

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 11th November, 1948.

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

QUESTIONS.

TRACTORS.

As to Allocation and Use.

Hon. E. NULSEN asked the Minister for Lands:

(1) Is it a fact that Mr. C. R. Le Mercier is a pool machinery man for the Brunswick and Waroona area, and if he is so, have any dams been constructed, or tanks sunk in his district recently?

(2) Following upon the reply given to Question No. 2, as given on the 21st October, 1948, is it known that this machine left Perth for Carnamah on the 28th October, 1948?

(3) Are the names of the farmers contributing to the purchase of the machine known? If so, who are they? (Order only lodged on or about 21st October).

(4) What area remains in the Karridale district for the department to develop?

(5) How many P.W.D. machines are engaged on War Service land settlement development work in that district?

(6) In view of the answers to Questions Nos. (4) and (5), is the allocation of a D6 tractor to the Karridale district partly for War Service land settlement warranted?

(7) Is it known that Mr. Higgins is prepared to construct dams on Tootra, but, because of the hard nature of the ground and owing to inadequate power, is unable to commence?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes. For six months ended 15th June, 1948, 2,298 hours of general work, including dam sinking, clearing, drains, etc., were completed.

(2) No. Mr. Le Mercier signed an undertaking that the machine would be retained in the Forest Grove, Witchcliffe Karridale, Rosa Brook and Rosa Glen districts for the next two years, and would be available for soldier settlement work when required.

(3) Allocation was sponsored on representations from the Rosa Brook, Witchcliffe and Karridale Farmers' Unions. Following are names of farmers listed as interested in the purchase:—

Witchcliffe.—T. Hinton, Reg. Slapp, J. R. Mitchell, A. D. Errey, C. A. Summerfield, S. E. Robinson, C. S. Lester, W. B. Wicham, J. H. Brooks, J. A. Sebbes, J. R. Rowe, E. Wilmott, A. Owers, S. R. Crittendon, N. Wheeler, W. E. Bailey, H. G. Smith, R. J. Henderson.

Rosa Brook.—Teasdale, Clayton, Minchin, S. B. Johnston, Crozier, Darnell, F. Dennis, Sneddon, Brennan, Brooksby, Skegg, Busby, E. Arthur, G. Arthur, Mitchell, K. Dennis, Cubbon, J. White, Doak, Barrett, Gains, Dixon, George, Pickering, Jones, G. Johnston, Hansen, Hartnett, Detheridge, McCabe, G. P. Smith, Silverthorne Bros., S. Silverthorne, McSwain, Lancaster, Mills, Vinal, Yull, C. Hobson, C. Thomas, Earnshaw.

Karridale.—J. and L. Busby, J. Arburthnott, C. MacDonald, H. E. Tall, C. Ironmonger, E. J. Hiller, Geo. Wilson, D. Castle, W. Wagstaff, A. Wright, T. Mamion, J. Coffy, W. C. Peree, B. D. Sortiori, W. Hurst, D. Painore, M. Cash, J. Lloyd, G. Price, G. Balston, F. Harrison, J. Moss, L. Crane.

(4) Existing Farms.—New clearing and reconditioning—880 acres.

New Project 8 Farms—Clearing and re-conditioning—1,425 acres.

Proposed development 50 farms, based on cost of clearing now being undertaken.

(5) One P.W.D. D7 tractor; one P.W.D. D4 tractor.

(6) Yes.

(7) Mr. Higgins has advised the Department that he will be unable to undertake dam sinking on "Tootra" unless he obtains a powerful crawler type tractor.

CEMENT.

As to Supplies and Re-Control.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE asked the Minister for Housing:

(1) What is the present position regarding the availability of cement for building and other purposes?

(2) In view of what appears to have been an inequitable distribution of this product since it was decontrolled, will he now consider the question of recontrolling it?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) The position at present is difficult, but steps have been taken to effect an improvement in supply. The last figures available, namely, those for September, show cement production at 119 per cent. of the last pre-war year, which is the highest production since 1939.

The company is installing additional plant, on which it is hoped increasing production will be possible, commencing in about six months' time. Production by the company is estimated to improve from the existing rate of approximately 60,000 tons a year to a figure of 70,000 to 90,000 tons a year in three years' time.

(2) The company makes provision for the cement requirements of the holders of permits for housing and other buildings, and while some shortage of supplies has been apparent in some cases, readjustments of the volume taken by public works has been made which it is hoped will allow for a reasonably equitable distribution.

In view of the saving of time and money to those in the building industry and other cement users through the termination of control, it is hoped that it will not be necessary to reimpose controls of distribution of this product.

MILK.

As to Delay of Price Review.

Mr. MURRAY asked the Minister for Lands:

In view of the unsatisfactory position regarding the price of milk in the Bunbury district, will he inform the House—

(1) How many producer-retailers are—

(a) not paying charges under the Milk Act?

(b) paying charges under the Milk Act?

(2) Is non-payment of charges the major reason for the delay in overall price review?

(3) If the answer to No. (2) is "Yes," does he approve of penalising those who conform to the Act because the Board has failed to take action against wrong-doers?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) (a) Four.

(b) Three.

(2) No.

(3) Answered by No. (2).

FISH CANNING.

As to Government Assistance.

Mr. FOX asked the Treasurer:

(1) What amount of monetary assistance has been given by the Government to Hunt's Canning Company—

(a) at Albany?

(b) at Geraldton?

(c) at Hopetoun?

(2) What are the terms under which such assistance has been granted?

(3) Did the Fremantle Fishermen's Co-operative Company seek assistance from the Government?

(4) What was the result of such request?

The TREASURER replied:

(1) (a) None.

(b) None.

(c) None.

(2) Answered by (a), (b) and (c).

(3) Yes.

(4) The application was refused.

NORTH-WEST.

As to Resident Doctor for Roebourne.

Mr. RODOREDA asked the Minister for the North-West:

When is it anticipated that a resident doctor will be appointed to Roebourne?

The MINISTER replied:

No applications were received from medical practitioners in response to advertisements.

Organisation of medical services for lower North-West was studied by Commissioner of Public Health during his visit last week and his recommendations are awaited.

TRAM-TROLLEY-BUS CONVERSION.

As to Mt. Hawthorn Route.

Mr. HEGNEY asked the Minister for Transport:

(1) Has the Government given any consideration as to the advisability or practicability of extending the trolley-bus system along Oxford Street, via Cambridge Street, to Mount Hawthorn, to replace the present tram service?

(2) If not, will he indicate whether attention will be given to the matter?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) and (2) The conversion of the Mt. Hawthorn tramway to trolley-buses is now receiving consideration. The route favoured is via William Street, Newcastle Street and Oxford Street, along the present tram route.

TIMBER.

(a) As to Use for Synthetic Products.

Mr. KELLY asked the Minister for Forests:

(1) What timber is used in the manufacture of paper pulp, masonite and other synthetic products using lignin or wood cellulose as a raw material?

(2) In the manufacture of bonded plywood and wall boards, what Western Australian timbers have been found most satisfactory?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Throughout the world generally, softwoods such as spruce, hemlock, poplar and pine are used for paper pulp. In Australia and Tasmania paper pulp is being successfully made from Eucalypt hardwoods.

Other synthetic products, such as masonite, caneite and wall boards generally, can be made from a wide variety of wood fibres, including most hardwoods and softwoods, and materials such as bamboo and sugar cane fibres.

The main masonite production in Australia is at Newcastle, New South Wales, where a wide range of hardwood Eucalypts, Melaleuca, Angophora are used.

(2) Jarrah and karri have both been tried experimentally and found to be satisfactory for the manufacture of wall boards. The term "wall boards" covers particularly products such as masonite and caneite, in the manufacture of which the wood is not completely pulped, as for paper. The term "bonded plywood" usually refers to plywood made with special glues, giving a waterproof product. Up to date, "bondwood" has not been manufactured in Western Australia.

Plywood sheets have been satisfactorily made in Western Australia from karri, wandoo, blackbutt, banksia and others, but karri is the only species to have been used on a large scale commercially, and may be said to be the most satisfactory apart from locally grown pine, which is, of course, available only in small quantities.

(b) As to Production, Imports, etc.

Mr. KELLY asked the Minister for Forests:

(1) How many super feet of Western Australian grown timbers, jarrah, karri and pine, were used in Western Australia in the years 1938, 1939, 1940 and 1946, 1947, 1948?

(2) What quantity was exported in the same years?

(3) What quantity of softwoods was imported in those years?

(4) What are today's prices in Perth of imported softwoods?

(5) What tariff rate is imposed on imported softwoods into Western Australia?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) The consumption of Western Australian timber (hardwoods and softwoods) during the fiscal years 1938, 1939, 1940, 1946, 1947 and 1948 were as follows:—

1938—80,981,376 super ft. (includes 186,336 super ft. of local pine).

1939—80,609,436 super ft. (includes 228,792 super ft. of local pine).

1940—76,517,604 super ft. (includes 520,848 super ft. of local pine).

1946—66,130,356 super ft. (includes 1,462,248 super ft. of local pine).

1947—78,064,248 super ft. (includes 1,493,988 super ft. of local pine).

1948—82,499,016 super ft. (includes 1,633,440 super ft. of local pine).

(2) The quantity of timber exported during the same years was—

1938—90,548,928 super ft.

1939—68,451,000 super ft.

1940—60,595,020 super ft.

1946—40,476,300 super ft.

1947—41,503,536 super ft.

1948—43,012,860 super ft.

(3) The quantity of timber (hardwoods and softwoods) imported during those years was—

1938—7,399,764 super ft.

1939—7,791,292 super ft.

1940—7,737,672 super ft.

1946—1,214,964 super ft.

1947—3,685,728 super ft.

1948—1,902,900 super ft.

Separate information concerning softwoods only is not available.

(4) Imported softwood retail prices in Perth today vary with the prices fixed for each shipment received.

Some New Zealand pine may be obtainable at 80s. per 100 super, but prices for yellow pine, Baltic and oregon may vary from 120s. to 190s. per 100 super.

(5) The tariff rate on imported softwoods varies according to country of origin, and the form in which the timber is imported. Rates are shown under Item No. 291 of the Tariff Schedule and vary for logs, planks, sawn and dressed timber, and timber of various cross-sectional dimensions.

NOTICE OF MOTION, ETC.

As to Postponement.

The PREMIER: I move—

That the notice of motion standing in my name and also Order of the Day No. 1 be postponed till a later stage of the sitting.

Mr. MARSHALL: It is not permissible for a notice of motion to be postponed. It must either be removed from the notice paper or replaced for another day.

The PREMIER: Peculiar circumstances have arisen. The Loan Estimates are not yet up from the printer, but they will be here after the tea adjournment, if not before. It was expected that they would be here today and I hoped to proceed with them according to the notice paper, but have only just been informed that they are not yet available.

Question put and passed.

Mr. MARSHALL: It is not permissible for a notice of motion to be postponed. Motions can be postponed, but not notices of motion.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have already given a ruling earlier in the session that notices of motion can be postponed until a later stage of the sitting. The question has been put to the House and decided upon.

Mr. MARSHALL: I cannot quite hear your ruling, Mr. Speaker, but Standing Orders distinctly prevent the postponement of a notice of motion. If the Premier wishes to deal with this at a later stage of the sitting it may be permissible for him to move to that effect.

Mr. SPEAKER: That has been done already.

The PREMIER: I asked that the notice of motion be postponed until a later stage of the sitting.

BILL—LEGAL PRACTITIONERS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. A. V. R. Abbott—North Perth) [4.40] in moving the second reading said: The Bill embodies two main and three subsidiary objects. The main objects are, firstly, to alter the existing qualifications for admission as practitioners of the Supreme Court of Western Australia, by bringing those qualifications more into line with those applying to the admission of legal practitioners in the Eastern States and, secondly, to give the Barristers Board a greater measure of control over legal practitioners in this State. The three subsidiary objects are—

(1) Greater control over articled clerks and their service to solicitors;

(2) to permit the Crown Solicitor to have articled clerks; and—

(3) to facilitate the proof of charges against unqualified persons performing legal work for fee or reward.

With regard to the first main object—the qualification for admission as a practitioner in this State—it is necessary first to explain that in England, New South Wales and Queensland the legal profession is by law separated into two distinct branches—barristers and solicitors. The same distinction is followed in practice in Victoria but in the smaller States of South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania, practitioners are admitted, and in fact practice, both as barristers and solicitors. A barrister does not require training in many matters and on many subjects upon which a solicitor is constantly engaged. A barrister, for instance, does not have to concern himself with conveyancing, such as partnership agreements, leases, mortgages, etc. It takes longer to train a solicitor than it does to train a barrister.

Hon. E. Nulsen: And the latter does not require to have the same qualifications.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: No, or such a wide experience. Throughout the British Empire a solicitor cannot be admitted as such until he has undergone training for five years while a person may qualify as a barrister in three years. That practice is almost uniform throughout the British Empire. So far as Western Australia in particular is concerned, nearly all practitioners spend most of their professional lives doing the work of a solicitor and only occasionally plead in the superior courts. It is obvious, therefore, that the basic qualifications for admission as a practitioner of the Supreme Court of Western Australia should be those necessary to enable him to practice as a solicitor rather than the qualifications necessary to enable him to practice as a barrister.

Hon. E. Nulsen: A barrister here would need to have both qualifications.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The Bill has been designed to achieve these objects. The main effect of the measure in this regard will be as follows:—

(a) English or Irish barristers of two years' standing, Scottish Writers to the Signet and Scottish law agents will no longer be entitled as such to be admitted as practitioners in this State.

