to the land in the process.

Members who have studied the Public Works Act will be aware of the provisions relating to the payment of compensation. They will know that a claim for compensation for damage done to land is decided by what is known as a compensation court, which consists of a president and two assessors. One of the assessors is appointed by the landowner and the other by the department. Where the amount of the claim does not exceed £500, the president is a resident magistrate. Where the amount of the claim exceeds £500, the president must be a judge, unless the judge himself is satisfied to appoint a resident magistrate as president, or unless both parties concerned agree

to a resident magistrate acting as president. I earnestly trust that this proposed amendment will be approved by Parliament. It is of great importance in regard to the State's policy of industrial expansion. It would be unfortunate if the policy of the Government, in that direction, were to be held up or hindered because of a comparatively small number of landowners refusing to make available to the Government the materials required at reasonable prices, and who could not, by any method, be compelled to do so.

The other amendment proposed to be made to the definition of "public work" and "work" aims to include the buildings and structures required for fire brigade purposes. With the passage of time and the increase of population the Fire Brigades Board has been finding much difficulty in obtaining suitable sites upon which to establish buildings and structures necessary for firefighting purposes. The inclusion of this amendment will enable the necessary steps to be taken under the provisions of the Public Works Act to acquire suitable land for these purposes: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Doney, debate adjourned.

BILL—PUBLIC SERVICE APPEAL BOARD ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR LABOUR (Hon. A. H. Panton—Leederville) [5.32] in moving the second reading said: This Bill purports to amend Section 6 of the Public Service Appeal Board Act, 1920-1943. That Act provides by Section 6, Subsection (3), that a person employed in a temporary position for five years may, at the end of that period, have the right to apply to the Public Service Commissioner for appointment to the permanent staff. If his application is refused he then has the right to appeal to the Public Service Appeal Board. That position prevailed until 1941 when the Government, through Parliament, amended that particular section. It was found that we were going to have, and were having, very heavy enlistments from the Public Service which meant employing many temporary employees to fill the vacancies until the permanent officers returned. At that time a definite

promise was made by the Government that the men who were enlisting, being called up etc., would be entitled to their positions with the privileges appertaining to them when they returned. It was soon realised that it would be impossible to employ both the men who were returning and the temporary employees who were acting while they were away. That was something very obvious to the Government.

The Public Service Commissioner discussed the whole matter with the Civil Service Association, and it was agreed between them that the war period and 12 months after would not count as part of the qualifying period of five years under Section 6, Subsection (3), and Parliament passed, on that thought it did, legislation to that effect. That was done by an amending Act in 1941 and the following proviso was added:—

Provided that the operation of this subsection shall be suspended during such time as the war, in which the Commonwealth of Australia is engaged at the time of the commencement of this provision, continues, and for a period of one year after the Governor-General of the said Commonwealth, acting in accordance with law, shall have declared that the said war has ended.

It was thought, when we passed that amendment, that it prevented the period from the 25th November, 1941, until 12 months after the ending of the war, from being counted in the qualifying period. As a result, the men and women who entered the service in a temporary capacity from that time were looked upon as working on a purely temporary basis. It was anticipated that, when the men and women who were in the Forces returned, they could be put off. That can still be done, but it has been found—and the Crown Law Officers agree with this—that the 1941 amendment may be interpreted as suspending the right to apply for appointment only.

In other words, what Parliament thought it was doing, namely, deleting the period from the 25th November, 1941, until 12 months after the war, from the qualifying period, has now been interpreted as merely disqualifying the right to appeal. The Crown Law officers say that it will be very hard to defend that contention. That means that the temporary employees concerned are now in a position to deem the time they have worked as being part of the period

of five years giving them the right to apply to the Public Service Commissioner for appointment to the permanent staff, and, if refused, to appeal to the Public Service Appeal Board. That was never intended by the Government or by Parliament. Rather than find ourselves in difficulty over the matter, we want it cleared up.

This Bill is to remove any doubts and to express clearly what was originally intended. We hope that the proviso in the Bill will clarify the position. I might state that all the temporary employees who have come into the Civil Service during the war have been notified by circular and informed by the Public Service Commissioner that they are employed only during the absence of the permanent officers whom they are replacing, on military duty.

Hon. N. Keenan: When were they so informed?

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: Not very long ago, unfortunately. I think that is what started this.

Mr. Doney: Was there any form of agreement between them and the Government when they came on?

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: No. I honestly believe that they came on under the impression that they were taking the place of a man or woman who had gone into the Services. I am under no illusions about the position, but it is now found possible for another interpretation to be placed on the 1941 amendment. It is obvious to all members that the returning men must have their positions back. That was a definite promise given; whether or not a promise was given they would be entitled to that. But the fact that there is someone working in their place who can say, "I have been here for five years and am only waiting for the war to finish when I will have the right to apply for a permanent position and will go to the Appeal Board and say, 'This is my position,'" will put us in a nice pickle. That was never intended. This is purely a clarifying Bill, and I hope it will clean up the matter.

Wherever it is possible to employ temporary employees it is done. Unfortunately, there are many vacancies. I am sorry to say that in the Mines Department seven youths, all under 22 years of age, went into the Air Force, and not one will come back.

I do not think that is typical of the other departments. Those places will have to be filled by someone else. The men and women who return must be given employment, and we hope that this Bill will clarify the position. The Civil Service Association realised the position, when it made the original agreement, but for some reason or another it was misrepresented here. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. N. Keenan, debate adjourned.

BILL—BUILDING OPERATIONS AND BUILDING MATERIALS CONTROL.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 15th November.

HON. N. KEENAN (Nedlands) [5.42]: On the 20th August last the Commonwealth Government announced that as from that date, buildings costing up to £1,200 could be erected without the necessity of obtaining a permit under any regulations in force under the National Security Act. In consequence of that announcement there was a certain amount of rushing to start the erection of buildings of that class. That did not occur so much in Western Australia as in Victoria and New South Wales. Almost immediately after that was announced it was found that the building materials and building requirements were not nearly sufficient to go round. In other words, there was not nearly sufficient to fill the needs of all who wished to obtain these building materials. So the position arose that inflation seemed an absolutely certain result because the natural effects of there being less materials than are required by the market is a rise in prices. There will be many engaged in building who are prepared to pay any price if they desire to obtain certain material and it can be procured at that price.

An absolutely certain result of this lifting of the requirements of the regulations under the National Security Act was inflation of a very dangerous character in respect of building materials and building requirements, unless control was re-imposed. There was only one possible way to stop that inflation, and that was to re-impose the control which had been lifted. The Commonwealth Government did not desire, for reasons no doubt easily to be appreciated to adopt so unpopular a step. So what it did

was this: It notified the States that it was no longer going to exercise the rights it had under the National Security Act to control either the cost or the supply of building materials and building requirements. Members will appreciate the fact that the National Security Act does not in any sense diminish the power of this Parliament to pass legislation to control the price or the use of building materials or building requirements. If the Commonwealth exercises its power under the National Security Regulations by virtue of Section 107 of the Constitution, the Commonwealth law prevails. If, as is the case here, the Commonwealth says, "We are not going to exercise that right," unfortunately the position is that unless the State steps in and takes measures to avoid the position that must arise, a very undesirable result is certain to ensue.

The State must do something, otherwise the province that it exercises its right to govern in would be involved in a very dangerous state of affairs. That is the origin of the Bill. It has been forced on the State by the act of which I have just reminded the House. The first query which naturally arises in relation to the Bill is how far does it affect those who, acting on the assumption that the Commonwealth was well advised in lifting the permit system in August last, have entered into contractual relations involving them possibly in a serious legal position. I have looked at the Bill and shall ask the Premier whether he has been fully advised that under a certain clause, to which I am not at the moment entitled to refer but which purports to deal with transactions that had taken place prior to the passing of this Bill and its becoming law, these people are fully protected. I think he will say that unfortunately the language used refers to some acts which have been done under the National Security Act, or some other order allowing these particular operations; in fact that the procedure was that the announcement of the 20th August simply wiped out any order that was issued to any person under the National Security Act before that date.

What the Commonwealth Government did was to say that no order or permit was necessary. From that point of view I am sure it is possible that this Bill may involve individuals, who have acted bona fide on the assumption that the Commonwealth

in August was well warranted in the action it took, in a serious legal position. Suppose a man had contracted to build a house and had entered into a contract knowing at the time that the Commonwealth law, the only one applicable, had been waived and now finds that he is put in a position where he can only obtain, as will be the case when the Bill becomes law, the necessary materials with the consent and permit of the board to be created under this Bill.

The Premier: You are speaking of contracts which may have been entered into after the 20th August, and which were contracts for buildings for which no material permit was available.

Hon. N. KEENAN: Yes. I should like to have referred to the clause in question, but at the second reading stage members are not allowed to make references to clauses.

Hon. J. C. Willecock: The principle of the clause could be referred to.

Hon. N. KEENAN: This has application to one particular clause.

The Premier: Will the hon. member read Clause 5?

Hon. N. KEENAN: That is the clause to which I am referring. In any event the matter is one to be discussed in Committee. I have no doubt the Premier himself will agree that any person who had entered into a legal contract involving that person in a liability would require to be protected. The Premier is the last man to suggest any doctrine to the contrary. Another feature is that whilst the Bill severely regulates expenditure on the erection of buildings, when on permit of the board, it does not, as pointed out by the Leader of the Opposition I think in his remarks on the second reading, restrict the individual to benefit only on one building, except in one clause which does not relate generally. It may be desirable—undoubtedly it is desirable—that where the amount available is of a very limited character for precautions to be taken, so that every individual in the community shall be entitled to his fair share, and that no one individual will be able by any means within the province of the Act to obtain more than a fair share. That again is a matter for Committee. When the Bill reaches that stage no doubt the Leader of the Opposition, who first drew attention to the fact, will point out in appropriate words what requires to be done.

There is also the fact, which I have privately mentioned to the Premier, that this Bill in the form in which it is drawn will amount to some extent to control of labour. It speaks of the total cost which can be spent without a permit—which has to be obtained from the board—as a certain sum. Obviously the amount that will be available to pay for labour to use that certain sum would be only what is left after one had paid for the materials. If a man were entitled to spend £100 on a building and the materials cost £60, it is obvious that £40 is the full extent of the money he would be authorised to spend by way of labour. I do not know that there is any reason to anticipate any certainly acute shortage of labour, or possibly any shortage at all. I have personally heard—I have no doubt other members have heard it too—that there is labour of a certain class available. One sees nearly every day in the paper advertisements by the Commonwealth Service Bureau, which is another name for the manpower office to enable it to prolong its existence, calling on employers to contact it for the purpose of employing men who have been demobilised from the Army.

I do not think there is any reason to suppose that any danger is involved in allowing anyone who wishes to carry out work and is entitled to a certain amount of material spending any necessary amount, whatever the amount may be, on labour. I intend when we reach that clause to ask the Premier, who I think is sympathetic in the matter, to set out a figure solely relating to the cost of materials and not therefore in any way restricting the amount of labour that can be employed. With these few observations I regard the Bill as one which commends itself to me. It is absolutely necessary. If it is not adopted, and adopted quickly, and if the control is not wisely used, we are facing the possibility of a huge inflation in the cost of building materials and the cost of building requisites. Of course we are also facing the possibility of very grave injustice being done to those who have limited means who would not be able to pay the inflated prices. It requires no possible comment by any person to see that we must pass the Bill and pass it quickly. I support the second reading wholeheartedly.

MR. SHEARN (Maylands) [5.55]: As the member for Nedlands very rightly said this Bill deals with one of the most difficult and urgent problems that confront not only this State, but every other State in Australia. With the hon. member I say quite frankly that I am delighted to see that we are at last to have some reversion of control to the State Government. I doubt whether there is a member in this Chamber who during the war period had not occasion to become exasperated with the bottle-necks which were so generally associated with the centralised control in relation to the distribution of the available building materials. I think the member for Nedlands said, and with his remarks I am in entire agreement, that unless something is done of a direct nature to speed up the position it will grow progressively worse until we shall have a crisis in the State in relation to the housing position.

I know from my own experience—no doubt other members have had the same—that there is hardly a day when returned men have not come to me, men with four or five years of distinguished active service, pointing out that their wives and children have had to live—not only in hovels—but in garages and similar buildings and even less desirable habitations than garages. In many instances they have unfortunately resorted, not knowing the true position, to the purchase of land hoping eventually that such land will be the means of enabling them to secure a permit for the release of the necessary building materials and thus provide a home for themselves. Had this matter been handled originally in a more direct and a less theoretical way we would not have had the condition of affairs that we have today, nor would the position be as acute as it is now. One could go on ad infinitum giving examples of this sort of thing, but I would like to refer to one case which came under my notice some little time ago.

We realised while the war was on that the Army and other services were entitled to whatever building materials were available at the time and for that reason every possible step had to be taken to conserve such materials for their use. The man in the street, however, knows that for the last 12 months or more there has been no danger or menace facing us from the

enemy. In other words, all further danger has been removed from our shores. Notwithstanding that, I know of an instance where between 150 and 200 tons of galvanised iron of various lengths was left lying in the open some 70 or 80 miles from Perth while farmers and others were unable to obtain iron for the building of tanks or for putting roofs on buildings which were urgently needed for housing accommodation. As a matter of fact, it is only during the last few weeks that somebody in authority has been galvanised into action and that the Commonwealth has started to make arrangements through the Disposals Commission for the distribution of this direly-needed material. This is but one instance; scores of others could be mentioned, all going to show the unrealistic attitude that has been adopted. One might say that there has been too much of an academic approach to these matters in the Federal sphere, which is characteristic of many other things done by the Commonwealth, and not sufficient of a practical approach.

I have some knowledge of what has been done by departmental officers of the State in relation to this difficult matter during the war period. I go so far as to say that, but for the fact that those officers really exceeded the authority vested in them, the position would have been much worse. Following the lamentable action taken by the Federal Government and the unsavouriness of the whole position, I say frankly that it was not until there was a probability of its being made a political issue that the Commonwealth sought to pass the buck to the State and get out. I know from personal experience that the officers of the State departments did a magnificent job under extreme difficulties in sorting out the thousands of cases that came before them and, as far as was humanly possible, ensuring that the cases of greatest hardship received the earliest possible consideration.

Another example of the Commonwealth's unrealistic approach to the problem has been its manner of releasing men from the Services. Today, in the metropolitan area, we have skilled tradesmen, some of them returned soldiers, out of employment and walking the streets. Why is this so? Because the materials required are not available for their use. Had the problem been

approached with any sense of realism or with any ideas of practicability in relation to the release of tradesmen so that they might be available for the erection of homes or public buildings, we would have had all the industries engaged in the production of these urgently-required and short-supplied materials kept busy making them available. So today we have the spectacle of labour being available and material not available. I know that there are homes being erected in the metropolitan area that have been almost completed for weeks, but the final touches cannot be applied because doors are not available. There are instances, too, where, owing to lack of material for internal linings for buildings, the work cannot be continued. Yet many of these buildings are homes urgently needed by people living under dire conditions.

When we appreciate the seriousness of the problem confronting the Premier, the Government and the State generally in the matter of housing, which is obviously and inevitably growing worse hourly, we must realise the urgency of providing all possible facilities to assist the Government in taking up the lag which has too long existed as a result of the ineptitude of the Canberra administration. I have no wish to be unduly critical of the Canberra administration but we have been brought face to face with its stupidity and its lack of appreciation of local conditions. Perhaps this lack of appreciation is not to be wondered at, seeing that we are 2,000 miles from the centre of control, but my complaint is that the Canberra administration gives little if any heed to the advice offered from time to time by the State, and one is therefore perfectly justified in saying that the administration is unrealistic and unsympathetic. Now that a large number of men are being released from the Services, we are finding that some are disinclined to return to their former employment—I am referring to bricklayers and the like—and I believe the Government proposes to make an investigation and endeavour to secure the co-operation of the various executives concerned—this co-operation will not be sought in vain—to determine whether the wonderful achievements made possible by mechanisation for the erection of urgently needed buildings during the war cannot be turned to account in peacetime. I consider that such methods should be introduced to

meet peacetime requirements which are now as pressing as were wartime requirements a few years ago.

If it is possible to introduce mechanical contrivances into various industries, such as brickmaking, etc., and so reduce the physical labour involved, what we find happening to-day in some industries will no longer prevail and that is men walking out of industry because of the antiquated methods employed. For this I do not blame the men; they are being asked to work under conditions that were out of date 25 years ago, and I think they are entitled to ask that a reasonable effort be made to render their employment more congenial and also ensure that the industries make their contribution to the expeditious production of urgently-needed material.

The Minister for Lands: We are setting out to get the brickworks mechanised now.

Mr. SHEARN: Following the Minister's line of thought, I have always held the view that where it is practicable to use machinery in lieu of manual labour, the machinery should be adopted. In other words, when we can show that in many industries machinery can greatly lessen the violence of manual labour, let us adopt it, though not at the expense of the worker.

The member for Nedlands referred to the fact of the National Security Regulations being lifted with apparently no notice beyond a statement in the Press. I know of people who rushed in to take advantage of the open season—that is what it amounted to—in order to obtain supplies of available material. As the hon. member rightly said, despite the interim attempt to impose restrictions to meet the conditions, many people were able to cash-in on the situation. Who was to blame for that? I attribute the blame to lack of realism on the part of the Federal authority. For these and many other reasons which I shall not detain the House to mention at this stage, I support the Bill.

I hope the Premier will be able to carry out the idea he has expressed in relation to making material available to private enterprise. I am not here as an advocate for private enterprise, but even the Premier will concede that during the war period private enterprise did a job comparable with, if not a little better than, that done by governmental institutions, despite the difficulties arising from lack of material and shortage of labour. Therefore I hope that private

enterprise, under the new set-up, will be given, in the words of the Premier, an equitable share of the labour and material available.

MR. McDONALD (West Perth) [6.11]: I think all members will agree that this Bill is essential. There are just one or two aspects to which I wish to refer. I should like to see the board which is to operate under the measure include some practical people engaged in the building trade. In saying this, I have no desire to reflect on the members of the Workers' Homes Board, which has done good and competent work. Under the Act, the Workers' Homes Board consists of three members, one of whom I believe is the Under Treasurer. He is a public servant of great ability and we are fortunate to have him in the service, but he is to be a member of the Electricity Commission, he is a member of the University Senate, and I do not know how many other responsibilities he is shouldering. It is impossible to conceive that he should be able to give much time to the control of building materials, and if he has a deputy whom he might utilise on the Workers' Homes Board and on the board to be set up under this measure, the deputy might not be experienced in building operations. There might not be available a man having that experience.

Of the other two members of the Workers' Homes Board, I am not aware whether they are experienced in the building trade. I suggest that the board under this measure be enlarged to include an architect, a practical builder and a manufacturer engaged in the supply of building requirements. I make this suggestion in the interests of the effective working of the board, because, as the member for Maylands has said, we can gain by having practical men to help in these matters and lose if we have too many men who operate purely on theory. There is another consideration that should appeal to all of us. The urgency of the matter is beyond question, and the Government would be well advised to place part of the responsibility upon the building trade itself, as well as on the Government department. The board would be strengthened by the addition of practical members, and at the same time the building trade could, through its

representative, render assistance in overcoming what is a grave problem.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. McDONALD: I pass now to one or two other considerations. The amounts in the Bill in respect of which work may be undertaken without the necessity of applying for a permit are small. I realise that they are necessarily small, as there is urgent need to ensure that materials are disposed of to the very best advantage. However, I would like the Premier to consider whether they might not be enlarged somewhat; for example, in respect of the renovating of a house by painting and whitewashing, where the limit is now £25 in one year. I would also like the Premier to consider, with respect to the costs involved in the operations which are exempt from the necessity for obtaining a permit, how far there should be some increased check on the charges which are being made. People at present are not only anxious, but desperate, about the need for renovations and repairs to their properties; and the labour supplied is so short that those who are able to do the work can quote almost any figure and the householder or the property owner would be more or less obliged to pay whatever was charged. I think it important that the charges to houseowners for essential renovations and repairs should not be exorbitant. It is all the more important, when there is a limitation to be imposed by this legislation on the amount which may be spent, if that amount is absorbed in excessive charges as compared with materials. Then, of course, the utility of the exemption or of the permit is very greatly diminished.

The Bill contains a number of clauses which I would describe as drastic. I am not unaware of the fact that in policing a measure of this kind, where there will be strong inducements to get materials, as well as to get work done, to abuse the position unless adequate power is given to the board. I would like the Premier to consider whether some of these clauses which the draftsman has inserted might reasonably be excluded. For example, by one clause power is conferred on the board to give directions to the architect, builder, contractor or engineer in connection with building operations. I

can well understand that if building operations have been commenced without permit, as to which permission should have been obtained, then the board can step in and give directions to stop the operations, or allow them to proceed on a limited scale or on some particular basis. But once the board has given permission for work to be done and materials to be used, then it seems rather a drastic authority to confer upon the board to enable it to step in and direct that the work shall be done this way or that way, and possibly in the way that the houseowner might not really require.

Then, again, a man to whom a permit is granted by the board must keep proper and accurate books of accounts and stock and costing records in relation to the building operation; and he must preserve all of those books and records until such time as he secures a permit from the board to destroy them. That is a kind of provision where the necessity for obtaining a permit might well be overlooked by many people who are acting in quite good faith, and I think it might perhaps be more convenient if it were provided that the records should be kept for a period, of, say, 12 months. What happens to them after that period would not concern the board. Further, the board is given a power of entry and search.

A person authorised by the board may enter and search any place or premises used for carrying on the business of storage, delivery, disposal, use or application of any building material; make copies of or take extracts from any books, accounts or documents relating to the business; stop any person engaged in the carriage of any building material; and search any vehicle or container used in connection with any such carriage. In addition, the board may, by notice to any person engaged in the business of, or concerned in any transaction relating to building operations, or concerned in any disposal or acquisition of building material, require that person to produce any books, accounts and documents relating to that business to any person specified in the notice, and give such directions as the board thinks fit in relation to the storage, delivery, disposal, use of application of any building material.

While I acknowledge that some degree of power may be needed in a board in a

case of this kind, some of those clauses savour rather too much of an invasion of the ordinary rights of people for them to be very palatable, even admitting that the legislation requires to be fairly exacting. If the experience of the board shows, after it had been in operation, that there had been evasions, that there had been concealments, that there had been necessity for drastic powers of entry, then I should be quite prepared to see the board clothed in additional power. I quite appreciate that the board may need to call upon people to furnish particulars of the stocks which they hold, and that if they furnish incorrect particulars that then they should be subject to substantial penalties.

Mr. North: Would that include the Army?

Mr. McDONALD: No. I do not think the Army can be touched by State legislation of this kind. But until we find there is any degree of evasion or concealment on the part of the people concerned, whether building owners or houseowners, or persons engaged in building operations, I should prefer to see that we did not suggest to the board that it should be able, by its agents, to walk in to anybody's business and demand the production of all kinds of records and the perusal of books and records. Even the most ethical and honest businessman or trader feels a certain reluctance to have such a power exercised over him at any time by people who are not like taxation officials, permanent and responsible officers of the Crown, but men who may be occupying a post under this board on a temporary basis.

I think those matters might well be considered in Committee and might receive consideration by the Premier in the meantime. The really important matter to which I have directed attention is my feeling that from every point of view the association of practical experienced men—responsible men, men of standing in the building trade—with this board would add to the utility and experience of the board, would give the public and the building trade added confidence, and would mean that the building trades, which are so vitally concerned, would share with the Government the responsibility and duty of overcoming the difficulty of short supplies which is so materially affecting the demand especially for housing, in this State.

THE PREMIER (Hon. F. J. S. Wise—Gascoyne—in reply) [7.42]: It is very heartening in handling a difficult matter such as this to find that there is a clear understanding on the part of members of the difficulties associated with the problem. It was very easy to foresee, when the announcement was made by the Commonwealth that it intended to relax all controls on buildings up to £1,200, that chaos would ensue in all States of Australia. It was a very unfortunate happening, and one which brought from me severe criticism at the time and a severe warning of the implications associated with it. I will touch a little later on the effect of that happening. I am very pleased to note that members fully realise there is no option but for the State to accept the responsibility, no matter how irksome may be the task. To deal with the specific points raised that may be dealt with now and not left to the Committee stage, I would firstly mention the point submitted by the member for West Perth in connection with the constitution of the board—the existing Workers' Homes Board—and his comment that it may not be a suitable authority to handle this legislation.