Regarding English and Irish barristers, they may not have the necessary basic training as solicitors before being admitted to the Inns of Court. Members are probably aware that in accordance with an ancient custom in England, a man can be admitted as a barrister after eating so many dinners and passing a not very advanced examination in the principles of law. As a barrister, his serious training commences by working in conjunction with some senior barrister for whom he devils. He has to serve a considerable time with his senior and he begins by getting junior briefs that are given to him through the agency of the man with whom he is training.

Hon. E. Nulsen: Would he have the qualifications necessary for an articulated clerk?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I do not think he would, as a barrister. If, therefore, an English or an Irish barrister wished to become a practitioner in this State, he would first have to qualify as a solicitor or otherwise obtain a degree in law similar to that obtained at the University of Western Australia, and serve the necessary period of articles to a solicitor. He could in his own Homeland be admitted as a solicitor after having the necessary training that is provided for him in England. In other words, a barrister can become a solicitor in England but only after he has received certain training. In the same way, in the Eastern States a man can become a solicitor only after he has had certain experience as a barrister and after his name has been removed from the roll of barristers.

Hon. E. Nulsen: And would a university course be necessary?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: No, but he will require to have the qualifications of a solicitor before he can be admitted in Western Australia, if the Bill becomes law. Whereas the Eastern States will not recognise these barristers without some training—I am not quite aware of what it is, but they are required to have practised for a certain period before they can become solicitors, even though qualified as barristers—here, on the contrary, English barristers require no training at all.

The Bill expressly protects the rights of any person who is an English or Irish barrister but has not yet been such for two years. Under Section 16 of the Interpreta-

tion Act the rights of any person who is affected by the Bill and applies for admission before it becomes an Act, will be protected. With regard to Scottish lawyers, known as Writers to the Signet or law agents, the great bulk of Scottish law and practice is totally different from that found in Western Australia. A Scottish solicitor of even the highest standing must find himself quite at sea in understanding and practising Western Australian law. It is necessary for the protection of the public that no practitioner shall be admitted to practice in this State unless he has the necessary qualifications at time of admission to understand and practise our law. Another effect of the Bill will be that—

(b) It will also affect a person who has a degree in jurisprudence.

In 1945 the principal Act was amended to allow a degree in jurisprudence to be a qualification for admission. At that time it was apparently visualised that only persons who had obtained a degree in jurisprudence at some university in the British Empire would apply for admission as a practitioner in this State. Since then, however, a case has arisen where a person with a degree in jurisprudence from the University of Prague may seek to be admitted in this State, and the subjects studied for that degree in jurisprudence in no way qualified him to practise in Western Australia.

Hon. E. Nulsen: Is the degree of jurisprudence a higher degree?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I am not familiar with it, but think it is a degree of less practical application than the degree of law conferred by our University.

Hon. E. Nulsen: Is it more academic?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Yes, Roman law would be one of the major subjects. It is proposed to alter that qualification by requiring that the degree must be one which is recognised by the Board, and that the examination passed for the degree was substantially in those subjects and at as high a standard as would be required for the degree of bachelor of laws at our own University. Then there is:—

(c) A further effect of the amendment will be that practitioners of the Supreme Court of Victoria will be entitled as of right to seek admission in Western Australia.

At the present time practitioners of all States, except Victoria, may be admitted in

this State; but Victoria requires a graduate in law to serve only one year's articles to a practitioner before admission, while our law requires two years' articles after graduation. The present Section 14 (d) (ii) of our principal Act prevents reciprocity with Victoria, because the section requires similar service under articles as is required in this State. Victoria will accept our practitioners, if we accept hers, and it is with a view to obtaining this reciprocity with Victoria that this amendment is proposed.

Hon. E. Nulsen: Even though Victoria does not require two years' articles?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Yes. It is felt that the time has arrived when a solicitor in one State should be entitled to admission in any other State. After all, we are all Australians; and it is curious that a Victorian solicitor may appear in the High Court in Western Australia, if he is admitted to that court, but may not appear in our own Court.

Mr. Hegney: You want uniformity?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Yes, throughout Australia.

Hon. E. Nulsen: Will this apply to New Zealand?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I am not aware whether it will. There is provision for admission of New Zealand solicitors. They cannot be admitted as of right, but must apply. Finally we have the following effect:—

(d) If the amendment is passed, a person with the equivalent of a Western Australian law degree may be admitted after serving two years' articles, and a person admitted as a solicitor in England, or in any Australian State or other British country where a similar system of law prevails, may be admitted without service of any articles; but a barrister will not be admitted on that qualification alone.

To sum up, a solicitor of any part of the British Empire which has a standard equal to our own will be able to obtain admission. If a lawyer has obtained a degree of any university in the British Empire, then, if the training is substantially the same as our own, he may, by serving articles as our own students do, that is, two years, be admitted. But a barrister, as such, whether of the Eastern States or of England, will not be admitted. At present, a barrister of Queensland or of New South Wales cannot be admitted, but a barrister of England may be.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: A person admitted as a barrister in England may now be admitted as a barrister and solicitor?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Yes.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: That will apply?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Yes. There will henceforth be uniformity throughout the Australian States.

Hon. E. Nulsen: You are only asking that they have the same qualifications as this State insists on?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Yes. The next major purpose is to give the Barristers Board a greater measure of control over members of the profession in this State. At present, the only disciplinary powers of the Board are in relation to illegal or unprofessional conduct, and then the Board may only make inquiries and submit a report to the Full Court of Western Australia. The Barristers Board makes a report to the Full Court, but that court must deal with any charge, even of a minor nature which hardly warrants the discipline of the Full Court. The Bill proposes to give to the Barristers Board a measure of disciplinary powers over practitioners who are guilty not only of illegal or unprofessional conduct as at present, but also of any neglect or undue delay in the conduct of the business of their clients.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: If he is to be struck off the rolls, he will have to appear before the Full Court.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The Board will have power to inflict a fine up to £100, suspend the practitioner from practice for a period not exceeding two years or reprimand the practitioner; or the Board may make a report to the Full Court, and in any event any practitioner may appeal to the Full Court against any order made by the Board. This power of control is less wide than, but somewhat similar to, the control given to the Medical Board over members of the medical profession by the amending Medical Act of 1945. The Chief Justice considers that these added disciplinary powers will be very necessary as soon as the guarantee fund established under the amending Act of 1944 is operating.

In regard to the first subsidiary purpose, namely, the control of article clerks, and their service to lawyers, it has been found in the past that there were no satisfactory

arrangements for control by the Board over the service by country article clerks of part of their service in the city. A common practice is for the country solicitor to allow his article clerk to spend a few months with the solicitor's town agent, so that the article clerk may gain experience of work in the various courts in Perth as well as in the Government departments, etc. No satisfactory provision at present exists to enable the Barristers Board to control this service and the Bill is designed to give the Board the necessary powers in this regard. I think members will appreciate that it is necessary, in the interests of an article clerk who is serving in a country town for him to have some training in a town office. At the present time there is no provision in the Legal Practitioners Act to enable that to be done. It is carried out at times, but there is no proper authority for a country article clerk to serve some of his time, or gain experience in a town office.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Why do not you make provision for a clerk to be able to earn while doing his articles?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: There is already provision for that.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: No, there is not.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I think there is. At present, a practitioner who has ceased to practice on his own behalf is not entitled to take or retain an article clerk. The effect of that is to prevent any Crown Law officer from having or retaining an article clerk. The Public Service Commissioner is particularly anxious to try to improve the standard of the Civil Service by encouraging promising young public servants, particularly Crown Law officers, to take degrees at the University and to be admitted in this State. This will benefit both the State and the officers concerned.

At present, there is one Crown Law officer doing a rehabilitation course in law at the University. He has six distinctions and two major passes in the eight subjects he has so far taken. He is now in his third year at the University and, being an ex-Serviceman, he will be entitled next year to do his first of two years' articles concurrently with his fourth year law at the University. Unless he is allowed by legislation to do his articles with the law officers, he

will be compelled to seek articles with a solicitor in private practice, and cease to be a public servant. Alternatively, he could never seek admission to the Bar. The Bill endeavours to avoid any such hardship and will, if it becomes law, tend to improve the standard of and opportunities in the Civil Service.

Hon. E. Nulsen: I do not see any reason why public servants should not be articled to Crown Law officers.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Although the Crown Solicitor may have an articled clerk who may become admitted, such clerk, after admission, will not be entitled to go into private practice until he has satisfied the Barristers Board that he has had 12 months' experience in a private legal office. In other words, he will be able to practice his profession in the Crown Law Department and, because of having been articled to an officer of that department, he will have gained sufficient experience in Crown law matters to be able to carry out his duties efficiently. If, however, he wants to leave the public service and practise on his own as a solicitor, there might be many matters with which he had not been able to become familiar while in the service, and so it is provided that he must do one year's articles with a private firm. I might add that that period has the approval of the Chief Justice.

Hon. E. Nulsen: That really means that he cannot become an outside solicitor until he has served 12 months' articles in a private office.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Exactly. This is necessary for his protection as well as that of the public. The period of 12 months was suggested by the Chief Justice and supported by the Crown law officers. I do not know the practice in all the other States, but it is understood that in South Australia the Crown Solicitor has had many articled clerks who have remained as solicitors in the Crown Law Department of that State and are doing very good work. I have it from the Public Service Commissioner that the Crown Solicitor in New South Wales also takes articled clerks.

The final object of the Bill is to facilitate proof of charges against persons who do legal work for pay or remuneration

without having the necessary qualification to do that work. The present section has been found inadequate to protect the public and the legal profession from the performance for reward of unqualified work. Persons doing legal work without proper training cover up their costs for such work by charging heavily for services in respect to which they are entitled to charge. The amendment is worded so as to prevent evasion of the existing Act while not affecting the person who does occasional legal work for another without reward.

Hon. E. Nulsen: The legal man cannot be paid for both.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The effect of the amendment is that if a non-legal party wishes to do occasional legal work without charge, he may, but if he does legal work in conjunction with some other work for which he is charging, then his action will become unlawful. The reason is and it can easily be seen, that he has only to increase his charges in connection with the work for which he may legitimately charge and then say, "The legal work I am doing in addition is being done at no cost." In these circumstances, it is impossible to prove that such a man is charging, as is very often the case, for the legal work.

Hon. E. Nulsen: That does not apply to a legal practitioner.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: That is so. I might say that the proposals in connection with the admission of solicitors to the Supreme Court are fully approved by the Barristers Board and the Law Society of Western Australia. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. E. Nulsen, debate adjourned.

BILL—MINING ACT AMENDMENT.

Message.

Message from the Governor received and read recommending appropriation for the purposes of the Bill.

LOAN ESTIMATES, 1948-49.

Message.

Message from the Governor received and read transmitting the Loan Estimates for the year 1948-49 and recommending appropriation.

In Committee.

The House resolved into Committee to consider the Loan Estimates, Mr. Hill in the Chair.

Vote—Departmental, £193,000:

THE PREMIER (Hon. D. R. McLarty—Murray-Wellington) [5.10]: I wish to submit for the consideration of members the Estimates of the expenditure for 1948-49 from the General Loan Fund. In doing so, I shall outline the main items of expenditure last year and those included in the Estimates for this year. The proper expenditure of loan moneys imposes a grave responsibility on any Government because it is in the nature of an investment of capital which in private enterprise would provide the revenue to keep the concern going. Unfortunately, the Government loan expenditure cannot be so rigidly applied because it is necessary at times for a Government to provide facilities for the encouragement of settlement, and the direct financial return from the expenditure may not be sufficient to meet the debt charges on the amount of loan money involved. Again, expenditure may have to be undertaken of a specially heavy nature for the provision of a non-revenue producing work which is anticipated to have a long life as, for example, the provision of a large public building, and it would not be fair to place the whole of the financial burden on the present population.

Apart from these considerations, however, governmental loan expenditure should be carried out with the same regard for our ability to repay the borrowed money as a prudent man would be expected to exercise in borrowing for his own personal needs. That this has not always been so regarded or has not always been practicable is apparent from the proportion of our present public debt that is entirely unproductive; that is, direct earnings from the undertakings provided from the loan money spent are insufficient to make any contribution towards the interest and sinking fund payments on that debt.

Unproductive Portion of Public Debt.

Of a total debt at the 30th June last of just over £100,000,000, no less than 49.9 millions—or nearly half the entire public debt—was totally unproductive. This position is accounted for in part by the rise in costs

which has been so marked since the end of the war and the difficulty of increasing revenue charges sufficiently to keep pace with the rising costs. A good example of this difficulty is provided by the railways, where the capital of £27.4 million appears amongst the unproductive debt. Last year the railways failed to earn sufficient revenue to meet working expenses, excluding debt charges. In contrast to the position last year I notice, on looking through the records, that in 1942-43 the surplus of railway earnings over working expenses was almost sufficient to meet the whole of the interest payable on the capital. The losses on our loan undertakings are such as to compel us to be most careful in approving loan expenditure. On the other hand, the war years have caused a big accumulation of necessary public works waiting to be carried out and they must be carried out if the State is to make any economic progress.

Figures for 1947-1948.

Last year the Loan Estimates covered an amount of £5,683,000. The amount actually spent was £3,031,000. It will be remembered that when I introduced the Estimates last year I said that in all probability we would not be able to spend the whole of the money covered by them, owing to the difficulty of securing labour and material. That position did arise and some of the works listed could not be commenced, while others could not be implemented to the extent contemplated in the Estimates. Details of the amounts estimated and actually spent are as follows:—

	Estimate.	Actual Expenditure.
	£	£
Departmental ..	183,000	82,000
Railways and Tramways ..	708,000	333,000
Electricity Sup- plies ..	2,114,000	728,000
Harbours and Rivers ..	160,000	149,000
Water Supply and Sewerage	1,144,000	682,000
Development of Goldfields ..	185,000	262,000
Development of Agriculture ..	132,000	75,000
Roads, Bridges, Public Build- ings, etc. ..	767,000	567,000
Sundries ..	268,000	151,000

I shall refer briefly to some of the larger works undertaken last year.

Railways and Tramways.

Improvements to the Midland Junction Workshops cost £36,000, while £7,389 was spent on the provision of an under-water coal storage tank at Midland Junction. This work is almost completed. Bus chassis to the number of 17 and three spare engines were purchased during the year at a cost of £74,658; other buses for the Railway Department cost £20,500. Expenditure of £60,084 was incurred as part payment for six new diesel-electric rail cars and 12 trailers. For the Tramway Department nine Daimler road buses were purchased at a cost of £51,571.

Electricity Commission.

Expenditure on the South Fremantle Power Station amounted to £677,000. On the East Perth Power Station £6,753 was spent for the provision of an additional transformer and £12,177 for new switch gear. Expenditure to a total of £16,220 was incurred on the South-West Power Scheme.

Public Works Department.

The main expenditure under this heading related to the dredging of the bellmouth entrance to the Fremantle Harbour, the figure being £22,000, and for the extension to the North Wharf berths 1, 2 and 3, £42,630. Expenditure of £28,956 was incurred on preliminary work at Bunbury Harbour. On improvements to harbours and rivers £47,000 was spent, £29,000 being spent on improvements to the Swan River and £13,000 on extensions to Robbs Jetty. On improvements to jetties in the North-West £7,300 was spent, most of it on the provision of a new shed at Point Samson jetty. On the provision of water supplies for towns £76,000 was spent, the main items being as follows:—On the Katanning water supply, in raising the wall of the dam, £10,946; on the Pemberton water supply, £6,000; on the Bridgetown and Collie mains, which were re-lined, £3,490; for the construction of the Gnowangerup water supply, £6,930; on improvements to the mains of the Geraldton water supply, £18,430; on the Waroona water supply, £10,023; on the Albany water supply, in replacing the wooden pipes, £4,646, and in duplicating the reservoir at Mt. Clarence for the Albany water supply, £5,378.

Water Supplies.

Approximately £131,000 was spent on the Goldfields water supply, the main work being related to the raising of the wall of Mundaring Weir at a cost last year of £79,000. On renovating the mains £19,000 was spent and the balance of the total sum was spread over a number of smaller items. Under the heading of "Water Supply in Agricultural Areas," £158,000 was expended, the main works being as follows:—

	£
Stirling Dam	61,609
Harvey Irrigation	61,000
Wilson Drainage District Works (Torbay area)	9,269
Preston River levees at Glen Iris	4,843

Public Buildings.

A number of smaller works was also completed. For the provision of public buildings £567,000 was spent, this sum covering a large number of buildings. The main item of expenditure was on hospital buildings, which accounted for £367,000. Most of this was spent in connection with the Royal Perth Hospital, other expenditure on hospitals being as follows:—

	£
King Edward nurses' quarters	7,823
Northam Hospital	3,576
Wooroloo Hospital staff quarters	4,505
Perth Dental Hospital	19,200

Other large works were, Leederville Technical School, £29,849; Collie School, £11,512; Cunderdin School, £18,755; South Bunbury School, £9,624; Carnarvon School, £2,319; purchase of Cathedral Hall for the tuberculosis clinic, £7,500; new offices, which at present will be required for the State Housing Commission, but which should be available in due course to relieve the accommodation demands of other public service units, £22,325.

Development of Goldfields and Mineral Resources.

Under this heading the actual expenditure was greater than the estimate. This was due to the fact that larger sums than were estimated were spent on the Wundowie Charcoal Iron Industry as well as on the State

(W.A.) Alunite Industry. The expenditure estimated for Wundowie was £80,000, while the actual expenditure was £165,000. The estimate for the alunite industry was £50,000, while the actual expenditure was £55,000. I shall be dealing in some detail with both of those projects at a later stage in my speech.

Loan Expenditure, 1948-1949.

The estimated loan expenditure for this year is £6,246,421. At the Loan Council meeting held last August the total of the loan programmes submitted by the Commonwealth and the States was £91,317,000. Towards this sum it was expected that £4,801,000 would be received by way of loan repayments, while at the end of last financial year an amount of £7,812,000 was in the hands of the States as unexpended loan moneys. The amount which would have to be borrowed, therefore, if the total of the loan programmes was approved, was £78,704,000. At the 1947 meeting of the Loan Council it was decided, owing to the difficulty in securing labour and materials, to limit the borrowing programme to 75 per cent. of the approved loan programme.

Borrowing Programme.

The borrowing programme was fixed at £53,282,000 and the results for the year 1947-48 show that this sum was slightly more than sufficient to meet the net loan expenditure of the Commonwealth and States, the sum spent being £51,442,000. In considering the amount to be borrowed for this year it was felt that, as many of the works included in the programmes related to expenditure on materials that had already been ordered and that were expected to be delivered during the year, it was likely that the programmes would be closer to completion than were those of 1947-48. Accordingly, the borrowing programme was reduced by only 12½ per cent. It is understood, of course, that should a State find itself able to implement its full programme, the necessary funds will be available. I have felt it wise to include in the Estimates the whole of the loan programme approved by the Loan Council rather than to limit it to the borrowing programme only.

Loan Estimates for 1948-1949.

The details of the Loan Estimates for this year are as follows:—

	£
Departmental	193,000
Railways and Tramways ..	1,171,732
Electricity Supply ..	1,895,472
Harbours and Rivers ..	231,338
Water Supply and Sewerage	1,224,957
Development of Goldfields	
and Mineral Resources ..	177,130
Development of Agriculture	237,625
Roads and Bridges, Public	
Buildings, etc.	731,766
Sundries	383,401
	<hr/>
	£6,246,421

Hon. E. Nulsen: Over 100 per cent. more than last year.

The PREMIER: I will explain that as we go on. No doubt the hon. gentleman knows the explanation already.

Departmental.

The expenditure under this heading relates mainly to the payment of salaries to officers of the Government Service who are paid in the first place from Consolidated Revenue Fund, but the Votes of the department are recouped from Loan where the officer is engaged on Loan work or is partly engaged on such work. If the whole of the Loan programme cannot be spent, an adjustment in the amount repaid to Revenue from Loan will of course, be made.

Railways and Tramways.

Of the works being undertaken by the Railway Department which are already in progress, the outstanding ones are as follows:—An amount of £3,000 is estimated to be spent this year to complete the work connected with the deviation to avoid the tunnel at Swan View. Work still to be carried out relates to the metal ballasting of the new track, also the fencing of the railway line. The plant for the underwater storage of Collie coal is almost completed and an amount of £500 is estimated to be spent this year to complete it. The sum of £8,200 will be spent on the completion of the rehabilitation of the Midland Junction Workshops and £30,000 on the provision of canteen facilities there. This work was held up for a review of the building requirements as a considerable amount of material, most of it in short supply, is needed for the canteen. It has been decided,

however, to commence the work and a start will soon be made.

The new station at Meltham is nearing completion and an amount of £7,500 is to be spent this year to complete the work. For the completion of a water supply at Kwobrup £3,680 will be spent. This work provides an artificial catchment and a rearrangement of the drainage to improve the catchment. The sum of £36,000 will be spent on new machinery for the Midland Junction Workshops to assist with the rollingstock regeneration programme. It is estimated that £30,000 will be spent on new diesel road buses and £168,000 will be required to complete the purchase of the six diesel-electric rail cars and the 12 trailers which are now arriving. It is expected that the first of these units will be available for traffic in March of next year. For the new offices for the tramways, and canteen and mess room at East Perth, £11,800 has been set aside. In regard to new works for the railways, the outstanding items are as follows:—The East Perth-Rivervale duplication is a large work estimated to cost over £100,000 and it may be possible to make a commencement this year. An amount of £15,000 has been provided on the Estimates.

Mr. Rodoreda: Where is that? East Perth to where?

The PREMIER: East Perth to Rivervale. An amount of £30,000 has been provided to make a commencement with track improvements on the Bakers Hill-Northam section of the Eastern Goldfields line, the Salmon Gums-Esperance line, and on the line near Spencers Brook. It is estimated that £26,200 will be spent on loco depot improvements at Northam; and £20,400 on improvements to the yard, including mechanical coaling plant and new barracks at Bridgetown. Provision of £15,000 has been made for the erection of a diesel electric rail car shed to house, service and maintain the diesel electric rail cars.

For the housing of railway employees, particularly in the country districts, £70,000 has been provided. Provision has been made for £20,000 to be spent on garages and equipment to house, service and maintain the road buses at Bunbury and Perth. It is estimated that £115,000 will be spent on new railway wagons. Under the Tramway Department £80,000 has been set aside to purchase new buses and £100,000 to meet

part of the cost of the 50 additional trolley-buses which are on order. On overhead line equipment for new trolley-bus routes it is estimated that £33,000 will be spent.

Electricity Supply: Total estimated expenditure—£1,895,472.

Equipment for the new South Fremantle generating station is arriving regularly and is being placed in store. Substantial progress has been made on the foundations for the station and on the building itself, which is being erected by a local contractor on behalf of the English contractors. The value of local work done on the station and of the equipment which has been landed at Fremantle already exceeds £1,100,000. In addition, some equipment for the change in frequency in the metropolitan system, and some local work on the frequency system, has been carried out. The value of this work exceeds £200,000. Members are aware, of course, that the Commonwealth Government is making a contribution towards the cost of the change in the frequency.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: That is, about £300,000?

The PREMIER: Yes. The total cost of the first section of the South Fremantle generating station and of the change in frequency was originally estimated at £3,400,000. This figure will be exceeded as all contracts are subject to clauses which provide for increases in prices to meet the rising cost of wages and materials. The provision for electricity supply also includes that part of the first payment on the purchase of the City of Perth Electricity and Gas undertaking, which will be chargeable to Loan. Members are aware of the arrangement by which the undertaking will be purchased for an annual payment of £60,000 for a period of 50 years.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: That is a wonderful slab of State socialism.

The PREMIER: Of which the Acting Leader of the Opposition approves. But we will have more to say about that when we introduce the Bill in a few days. Part of the £60,000 will be treated as interest on the capital value of the purchased plant and will be paid by the State Electricity Commission from its revenues, and the remainder will be payments of principal to be found from Loan and added to the capital of the Commission. I do not intend at

this stage to enlarge on this matter as opportunity for a full discussion on the new agreement will be given when the Bill to ratify it is submitted to Parliament. Suffice to say that in my opinion the terms of the purchase are equitable both from the viewpoint of the Perth City Council and the Government. The purchase will terminate a most unsatisfactory condition in regard to the supply of electricity which I think could not have been allowed to continue to the end of the existing agreement in 1963.

In the South-West scheme contracts have been let for extensions to the Collie generating station. Work has been commenced on clearing the routes for high tension transmission lines. The Commission's depot at Pielon Junction has been established. A number of supply authorities in the country have been supplied with generating equipment on a hire basis. It is felt that it is more desirable, to meet the needs of country authorities, for the Commission to purchase generating plant and hire it to the local authority rather than that the local authority should purchase its own equipment which ultimately will have to be taken over by the Electricity Commission when the South West scheme is extended to the local centre. These hire plants have been placed in towns where the supply authorities were experiencing difficulty in coping with the growing demand for electricity supply and are all in areas which the Commission expects within the next few years to be able to supply current either from Collie or South Fremantle. Particulars of the total estimated cost and the expenditure to date, plus the Estimates for this year in regard to the South Fremantle station are as follows:—

	Total estimated cost.	Expen- diture to 30th June, 1948.	Estimated expendi- ture 1948-49.
	£	£	£
South Fremantle			
"A" station	2,734,000	738,191	1,410,000
South Fremantle			
"B" station	3,250,000	846	66,000
East Perth frequency changer	700,000	164,530	32,000

Public Works.

Of the new works contemplated in the Estimates the following are the main ones:—£24,000 has been provided to cover

improvements to the Roebourne jetty, for the provision of a crane for Onslow and for locomotives for Onslow and Roebourne. A sum of £8,000 has been set aside for a new goods shed at the Wyndham jetty; but it is possible, on account of the shortage of materials, that this work will not be able to be commenced this year. Provision has been made for a new explosives jetty at Woodman's Point, also for a new slipway at Albany. Tenders have already been accepted for a new dredge for use at Albany at an estimated cost of £340,000. Tenders have also been called for a new grab dredge for use in the harbours generally and more particularly for the deepening of berths at Fremantle harbour. However, it is possible that no expenditure on the dredges will be incurred this year. An amount of £10,000 will be spent this year on reclamation work at Albany.

An amount of £40,000 has been provided towards meeting the cost of enlarging the Goldfields water supply main conduit between East Northam and Grass Valley and another section east of Cunderdin. This work is essential to meet the growing needs of the scheme. A sum of £15,000 has been provided for extensions throughout the Goldfields and for the supply of a booster pump at Kellerberrin. The enlargement of the main conduit is included in the work to be carried out under the Comprehensive Water Scheme and will therefore be subject to a pound-for-pound subsidy from the Commonwealth Government. A sum of £48,850 is included for the relaying of mains at Albany, new mains at Kondinin and additional pumping plant at Geraldton, as well as many improvements at other centres, while £1,000 has been set aside for preliminary expenses on a new water supply for Bridgetown.

Other Country Water Supplies.