The board consists of the Under Treasurer, as Chairman, the Principal Architect, and Mr. Harler, who is Assistant Manager of the Wyndham Meat Works. With all the responsibilities of the Under Treasurer, this is one that he does not delegate. He does not miss a meeting of the board. The secretary is an experienced man who, as I shall show, in another capacity has not only the confidence of the general public with whom he deals, but also the confidence of the Building Industry Congress. If we considered the enlargement of this board on the lines suggested by the member for West Perth we would anticipate that this temporary requirement—and we hope it may be very temporary—in the control of building materials requires adding to a permanent board someone to act for a temporary period; or it would mean the setting up of a separate entity to deal with this particular matter. In either case, we have men experienced in the building trade and its industries associated with the activities of the Workers' Homes Board, who have had vast experience in workers' homes construction—or, in the case of the Principal Architect, in public works construction—and who are the authori-

ties handling war service homes and other works for the Commonwealth.

In addition to that, there will be before this House this session certain amendments to the Workers' Homes Act. I do not wish to mention what the House will be asked to agree to in connection with the composition of the board, but I would say that the alteration contemplated will not only go most of the way to meet all the objections the hon. member suggested might arise in connection with the present authority, but will give to the board a buttress of further men experienced in various sections of the building trade.

In connection with the point raised by the member for Nedlands and the member for West Perth concerning the limitations imposed on the amounts to be expended as costs of work, I would point out that there are certain commodities used in aspects of the building trade, particularly in connection with renovations, the cost of which represents a very small portion of the total cost. That applies particularly to paint work to roofs and roofing and to internal work such as decorations. For example, for £100 worth of work in connection with painting, approximately only £10 worth of paint is required; and in connection with plastering, £10 worth of material requires approximately £50 worth of labour; so the point raised by the member for Nedlands that that particular proviso with a low amount of exemption for materials really does imply that there is to some extent a control of labour. At this stage, especially in connection with painting—

Mr. McLarty: Some of the prices charged for painting are extortionate.

The PREMIER: We are in this position; that city premises are being painted and workmen are being employed whereas the completion of dozens of cottages is being delayed because of the lack of painters. So it is essential, where the cost of certain commodities represents such a small portion of the total cost of the work, to control the permit-free limitations very rigidly. I would direct attention to the definition clause in the Bill. Members will find there ample scope and opportunity for the general householders to get, within the limits prescribed in the Bill, sufficient material to do considerable work in and about their homes and dwellings. For example, with £10 worth of paint, plaster, calomine and the

like—with no allowance made for his own labour—I can imagine the member for West Perth, appropriately attired, doing very valuable work in his own home or in his neighbour's home.

Mr. McDonald: You cannot imagine the result though.

The PREMIER: That provision is fully met if members will look at the interpretation of costs in the Bill itself.

Hon. N. Keenan: Paint is not included in the schedule

The PREMIER: No, because there is a plentiful supply of paint. While one normally would applaud every move on the part of people in the suburban or city areas to paint and to decorate public and private buildings, if we permit of the free purchase of these commodities today and therefore the free use of the individuals associated with the work entailed in the application of the materials, we are going to prejudice seriously the home building programme. So, while I acknowledge that homes in suburbs and buildings in the city itself are sadly in need of paint, and the services of painters to apply it, it is a wise and necessary provision to have this matter covered as it is in the Bill. But I point out, even to those who are not adept in the art of applying paint, that there is ample opportunity during the holidays they may be able to take at Christmas time, to ease the labour market and meet the depreciation that is taking place in and about their homes.

The member for West Perth referred to drastic clauses. I admit that there are drastic clauses in the Bill, but I do wish to state that since the Bill was introduced into the Chamber by me the Building Industry Congress of Western Australia has had an interview to discuss it, and that interview took place last week—I think last Friday. The deputation consisted of the following gentlemen:—Messrs. H. A. Doust, President of the Building Industry Congress, G. Boucher, C. J. Cornish, R. Golding, B. A. Lewis, H. Mercer, J. W. Nicholls, A. G. Petherick, C. H. Plunkett and A. E. Sandover, who are representative of all sections. They represent the hardware traders, the builders themselves, the timber merchants, the hardware manufacturers and the master builders. They made suggestions in regard to the representation on the board, on somewhat similar

lines to the ideas expressed by the member for West Perth. But when what was intended was explained to them, and they learned that we were anxious to use their congress as the consultative body on all occasions, and to have, administratively, the sympathetic understanding of the problem that has been applied since the State has had this responsibility, they appeared to be very well satisfied.

As a matter of fact, the officer to whom the authority will be delegated is very experienced. He had the authority given to him when the Department of War Organisation of Industry, under the direction of Mr. S. A. Taylor, controlled the permit system. He has carried on since the Commonwealth withdrew its authority on his own responsibility. The expression of opinion of the Building Industry Congress is that that body is well satisfied with the present treatment, and if it continues in the future as in the past, it expects to experience no difficulty and to have no quarrel. In commenting on the drastic clauses in the Bill the Building Industry Congress showed that it was well aware that in the administration of such an Act as this lies the strength and force of the statute. That body realises that, unless there is authority to search, the irresponsible people or those predisposed to malpractices would be difficult to check and control.

As these clauses are lifted word for word from the National Security Order that has operated since the inception of this control, it has found no fault with their continuation, because the people represented by that body are not the sort to fear rigidity of this nature or to find the living up to the requirements of permits irksome, but rather is it the persons who are disposed to indulge in sly practices who would desire to evade these responsibilities. I express that as a recent happening in consultation with the very people who will be operating within the provisions, irksome though they may be, of this legislation.

The member for Nedlands raised a very important point in connection with the contracts which were entered into immediately the Commonwealth lifted the restrictions. It is unfortunate but it is a fact that there was a rush for building materials and a rush to make arrangements to build by people who were suffering no hardship whatever. Contracts were entered into. In

some instances people who had a small amount of material put in foundations of buildings and used all the materials they could rake up to commence a structure which, if not completed, would be a very wasteful operation. In spite of the knowledge, on the part of the administrative officer, that these things happened because of the relinquishing of authority by the Commonwealth, he approved of the issue of the licenses to purchase the building materials necessary. There is very little alternative. I have asked for an assessment of the proportion of building that will be involved.

Of the current buildings in progress and anticipated to be commenced, those which are the subject of contracts made with responsible builders, and which might otherwise not have received permits, are approaching five per cent. of the total. So that because of the lifting, overnight, of the restrictions there will be approximately five per cent. less of essential building materials available to people who are more urgently in need than those who are carrying on the structures. But, as the hon. member pointed out, because the permits made under the National Security order have to be honoured—several of these structures are still in the course of construction—the administrative authority has, under very recent date—under today's date in one case—approved and sponsored the provision of the material which the buildings, the subject of the contracts, warrant.

In connection with the clauses that are drastic the administration has the confidence of those closely associated with the industry, and from the administration they expect no difficulty. It can be understood how necessary it is to police a Bill of this nature when it becomes an Act, because of the devious ways that could be adopted to evade it. It is necessary, in the interests of those who so urgently require homes, that these clauses be retained, and more particularly as they are lifted entirely from the National Security Order that so well controlled the matter in difficult times. At this stage I have no further comment, except that I appreciate the manner in which this Bill has been received.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Rodoreda in the Chair; the Premier in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 5—agreed to.

Clause 6—Definitions:

Mr. McDONALD: In view of the legislation that is impending as to the Workers' Homes Board, which I understand will make it more broadly based in view of the additional responsibilities it is about to undertake, I do not propose to press for the alteration of the board to control this Act. The Workers' Homes Board, which has done such good work in the past, will, with the additional strength that the Premier has indicated, be well fitted to control the operations for which it will be responsible under this Act.

Mr. WATTS: In moving the second reading the Premier said second-hand materials were not intended to be controlled. Nothing in the Bill indicates that it is confined to new materials. I had in mind moving an amendment to alter the definition of "building materials" to include the words "when new", but before doing so I would like the Premier to indicate his desires on that point.

The PREMIER: There is no intention that the Bill should control second-hand materials. Second-hand materials have been free of permit or the necessity for license during the operation of this principle under the National Security Regulations. If it is necessary—I will make an inquiry which I have not yet made—I will have an appropriate amendment inserted, in the Legislative Council, to cover the point and make it clear that the Bill does not apply to second-hand material.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I wish to draw the attention of the Premier to the definition of "religious building." There are many structures that are unquestionably religious buildings but which are not used for public worship, for instance convents and buildings of that class which would be excluded from this definition by the word "public."

Clause put and passed.

Causes 7 and 8—agreed to.

Clause 9—Restriction on building operations.

The PREMIER: Members will notice, on page 3 of the Notice Paper, a proposal, standing in my name, to move an amendment to add a new paragraph. This is one of the matters that arose in consulta-

tion with the Building Industry Congress, when it was pointed out by a representative of the master plumbers, who is the principal of a large firm in this city, that, as in the past, there will be circumstances that will require quick action, and that could not wait for a permit. An example would be if the water system of a hospital or some other building or premises broke down. In that case it would not be possible to wait for a permit because repairs might have to be started during the night. I therefore had an amendment drafted to meet that requirement by adding a further paragraph. I move an amendment—

That a new paragraph be added as follows—

(h) to any building operation urgently necessary to effect repair to any damaged structure, water, sewerage or electricity system in such circumstances that failing immediate repair life or property is endangered or is likely to be endangered: Provided that such building operation shall—

(i) be restricted to essential repair; and

(ii) forthwith on the commencement thereof be the subject of an application by the person effecting the same for the consent of the Board for the continuance or completion of such building operation.

Amendment put and passed; the clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 10 and 11—agreed to.

Clause 12—Revocation, suspension and variations of consent:

Mr. WATTS: The clause reads—

Where the consent of the board has been granted under this Act, the board may, at any time, by notice in writing revoke, suspend or vary the terms and conditions of the consent for such period as is specified in the notice.

No sufficient explanation has been afforded why the clause should read in that way. It seems to be a little too wide. The board would not grant its consent unless it was fairly satisfied on the evidence before it that the work was necessary and that such new materials as were essential could be supplied. If the clause stated that the permit might be suspended or the consent withdrawn in circumstances involving improper practice on the part of the applicant, my objection would not be voiced. If there is a similar provision in the National Security Regulations, it does not make the clause any more desirable.

The PREMIER: The clause has been inserted to cover two or three types of happenings. A permit for materials, following a permit to build a certain type of structure may have required, because of the design, the approval of a certain type of material which becomes in short supply, and it is necessary to have an opportunity for the builder or contractor, even of a large structure, to apply for a variation of the type of structure formerly approved. Certain materials might become plentiful that were not available at the time of the issue of the license, and in that event the board might revoke, amend or alter suitably the permit for the issuance of material. On the other hand, there are cases where permits have been approved and consent granted for the purchase of materials, and the person concerned has altered the plan and made the building larger, and so needed more material. Or he might in other ways endeavour to outwit the authority to meet his own ends. There are several buildings on which the work is not proceeding in accordance with the permit and the clause would be used to revoke, suspend or vary the terms and conditions of the consent. As was stated at the Building Industries Congress, it is necessary to have this power during the period of good supply today varying to short supply tomorrow, and vice versa.

Mr. WATTS: But for the fact that I can place more reliance on the board than on the activities of certain other people, I would do my best to have the clause deleted but, because of my reliance on the board, I believe the provision will be administered in the manner indicated by the Premier.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 13—Power to give directions:

Mr. WATTS: This clause purports to give the administrative authority power to issue directions even after building operations have commenced, whether or not the building operations are of such a nature as to require a permit under Clause 9. If the building operation is in accordance with Clause 9 (1), it seems right and proper that the board should have such authority, but if it comes within the license granted by Clause 9 so that no permit is required, the board should not have any further control. It is a matter not within the board's

jurisdiction in the first place, and should not be within its jurisdiction subsequently.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 14 to 25—agreed to.

Clause 26—Powers of administration:

Mr. WATTS: I move an amendment—

That paragraph (a) of Subclause (1) be struck out.