A total of £50,000 is provided for the construction of key tanks in the wheat areas, for continuation of drainage in the Warroona district, channel lining in the Harvey irrigation area, Collie district drainage improvements, and many smaller improvements to the drainage and channels throughout the irrigation area. Provision has also been made to meet the first year's costs in connection with the Port Hedland water supply and tenders have already been called for the pipes for this scheme.

A sum of £9,000 has been included for improvements to be made on the Wyndham-Turkey Creek-Margaret River stock route and additional improvements to the Derby-Broome stock route.

Mr. Marshall: You ought to do something for the Meekatharra-north stock route, which is in a deplorable state.

The PREMIER: If that is so, we shall see whether something can be done. For preliminary work for sewerage at Albany, an amount of £9,000 has been set aside.

Works in Progress.

To continue the reconditioning work at Fremantle Harbour, berths Nos. 1, 2 and 3, and for the bellmouth dredging at the harbour entrance, £70,000 has been provided; for work on improvements to the Bunbury Harbour, the estimate is £80,000, and for improvements to the Swan River in the neighbourhood of the Causeway the amount is £30,000. A sum of £25,000 has been provided for the continuance of the renovations to the main conduit, Goldfields Water Supply, and £25,000 to complete the extensions in wheatbelt areas and for the completion of the summit tank at Booran.

To meet the expenditure for the raising of the Mundaring Weir, a total of £120,000 has been set aside. The complete cost of this work will be approximately £500,000. Provision has also been made for the new pumping plant at Norseman, and £4,000 has been provided for additions to the Leonora-Gwalia water supply. For water supplies for towns, £31,000 has been included. Of this £4,000 is for the purchase of meters. The main works are—Geraldton reticulation improvements, £1,200; Waroona Water Supply, £8,200; Gnowangerup new dam, £6,000; Katanning, £6,000; and £2,700 has been included for the cost in connection with the new reservoir at Albany.

Mr. Hegney: Have you £50,000 for Port Hedland?

The PREMIER: I told the hon. member all about Port Hedland.

Hon. E. Nulsen: You have not mentioned anything about the Esperance district.

The PREMIER: Yes, I mentioned Esperance, too. Every member is getting a turn. For agricultural water supply purposes, £159,370 has been set aside, which

amount includes the following for tank construction in the country:—

	£
Pingrup	2,250
Mendel-Wongoondy	14,600
Ongerup	10,200
Lake Grace	3,300
Reconditioning of tanks in agricultural areas	8,200

An amount of £50,000 has been provided for carrying on Harvey No. 3 irrigation channel work and £30,000 for Torbay drainage. For the new town water supply at Hamersley Range to serve the needs of the asbestos mining industry, the estimate is £19,500.

Under the heading of Abattoirs, £28,560 is expected to be spent on the Kalgoorlie Abattoirs and £20,318 to complete work now in progress for the remodelling of the Midland Junction Abattoirs.

Public Buildings and Hospitals.

Over £700,000 has been earmarked for public buildings. This sum covers the total required to complete works in progress as well as making provision for new works, including schools.

The total estimated cost of providing nurses' quarters at King Edward Memorial Hospital is £105,000, of which £60,000 will be spent this year. A total of £19,000 is expected to be spent on completing the first section of the Royal Perth Hospital and £100,000 for continuing the work on the second section of the hospital.

The new works under Public Buildings to be commenced this year will naturally depend upon the availability of labour and materials, and the Government will decide from time to time, having regard to the urgency of the needs, which particular buildings shall be commenced.

Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage.

The estimated expenditure for work under this heading is £661,387. One of the major items of expenditure will be £80,000 for the completion of Mt. Yokine reservoir. The total estimated cost is £150,000, and we expect that the work will be almost completed by the end of the current financial year. A sum of £18,176 has been provided for the extension of water supplies to Osborne Park and Scarborough, where building activity is very marked and the need for additional supplies is urgent.

For sewerage work, £16,000 has been set aside for North Fremantle, £24,000 for the Bayswater area and £21,000 for the Midland Junction area. A total of £49,000 will probably be spent on the Perth main sewer diversion.

An amount of £40,000 has been set aside for water supply to meet the increased demand for water in the northern suburbs to connect the Hills mains to the Mt. Yokine reservoir. The steel for making the pipes has been ordered and the expenditure for this financial year depends on how quickly the steel deliveries come to hand. A sum of £20,000 has been provided for the Mt. Eliza-Dalkeith-road 30in. main, which is necessary to meet water demands at Swanbourne, Cottesloe and Fremantle, and £11,000 will be spent on water supply main improvements at South Perth. An amount of £35,000 is the estimated expenditure this year for the extension of sewerage to an area near Manning-road, South Perth, which will be developed during the year by the State Housing Commission.

Development of Goldfields and Mineral Resources.

The estimated expenditure under this heading is £177,130, the main items being £55,000 for the Charcoal-Iron Industry and £73,000 for the State (W.A.) Alunite Industry. As the history of the alunite and the charcoal-iron industries may be little known by some of the newer members, I shall sketch briefly the story of the commencement of these two industries, their development to date and prospects for the future.

Alunite Industry.

A complete history of the alunite industry was published by the Department of Industrial Development in 1946 and members who have not read it will find it a most interesting document.

The shortage of potash in the early stages of the war encouraged a local syndicate to exploit the possibilities of producing potash from the large deposits of alunite at Lake Campion near Merredin. The syndicate was formed in 1940 and, with some small financial assistance from the Government and technical assistance from the Department of Chemistry, operated a pilot plant at the University. The experiments carried out on the pilot plant were sufficiently successful

to encourage the belief that a commercial process had been discovered and the syndicate took steps to form a company.

Due to the entry of Japan into the war, the company flotation was found to be impracticable and the Government, which had agreed to make a loan to the new company pending the raising of sufficient capital, entered into an agreement with the members of the syndicate to form a partnership. The partnership then took steps to erect a large scale plant at Lake Campion for the production of potash, which by this time was severely rationed in Australia.

Many initial difficulties were experienced, mainly in obtaining suitable plant and labour and the plant was not completed until the end of 1943. The production of potash involves complicated chemical processes. Trial runs of the plant demonstrated that modifications of the units associated with the process would have to be made in order to achieve effective results. The estimates based on the pilot plant experiments were found to be seriously at variance with the results secured on the commercial plant. These discrepancies were due to unsuitable heating units, insufficient temperature control and unsuitable kiln shape. In the leaching section, corrosion troubles developed, and premature separation of crystal from leach liquors took place.

It was obvious that a large scale reorganisation of the plant was necessary. Consideration was given to closing down the works pending this reorganisation, but, in view of the urgent demand for potash, it was decided to continue production while the plant modifications were being effected. Up to the end of 1946, 3,850 tons of fertiliser had been produced, and during the past year production has been maintained at the rate of 4,000 tons per annum. Admittedly, the fertiliser is of low grade, the potash content being about 30 per cent. as compared with 60 per cent. in the imported fertiliser. Research work has been carried out continuously and as a result new processes have been developed. Already portion of the new process has increased the fertiliser to a 36 per cent. potash content and when the plant is completely reorganised a 60 per cent. product should be possible. During the course of these developments the partnership was dissolved and the

works are now owned entirely by the Government.

The cost of establishing the industry has been heavy—far in excess of the original estimate—and it is evident that a substantial proportion of the money spent will have to be written off. In view of the national importance of the industry and the fact that large subsidies have been paid by the Commonwealth Government on imported potash, the Commonwealth has been requested to share with the State in the capital write-off. Two independent Commonwealth investigators have reported favourably on the future prospects of the industry and there is now every reason to hope that the introduction of the latest method of production will place the industry on a sound basis and render Australia independent of overseas supplies of potash.

Mr. Leslie: They are importing it from Russia rather than develop our own industry.

The PREMIER: Yes. The amount spent to the 30th June, 1948, was £476,604 and a further expenditure of £180,000 is required.

Charcoal-Iron Industry.

The need to establish a heavy iron and steel industry in this State had been recognised for many years as one of the indispensable requirements for our economic stability. We possess some of the best iron deposits in the world, but on account of the non-coking quality of our coal the production of iron by the ordinary methods of coke blast furnaces was impossible. In view of our large timber reserves, investigations into charcoal blast furnaces had been made for some time by the Department of Industrial Development; and in 1942 the investigations had reached a stage when an estimate of the cost of such a project and its possibilities of success could be made. The proposal submitted by the Department of Industrial Development was for the erection of a small blast furnace to produce up to 10,000 tons of pig iron per year and to associate with the furnace a refinery for the extraction of acetic acid and wood naphtha from the timber converted into charcoal. The furnace and refinery were to be erected at Wundowie, near Northam, because of the proximity of supplies of iron-ore, timber and limestone.

It was recommended that this plant should be in the nature of an experimental pilot plant to test the process of iron production and wood distillation so that if successful, a large-scale plant could be erected near larger timber supplies and use made of the rich iron deposits in the North by inexpensive sea transport of the ore. The project was an ambitious one and necessitated a great amount of research on problems hitherto not previously attacked in Australia. The best technical advice available in Australia on blast furnaces was secured and an officer of the department was sent to America to gain experience in the operation of wood distillation plants.

As a result of the investigations, it was decided to proceed with the erection of the plant and a commencement was made in 1943. Due to war conditions progress in construction was slow, and it was not until January of this year that production of pig-iron commenced. The refinery has not been completed, due mainly to the fact that priority was given to requirements for copper and copper-smiths for the Royal Perth Hospital. It is expected, however, that the refinery will be ready for January next.

After some initial difficulties involved in developing a technique for treatment of the iron-ore, satisfactory methods have been evolved enabling pig-iron production to be stabilised for the present at about 70 per cent of estimated eventual output. Until the refinery is working and the by-products can be recovered, no good purpose would be served by increasing the scale of operations. All State requirements of pig-iron are now being met from Wundowie and excellent reports have been received from users as to quality.

The wood distillation retorts have worked excellently from the inception, producing a high grade of charcoal. A small temporary sawmill, in addition to providing blockwood for the retorts, has produced large quantities of sawn timber including seasoned timber for flooring for the local housing and construction programme. Without this mill the housing programme at Wundowie would have been seriously delayed. Production of pig-iron and sawn timber is now at the rate of £75,000 per annum. With rising costs, the expenditure on the project has been greater than anticipated; and up to the end of June last the amount spent was

£485,963. It is anticipated that a further sum of £136,000 is required for completion.

Mr. Styants: What was the original estimate?

The PREMIER: I cannot say off-hand. The Commonwealth Government showed its interest in the industry by granting £30,000 towards the cost. It will be remembered that soon after assuming office the Government had an investigation into the industry by Mr. A. J. Gibson, a consulting engineer from Sydney, who had had many years' experience with the Broken Hill Proprietary Company. Mr. Gibson's finding was that the experiment was justified and he recommended the Government to complete the work.

Loans to Mining Companies.

The remainder of the estimated expenditure on the development of mining relates chiefly to loans made to mining companies. The sum of £10,000 has been provided for loans generally; £8,000 for the Freney Kimberley Oil Company; £10,000 for the Collie coal basin drilling project, for which negotiations are in hand for the purchase of a deep drilling machine; £8,000 is provided for assistance to prospectors, and £4,400 for the State Batteries.

Department of Agriculture.

Provision has been made for the continuance of the work at the Ord River Research Station, the expenditure being shared by the Commonwealth Government. It is estimated that £16,795 will be spent at the Muresk College. Provision for £110,000 is made for a new slaughter hall and sale yards at the Midland Junction Abattoirs where extensive alterations and additions are being made.

An amount of £30,000 is included for pine planting. For some years a regular programme of pine planting was carried out, but with the advent of the war it had to be interrupted. It is essential that we develop the supply of our softwoods, not only to avoid importation from overseas but to conserve the use of our hardwoods for those requirements that can be met only by hardwoods.

Sundry Works.

At Welshpool it is proposed to provide £205,000, most of which is required for the

Chamberlain Industries: £40,000 is set aside for the completion of the foundry, and £165,000 for the purchase of equipment and machine tools which will be leased to the company with the right of purchase. An amount of £30,000 has been provided for land resumption for industrial purposes; and £30,000 is required as additional capital for the State Sawmills towards the erection of the new mill at Shannon River, and £7,550 for machinery and loco sheds at Pemberton, purchase of locomotive and investigations in connection with a new mill at Deanmill. An amount of £20,000 has been provided for the W. A. Meat Export Works to enable the works to comply with the Commonwealth requirements regarding export of meat.

It is not possible to deal in detail with all the projects contemplated in the Loan Estimates, but any further information required by members will be supplied when the Estimates are under discussion. I submit the Estimates for the consideration of members.

Progress reported.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

BILL—FAIRBRIDGE FARM SCHOOL.

Second Reading.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. A. V. R. Abbott—North Perth) [7.30] in moving the second reading said: This small Bill with a very long title is to enable the Fairbridge Farm School Incorporated to carry into effect an agreement with the Kingsley Fairbridge Farm School Society of Western Australia Incorporated. As members are aware, the parent body of this society was formed in England many years ago and it is now known as the Fairbridge Farm School Incorporated. A local society was created in Western Australia to assist in carrying out the objects of the parent organisation and the local body is known as the Kingsley Fairbridge Farm School Society of Western Australia Incorporated. Prior to the war, the majority of the funds required to carry out the charitable intentions of these organisations was provided by the London society. The object is to take from England children who have no parents and bring them to Western Australia so that they may be educated and trained and thus enabled to earn their own living. This

London society not only has other organisations in Australia but it also has kindred associations in Canada and elsewhere in the British Empire. Owing to the war, the migration of these children ceased.