This provides that the board may require a person to produce any books, accounts and documents relating to the business to any person specified in the notice. There are two other powers which I desire to retain, namely, that the board may require the person to furnish such particulars relating to the business as are specified in the notice and give such directions as it thinks fit relating to the storage, delivery, disposal, use or application of any building material. In my opinion, the board is entitled to have the right to call for particulars. I question, however, the necessity to give the board by this measure the right to demand that all books, accounts and documents relating to the business shall be produced. It is necessary for returns to be furnished, if these are called for. That is right and proper, but we should not expect the people concerned to produce their books for inspection by the board.

The PREMIER: I hope the Leader of the Opposition will not press his amendment. This is one of the necessary provisions to deal with people who are snide, people who indulge in malpractices, people who engage in black-marketing, and there will be, I submit, no industry or trade which will have such a fertile field for exploitation as the building industry. There is nothing whatever for any accredited person, authority or company to fear in the power which is being given to the board in this connection. It will be vital to be able to follow up, if necessary, the source from which the irresponsible and dishonest person draws his supplies. I visualise the prospect of a very big field and a very big market for the person who is dishonest and indulges in these practices. I hope, for the purpose of policing the decent and responsible firms, as well as their clients, that this paragraph will be retained.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 27—Power of entry and search:

Mr. NORTH: I would like to ask the Premier whether he can explain in a few words how far this Bill affects the position of the Army, the Navy and the Air Force, which hold enormous stocks over and above their requirements, and whether he has any power at all to deal with that aspect. I have been informed from sources that I cannot disclose that there are tons of vital housing necessities, for instance, nails, which are held up at certain places.

The PREMIER: There is no authority, nor can authority be taken, in this Bill, to control materials held by the Department of the Army. The Commonwealth Government has complete knowledge of the shortage of building materials, and I feel confident that it will shortly realise that if there is any commodity in short supply which is held by the Army in plentiful supply, it will very quickly be made available.

Mr. Shearn: It will take the Commonwealth Government a long time to realise it.

The PREMIER: That is true. Unfortunately, requests for release of materials have not been properly appreciated; but the Disposals Commission, plus the requests of all the State Governments acting through that commission, will, I am sure, soon rectify that position. It must be acknowledged that the Army and its associated services were forced to hold very large quantities of goods against emergencies.

Clause put and passed.

* Clauses 28 to 38—agreed to.

Schedule:

The PREMIER: During the discussion with the Building Industry Congress, and subsequently with representatives of the trade in conference with the Administration, it was made quite clear that the schedule might be added to or subtracted from by proclamation, as and when materials either became in short supply or in plentiful supply. It may be possible early in the new year to remove one or two items from the Schedule, as now printed. It was pointed out during the course of the conference held last week that fittings for water and gas pipes have not been, and are not now, in short supply, and it is not expected that even a tremendous expansion of work will result in these parts being in short sup-

ply. With regard to heating and cooking appliances, for quite a while these were being manufactured in the State. They were considerably in short supply owing to the lack of plain iron, primarily. Some of the items are in plentiful supply in the Eastern States, and it is necessary to retain them in the schedule for the purpose of allocating them as and when they come to hand. The congress was helpful in the advice which it gave; and the arrangement made is that the members of the congress shall meet regularly with a view to ascertaining whether there is likely to be an impending shortage or an increase in the item mentioned in the Schedule. The members are traders and will consequently know the sources of supply and the availability of materials. I move an amendment—

That in line 7 the words "Water and gas pipes and fittings" be struck out.

Amendment put and passed.

The PREMIER: I move an amendment—

That in line 8 the words "Heating and cooking appliances" be struck out.

Amendment put and passed; the schedule, as amended, agreed to.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

BILLS (4)—RETURNED.

1, Commonwealth Powers.

With amendments.

2, Electricity.

3, Railways Classification Board Act Amendment.

4, Air Navigation Act Amendment.

Without amendment.

BILL—STATE GOVERNMENT INSURANCE OFFICE ACT AMENDMENT..*Council's Message.*

Message from the Council received and read notifying that it insisted on its amendments Nos. 1 to 6.

BILL—MEDICAL ACT AMENDMENT.*Council's Amendments.*

Schedule of seven amendments made by the Council now considered.

In Committee.

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

No. 1. Clause 7 (page 3)—Delete the words "examination and" in line 26.

(Consequently, the words "examination or" in line 29 were ordered to be deleted.)

No. 2. Clause 10, in proposed new section 13 (2) (page 6)—Insert the words "professional misconduct or" after the word "of" in line 40.

No. 3. Clause 10, in proposed new section 13 (6), (a)—Delete the words "any time and as often as he may think fit" in lines 32 and 33, on page 7, and substitute the words "intervals of twelve months."

No. 4. Clause 12 (page 8)—Delete the words "after an approved course of study and examination" in lines 8 and 9, and substitute the words "recognised by the Board."

On motions by the Minister for Health, the foregoing amendments were agreed to.

No. 5. Clause 13, in proposed new section 16A (1), (a) (page 8)—Delete the words and parentheses "(not being registered as a specialist)" in lines 23 and 24.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Mr. WATTS: No-one has the faintest notion what it is all about. Will the Minister be kind enough to give us some indication of his views on the subject? This deals with a most important matter. What is intended by this amendment? Though I have followed the matter closely, I do not know what it means.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Each member has a notice paper, and I thought members would have read the amendments and thoroughly understood the position. I did not think we should waste any time. This amendment refers to specialists and the proposal is to relieve specialists of the necessity of paying an extra fee of one guinea. According to Dr. Hislop, doctors think there is no need for it. It does not affect the finances of the Government. The guinea goes to the Medical Board, and they are satisfied that the one fee of three guineas should cover everything. They do not think that an extra fee should be charged in respect of a specialist. I would mention that I went through the amendments carefully and discussed them with the Solicitor General. I have also discussed them with my prede-

cessor. Of course, if members want each amendment explained, I will be only too happy to explain it but I thought it would be wasting the time of the Committee.

Mr. Doney: It has been the custom.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I think we should sometimes break away from custom.

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

No. 6. Clause 13, in proposed new section 16A (1) (page 8):—Delete paragraph (b), as contained in lines 29 to 33.

(Consequently, the words "or the annual practice fees" in lines 7 and 8, page 9, and the words "or fees or either of them (when both fees are payable)" in lines 9 and 10 (same page) were ordered to be deleted.)

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: This is a consequential amendment. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

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

No. 7. Clause 13, in proposed new section 16A (page 8):—Delete the words and parentheses "(not being registered as a specialist)" in lines 34 and 35.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: This is also consequential. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

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

Resolutions reported, the report adopted and the message accordingly returned to the Council.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1945-46.*In Committee of Supply.*

Resumed from the 15th November; Mr. Rodoreda in the Chair.

Vote—Education, £915,350 (partly considered):

MR. HOLMAN (Forrest) [8.40]: I wish to add my congratulations to the Minister on his good work in connection with the department he is handling, and also to thank him for the assistance he has given me as member for the district.

Mr. Willmott: You must have got more than I did.

Mr. HOLMAN: I have got quite a lot, but that will not stop me from asking for more—I am like *Oliver Twist* in that regard! It is interesting to listen to the

figures quoted by the Minister in connection with the cost per pupil where the schools vary in numerical strength. Before dealing with that aspect I wish to draw attention to the fact that in the Estimates for 1944-45 an amount of £29,131 was provided for contingencies and included the sum provided for furniture, books, etc. The Minister gave the explanation that it was not possible to secure the furniture and books wanted, otherwise that vote would have been more than spent. Out of the Estimate of £26,406 this year £4,664 is to be used for contingencies. The Minister told us, however, that most of that money was to be spent on contingencies. I hope he will give us some explanation of that. Possibly the balance of £21,742 will be to pay for the extra teachers that we hope to see coming out of the Services in the near future.

While on that subject I express the earnest wish that the releases of these teachers will be speeded up. Many teachers—I know some personally—who are still in the Services are wasting their time. They could well be discharged not only to take over their former positions, but also to take the refresher course that will probably be necessary for them. I feel sure the Minister is doing his best in this regard, but he, like other State authorities, is probably hamstrung in trying to get the Army officials to see eye to eye with the State requirements. I mentioned the cost for each pupil in certain schools where the numerical strength differs. There is no doubt that these figures are enlightening. The Minister told us that in 9.6 per cent. of the schools with more than 200 pupils the average cost per child in attendance was £11 9s. 1½d., whereas 56.2 per cent. of the schools, having an average attendance of 20 and under pupils showed an average cost per pupil of £26 18s. 6½d.

The difference in the cost per pupil in these two ranges of schools is no less than £15 9s. 5d. per pupil. That is really amazing. We can see from these figures that each school of 20 pupils costs, approximately, an extra £310 per annum. It would be perfectly good business to put that £310 per annum into a fine bus service to take these kiddies to a larger school. It has been said that we are waiting for the consolidation of schools to progress. While we are waiting for that scheme to come into full operation, I suggest to the Minister that it would

be good business—using the term again—to close up some of the smaller schools and utilise the larger ones already in existence. Let us study this from a financial point of view! The Minister later on, in introducing his Estimates, told us that there were 101 bus contracts and that the cost was £27,000 annually for 2,531 children. The average cost of a bus per annum is £270 which works out at an average cost per child of ten guineas a year as against an added expenditure of 15 guineas per child per year in the case of those attending schools with less than 20 pupils. I hope that in future decent bus services will be installed so that these kiddies can go to larger schools.

I am not criticising the Minister in any way in this matter because I know his attitude towards consolidation of schools. But now that the release of motor vehicles is easier it should be possible to give better attention to the children attending the smaller schools. The Minister said that he was bound to admit that the outlook at present for new school buildings was far from bright because the housing position was so acute. I quite realise that, but I am still at a loss to understand why renovations and repairs are not being carried out more speedily in the country districts. Practically every school in my electorate—and suppose those in other areas—is sadly in need of repairs. Some of the conditions prevailing are disgusting and constitute a slur on the year of grace in which we live.

That leads me to the point that we have been told that the consolidation of schools is to take place and that there is, in the near future, to be the establishment of junior high schools throughout the State. When that is brought into being it will necessitate the closing of numerous schools. I suppose practically every member has the same trouble with the state of the schools in his electorate. If those schools are to be closed down in the near future a member is only wasting his time and the time of the Education Department and perhaps the Public Works Department by asking for repairs and renovations to be made. I think the School Sites Committee, which we are told has been active in selecting sites, should give us an inkling of where these schools are to be situated, and hope that that will be done soon. I am glad the Minister proposes to provide junior

high school facilities for country children, and that they are to have a number of senior high schools as well.

I think the School Sites Committee should make some announcement, because the Minister gave us to understand that it has already made a survey of the districts where the junior high schools will be required and that plans have been made to go ahead with their construction as soon as possible. I take that to mean that the plans have been made and will be carried out when it is possible to do so, but that we are to be kept in the dark in the meantime. It will be an improvement when that reform comes into being, because it will give some equality of opportunity to the children, particularly those in isolated districts who at present suffer a disadvantage. They suffer a disadvantage not only during their school period, but later on, because their chances of employment after leaving school are affected. I know something of the disabilities of one-teacher schools. The teacher in such a school has not the opportunity to impart the knowledge that he would desire the children to gain, and neither have the children the opportunity to gain the knowledge they are entitled to.

The Minister told us that the cost of these schools is prohibitive, and one can understand, on going through some of the schools, that something must be wrong, because the equipment they have in many cases should, in my opinion, be prohibited and they should not have to put up with such conditions. I hope the consolidation of schools will be put into effect in the near future. Visual education has been mentioned, and some time ago I suggested to the Minister that he make an investigation into the use of television in the schools in England. I then quoted information from a document that I had, and stated that England was making great strides in visual aid education and television. The latest announcement in Western Australia is that television is not possible here for perhaps another six years, but that should not prevent the necessary investigations being made in order that it may become an accomplished fact as soon as possible.

School children in country districts should be given not only a decent education but an education of university standard by

means of television and radio. Lessons by radio have been very successful in the country districts and provide a measure of equality with the city children. However, in smaller centres the cost of radio equipment is often too much for the parents and citizens of the district. The Parents and Citizens' Associations in country areas have done fine work and I was pleased to hear the Minister congratulate them on what they have performed. They cannot be expected to carry the cost of this equipment, and there should be some means of subsidising their efforts to enable them to carry the work further still. I approached the Lotteries Commission to see if it were possible for that body to subsidise the Parents and Citizens' Associations in country districts in order to secure better equipment for the schools. I had in mind visual aid facilities.

Where it is impossible for the Educational Department to provide projectors it might, by means of subsidies, where centres are grouped in close proximity, be possible to use one projector for the group of centres. That would do away with the Minister's suggestion for itinerant operators. However, because of the constitution of the Lotteries Commission it was not possible for it to grant a subsidy. It may be possible for the Minister, through his department, to subsidise those associations in the way I have mentioned. If not, he may be able to persuade some other authority to assist in the provision of the necessary facilities. I was pleased to hear the Minister refer to hostels, and he cleared up a point that has troubled many parents who may soon have an opportunity to send their children to the proposed high schools. I am referring now to the working people who have not very much money to spare for the higher education of their children, and the Minister's statement that the department would make up to those parents who desire their children to make use of the hostels when attending the high schools the estimated difference between the cost of maintaining the child at home and at the hostel was very encouraging. It will go a long way in easing the minds of those parents to whom the added financial responsibility might be too much.

Reverting to the question of school buses, I do not suppose I am singular in my view that the type of vehicle provided

for the children in the country districts is not at all satisfactory. I know perfectly well that, because of difficulties arising out of the war and of the impossibility of securing new vehicles, better means of transport have not been procurable, but when one considers the "rack and ruin" conveyances that have been availed of for the purpose of transferring the children from their homes to the schools, one cannot regard them as satisfactory, despite the fact that they probably had to pass the tests required by the department. Now there is some possibility of new buses being released in the near future, I trust the contractors will be required to provide a better type of vehicle. I feel sure the Minister will see to that. I suggest to him that more co-operation is needed between his department and the local governing authorities and the Public Works Department with respect to the roads over which the children have to travel to school.

With co-operation or co-ordination of effort between the departments, great improvements could be effected in that direction. Because of the long and tiring distances the children have to travel to school, it might be possible to provide some amenities to occupy their attention, such as the installation of wireless equipment in the buses. That might sound extravagant but I do not view it from that angle but rather from that of the new order of which we have heard so much, with its promise of the provision of amenities that were not forthcoming in bygone years. If the wireless were installed in the buses, it would alleviate the tiring nature of the journey. In a pamphlet I received recently entitled "The Education of the Young as Social Units," one paragraph in particular struck me as being very true. That paragraph was as follows:—

It being assumed that the home properly discharges its obligations, the next essentials after the competent educator are roomy and attractive buildings equipped with all necessary educational aids and apparatus and having sufficient space for games and other outside activities for all pupils.

Having gone so far, I would say that another necessary reform in our future schools is the provision of added space in infant rooms. Members will probably know that the younger kiddies not only have their ordinary educational curriculum but participate in games and exercises. In

many instances, for the latter purpose it is necessary to push aside desks and forms to make available the space essential for their exercises. In future we should make better provision in that respect and extend the size of the class-rooms. That feature of the kiddies' education is essential and should be catered for in a proper manner. Another extract from the pamphlet reads as follows:—

In addition to what is learned or done on the school premises, there must be reckoned the unconscious influence of pleasant and congenial surroundings on the minds and souls of the young. The effect of continual contact over the years of school life with clean, well-ordered, beautiful buildings and their tastefully laid-out precincts in creating standards and artistic tastes in the youthful mind cannot hardly be over-estimated.

I would like to take the writer of this pamphlet to the timber mill centres so that he could see the congenial surroundings there. I do not desire to appear parochial but I would instance the Holyoake school where I could ask the writer to take some exercise in jumping the storm-water drains that run through the grounds. If it could be considered that the kiddies there should take their exercise in congenial surroundings of that description, I would be surprised. In many places in that part of the country the schools are built on hill sides on rocky or gravelly ground without the slightest hope of beautiful gardens being developed. Even if it were possible to remove the rocks, stones, gravel and so on it would not be possible to establish gardens, because there are no fences round the school grounds. In some places the fences are down or have disappeared and have not been replaced. There is ample scope for the beautification of school grounds. I believe the kiddies should not remain inside school buildings all day but should be taken outside into the open air where their schooling could be continued in congenial surroundings. If we could provide them with beautiful gardens, lawns and shrubs, it would be better from that standpoint. I hope that in future this matter will be given the serious consideration which it has evidently not received in the past.

I wish now to refer to the unsatisfactory sanitary conveniences at many of the country schools. They are really shocking. I am at a loss to understand how they pass

the requirements of the health authorities. I have made a close examination of practically every school in my electorate during the last three months, and not in one instance was I satisfied with the sanitary arrangements. I do not speak thus simply for the sake of talking; I am very earnest in this matter. The other evening we had a discussion as to whether, at the schools attended by native children and whites, there should be separate sanitary arrangements. I rather imagine that we should not allow either coloured or white children to use the conveniences provided at a great majority of the schools. I am quite aware, as I have admitted previously, that work of this sort has not received attention in recent years because of the lack of labour and material, but the sanitation at existing schools is a matter that should receive attention before the consolidation of schools or the provision of hostels or high schools or any other educational reform. I go so far as to say that the morals of the children would probably be affected by the arrangements at some of the schools. In some places the privies for the girls are not protected from the view of the rest of the children.

Mr. Doney: Were all of them like that?

Mr. HOLMAN: I said some places were like that, and the vast majority are deserving of severe criticism.

Mr. North called attention to the state of the Committee.

Bells rung and a quorum formed.

Mr. HOLMAN: Perhaps the subject is distasteful to some members. Still, I am pleased that the Minister has kept his seat and is listening intently to my remarks. I suggest that, if possible, he or his officers should inspect the sanitary arrangements at the railway mill at Banksiadale and at the reserve at Mandurah. At both of these places the pan system is in use. I believe that the Town Planning Commissioner was responsible for the type of privy at Manjimup. The manager of the railway mill, Mr. Huxtable, has experimented with a type of privy for mill employees. Though it is the pan system, it is absolutely hygienic, being odour-proof and fly-proof. The adoption of this type would provide a basis for educating children in personal cleanliness and in observing hygienic conditions generally. The

installation is very cheap and very effective. It consists of a sleeve to fit over the pan, which has a connecting pipe to a ventilating pipe passing through the roof of the building. The close-fitting cover makes it an effective and hygienic privy. This reform is highly necessary in the interests of the cleanliness, health and education of the children, and I hope the new type will be adopted at all the schools where the pan system is still in use. I should like to see the Health Department take up this matter and make every user of the pan system adopt that type.

A remark was made a few evenings ago that we should have contented teachers. I am in agreement with that view. One way of making country teachers contented is by providing them with good quarters and amenities. If this were done, we would have many of the best classes of teachers prepared to go to the country instead of seeking transfer to the metropolitan area. At one school I have in mind no quarters are provided for the teacher. The teacher is a married man whose wife and family have to reside in the metropolitan area, and he lives in the hotel in the district where he is teaching. I hope that case is an exception; it is the only one of the kind I know of. At other schools the quarters for the teachers are not up to the standard that we would have in our own homes. I suggest that there is room for improvement in that respect.

Another matter I desire to bring to the notice of the Minister relates to the transfer of teachers. Each year certain numbers of teachers are transferred and I presume great difficulty arises, because I know of many cases where a teacher has gone to where he was transferred, with his furniture, only to find that he has to wait until the other teacher gets out of the premises. He may put in the whole day helping the other teacher to remove his furniture, in order that he may shift in himself, and then he goes into a house that is dirty. That is no fault of the outgoing teacher, because the house cannot be left in a clean state immediately after furniture has been removed from it. I do not know how the department effects these transfers; but I would suggest that teachers about to be transferred should be given a longer period of notice. By some means or other the department should ar-

range for the house or the quarters which are to be occupied by the teacher to be vacated previously to his arriving at his destination. It is but a small matter and probably can be adjusted quickly; nevertheless, it is another pinprick which causes dissatisfaction and the teacher who is dissatisfied loses a certain amount of interest in his work. In consequence, not only does the department suffer but the children as well.

Another point which I would raise is the possibility of visits by officers of the Agricultural Department to country schools. Members will readily recognise that in country schools we have our future country population. Those children will be pursuing agricultural careers when they leave school, whether it be as orchardists, farmers, or potato-growers etc. It would be to the benefit of the State in general if they could be given lectures periodically by officers of the Agricultural Department, and so gain scientific knowledge of the work in which they may be engaged when their school life is over. I suggest that it is possible to arrange such a course of lectures.

I am sorry no mention was made of regional technical schools. I am extremely interested in the technical education of country children. Before my entry into Parliament I was secretary of the W.A. Printers' Union, and whilst holding that office was able to make provision for the technical education of apprentices in country districts through the medium of correspondence classes. The idea was not my own; I picked it up while I was attending a conference in the Eastern States. By putting the scheme in operation in this State, our country apprentices to the printing trade were enabled to receive similar education to that given to city apprentices. Regional technical schools might be worked in conjunction with junior high schools by some means known to the Minister himself.

We ought to be able to give our country children an advanced type of technical education. We all say that we want decentralisation of industries in the future and we talk about it a great deal. If my suggestion were adopted we would have the means of educating our youth; we would also bring into existence compulsory part-time education for many children in the State up to the age of 18 or even 20. The employers should be compelled to allow these youths a

certain period during each week in order to attend these suggested schools. In that manner we would get over one of the hurdles in the way of raising the school leaving age. I shall now introduce a parochial note. I thank the Minister sincerely for his assistance to me in providing a domestic science school at Donnybrook, also for enlarging the school ground and building an infants' classroom.

Mr. Abbott: You should not disclose those things.

Mr. HOLMAN: I put a strong case to the Minister, who agreed that the work should be done. Probably it was due to the way in which the case was presented. I hope he continues the good work and provides a domestic science centre at Brunswick Junction. I know he is contemplating the establishment of these centres and I hope that Brunswick Junction will be placed on the list of urgent works. My criticism in some instances may have been a little heavy, but I know the Minister will accept it as he always does, as constructive. I hope the suggestions I have made will be of assistance to him in carrying out the desirable reforms he is contemplating for the children of our State.

MR. McLARTY (Murray-Wellington [9.29]: I wish to make a few remarks on this Vote, upon which there has been considerable discussion. That is not to be wondered at, because wherever one goes in this State one finds that the question of education is a burning topic. All members of Parliament are having suggestions and requests made to them about education generally. In common with other members, I am glad to note that an increased amount has been made available for the ensuing year. I regret that we did not receive the report of the Education Department earlier. It certainly is a most informative document and I hope that next year the Minister will see that it is distributed earlier so that members will have a chance to study it and learn more about the activities of the department.

The Minister has told us that it is his intention, or the intention of the Education Department, to undertake a policy of centralisation. I think he also said that opposition to centralisation was dwindling. We remember that in the early stages when

centralisation was suggested and it was made known that a certain small school was to be closed, opposition developed. People said land values would depreciate and that the proposal was not in the best interests of their district. But I believe that parents are now coming to realise that through centralisation they are giving their children a better education and thereby a better chance in life, and they are certainly in the main agreeing to this proposal.

I notice in the report of the Director of Education that in this State, at the end of 1943, there were 650 schools open. Of that number 356, or 55 per cent., had an average attendance of 20 or under. I think that should indicate some of the difficulties which the Education Department is facing. I want to assure the Minister that I have had some experience of the small schools referred to in the report, and I have found the teachers very enthusiastic. From my knowledge of them, I should say they are good teachers. It is customary for many teachers to start in small schools and many have eventually taken charge of larger ones. The Minister himself started in a small school, and today he is in charge of the department in which he began as a teacher. I have said before, and I want to say it to the Minister now, that I feel that children in small schools do not get the chance afforded those in larger schools. We know that before a child can secure entrance into the Public Service he has to pass his junior examination. The country child does not get that opportunity; and I want to ask the Minister whether he thinks it necessary for a child to pass the junior examination before being admitted into the Public Service. I do not know that that competitive examination is altogether desirable and I would like to hear the Minister's views in regard to the matter. I believe that many a child in the country, although he has not passed his junior, would, if given a chance to enter the Public Service, prove himself well worth while. But he is not given that chance and, under existing circumstances, cannot get it.

As we know, the Public Service today offers certain advantages. There is permanency of employment, superannuation on retirement, and other advantages which many people desire their children to have. I notice that mention is made in the report of the fact that considerable attention

is being paid to correct English. I think that is very necessary, although I am doubtful—I do not know whether the Minister will agree—whether English is more correctly spoken today than it was years ago. In fact, I think we have developed more slang and use more slipshod words and invented phrases such as “too right,” and “not in the race,” and other such expressions.