In a review of the scheme prior to resumption, the London society, prompted by the British Home Office, decided that it was desirable for all Fairbridge farm schools throughout the Dominions to be controlled directly by the parent society in London to maintain what is called a policy of unbroken responsibility towards the children. The British Home Office considered that this was a most desirable feature and that the parent society should not avoid its responsibilities to the children by handing them over to an independent body in each Dominion. It was therefore considered that the parent society should control the Fairbridge Farm School at Pinjarra through a local board of governors rather than through a virtually independent society.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Apparently it took them a long time to realise the necessity for that.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Yes, it did. Apparently it was the result of the feeling of the Home Office and the feeling of the many people who were contributing to the fund. Almost all of the funds are contributed by the Home society. With this end in view, the representatives of the parent society came to Western Australia last year to confer with the Western Australian society, and as a result of their deliberations an agreement was arrived at whereby ultimately the Western Australian society would merge with the parent society. In the meantime, the control of the Fairbridge Farm School at Pinjarra was to pass to the parent society and be administered by that society through a local board of governors. This was agreed to by the local organisation and it also agreed that, pending such merger, the properties of the school should be held in trust by the parent society and the Western Australian society jointly for the purposes of the parent society, and at the end of six years, or earlier, if the membership of the Western Australian society should fall below 11, the Fairbridge Farm School property should be vested absolutely in the parent society. Meanwhile, the assets, including trust funds, of the Western Australian society

should be vested in the parent society subject, of course, to the trusts concerning the same, to permit the carrying on of the scheme in Western Australia by the board of governors.

Incidentally, a similar arrangement has been arrived at in Canada in respect of the Fairbridge Farm School in British Columbia, and I understand that negotiations are proceeding for a similar re-organisation of the Fairbridge scheme in New South Wales. Since this particular agreement was entered into, doubts have been expressed by leading counsel in Perth as to whether, under its constitution, the Western Australian society can legally carry out such an agreement, particularly as regards trust funds, without the aid of an Act of Parliament. It is therefore desired that an Act should be passed resolving the doubts and giving legal effect to the arrangements between the two societies.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Desired by whom?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: It is desired by the two parties.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: You are quite sure of that?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I am quite sure of that because I have received a written intimation signed by the solicitors of both societies.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: You are sure there is no coercion about it?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I do not think there was any coercion, although possibly there was an intimation that the London society, which was providing all the funds, might have felt that it would not continue to do so if the local society would not agree to what was considered a reasonable and fair proposition.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Then there is no suggestion of duress?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: No, there is no suggestion of duress in that. After all, if a person is providing money surely he has the right to have a say in the way in which it shall be spent.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Do you think that is the only criterion in this matter—the provision of money?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: If I am carrying out a charitable object, and providing the money for it, and the object of

my charity comes from my own country, surely I have a right to say in what way that object shall be controlled. I do not call that duress.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: There is such a thing as fulfilling obligations entered into.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Yes, but there were no obligations in this case. If they were entered into, then of course they would have to be carried out, as the hon. member is aware, and there would be no necessity for a new agreement.

Mr. Hoar: I do not think you are too sure of your ground.

The Premier: Let us get the children out; that is the main thing.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: That is not the main thing.

The Premier: Yes, it is.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: This won't do it.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The board of governors referred to, which is now controlling the Fairbridge Farm at Pinjarra for the parent society, is constituted under an agreement with the parent society as follows:—

Two members nominated by the Treasurer of Western Australia.

Two members nominated by the Rhodes Fellowship.

Three members nominated by the Western Australian Society.

Four members nominated by the parent society in London.

All members of the board are resident in Western Australia.

The farm school at Pinjarra is now being extensively renovated in preparation for the reception of children from the United Kingdom under the scheme. Subject to completion of legal formalities, of which the proposed Bill is now a vital part, the first party is expected to arrive towards the end of this year. From the remarks of the member for North-East Fremantle it appears that he has the idea that some unreasonable attitude was taken up by the London society. With that contention—

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: What do you think?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I cannot agree, because, after all, if we in Western Australia were sending children home or to any other part of the British Empire,

at our own expense, and providing all the money, surely we would be entitled to expect that we would have the say as to how that money was to be spent.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: I take it the Attorney General is perfectly happy about this.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Not only that, but I should think it is extremely fair that the control of the children, and the actual spending of the money, should be vested in residents of that country, who were nominated on the basis I have outlined. I consider the London society has been entirely fair and well within its rights, and I feel that it was fully justified in keeping the responsibility for its children under the control of its nominees.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Has the Attorney General made any inquiries as to why this step was so necessary after all those years?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: One of the reasons was that the Home Office desired it.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: That is not a reason.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I think it is a very good reason. If the hon. member, when a Minister, desired something it was a very good reason for its being done, and I think members know that it always was done.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: One must justify one's desire.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: If the hon. member were doing it, it would be right, but when anybody else is doing it, it is all wrong.

The Premier: There was no prospect of getting any children out here.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I cannot appreciate what appears to be the hon. member's point of view.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: You might do so later on.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I might. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. J. T. Tonkin, debate adjourned.

BILL—LAND ACT AMENDMENT.*Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. A. H. PANTON (Leederville) [7.46]: The Bill, which seeks to amend the Land Act, deals with three or four matters, some not very important and some rather interesting. It will repeal Section 9 which provides that aboriginal natives may be granted land up to 200 acres in extent. The new provision will give the natives the right to take up land on the same basis as anyone else. I presume that is what it means. I do not know whether the Minister has any information to indicate why that course has been found necessary. I have no objection to it, but I am rather doubtful about the Lands Department being rushed with applications from aboriginals seeking to take up huge tracts of country. I can see some advantage in allowing them to take up 200 acres for the purpose of intense culture, but I doubt whether the provisions in the Bill will be regarded as of any importance by the natives. Apart from that, I do not know that its inclusion will make any difference regarding the Act, and I can see nothing to be gained by discussing that phase.

Another provision in the Bill relates to Class "A" reserves. I understood from the Minister's speech that it is proposed to proclaim Class "A" reserves in future rather than to gazette them as at present. Not only is it proposed that that course shall be adopted in future but the provision is to have retrospective application to all such reserves that have been gazetted. The Minister said that the reason for the change was that under the present system the Commonwealth Government might resume any Class "A" reserve if it so desired, apart from certain areas vested in municipal councils and road boards for specific purposes. I understand the Commonwealth Government did make one such attempt but was not successful.

I would like the Minister to give the House some further information respecting this matter and to tell us whether, if the Bill becomes law, there is anything to prevent the Commonwealth Government, should it desire to take over a Class "A" reserve for some special purpose, bringing down

legislation which would override the State Act. No doubt the Minister could secure legal advice from some of his colleagues on that point. If the Commonwealth Government could pass legislation that would have that effect, it is so much waste time considering a Bill of this type. Rightly or wrongly, I understand that Commonwealth legislation overrides that passed by the State. I presume that the attempt made by the Commonwealth to take over a Class "A" reserve was during the war period.

The Minister for Lands: Yes!

Hon. A. H. PANTON: I do not know that if the Commonwealth regarded the taking over of such a reserve as essential during war time, anyone would object to that course, provided the area reverted to the State subsequently.

The Minister for Lands: That is so. Had the Commonwealth Government been prepared to negotiate, we would have been reasonable about it; but the Federal authorities tried to step in and take it over.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: I still think my contention is correct that there is nothing to prevent the Commonwealth, if it requires land that it regards as essential for its purposes, passing an Act and resuming it.

The Minister for Lands: Quite so.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: I think that is correct.

The Minister for Education: But I think the Commonwealth authorities admit that it cannot be done if the area has been proclaimed. In that case, their expropriation rights have no effect, legislatively or otherwise.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: If that is correct, it is news to some of us. I always thought Commonwealth law was supreme in all circumstances. If that is not so, it is good to know that the State, in this respect at any rate, is superior to Commonwealth law. Should the Commonwealth Government regard the possession of land, even though it should be a Class "A" reserve, as essential for war or other purposes, I take it the State Government, irrespective of its political colour, would be prepared to negotiate.

The Minister for Lands: That is quite right.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: We should certainly protect our Class "A" reserves. On my first reading of the Bill, I came to the conclusion that the Minister sought the right to release such reserves by proclamation instead of bringing the matter before Parliament. I am glad to know that that is not the position. We must be jealous regarding our Class "A" reserves and should protect them against the Commonwealth Government if necessary. I admit that I was put right about this matter by the Under Secretary for Lands. I rang him up to ascertain the position regarding King's Park, and he then informed me that I was on the wrong track. In view of the Minister's statement, which I accept as correct, there need be no further trouble on that point.

I am not so happy about another principle involved in this amending Bill. There was an instance at Narrogin where the local R.S.L. was granted a piece of land for the specific purpose of erecting a memorial hall on it. Because it had been granted that area under the section the Bill seeks to amend, the R.S.L. could not mortgage the property and a special Act of Parliament had to be passed so that it might exercise that right. The Bill provides that in such circumstances the approval may be given by Order-in-Council instead of the proposition being placed before Parliament.

The Minister for Lands: That is right.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: That is a rather dangerous procedure. I do not suggest that the Minister is not to be trusted in this respect, but we know that very often pressure is brought to bear upon a Minister who may not know all the facts which would be available if such matters were brought before the House. Each session a Reserves Bill is introduced, and I see no disability involved in adopting that course. Each member in this Chamber represents some part of the State, and my experience has been that when a Reserves Bill is introduced, any member interested in one of the proposals dealt with in that legislation is keen to know all about it. He is in the position to secure firsthand information and can give firsthand information to the Minister and the House. If the proposed change is in order, no trouble is experienced.

I am jealous about Parliament being deprived of any of its rights. If the issue

in this instance involved any inconvenience to the Minister or his staff, I would not raise any great objection. But I cannot envisage anything of that sort. I would like the Minister to give further consideration to this aspect. We should retain the right of Parliament to determine, when a Bill is introduced to deal with such matters, whether or not a mortgage should be raised on the block of land concerned. I do not like that right being taken away from members.

The only other matter dealt with in the Bill concerns the raising of the cost for the preparation of Crown grants from 30s. to £2. I do not offer any objection to that increase, but I suggest to the Minister that he should get legal advice respecting the preparation of Crown grants with a view to ascertaining whether it is not possible to simplify the procedure to a considerable degree. The officer responsible for the document is the Surveyor General who has to sign the grant together with the officer who actually prepares it. Then it has to be signed by the Minister for Lands, after which the document goes to Government House for signature by the Governor. When 40 or 50 grants are spread out on the table for the purpose of securing these signatures, the place is flooded. I can see no reason for it at all.

The Minister for Education: No wonder there are two big tables in the office of the Minister for Lands.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: That is so. When I was Minister, I had to pick up the lag that occurred during the war period, and it was a big task. I frankly confess that I left some of them over for the present Minister.

The Minister for Lands: You should see what is coming in now. We get 300 and 400 at a time.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: It is ridiculous that they must be signed by so many authorities. The documents are not for framing. I suppose the practice has come down to us from the early days of the Colony, but I cannot see why it should be necessary for anyone apart, possibly, from the Surveyor General and the Under Secretary for Lands to sign them. If the Minister were to look into this point, he might decide to introduce legislation to simplify the procedure. It might be asked why I did not

deal with the matter when I was Minister for Lands. I held that portfolio for only 15 months. I certainly did not attend to the matter but the present Minister, with the assistance of the advice of his fellow legal Ministers, could possibly deal with it with a view to its simplification. I support the second reading of the Bill.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. L. Thorn—Toodyay—in reply) [8.0]: I assure the House that this amending Bill was given much consideration by the Lands Department, and we have some very efficient officers.

Hon. A. H. Panton: That is so.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: With regard to the first amendment on which the member for Leederville spoke, and which is designed to place the native on a better basis as to the selection of land, I agree that there will not be any great demand by the native population for farm land. However, we have had strong representations made to us by the Department of Native Affairs to liberalise this section of the Act. With the tolerance of the House, I shall read a letter from a native asking that this concession be granted. We know that natives in many instances cannot be relied on. I have employed them myself and know that that is so.

Mr. Hegney: Many whites cannot be relied on, either.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: That is so. The hon. member can speak for himself.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Do not start a brawl.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: No.

Mr. May: Why not?

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: The fact is that natives are not reliable. They will give all sorts of undertakings, but the next day they are missing. They have gone bush. The letter to which I refer is addressed to the Minister for Native Affairs and reads as follows:—

I am writing this hoping that you, Sir, as Attorney General and Minister for Native Affairs, might be able to do something for me or at least give me a ruling on Section 9 of the Land Act. This section, according to a ruling given for the benefit of the Lands Department, precludes me or my nephew from selecting land. The ruling states that no descendant of an aboriginal is eligible. Is this correct, or has there been some mistake? I

was under the impression that anyone not being a native at law living a normal, white man's life, being born and reared as such, would have been quite entitled to select land for the purpose of farming and making a home to live in a reasonable amount of comfort and respectability.

I myself am a quarter-caste. The late Chief Protector, Mr. A. O. Neville's records will prove this. I was born and reared under white man's conditions and have adhered to those conditions all my life. I put in seven years at a convent school (day) and two years at a State school. I was baptised and confirmed a Catholic, have gone through life working at most jobs and mixed with people and been respected by all.

We hear a lot of talk about the uplift of the native, but, I ask you, Sir, what is the use of the education and bringing up that I have had if I am to be debarred from helping myself to improve my standing? My nephew, a young chap, 19 years of age, who is feeling that he would like a place in the sun and has an ambition to go farming and make his way in the world, is thinking it rather hard that he should be debarred from holding a bit of the soil on which he was born.

So I appeal to you, Mr. McDonald, to give this matter your kind consideration, and if you can, for the lad's sake, do anything to lift us above the present level on which we stand, degraded so far as Section 9 is concerned, I shall be extremely grateful.