Mr. Seward: What can we expect when people listen so much to the radio?

Mr. McLARTY: I agree that the radio has probably something to do with it. The Director of Education states that serious attention is being given to the art of correct speaking, and I think that is very necessary.

The Minister for Education: There is no doubt that the standard of speech has greatly improved in the schools.

Mr. McLARTY: I am glad to hear that; but, as pointed out by the member for Pingelly, children do not learn the art of correct speaking from the radio; nor do they learn it from the pictures. Again, the other day I read a sub-leader in one of the Eastern States papers in our reading room. It referred to the need for children to be taught good manners. I think that is necessary. I know that in regard to good manners the teachers cannot be altogether responsible for the children, because a lot depends upon home life. Again, the war years, with all their hustle and bustle and fighting for seats on trains and trams and for places generally, did not lead children to appreciate the need for good manners; but I think the time has come when it should be impressed upon children that good manners are necessary to help them when they leave school in regard to employment, and to help them through life generally. If teachers would impress upon children the need for respect for their elders, and for womenfolk, and for the law, it would also be very helpful.

Mr. Abbott: What about respect for the law-makers?

The Minister for Lands: They have no respect for themselves!

Mr. McLARTY: There is need to educate children in respect for the law. I feel that some children are being misled entirely in this direction. If more respect for law and order had been taught, we

would not have had all this black marketing that has been taking place in the country. If children were taught that they should expose those who break the law, I believe it would be all to the good.

Another matter to which I think attention should be given in the schools is vandalism. One can see the defacement of public buildings that have been erected only a short time. Compartments in railway carriages are scribbled all over, seats are deliberately cut, and other public utilities are knocked about. I believe that it would pay us over and over again at intervals to impress upon children the evils of vandalism and what it means, and the need for them to respect not only private but public property as well, instilling into their minds that they are part-owners of public property. I notice that the report also refers to several sidelines that the department is encouraging.

There is the Gould League of Birdlovers which has over 5,000 members. That is a good thing. Perhaps if we could encourage this activity there would be less destruction of some of the beautiful birds in this country. Then again we have recently heard a good deal about beautification. I notice by the Director's report that some thousands of packets of seeds have been distributed to children and that they have taken them home and grown them in their own gardens. I certainly think that a love of flowers should be encouraged.

The Minister for Lands: Hear, hear!

Mr. McLARTY: I knew that the Minister for Lands would agree with that. Reference is made in the report to the health of the children and this is what is said—

The health of children in the schools has been good apart from the usual child ailments of which there has been no epidemic. Scabies continues to give the branch much concern owing to its infectious nature and the lack of the parents to diagnose the trouble and carry out the treatment. Unless scabies is treated during the early stages it becomes a serious infection and may take three or four months to effect a cure. The usual parent treats it as an ordinary itch and neglects it in the early stages.

I want to say a word or two about this disease. We had a discussion on native affairs the other night. I have been advised, from a medical source, that some native camps in Western Australia have scabies amongst them. I do not wonder at

it. I know from my experience in the Army that once scabies breaks out it is a hard job to get rid of it.

The Minister for Lands: It travels a right.

Mr. McLARTY: Yes. I asked the Minister to make some inquiries into these outbreaks of scabies in native camps. He assured us that there will be no segregation of native children attending State schools. But if they are responsible for spreading diseases such as this some stringent action should be taken.

The Minister for Education: It has been taken.

Mr. McLARTY: Where any contagious or infectious disease is detected in a school the child concerned is sent home. I cannot see how, under the existing conditions of these camps, we can prevent outbreaks of diseases such as this. I put to the Minister, as strongly as possible, that as soon as the opportunity presents itself he should make an inspection of the living conditions of these native camps and decide whether it is a fair thing that these children should attend the State schools. We have an obligation to see that these native children are educated, but I think that we must also study the health of our own children. Until such time as the conditions under which the natives live are brought to a better standard I suggest that the Minister should give serious consideration as to whether, in many cases at least, there is justification for allowing native children to attend our State schools. The member for Forrest referred to sanitary conditions in country schools. When it is practicable septic tanks should be provided.

The Minister for Education: That is the policy of the department.

Mr. McLARTY: I hope that policy will be put into operation. I have discussed this matter with the Minister and I know he is anxious to put it into operation. Large sums of money—up to £800—have been spent on erecting new latrines for country schools, but septic tanks have not been provided. South-western members have, for years, advocated the establishment in the South-West of an agricultural college. The Minister should give consideration to this proposal. I know there are several schools to which lads, who desire

to take up farming as a career, can attend but I think that, in view of the growth of the South-West, the certainty in regard to its future development, and the class of mixed farming carried on there—besides what is called dry-farming there is irrigation farming—the South-West is entitled to an agricultural college.

The Minister for Education: Yours is a pretty tall order. You want a high school, an area school and an agricultural college!

The Premier: He usually gets everything.

Mr. McLARTY: I am not asking that they should all be placed in the one spot. I leave that to the good sense of the Minister.

The Minister for Education: It is all right so long as they are in the one electorate.

The Premier: There is no better served electorate than that of the hon. member.

Mr. McLARTY: I have not been complaining of the treatment I have received in the past; I am simply making some suggestions for the future. I join with the Minister in paying a well deserved tribute to the Parents and Citizens' Associations. They have done a most valuable work. I hope it will not be long before the additions, that the schools are in urgent need of, will be made. I have told the Minister about the schools in my district and I do not wish to tell him again now, but I suggest that it would be a good idea if we could see a priority list of future school improvements. I know that it would not always be possible to keep to that list. Circumstances would arise under which the priorities would have to be altered but, nevertheless, members should be able to see the programme of works that it is intended to carry out for our future educational requirements.

MR. ABBOTT (North Perth) [9.50]: The Minister's speech gave the House many matters for serious consideration, as did also the report issued by his department. I congratulate the persons responsible for the preparation and issue of that report, an exceedingly good one, which gives the member, who has not the opportunity that the Minister has to be thoroughly conversant with educational matters, a reasonable

knowledge of the great amount of work that has been done in the department. Much has been learnt on educational matters from the necessity that arose, during the recent crisis, to teach things quickly and efficiently. I am glad that the Minister has given consideration to the introduction of teaching in the schools by visual means. No doubt it is one of the finest ways of impressing, particularly on the young mind, anything that it is necessary to teach. In the report much has been said about vocational guidance and aptitude testing. I think those methods are of great importance in assisting the teacher to know the child and its capabilities and, later on, in guiding the child to an avocation in which it is suited to be employed. Many people find themselves in avocations in which they are not interested and for which they are not suited. All these improvements cannot be instituted at once, but I would like to see the aptitude testing commenced at an early age.

At present it seems to be left until the child is about to seek a career, but, if it were done at the age of eight and perhaps a little later, it would give both teachers and parents a knowledge of the capacity of the child and would indicate to the teacher whether the child needed greater help, and in what direction its education should be stressed. It is mentioned in the report that the medical staff is not sufficient to serve the whole State properly, and that again is a matter of expediency, but I would be prepared to see considerable sacrifices made to ensure that a full medical examination of each child was made. I read recently of the medical examination made at Fremantle of all the school children each year, and no doubt the Minister knows all about that. Apparently it has been a great success and I hope he is favourably inclined towards such examinations, as I feel sure many children would lead happier lives if given medical attention when suffering from any disadvantage early in their careers. I hope that a midday meal will eventually be provided for school children. It would be of great benefit to the children and would be a relief to the mothers who find it almost impossible to provide a suitable lunch. In the present meal children get too much starch in the form of sandwiches and so on.

The Minister for Lands: They would be more likely to get a toffee-apple, at present.

Mr. ABBOTT: I am pleased to see that we have some thoroughly satisfied members in the Chamber tonight. The member for Murray-Wellington seemed to have everything he wanted, and the member for Forrest also seems to have achieved a great deal, but there are other districts, such as North Perth.

The Minister for Lands: And Leederville!

Mr. ABBOTT: That is near my own district, and probably the Minister might go from one to the other.

The Minister for Lands: I have had every Minister for Education since the member for Nedlands out there.

Mr. ABBOTT: There is a great deal of painting to be done, but the school in my district is a very old one. I know of one old school that was given a new roof and was thoroughly renovated, and I hope that, owing to its age and condition, the school in the district I represent will be high on the priority list that we are not permitted to see. The school grounds are a source of everlasting complaint and I hope the Minister will remember that gravel is needed in my district also. He might give consideration to whether the infants' schools have sufficient equipment for the manual training lessons that are part of their curriculum. I have been told that no equipment is furnished and, if that is so, I would like the Minister to bear that in mind. I wish to express appreciation of the work of the school-teachers. Society owes a lot to those who take over the responsibility of educating children and who relieve the parents of a great deal of worry. I wish publicly to express my appreciation of what they are doing.

MR. NORTH (Claremont) [9.58]: At this stage of the debate I am thinking of Mother Hubbard and the dog that got no bone. So much has been said about this subject that the Minister for Education, who is so active and studious, and who has such an active director—

The Premier: You have heard of "pointing the bone."

Mr. NORTH: I will not delay the Committee beyond making the point I had in mind when I rose. All the talk during the last session or two has been about equipment, buildings and improvements of that description. I am very anxious respecting one

issue with regard to our school children. I refer to the question of the natural ingenuity of Australians and their sense of humour.

Will all these wonderful improvements that are contemplated and the longer period of school years have the effect of turning our children into a mass of dopes? Representatives of a certain nation have been amongst us during the last few years hoping to come to rescue us from the possible ravages of war in our country. Those of us who were able to assess the calibre of that other race, with its high quality schools and universities round almost every street corner, came to the conclusion that the average Australian had two or three times as much initiative and push when it came to a showdown as did the gentlemen from overseas. In New Guinea was disclosed what our old-fashioned educational system was able to produce in the shape of a good natural article. That is the one great danger I see in our big programme of education. The most difficult of the problems confronting the Minister for Education, his director and his staff is to ensure that the system established will not drive out of the Australian his natural qualities.

Mr. J. Hegney: This speech may have international repercussions!

Mr. NORTH: There is something we can learn from the fact that education can become too specialised and can eradicate natural qualities. This Chamber consists largely of members who had to fight their own election. It is surprising how many have fought for themselves instead of having the fight waged for them by organisation. From listening to the speeches delivered in this Chamber it is easy to determine that many here sold newspapers when they were 12 years of age—at a time when they should have been at school.

Mr. Fox: That is a good argument for children selling newspapers.

Mr. NORTH: We know the great danger there is of specialists becoming so able in their own domain as invariably to lose the umbrellas when they go to catch a train. I believe our educational system as it expands in the future will require to be very general and not attempt to specialise overmuch. We must not turn our children into walking automatons on one subject but rather enable them to face the battle of life in the general sphere. The former tendency

has been the effect of education over the years. It does seem to produce rabbits compared with those brought up in the hard school of life. I myself am one of the rabbits because I have had plenty of education, but I have survived it. Nevertheless I make the point that the great school is the school of life outside, and I have seen something of that hard school.

The Minister for Works: I had an idea that you were a Welsh rarebit!

Mr. NORTH: As we extend the education system along the lines the Minister intends, we must watch that particular point, because the more we push ideas into our young people, the more inclined they are to be incapable of dealing with any situation they are not accustomed to. I believe that at the present time that is the danger existing all over the world. I believe that the great mass of the education available is not achieving the type of education we would like. I do not believe the Director of Education here will spend all his time in future entirely upon considerations of buildings, gardens and equipment. He will have to face the great difficulty of retaining the natural ingenuity of the child that is inherent in him when he first goes to school.

On many occasions we have discussed our own natives and compared them with the white people. Who is it we send out when we want to trace a criminal? It is to the black-tracker that we turn for help to secure the wrongdoer. It is along that line of argument I am endeavouring to stress a phase of education that I believe is failing throughout the world. I believe the mass of the people have not the ingenuity, initiative, and sense of judgment that others had in the past. Something has happened to the world. Whether it is because of the machine age or the radio or what it is, the fact remains that the people nowadays are not the same as they were some generations back.

The Premier: They never were!

Mr. NORTH: Perhaps not. Men like Shakespeare and others, including great musicians, had to teach themselves.