This man's application was supported by the Department of Native Affairs. I know natives who can speak English as well as we can. They are well educated, and if we can do anything to uplift them it is our duty to do so. I am not going to stonewall my own Bill.

Hon. A. A. M. Coverley: Was he not wrongly advised? He could take up 200 acres of land.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes, but he was objecting to the limitation imposed by Section 9.

Hon. A. A. M. Coverley: I agree with you.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: I am in agreement with the member for Leederville that we must jealously guard our Class "A" reserves. We discovered during the war that the Commonwealth has power to acquire these reserves, and therefore we are now, under our sovereign rights, proclaiming these reserves. That procedure will protect them for the State. I assure the House, however, that should the Commonwealth Government at any time require a Class "A" reserve to assist it in prosecuting a war, it

will receive the hearty co-operation of this State. Such co-operation has always been given. We shall shortly have before us a Bill dealing with reserves and road closures. I think it will be the biggest Bill of its kind ever presented to the House, because our present State activities are demanding the closure of roads in almost every part of the State. It will not be long before that measure is brought down.

Regarding Crown grants, much work is entailed in their preparation. They are fine documents, written on the best of parchment. I suggested to the Assistant Under Secretary for Lands soon after I assumed office that he might provide me with a rubber stamp for the purpose of putting my name on Crown grants. He gave me a very nice lecture, which I greatly appreciated, on tradition. He said, "This document is handed down to the State by His Majesty the King and it must be preserved. We cannot allow a rubber stamp to be placed on so important a document." Members will admit that that is so. He is a proud man who gets his Crown grant, or title deed, to his land. He says, "I must lodge it with the bank for my own protection. It is the title to my property." I do not disagree with the member for Leederville that the procedure may be simplified and that a lower fee might be charged.

Hon. A. H. Panton: I was not thinking about the fee, but about the work.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I should like to inform the House that we intend asking the King himself to sign a few of these Crown grants for the State during his visit. I must now have convinced the House how important and valuable these documents are.

Mr. Hegney: The Minister's signature should be on them, too.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I am glad the member for Pilbara and myself are in agreement on that point.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

BILL—FOUNDATION DAY OBSERVANCE (1949 ROYAL VISIT).

Second Reading

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. L. Thorn—Toodyay) [8.13] in moving the second reading said: This Bill was introduced in another place and passed through that House. It deals with the observance of Foundation Day next year. The Government's desire is that a special holiday shall be observed in Western Australia in honour of the visit of Their Majesties the King and Queen and Her Royal Highness the Princess Margaret. The logical day for such a holiday is Monday, the 6th June. That will be the principal day of the public celebrations, including the Royal progress through the City in the morning, the running of the King's Cup in the afternoon, and the Youth torchlight procession and fireworks display in the evening.

Monday, the 6th June, however, is the day set down to be observed as a holiday for Foundation Day. It is proposed, therefore, that a special Royal Visit holiday should be held on Monday, the 6th June, and that Foundation Day should be observed on a Monday later in the year. The Government has power to declare a paid holiday only for its own employees, and the Employers' Federation was therefore consulted. That organisation agreed with the Government's proposal. As the observance of Foundation Day is fixed in some Acts of Parliament, the proposed transfer necessitates the passing of this Bill. It is intended to issue a proclamation fixing the first Monday in September, which is the 5th, as the day on which the Foundation Day holiday will be observed in 1949.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Why so late?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Because it is necessary for us to space our public holidays in the interests of commerce and industry.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: That will be only for next year?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes: It may be mentioned that as the visits to Kalgoorlie and Fremantle will each take place on a Saturday, the question of a holiday on the days affected does not arise. Careful consideration has been given to the position arising at Northam and York, which will be visited on a Thursday. To declare that the

special holiday in these towns should operate on the Thursday rather than on the Monday would give rise to many practical difficulties. The major problem would be to define the area in which the holiday would operate in view of the fact that people will come from many distant towns.

In the circumstances, the Government has decided to make Monday, the 6th June, a State-wide holiday; and at Northam and York it will release its employees, where they can be spared, for the period necessary to enable them to attend the local celebrations. It is hoped that private employers concerned will follow this lead. I feel that this is a very well thought-out and suitable arrangement for the visit of Their Majesties.

Mr. Marshall: It must have given the Government the devil of a headache!

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No, this Government is never short of advice, and we arrive at decisions fairly smartly and efficiently.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: As in the case of land sales control, for example!

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Why dig that up when we are discussing a subject like this? We feel that, in view of the fact that the visit of Their Majesties to Northam and York is to be of such brief duration, the arrangements made should be suitable for those two country towns. Their Majesties will be in Northam for 1½ hours, of which time a good deal will be taken up at lunch. They will be in York for half an hour. It will be realised that there is no necessity, therefore, for a public holiday to be declared on that occasion. Members will agree that York and Northam are only a short distance from Perth, and most of the people in those towns will take advantage of the Monday holiday to come to the City to witness the Royal procession and the celebrations on that day. This Bill has been passed by another place, and that should encourage members of this Chamber to agree to it. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Hegney, debate adjourned.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1948-49.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from the previous day; Mr. Hill in the Chair.

Note—Education, £1,728,475:

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION

(Hon. A. F. Watts—Katanning) [8.22]: It gives me considerable pleasure to introduce the Estimates of the Education Department for the year ending the 30th June, 1949. The expenditure for 1947-48 was £1,648,768, of which salaries accounted for £1,345,544 and other expenditure £303,224. The estimated expenditure for this year is £1,728,475, of which salaries account for £1,382,085 and incidental contingencies, £346,390. The total estimated increase in expenditure for the year is, therefore, £79,707. The increase in salaries is estimated to be £36,541, and other expenditure £43,166.

But these figures do not present the true position for the following reason:—As the expenditure in 1947-48 included approximately £75,000 of arrears of salary payable under the new award issued in November, 1947, in respect of the period from the 1st July, 1946, to the 30th June, 1947, the Estimates for this year really provide for an additional expenditure of £154,707 over the actual expenditure incurred during 1947-48. Therefore, the expenditure for this year as against that incurred during the financial year just passed represents an increase of £154,000. The increased salary expenditure is due to the following causes:—

- (1) Increased teaching staffs and schools.
- (2) Extension of certain special activities.
- (3) The increased number of students in the Teachers' College and the payment of much higher allowances.
- (4) The growing liability, under an incremental scale laid down in the teachers' salaries award.
- (5) Some improvement in the classification of teachers generally resulting in higher salaries and basic wage rises.

The number of students in the Teachers' College at the present time is 425 which, I am informed, is the largest number that has ever been in training in one year at the college. The lecturing staff has had to be considerably increased to cope with the position. This, I think, will be the first year since 1939 when the output of the college has provided an excess of new teachers over the losses due to resignations, retirements, etc., although unfortunately, in view of the considerable number of retirements and resignations, the increase in the personnel is not as great as was expected.

It will be remembered that I made some reference to this position during the debate on last year's Estimates. The result this year, however, should be somewhat better. As far as we can ascertain there should be a surplus of 40 to 50 teachers, which will mean an increase in the over-all teaching personnel. I made reference a moment ago to the increased number of students in the Teachers' College and the payment of much higher allowances. It is necessary that the number of students in that college should be maintained. At the moment, and for the last couple of years, great assistance in that direction has been given by the presence of what are known as the C.R.T.S. trainees, namely, ex-Service personnel who come under the Commonwealth re-establishment training scheme. A number of those also will come into the college next year, although a diminishing number.

I think the situation at the present time is that roughly 50 per cent. of the trainees are under that scheme. When that accretion to the available personnel ceases, as it must do within the next couple of years, it is our desire to maintain the numbers at the Teachers' College, first, to replace the wastage due to retirements, resignations, deaths, etc., and also to provide additional teaching staff in order that the size of teacher-classes may to some extent be reduced in accordance with modern and very proper ideas; and secondly that consideration may be given, as early as possible, to the implementation of the Act which provides for the raising of the school-leaving age to 15 years. So, very careful consideration was given to any ways and means that could be found of encouraging an influx of trainees into the college, particularly after the C.R.T.S. trainees ceased to represent any substantial proportion of the numbers there.

It is a fact that at the present time the teaching profession is one that offers opportunities as good as any other. The remuneration available to teachers in all stages of their professional career is now, I think, reasonable in comparison to what applies in other occupations. When the amounts which they can now receive are taken into consideration in conjunction with the privileges which membership of the teaching profession under the Education Department carries with it, such as long-service leave, participation in a reasonable

superannuation scheme, lengthy annual holidays and the like it seems to me that many young people should be likely to take on this profession as their career. There is, I would say, no more valuable contribution that can be made in the next decade to the betterment of this community—and indeed any other community of a similar character—than the provision of education on sound lines for the children of our country. It is a work which carries with it, I know and appreciate, a very heavy responsibility, but at the same time I believe it carries with it, if undertaken with determination and knowledge, a very great reward.

So I am of the opinion that we have a reasonable prospect of carrying on the Training College with numbers very close to what we have there at the present time if we ensure that the difficulties of the training period can be reasonably overcome. We know well that the brains of the community do not lie entirely with those who have the most of this world's goods or those who are members of the smallest families. Those who are not so well off find it difficult to maintain children during the student period and, in the case of larger families, it may be even more difficult owing to the number of children to be taken into consideration. Therefore the practice has grown up—I think very properly—of providing young people with financial assistance in order that they may help in a substantial way towards their own support during the training period. Last year the allowances were increased by £10 and this year they are to be increased by a further £20.

The sums paid to monitors are to be increased by £20 and £30 respectively, I think, in the first and second years. As members are aware, the foundation of entry into the training college in a great majority of cases is a preliminary period served in the capacity of monitor. In addition, the allowance for books, made by the Education Department to trainees, has been increased. Better provision has been made at the training college for amenities. A librarian has been appointed and improvements have been made and are being made to the library facilities available.

Generally speaking, it is our intention, wherever a suitable opportunity offers itself, to make the conditions as attractive as

possible in order to maintain the number of students at the training college and so remedy, as rapidly as possible, a state of affairs that involves many difficulties owing to a shortage of staff which, I frankly admit, has so far been the fault of no-one, but of circumstances quite outside the control of the Education Department or of anyone who has been responsible for its management or control. This is a problem to the solution of which we must all, to the best of our ability, make some contribution. If anyone—I make some appeal to the secondary school teachers of the department to assist in this—can induce suitable young men and women to enter the department on leaving school, the contribution made even in that small way to the future progress of the State will be considerable.

The work of the itinerant teacher in the North-Western areas of the State has been reported upon most favourably. There seems to be no doubt that the station owners appreciate the service given to them by that means, as it helps children who are on correspondence lessons to obtain some contact, as it were, with actual school life, and to improve their opportunities of making use, in the best possible way, of the system of education by correspondence. It is a well known fact that this itinerant teacher was appointed something over two years ago. I have been so impressed by the work reported to me as having been done by him that it has been decided to appoint another such teacher. The area now covered by the one itinerant teacher will be split up into two parts, so that there will be greater rather than less opportunity for the type of assistance to which I have referred to be given to children in far distant places.

Interest has also been taken in the correspondence-taught children in other ways. Provision has been made, in the incidental Votes of the department, for the payment by the department when claimed—encouragement is given to claim it—of return postage on lessons and books supplied by the department in the course of the correspondence lessons. An experiment is being conducted in the Narembeen district where it was possible, in the opinion of the senior officers of the department, to bring together a certain number of children on correspondence lessons for a period of one week, so

that that they might there make contact with school conditions and with certain specialist officers of the department, in order to see whether that contact and service might contribute towards the children understanding better the methods of education being employed and the opportunities given to them of obtaining knowledge through correspondence lessons.

I do not yet know what will be the result of this experiment, but if it is found to be successful—as I hope it may—the question of whether it can be conducted in other places and at regular intervals will have to be considered by officers of the department. The Narembeen area was selected as a place where there was opportunity of bringing these children together, in a way which perhaps did not exist in other parts of the State where children learning by correspondence are to be found. The number of children on correspondence lessons has dropped somewhat in certain areas owing to the decision to provide transport to the nearest school, even though that school was not large enough to be treated in the ordinary way as a consolidated school.

That was done in the hope that contact with other children and the opportunity to be taught by a professional teacher personally would make some contribution towards the betterment of the children and remove what in my opinion does exist in the minds of some of these people whose children are on correspondence lessons—I refer to something in the nature of an inferiority complex. That is being done in two or three places and consideration is being given to repeating it in certain other places, one of which is Hyden, where there is a small school with something like 12 or 14 children, to which it is expected that an equal number could conveniently be brought for distances of up to 25 miles by means of a bus service. There may be other places—though they will be limited in number—where this procedure could be tried. If there are, and practicable schemes can be worked out, they will be given every consideration.

Steady progress has been made in regard to visual education. An organiser, in the person of Mr. Smith, a teacher in the department, has been appointed and has recently taken up his duties. Provision has been made for a further mobile van, making two in all, so that the department's pro-

jectors may be taken to schools where there are none, not only in the outer metropolitan area but also in country districts, with more regularity than was possible with only one van. The setting up of the film advisory committee has resulted in the provision of further money for the acquisition of films and the co-operation of the Commonwealth film advisory board in this matter has been of considerable value.

The Superintendent of Visual Education, Mr. Uren, has been doing his utmost to extend and make the best use of the facilities afforded to him, and there is undoubtedly a growing realisation of the assistance that visual aids can be to education. It is as well to bear in mind that it cannot take the place of other means of education but it can be reasonably and properly utilised as a considerable aid to the teachers' functions. We all know that when we see a thing it creates an impression upon our mentality different from that when we hear it. It is also providing a child with learning and enjoyment—I think I might use that phrase.