Mr. J. Hegney: They were inspired.

Mr. NORTH: Let us consider the composers of the world. Did they come from schools of music? Not one! I know of not one who succeeded in winning a musical competition under the auspices

of the A.B.C. or other institutions that ever became a great composer. Did they benefit from that phase of education? Where do we find the original qualities nowadays that are required of the great composer, the great musician? So I say there is danger in our educational system that we will lose instead of gaining. Let members ask employers what their impressions are when they are engaging young boys. Let them say what they think of the education that is now made available to our children.

Mr. Doney: That is much the same as saying that the Minister for Education is wasting his time!

Mr. NORTH: Is that how the hon. member interprets my remarks?

Mr. Doney: That is what you suggest.

Mr. NORTH: It clearly indicates how poorly I am submitting what I regard as a reasonable case to emphasise the difficulties the Minister is up against not as regards what he is doing but from the standpoint of results achieved in the world.

The Premier: I think you are talking over the head of the member for Williams-Narrogin.

Mr. NORTH: I think Western Australia has achieved a great deal more with its existing equipment than we recently saw apparent in the product of a country that can boast of far more equipment and vastly more educational facilities than we possess. I urge members when they have a few minutes to spare from their duties to listen to some of the competitions that are broadcast over the air each week. I refer particularly to "The Leave Pass" feature.

Mr. J. Hegney: And to the quiz competitions.

Mr. NORTH: I ask: How many people of that sort have we in our community? I am not talking about those know-alls the member for Middle Swan has in mind. Let members listen to the sessions I refer to, and see what quality of education is disclosed. I think that we are up against something dangerous. Of course, I appreciate that the member for Middle Swan is the natural product with his natural ingenuity; and he has been brought up in a hard school.

Mr. J. Hegney: I did not sell papers.

Mr. NORTH: I must conclude my remarks, for I do not desire to weary members. I repeat again that in New Guinea

the test came, and what happened there? Australians had to lead the way and show others what to do. In New Guinea the test demonstrated what the product of our ordinary schools with their curriculum can accomplish. I think there should be room in future to give a great deal more attention to each child showing its own originality. In the school at Claremont recently, a very good show was put on along the lines I am suggesting. The children there gave a show of absolute originality, breaking away from routine and from rule in this and that direction and thus bringing out all there was in them. That is what I want to see done more widely.

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION

(Hon. J. T. Tonkin—North-East Fremantle—in reply) [10.11]: Speaking generally, the Estimates have been very well received. There are one or two points that I feel call for some reply. The member for Forrest, in his enthusiasm to support the claims of his district, exaggerated somewhat when he referred to the unsatisfactory privies at all the schools in his electorate. I do not pretend that the privies at all the schools are satisfactory, but the departmental policy is to replace the unsatisfactory ones as soon as possible and, in recent times, we have done a considerable amount in this direction.

The member for Murray-Wellington mentioned that the department had spent up to £800 in some instances on building new privies attached to schools. He went on to say that, although we spent such a large amount, we did not instal septic tanks. We do where we can. In each case where we have been replacing out-moded buildings and putting in brick structures, we have not failed to put in septic tanks provided the site is suitable. In the district of Murray-Wellington there are schools built on ground that has very poor drainage, and it is not possible to get a septic tank to function. Therefore the department reluctantly has to retain the pan system. I assure the Committee that we desire to replace the unsatisfactory privies, and this is being done as circumstances permit. Very few people would argue that we should use all the bricks available for the purpose of building privies while the housing situation is

so acute and while people are seeking building material for houses in which to live. As quickly as we can, we shall have the new and improved structures erected at our schools.

The matter of the education of native children has also been discussed. As I said when introducing the Estimates, we do not intend to segregate the natives from the whites in the matter of education. I repeat that. We will not segregate them because the department is convinced that such policy would be definitely a retrograde step. The Leader of the Opposition quoted certain reports which I had tabled in an endeavour to prove that segregation was necessary and that the existing method of educating the children was unsatisfactory. I have had a number of letters on the subject of educating the native children and the one I am about to quote is typical of others recently received. This one was sent to the Commissioner of Native Affairs by the teacher of the State school at Boddington. It reads—

It gives me great pleasure to tell you about the native children attending my school.

On taking charge here at the beginning of last year, there were no native children. Now I have 10 children attending, representing five families. It is a pleasure to teach these children. They are exceptionally well behaved, very clean and tidy in their appearance and with their school work, and attend school very regularly. If any child is away the mother always writes me a note explaining the absence. Their school work is generally below standard through lack of foundation work, but they are willing and keen to give of their best and, given a chance, will soon make the grade.

Until I came here I had not had any experience with native children but now, having handled them, I am attracted towards their kindly manner, their cleanliness and their honesty.

It is very refreshing to get an unsolicited report like that. Since the introduction of the Estimates, I have received letters of similar terms indicating that all teachers are not experiencing difficulty with the native children; nor have they cause for complaint about the condition in which they attend school. So I repeat that we are convinced that segregation should not be countenanced, and until it has been demonstrated that this method is a failure, we shall continue to educate these children together, having them in the same schools as the white children.

Our experience is that, if the native children have the same opportunity, if they commence school at the same early age, they can keep pace in their standards with white children. It is only because of the greater absences that occur and the fact of missing so much work that the native children get behind in their standards and, as is common with white children, once a child starts to fall behind in his work, his retardation becomes rapid. That is an argument which was used here in the debate on a subject previously before the Chamber.

Mr. Abbott: Are you suggesting that intellectually they are somewhat about the verge?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: We have no evidence to prove that there is any mental inferiority so far as learning the lessons is concerned. I am not saying we have proved that they are equal, but we have no evidence to prove that they are not equal.

Mr. Doney: Do you find that as they grow their ability is maintained or lessened?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: We have not had sufficient experience in the higher standards to enable us to form a judgment. It is not necessary to traverse the ground covered by the various speakers. I used to take full opportunity of the discussion on the Estimates to expound my views on education and so I have to expect members to do likewise. I never expected the Minister to reply to all I said and I am sure members do not expect me to do so, either.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Agriculture, £142,050:

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE

Hon. J. T. Tonkin—North-East (Freantle) [10.19]: This is the first occasion on which I have had the privilege of introducing the Estimates of this department. In the few months I have been occupying the position of Minister for Agriculture, I have found the work particularly interesting and, might I say, absorbing. The Government intends to stimulate very considerably agricultural production upon sound lines, and also to meet the very greatly increased demand which is coming from the agricultural industry for various

services, some of which are entirely new and have only been undertaken by the department since the commencement of the war. The implementation of the policy which the department intends to pursue is the reason for the increased Vote, the additional sum being £18,435.

During the war, the condition of farms generally has deteriorated, but that is to be expected because of the very great shortage of manpower and therefore the inability of the farmers to have the requisite work done. Apart from the lack of manpower, it was not possible for the farmers to get the materials which they required for repairing fences, for example. In many instances, too, stock has deteriorated, although I must say that farmers are to be complimented upon the fact that the deterioration is no greater than it is. Their efforts to maintain their stud flocks, despite war difficulties, have, I repeat, earned the commendation of the department. In the dairying industry, in particular, it is thought that the average production of cows has deteriorated. Therefore, the farmers have been most anxious for the re-introduction of grade herd recording. By an arrangement with the Commonwealth this recording has recommenced, the State paying one-third of the cost. Members are aware that before the war grade herd recording was being practised with very excellent results.

The average production of herds before the testing was about 180 lbs. of butterfat; within two years the average was over 200 lbs., individual herds exceeding 300 lbs. per cow. I am very glad indeed that farmers have been anxious to have this grade herd recording reintroduced; as I said, we have made a start again. Soil surveys have also been undertaken with a view to improving the standard of farming. When my predecessor was in office, he was chairman of the Lural Reconstruction Commission, and he was giving attention to this matter. He recommended that no new settlement should occur without adequate examination of the soils of the locality and the economic aspects of the crops to be grown. Consideration of that matter will provide a very good safeguard against failures in farming. An area at Margaret River and eastward has already been surveyed in collaboration with the

C.S.I.R., and plans are prepared for the further examination of areas west of Mt. Barker, at Esperance and north and eastward of Albany.

Mr. Thorn: For what purpose?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: A further examination has been made in collaboration with the C.S.I.R. for the purpose of surveying this land so as to ensure that when it is utilised it will be satisfactory.

Mr. Thorn: I was wondering whether it was for fruitgrowing or pastures.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: It is for the settlement of returned soldiers. In certain districts in the eastern wheatbelt, increase in soil salinity has caused concern for many years. Before the war, the department had planned an extensive investigation of these soils, but it was impossible to continue it during the war. Provision has now been made for the training of personnel to undertake the work, which it is hoped will commence on an intensive scale during the current year. As is known, the State is administering the Land Settlement Scheme as agent for the Commonwealth, and one of the provisions is that returning servicemen who are accepted as eligible for the benefits of the scheme shall have an opportunity to receive some training in practical agriculture; those who have had previous experience may attend short intensive courses on their particular industry, spread over about eight weeks. This responsibility has been placed upon the Department of Agriculture and approval has just been received for the intensive courses to be prepared. The scheme will involve the provision of buildings suitable to accommodate at least 50 trainees at a time, together with the instructional and domestic staff required in such a self-contained camp.

Mr. Thorn: Does this come under the Rehabilitation Committee, or are you acting independently?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: It comes under the Rehabilitation Committee. We are charged with the responsibility of giving this training and the courses have already been approved. This will involve additional expenditure and the employment of staff to assist the various technical officers, a portion of whose time must necessarily be devoted to this important educational work. Last year the de-

partment, collaborating with the Animal Health Division of the C.S.I.R., and assisted financially by the Australian Wheat Board, commenced an intensive attack upon the severe disease causing infertility in sheep in areas where subterranean clover is being grown. The indications are that the disease is more intensive in merino sheep and along the eastern edges of the wheatbelt where subterranean clover can be grown, that is, the Great Southern. This work will be intensified during the coming year. It is now at a critical stage in which a number of important facts have been collected that may throw a light upon the solution of this serious trouble. The problem is being attacked by a team of highly trained specialist officers, and it involves animal pathology, animal nutrition, and animal husbandry.

These officers are in close touch with the chief of the Animal Health Division of the C.S.I.R. in Melbourne. They have recently successfully reproduced symptoms of the disease in guinea pigs. This is a very great step forward as, owing to the greater breeding rate of these animals, the investigation may be considerably shortened. The Government also approved, during the term of the Premier as Minister for Agriculture, of the erection of an Animal Health and Nutrition Laboratory at Holmwood. This building has now reached the stage where an inspection could give an idea of its elaborate lay-out; it will compare with any other laboratory of its size in the Commonwealth. It has been so designed as to enable extensions to be made as our collaboration with the C.S.I.R. increases. In addition to the work already being carried out, it is proposed to prepare strains of vaccine for the inoculation of dairy stock against contagious abortion, which vaccine has given promising results in Victoria. This is one of the most serious diseases in dairy cattle throughout the world and, contrary to the general belief of dairy farmers, there is no known method at present of completely eradicating it, other than that of careful husbandry in maintaining a herd clean and as far as possible, avoiding buying animals in saleyards without a full knowledge of their previous history.

The department believes that continuous permanent development of our wheatgrowing areas, particularly in the heavy rain-

fall areas, depends upon greater importance being placed upon animal production in the eastern areas—that of sheep, both for wool and for the breeding of crossbred ewes which may be used for fat-lamb production; in the intermediate zone, where early subterranean clover can be grown, wool, with an emphasis on fat-lamb production; whilst in the westerly and south-west districts, fat-lamb production, blending to almost pure dairy farming, should be the aim. Long-term experiments are being devised at research stations in the western districts, such as at Wongan Hills, Avondale and Chapman Research Stations, to ascertain more precise information regarding a suitable rotation where stock are regarded as of the greatest importance, and wheat as a crop from which a quick cash return may be obtained, rather than one from which the main income would be received each year. This, in turn, involves the breeding of strains of wheat which not only satisfy the farmers' requirements as to disease resistance and yield, but also those of the miller, concerning strength of flour and other milling qualities. The department has endeavoured, and it is believed successfully, to prevent this work retrogressing during the war, but the intention now is to stimulate all the educational and investigational functions.