Mr. Hoar: It has changed since my day.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: And undoubtedly since my own day, seeing that we are of about the same age. This matter obviously requires direction along the proper lines and that is where I believe the services of the Superintendent and of the organiser—and perhaps to some degree the film advisory committee because it will will take some interest in visual education of adults—will be of considerable importance.

It was decided, as I said last year, that Parents and Citizens' Associations could be given assistance by the department in the provision of visual aid projectors and also assistance on a pound for pound basis in regard to libraries and the furnishing of Oslo lunch rooms where these have been provided at a school. I think library assistance is limited to schools above Class IV because those below have been provided for by other means. The number of places to which assistance has been given for libraries and film projectors since that pronouncement is 128 and I think the number will increase during the year now coming. We are very hopeful that much good may result in this matter if directed along proper lines.

The consolidation of schools has been continued and understanding has been reached in some places where the arrival of extra children would make accommodation difficulties. Parents have expressed the point of view that they would prefer the consolidation to take place even though the accommodation difficulties remain for a period. In addition a number of bus services to smaller schools have been installed for the reasons that I gave, and there have been one or two bus services split up because the number of children who were attending along existing routes became too great for the one bus to manage. It was therefore necessary to have two buses and in consequence the number has been increased in several places. There are now 240 services approved.

Requests for additional services are being constantly received but these are carefully reviewed before they are granted, as indeed I believe has always been the position. They are now carefully reviewed to ensure that the results will be satisfactory and that they do not occasion any dissatisfaction in other directions. Increases in the cost of new buses have heavily added to the expenditure per mile on many of these services. It has been the constant aim of the department to ensure that all new services are equipped with vehicles which comply with the specifications laid down some two or three years ago. Those services which were instituted without those conditions being complied with, because of impracticability at the time, should be brought up to standard as soon as possible. However, there are difficulties in the way of acquiring the necessary chassis and also in the way of having the necessary bodies fitted within a reasonable time.

I have frequently had representations made to me by Parents and Citizens' Associations, or by the prospective bus contractors, in regard to these matters, and I know that officers of the department have had representations made to them personally. Wherever possible assistance has been given in that direction and in supporting their cases where the vehicles have been difficult to obtain, or we have endeavoured to obtain some speedier completion of the work where bodies have been required. But the delays are very often most tiresome not only to the people whose children are to be transported, and the children themselves, but also to the bus contractors. However there

does not seem to be any way of coming to a speedy solution of that problem although a great number of buses are now in a very efficient condition.

Mr. Hoar: What length of contract do you give them?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The contracts run up to five years. Varying prices are paid. It is impossible to lay down a flat rate because the condition of roads, the number of children to be carried and the vehicle being used vary so much that every case must be dealt with on its merits. Tenders are called for new services, but frequently, on account of the rise in operating costs, applications are made for a review, and these are considered and justice is done, I think, in every case. There has never been any hesitation about considering an application for an increase in the mileage rate. If it can be justified, then steps are taken to meet the claim.

The number of buses coming upon the roads and the need for some assurance that they are being maintained in an efficient way led to consideration being given to the appointment of a person with mechanical qualifications and a knowledge of Western Australian conditions to the position of school omnibus inspector. A large number of applications were received; a committee representative of the Education Department and the Transport Board reviewed them, and finally a selection was made and the appointee, a few weeks ago, commenced his duties.

Hon. E. Nulsen: A good man, too.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I believe that is so. The reports we have received from him as a result of his first journey have been valuable, and the reports we have received about him from the areas he has visited have been equally satisfactory, and I think he will be co-operative so long as the bus contractors indicate a preparedness reasonably to maintain their vehicles in good order. I think this is a step towards ensuring that safety first is the motto of the department. It might be necessary to consider the appointment of a second officer, but this matter has not yet received definite consideration. We are waiting to see how the work of the present inspector progresses.

Some considerable expenditure has been incurred in modernising departmental and

school libraries. A librarian has been appointed at the Teachers' College and an appointment has been made within the department itself. Some direct gifts of books have been made to smaller schools and, as I mentioned, the larger schools are assisted on a pound-for-pound basis up to £50.

Much attention was given during the year to the question of what is known as the living-away-from-home allowance. Members are well acquainted with this matter. One of the actions taken, I think, originated on the representations of the member for Roebourne—

Mr. Rodoreda: I think it was the member for Pilbara.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Perhaps so. One of the actions taken was to increase the amount in the North-West areas to a maximum of £50 per annum, if I remember aright, but the question of some alteration in the living-away-from-home allowance in other parts of the State, not so much in the amounts as in the incidence of the payments, was the subject of a good deal of argument. Continual representations were made that a child desirous of being transported to some place of secondary education from some country centre should be eligible to receive the allowance. I mentioned last year that this proposal presented some difficulty. Finally a recommendation was made, following upon many representations, that until greater post-primary or secondary facilities could be provided in country areas, the bar should be lifted from Class IV. to Class III. schools.

After some cogitation and argument with the Acting Director in order to clear my mind entirely of any waste matter on the subject, I finally concurred in that, and, as from the beginning of the next school year, the provisions that have hitherto applied to children living within a certain radius of Class IV. or lower schools will be extended one grade higher. This will bring within the ambit of the possibility of obtaining this allowance children who are attending approximately 40 additional schools in the State.

I suppose the greatest problem that confronts the department—and here again I wish it to be clearly understood that I am not indulging in any criticism whatever but am endeavouring to look at the matter factually—is the provision of building accom-

modation. There were three classes of buildings which it seemed to me should participate as quickly as possible and as much as practicable in the limited resources of labour and material that were immediately available. These were, firstly, such places as had no schools. One of those places, for example, was Wundowie. Others are to be found where housing schemes have been operating in recent years. Secondly, there were those places where, owing to increased attendances at the school, there was a considerable number of children accommodated in premises completely detached from the headquarters of the school. Such were to be found in halls, occasionally in shops, and in one or two instances in disused schoolrooms at a distance from the existing school. Obviously the position of the teachers was unsatisfactory, and of course the accommodation where halls were being used very rarely reached the standard that might be regarded as acceptable for school premises.

The third sort were those places where, because there was no building available to deal with overflow—and these cases were limited in number—it was necessary to hold classes in hat rooms or on school verandahs. The middle class, of course, was the worst. Of these, there was a large number; speaking from memory, between 40 and 50. So it was resolved that all those three types should be the ones to receive the earliest possible approval for the provision of additional or new premises. That principle has been strictly adhered to up to the present.

When the works that are now approved and are in various stages of progress shall have been completed, a substantial proportion of those buildings will have been erected, but there are always cropping up little spots where there has been some recent appreciable increase of population, and this rather throws one's calculations out of stride. But a very genuine attempt, I would say, has been made to correct a situation which no-one desires to see continued and which, until it is substantially improved, must prevent the expansion of educational facilities and conditions in other directions that we are most anxious to see. It can only be productive of intense dissatisfaction if cases of that nature are left while other places, reasonably situated so far as

existing accommodation is concerned, are to be provided with some substantial improvements in other directions. I repeat, a very genuine attempt has been made to help in this matter, and by the end of the financial year I hope we shall have met with a reasonable measure of success.

During the year I received a deputation from the parents of those children who suffer from what I think is called cerebral paralysis and who are known as spastic children. The deputation came to me, as it happened, not as Minister for Education, but to me on behalf of the Premier, who at the time was either in the North-West or attending a Premiers' Conference. The deputation's request was that investigations should be made and action taken along the lines of establishing a clinic for the medical and surgical treatment of those children, where practicable, while at the same time provision should be made for the particular type of education which might be valuable to those poor little mites. I told the deputationists that they had presented me with a rather big problem, but that I would have some inquiries made with a view to seeing whether action could be taken.

The Medical Department was consulted. The Acting Superintendent of Primary Education presented a report of what had taken place in similar circumstances in New South Wales; while the Director, Mr. Little, who had arranged to go to England, undertook that during his journeyings to and from the U.N.E.S.C.O. conference, which he was to attend at Beirut, or at some other place in the Middle East, to ascertain what was being done in the matter in other countries. In the meantime, discussions have been proceeding with the Acting Director with a view to co-ordinating our ideas on the subject, finding out which children are available for treatment, what their needs are and endeavouring to collect them together, so that when the Director returns at the beginning of next year, we shall have the advantage of the information which he has acquired to enable us to make a start—if not along very expansive lines—and in conjunction with the medical authorities, towards the establishment of facilities for the help of these little ones. I mention that to indicate what it is our intention to do in this matter within our limitations and resources.

Before I entirely leave the question of building, I should like to pay a tribute to the work of the Principal Architect and those associated with him in the Architectural Branch of the Public Works Department; but the figures which they submit as the cost of building do sometimes almost frighten me. That is not their fault, but my purpose now is to refer to the satisfactory types of building which they contrive to plan and the pleasure which that building gives to those who use it on completion. I feel, nevertheless, after paying that tribute to the officers of the Architectural Branch, that there remains something which might be done with the Public Works Department to simplify the task of any Minister for Education, or any chief administrative officer, as he is now, of the Education Department. It is that we might know, as a common formality between the departments—not by special request as is the case now—what progress is being made between the time that the Education Department approves of a building and actual tenders are called.

We know that the Treasury approval intervenes. We know something about that for obvious reasons, but thereafter the whole matter seems to drift away. Many members come to me and ask, "How is the business getting on at so-and-so?" I reply, "You had better ask the Public Works Department; or, if you really want the information I will get it for you." I really do think that we must arrange before long some close liaison between the Public Works Department and ourselves in order that we may have ready access to this information, or so that it will always be available as a matter of course.

Hon. A. A. M. Coverley: That applies to all departments.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I am only dealing, as the hon. member is aware, with such frailties as I can see, or with one of the frailties I can see, in connection with the situation of the Education Department in relation to other Government services. I propose to take this matter up shortly with the Minister for Works, as I think it is not incapable of being satisfactorily arranged. During the year, there were a great number of schools for which renovations had been approved and carried into effect. For the reason I have just dis-

cussed, I cannot tell the Committee the number of schools, but I can state the expenditure. It was £74,000, and included the renovation, or doing up, of a number of school grounds. Some of them are still in a poor way, but I suppose we must hasten slowly in matters of this kind. I have no doubt that all the bad cases will be tidied up as soon as the work can be done.

Hon. A. A. M. Coverley: Can you tell me how many rooms will be in the Halls Creek school?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I shall make some reference to Halls Creek in a moment, but I cannot give the hon. member the information for which he asks. As I said, the amount expended was £74,000 and unquestionably much good work was done. But more remains to be done. The common difficulty of jobs of this nature, not only at the present time but for many years past and many years to come, as in all education matters, is that there is always a great deal to be done because there is always, or should be, an endless progression in educational matters. But I think that the number that has been attended to in the last 12 months is substantial. The amount involved certainly is, and the work I have seen as having been actually performed reflects great credit not only on those who designed it but also on those artisans who completed it.

The school sites committee has been busy during the year. The committee is consulted and its decision almost invariably acted upon, as it is a committee of experts, in regard to the selection of places where projected buildings should be established. During the last 12 months it has dealt with 47 sites and has held fairly frequent meetings and gone to considerable trouble in settling some of the difficult matters that come under notice from time to time, one of which was the selection of a site for a school at Floreat Park, in conjunction with the Perth City Council. It is a very effective set-up and one which reflects credit upon whoever decided to establish it at some earlier date.

In the months which have intervened since the last Estimates were presented there has been a considerable alteration in the organisation of the Education Department. The Director of all the staff remains

the controlling factor. The former Chief Inspector has become Superintendent of Primary Education and a Superintendent of Secondary Education has been appointed. There was previously a Superintendent of Technical Education. That triumvirate, in conjunction with the Director of Education, forms as it were the governing body of the staff of the department. Obviously it will relieve the Director of much of the detailed work which he was obliged to do, leaving him more and more time—and rightly—for the consideration and direction of the policy of the department in relation to the carrying on and improvement of educational work and research.

In addition, the Secretary of the Department, Mr. O'Mahoney, has become chief administrative officer. He also is responsible to the Director. He has been afforded the services of a chief clerk to whom, to a considerable degree, the work of dealing with such matters as school bus services and the like has been delegated, leaving the chief administrative officer to attend more particularly to the major matters of office administration and those things which the Director sees fit to hand to him, one of which is the work involved, as apart from the educational requirements, in the provision or arrangement of the provision of school buildings. I wish at this juncture, without appearing to single out any individual, to say that Mr. O'Mahoney is a very valuable officer and I think it will afford both myself and the member for North-East Fremantle some pleasure to think that his interest in and good work for the department has to some extent at last been recognised.

That is not to say for one moment that I do not fully appreciate the excellent work which has been done by the other officers I have mentioned, particularly those who have held their positions for a number of years. But it always did appear that the position occupied by the present chief administrative officer, when he was Secretary, was something of an indeterminate one, and the resolution of that position was highly desirable. I wish to express at this stage regret at the long ill-health of the Superintendent of Technical Education, Mr. Phillips, who has been absent for more than six months. My last report of his condition was somewhat more reassuring than those that I had received before, and I

trust the extended leave we were able to arrange for him will result in his return in good health to the departmental duties he has carried out for some time.

I would like to say at this stage that I believe the relationship of the department with the Teachers' Union has been satisfactory—perhaps more than satisfactory—during the last 12 months. Representatives of the union and myself, sometimes with and sometimes without the assistance of the Director, depending upon the circumstances of the times, have dealt with quite a number of controversial subjects. The major one, which I regret we were not able to proceed with, was a proposal made by the department that the Public Service Appeal Board legislation should be amended by withdrawing the teaching profession from the provisions of the Act and establishing a promotions board within the department which would fulfil, but more speedily, the same functions, and would have the same type of representation on it in favour of the teachers and the department.