It is pleasing to have learned and noticed, during the short time I have been Minister for Agriculture, that this policy is apparently supported by producers. I have gained my impressions, not only from personal letters but also from personal contact with farmers at agricultural shows, and those who have attended our field days at research stations. The Government has also given attention to means whereby soldiers taking up properties as dairy farms may obtain dairy stock without the necessity of competing in an already short market at very high prices for dairy cattle. Last year, provision was made for the purchase of as many heifers as those for which agistment on reasonable terms could be obtained; but this fact must be appreciated, that it would be a very unwise policy to purchase heifers if they were to be agisted at a high price, resulting in a very high capitalisation of those heifers.

So the continuance of the purchase of these heifers is dependent on the ability of the department to obtain agistment for the animals at satisfactory rates. Unfortunately, because of the high return received from grazing, particularly for beef, it has not been possible yet to find reasonably well-developed properties which can be leased or upon which stock can be agisted at rates which will prevent a very high capitalisation of the heifers concerned. The Government has, however, purchased approximately 800 heifers and is prepared to resume purchasing as opportunity offers. It would be futile to purchase heifers and agist them at such rates as would still result in a capitalisation similar to that at which they could be bought in the open market.

It is probable that beef will not be so profitable now that Service demands have lessened, and those owners of large properties where beef fattening has been the principal source of revenue might consider assisting in the soldier settlement scheme by making arrangements to agist heifers, either on their own account or by some arrangement with the department.

Mr. McLarty: They would need to be dairy heifers.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes. It is anticipated that not more than 100 farms will be available and ready for stock by the end of next year, which will require 2,500 dairy cows. The quantity which the Government has already purchased, together with numbers which are known to be held on dairy farms, indicates that the position is not as serious as it first appears. I think that is a fairly broad survey of the department's activities.

MR. SEWARD (Pingelly) [10.35]: I would like to offer my congratulations to the Minister on the occasion of his first introduction of the Agricultural Estimates and, broadly speaking, on his outline of the activities of the department for the next year. I was pleased to hear his reference to the new laboratory to be erected. I venture to say that it is possibly the most important item in the whole of his address. When we consider the splendid services we have received from our technical staff in the Agricultural Department—and I specially refer to officers like Dr. Bennetts—and the shocking accommodation they have

had in past years, I think we can regard ourselves as fortunate in having been able to retain them. With the early prospect of their being able to occupy a decent up-to-date laboratory, with the necessary appurtenances, I think the chances of our continuing to retain them will be enhanced. I would like to see some attention given to the possibility of increasing the salaries paid to the veterinary branch, because those officers are very important to the advancement of this State.

I have raised a certain question every year I have spoken on these Estimates, and I propose to do it in future years until I get what I ask for. I refer to the provision of a veterinary surgeon for the Narragin School of Agriculture. It is absolutely essential for present-day farmers dealing with high-grade stock to have a smattering of veterinary knowledge; otherwise they are in an almost hopeless position. It is absolutely necessary that a veterinary officer should attend the agricultural college, if only once a week, to give lectures to students. That officer could go out into the district in the event of an outbreak of stock disease, secure samples, and conduct experiments before the classes at the school. Then, when they finished their term at the school, the boys would have a certain knowledge of veterinary practice; and when valuable animals—horses, cows or sheep—became stricken with disease, they would have some knowledge of what was the matter or what to look for, instead of, as it were, gazing at a blank wall.

Everywhere that we have an agricultural college there should be a veterinary officer, who should give weekly lectures and carry out experiments. I am satisfied that if that were done, sufficient interest would be aroused in some students to induce them to proceed to a veterinary course. The Minister knows that we are lamentably short of veterinary surgeons. Anything we can do to encourage a student to take a course of veterinary work would be of value to the State. I hope that action will be taken in future to provide transport for farmers who wish to attend the field days at the State farms. It was too late to do anything this year, but we had a request from farmers within 50 or 60 miles of the Merredin State Farm. They had never been to a field day. It is not of much use having a field day unless transport facilities are

provided for those who wish to attend. I hope that matter will be taken up with the Railway Department so that Diesel coaches or something of the sort can be put on for the purpose. I was struck by the following paragraph in the Agricultural Report:—

Marketing.—Although many of the controls exercised by the Government during wartime are extremely irksome to farmers and are unlikely to be tolerated after the war for any length of time, there are certain features of wartime marketing which make a strong appeal to producers. The most attractive feature of wartime farming is the confidence and security which arise from knowing in advance the price that will be paid for farm produce.

It is essential that measures be taken to establish some stability for farm produce in future years. I ask the Minister whether anything has been done to improve the conditions of the Midland market since we were here last year. That has been a source of many complaints by many farmers, over many years, because of the violent fluctuations of the sheep market there. Only this week I was talking to a prominent farmer of the Midland district. He had sent a consignment of sheep to the market on, say, Wednesday, and had received, speaking from memory, 31s. for his rams, and 32s. odd for his ewes. He sent a consignment down the following week and got 22s. and 21s. for practically the same animals. That is something that we have to tackle.

We appointed a Select Committee last year and one of its recommendations was that the agents, in whose hands this matter is largely placed, should exercise more care in seeing that the market is not glutted for one or two weeks and then starved for a few weeks. A fall of 10s. a head for a sheep is a serious matter to a man sending in a consignment of stock. The man I have in mind was sending sheep in practically every week for some time, so that it would not matter much to him, but it would practically ruin the year's returns of a man who sent in only one or two consignments and struck low markets. I urge that the Minister do as much as possible to stabilise that market by getting the agents to take the necessary action.

Arising out of that is what I regard as a very serious thing. I heard over the wireless a few weeks ago—but not through the Press—that the export of sheep from Western Australia to the Eastern States

ad been prohibited because of tick. There is no excuse for lousy sheep! A few years ago inspectors attended stock sales and if sheep were visibly affected with lice they had to be taken out of the yard. At sheep sales the wool can be seen hanging from the sheep. That is not fair. If sheep come a two or three times the agents get their commission on each occasion. They should make steps to prevent sheep affected with lice coming in.

Lousy sheep in one pen may affect those in another pen. A farmer in my electorate is considerably depressed and he said to me, "When I came to shear my sheep they were all lousy." he had bought a line of sheep that were affected and the lice had spread through his flock. It is not nice to hear over the air that our sheep are not to be exported to the other States because of lice. The department has been affected owing to lack of manpower during the war years, but this matter should be taken up with the agents and inspectors so that periodical examinations could be made. That could not be done now because the sheep are all shorn, but it could be carried out later to prevent lousy sheep from coming in. A man who dips his sheep should not be exposed to the possibility of getting affected sheep from the market. The report at page 9 states—

If good falls are experienced in this period it is not unreasonable to anticipate a large supply of sheep on the meat market in the spring and early summer.

We dealt with that matter in the Select Committee. It will have serious consequences in the agricultural areas. In my opinion the farmers should be encouraged to go in more for fat lambs than for wool because we are getting too many sheep in the agricultural areas. It has been all right to do that while the war has been on, because we have been able to sell our mutton to the Services and dispose of it as frozen mutton for export, but those markets will not be available now that the war is over. The result is that we will have a large number of sheep coming into the markets in the next few weeks and bringing about 3s. per head, because they will be competing against fat lambs. The farmers should go in for the fat lamb export trade instead of keeping sheep for wool. At the same time it does not redound to our credit to think that we will be selling sheep

for 3s. a head in the next few weeks, and are not able to do anything to have these sheep slaughtered and sent to England where there is a desperate shortage of meat. Instead of these animals being killed to feed pigs they should be sent to England where they would be relished. I do not know whether anything has been done to improve the Midlands Abattoirs.

The Select Committee last year found some big defects there, especially in the slaughtering methods. The butchers had their own slaughtermen who simply slaughtered a number of sheep during the day and finished about midday. The trouble was that they did not care how they did the work. They slashed the skins about so that they became damaged and they were sold on a damaged basis. That means that the purchaser bought the sheep and offered the skins for sale, and the buyer bought the skins knowing that they would be damaged. That is a loss to the producer. The recommendation was that the system be altered so that instead of the butchers supplying their own slaughtermen, slaughtermen would be engaged by the abattoirs, and any butcher, large or small, would be able to book space and his sheep would be slaughtered much the same as is done at the freezing works. Under that system the skins would be preserved and a better supply given to the seller.

Soil salinity was mentioned by the Minister, who indicated that more intensive investigations are to be made into it in the near future. Soil salinity is an alarming factor at present, particularly in the Great Southern district, where it is making big inroads into the paddocks through the spreading of the salt, and where it is killing the trees. I think it is a much more serious problem than is soil erosion in the Great Southern area, and I am pleased to know that close investigations are to be made to see whether something can be done to prevent its spreading. Infertility of ewes is a serious matter in that country. I know a man who had 1,700 ewes that were mated but from which he only got 50 odd lambs. That means that he must get rid of the ewes and cannot hold them for more than about two seasons. It is no use buying good rams to improve the value of the flock if they have to be sold in a year or two. I am glad to know that work in that direction is being continued. I am sure that if the

investigating staff continue their inquiries much longer they will get to the seat of the trouble.

The Minister did not mention the Government's wheat policy and I do not know what it is, but I hope steps will be taken to stabilise the price of wheat if that is possible. I hope it will be done and that the wheatgrowing areas of this State will be extended as far as possible, though I do not suggest going out into marginal areas just because they have had a good season this year. It is no use having one good season followed by seven or eight bad years. I think wheat should be grown wherever it is profitable, and that our land should be confined to the production most suited to it. I do not regard the Great Southern as a wheatgrowing area but it is a wonderful dairying district with a better climate than the South-West, because it has not the excessive rain. A lot of dairying could be carried on in the Great Southern, by growing the necessary fodders. I hope to see the dairying industry spread into that area, where I think people will engage in it more readily than in the excessively wet areas where the working conditions are not the best.

Reverting to fodder banks, in the South-West recently I was struck by the amount of meadow hay being cut this year. I do not wonder that we could not get tractors in my area, because in the South-West I think every farmer I saw had a new tractor and bailer and mower. They are bailing their hay and it does not take much stacking. A farmer in the Midland area had the idea of compressing wheat in order to save it for stock food. I have in my hands a sample that he gave me. It is wheat, mixed with a little molasses and compressed into a compact mass. If a machine were made to compress wheat in this way it could go from farm to farm, processing the wheat, which could then be stored as a food for stock. The compressed wheat could be sent to the northern areas, for instance, if necessary. At present it is a pity to see 20 per cent. of the hay being pitched out because it has been ruined by the weather.

The Minister for Lands: How is that compressed wheat released for use as stock food?

Mr. SEWARD: It is smashed up with a hammer. The sample I have represents 10 lbs. of wheat, which has been compressed

into a jam tin. It is pure grain with the addition of a little molasses.

Mr. Doney: It is very palatable to the stock.

Mr. SEWARD: If a machine went from farm to farm compressing the wheat in this way there would be no wastage. At present the farmer cuts the hay and sells it to a merchant, who says he will be round in about a month to cut it up, but instead of that he may come after about six or seven months, when the rain has ruined a large percentage of the hay, and that is the farmer's loss. I commend this idea to the Minister as I think it may provide a fodder bank of considerable value, and one which will not deteriorate as a haystack does.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 10.58 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Tuesday, 27th November, 1945.

	PAGE
Questions: State school children, as to medical and dental treatment	2175
Housing, as to Goldfields Water Scheme employees	2176
Bills: Increase of Rent (War Restrictions) Act Amendment, 3A.	2176
State Electricity Commission, Com.	2176
Medical Act Amendment, Assembly's message	2183
Criminal Code Amendment, 1A.	2188
Building Operations and Building Materials Control, 1A.	2188
Local Authorities (Reserve Funds) Act Amendment, 2A., Com., report	2188
South-West State Power Scheme, Com.	2189
Supreme Court Act Amendment (No. 2), Assembly's message	2191
Council's request for conference	2191
Justices Act Amendment, 2A., Com. report	2194
Motion: Trotting Control, as to inquiry by Royal Commission, passed	2192

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

QUESTIONS.

STATE SCHOOL CHILDREN.

As to Medical and Dental Treatment.

Hon. A. L. LOTON asked the Chief Secretary:

1, What was the total number of school children examined by officers of the Medical Department during the year ended the 30th June, 1945?

2, What number of children were attending school outside the metropolitan area, and of this number, how many required (a)