The matter was first discussed by myself with representatives of the union in a very friendly and straightforward manner, and was subsequently discussed in more detail with the Acting Director of Education. It was agreed that a proposal should be submitted to the annual conference of the union which was shortly to take place. It was clearly understood—I made myself very plain—that nothing could be done to alter the existing set-up which had been legally and properly acquired by the teachers, as with other sections of the service, unless with their agreement. It was a right they had which could not be taken from them, with propriety, unless they agreed.

The representatives who discussed the matter with myself and the Director were convinced that the proposals put before them were likely to be quite satisfactory to them and more satisfactory to the efficient working of the department—or at least I gathered that was their point of view. Unfortunately the matter was a little hurried. It was discussed not long before the teachers' conference was held and I would say that partly owing to the fact that the proposal was not fully understood a resolution for its adoption was defeated, I understand by 34 to 33 votes. There the matter stands at the moment.

I still think, and I know the Director thinks, that the department could be better served were the whole of the dealings in regard to these promotions appeals kept within the confines of the Education Department by some means that would be obviously fair to the teachers and at the same time reasonable for the department. I do not suppose the matter has been abandoned. I anticipate that at some later date it will be again taken up with the union with the distinct possibility that other counsels will prevail.

The Parents and Citizens' Federation has been provided, as most members know, with office premises at the corner of Hay and Irwin-streets. It has also been provided with telephone facilities by the department, and a contribution of, I think, £100 for the year towards the payment of a clerk to assist in looking after the office and the work of the federation. Its president, a Mr. King, I think, was granted a pass over the Western Australian Government Railways in order that he—I think he has been quite recently elected—might contact the branches of his federation in as many places as possible. I understand he took fairly full advantage of the opportunity. Numbers of representations have been made by the Parents and Citizens' Federation, many branches of which display a proper and reasonable outlook on the education question, but in regard to one or two of them I could wish that those who prepare the resolutions might be a trifle more realistic. But they are the exception rather than the rule.

The member for North-East Fremantle last evening raised some point in regard to the expenditure of £500 on a hostel at Bunbury. It will be remembered that the Country Women's Association had a hostel in premises known, I think, as Sandridge Park at Bunbury, and it was apparent some few months ago that circumstances were arising which would necessitate the association's vacating those premises, and some other steps being taken. At that time a suggestion was made by it that the premises of the Goldfields Fresh Air League at Bunbury might be purchased and renovated. Those premises were examined and a report furnished that they were worth acquiring at £500. Arrangements were made for their acquisition at that figure. A substantial amount was subsequently authorised for their renovation—approximately £3,000.

I am told the result of the job, which is now nearing completion, is very satisfactory and that the premises are suitable for a considerably larger number than could be accommodated at Sandridge Park. In addition, the premises will be available during the summer holidays for the National Fitness Council, as some portion of the return which the Government might expect from the expenditure. For the 40 or 42 weeks of the school period, the premises will be let to the Country Women's Association for £120. That association has done a very good work at Bunbury, and I think any contribution we can make in this direction is most deserving. My recent conversations with ladies who are in responsible positions in the Country Women's Association indicate that they are prepared to carry on, and are well satisfied with the premises, so I think that for the time being, anyway, one considerable difficulty in that area has been removed. At Albany we find that the increasing demand for some such type of accommodation is pressing us into opening negotiations with the Country Women's Association for an extension of its activities in that area. It is not at all clear what premises can be made available at this stage. The first consideration, however, is for the association to decide whether it can take on any further responsibilities. We are awaiting its verdict in that regard.

At Geraldton there were premises conducted by a Mrs. Mulgrue, and I understand very competently, for the accommodation of a number of girls attending the Geraldton High School. Those premises were purchased by some person who apparently intended to convert them into premises for residential purposes and to evict, or give notice to evict, as soon as possible, the lady who had been conducting the hostel. Urgent representations were made to me by the member for Geraldton that in these circumstances no other premises appeared to be available, so I asked the Director to report as to the desirability of our taking some action, and he recommended that the premises be resumed, and accordingly they were resumed. The lady and the girls in question are still safely installed there and are likely to remain as long as they wish.

In connection with hostels being run by organisations such as the Country Women's

Association, the committee at Koorda, and one or two other places, a subsidy has, during the last twelve months, been paid at the rate of 2s. per child per week. That amounts to £4 for the 40 weeks, approximately, of the school year. It has been of considerable assistance to the hostels in question, representing, I think, the difference between the possibility of their paying their way and not paying their way, which is what it was intended it should do. But the problem opens up wider and wider, as I think the member for North-East Fremantle will agree. We shall have to give serious attention to what means can best be found to provide the necessary accommodation, where required, and at the same time not impose on the department the responsibility of managing what could easily be called boarding houses, because problems that would be associated with their management at a distance—difficulties of staff, etc.—would be very great and quite impracticable.

It might also be improper for the Education Department to undertake their management. But the need for arrangements in some places is indicated by the instances I have given. All I can say at this stage is that while we do not intend to impose on the department the duty of running these hostels, we do propose to take such steps as are practicable to help ensure, without entirely guaranteeing the insurance, that premises will be made available at centres where these conditions exist. The junior farmers' clubs have, during the year, made quite considerable progress, and it is intended to appoint a couple of officers to assist the organiser, whose name, for the moment, escapes me.

Mr. Bovell: It is Mr. Young.

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION:
Thank you. These officers will assist Mr. Young in his work of extending the activities of the junior farmers. During the year an approach was made by the "Farmer and Dairyman" which prints a very valuable supplement—a separate document—which is the official organ of the junior farmers' club, for a subsidy in connection with its production, as it was being found impossible to produce the supplement, without any separate return for it, except at a considerable loss, in view of the increased printing costs. We ascertained accordingly

that their representations were probably entirely fair. Finally, after discussions with the Director, it was decided that provision of any other official organ would be an expensive proposition for the Education Department, and that without an official organ it was obvious that the Junior Farmers Clubs would suffer to some degree. Therefore the proposal that they should be assisted to the extent of £200 per year in the production of this supplement was approved, and payment is shortly to be made.

Consequent upon the committee set up in 1946 to deal with the question of school desks, and its report having been in substance accepted, considerable inquiry was made with regard to the acquisition of a substantial number of desks of the type recommended by that committee for use in new schools and, where possible, in certain classes of the old schools. It was, of course, quite impossible to scrap the many thousands of desks of the older type that were still serviceable, even if it had been desirable, from the point of view of comfort and convenience, to do so. It would have been extremely difficult to obtain sufficient numbers of replacements within any reasonable time. It was decided to make a move towards the provision of this better type of desk, and negotiations were opened both with private enterprise and with the State Engineering Works for their supply in substantial numbers. Contracts have now been let which, in the course of the next two years, will provide new desk accommodation for some 13,500 children. I believe that is quite a forward move in this direction.

During the year we have heard many times—and have had representations made on many occasions—about the desirability of the Commonwealth Government making special grants to the States in respect of education. I have sometimes pursued the theme that, even if we had a lot more money available, it would in many directions be difficult to spend it. Nevertheless, the matter was brought before the Prime Minister at the last Premiers' Conference. I might mention that in the meantime we were frequently told by the resolutions of sundry public bodies that we had only to ask for this additional finance and it would certainly be made available, because this or that Federal Minister had said so on this or that occasion. I thought that, for the removal of all doubt that might exist

in the minds of members of this Chamber who had heard these frequently reiterated statements, as well as for the information of the public, it would be as well for me to quote from the minutes of the Premiers' Conference in question, under the heading of "Commonwealth grant for educational purposes," when the matter was brought forward by Mr. Cosgrove, Premier of Tasmania. In his reply the Prime Minister said—

We consider that such matters come under the general tax provisions and should not be the subject of separate grants. I certainly would not recommend that the Australian Government should make a special appropriation for educational purposes in view of the fact that the matter can be covered by the general tax reimbursements.

I think that is as plain as the pike-staff ever was. The question therefore hangs entirely, as to the matter of any further expenditure, on the question of general tax reimbursements. We are already aware, from the reports of the Premiers' Conference and from information supplied to us by the Premier when introducing his Revenue Estimates some little time ago, that the claims of the States—here I do not propose to enter into any argument as to whether they are adequate or the reverse—cannot be met in their entirety, and therefore it is easy to see that the acquisition of additional funds for educational purposes is not likely to be possible to any substantial degree, nor is it reasonable to suppose, in view of the very clear statement of the Prime Minister, that that line of thought will be altered in the near future. I would therefore suggest to these organisations and persons, who for some reason or other have in mind the idea that we need only ask in order to receive one hundred or some other number of millions that has been mentioned to me, that they should bear in mind the observations of the Prime Minister in regard to this matter and let it rest perhaps until the next Premiers' Conference.

In conclusion, I am quite satisfied that substantial progress has been made in the educational field in Western Australia during the last 12 months. I do not say that the progress has been sufficient, but I do say that genuine efforts have been made, with quite a measure of success, to hasten the time—in the meantime to some degree bettering their conditions—when children will have a standard of education and edu-

cational opportunity in Western Australia such as we claim they are entitled to. No effort is being spared to remove the obstacles that lie in the path of bringing about that state of affairs at the earliest possible date. We do not lack appreciation of the efforts that have been made in other years but we say, without fear of contradiction, that the efforts made during the last 12 months are as great as and possibly greater than those made during any other period in this State's history.

There is no gainsaying the fact that the efforts to provide school accommodation, although to some degree forced on the community by circumstances, some of which I dealt with earlier, have been far greater in the last 12 months than in any previous year of our history, right back to the time when self-government was first granted to this State. In addition to that, what is being provided—thanks to the architects, the artisans and the development of educational ideas—is very much better than what was provided when we were children attending schools, let alone earlier times. And it is right that it should be so. Progress must continue and as long as that progress is directed along reasonable lines, then we are assured of a standard in the near future which will meet with the reasonable aspirations of those from whom we hear so much. There are occasions when some of our friends, who make these continual representations, might in one or two matters be just a little more realistic.

HON. J. T. TONKIN (North-East Fremantle) [9.40]: I think the Committee is indebted to the Minister for Education for the very clear, informative and interesting account he has given of the administration of this main department under his control. Of course, as a result of my long association with the department as a teacher, and then my experience subsequently as a Minister, I find it quite easy to know what is happening in the educational world in this State without seeking the information in the ordinary way. I can sense it by moving about the city. All matters of detail like the purchase of a building at Bunbury, or the erection of a hostel and so on are, of course, not known to me, but I am acquainted with the general progress that has been made throughout the State. I am also aware of any alteration of policy for

example, very quickly, and I know that although the Minister's story indicates that in some directions improvements have been effected, by and large the problems which were existent under the previous Government are still existent to the same degree today.

Schools have been erected and additions made, but I venture to say that the accommodation problem is just as acute now as it was when the Minister for Education was on the hustings complaining about what had been done by the previous Government. It has not yet been possible to make any appreciable improvement towards a reduction in the size of classes. That was a matter which was subject to criticism by supporters of the Government and by the Minister for Education himself. It is found that the Government has not yet been able to do that which the Minister thought the previous Government should have done. In order to put this question in a proper perspective it is as well to realise that this Government has had just as long a time available to it to do these things as did the previous Government.

Nobody in his right senses would argue that it was possible to build schools or train additional teachers during the war. We allowed the men to join up and male monitors did not go into Training College because they were at an age when they could be called up. Many of the females were called up or went into the Services. So inevitably there was an increasing shortage of teachers. New buildings were completely out of the question. Building ceased, bricklayers and carpenters went into the Services, brick kilns closed down, and it was not possible, in this country or any other, to proceed with a normal building programme.

The previous Government was a shorter time in office when the election took place—that is following the cessation of the war—than this Government has been. This Government took over control on the 1st April, 1947, the election took place in March, 1947 and the war ended in August, 1945. The Labour Government had to get going from a standing start with regard to the erection of buildings and the training of teachers, and it had available to it, on the dates I have given, a shorter period of office than this Government has had. So we have a right to expect that the Government

could accomplish more with regard to the erection of buildings and the training of teachers than was possible for the previous Government under the circumstances then obtaining.

That did not protect us from unfair criticism on the part of members of the present Government who complained about the lack of accommodation, the large sizes of the classes, the shortage of teachers and all sorts of things. It is strange that we find from time to time statements being made in order to present a picture to the public which is not a true one. That is being done as a result of statements alleged to have been made by Ministers and by declarations of Government policy which from time to time appear in the Press. Naturally I follow fairly closely the activities of the various Ministers and their statements when they travel about the country.

My attention was drawn to one statement made by the Minister for Education on an occasion when he went to South Bunbury to declare open some buildings which had been erected there. The Minister kindly invited me to accompany him, but it was not possible for me to do so. I read the account of the gathering and it was alleged, in the report of what took place, that the Minister had stated to the assembled people that 39 new schools had been erected by the present Government. That rather astonished me, because I could not see how it could be possible.

The Minister for Education: And I was careful not to say it.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Later, on the 14th September, I asked these questions in the House—

(1) In what localities are the 39 new schools to which he referred at South Bunbury on Tuesday being erected at present?

(2) What is the estimated cost of each of the schools?

(3) How many of the schools are being erected under private contract?

We have now been told by the Minister that he was careful not to say that 39 schools were being erected. I do not know what he said; I can only take the report that appeared in the Press. Even though the Minister might have been careful to avoid stating an inaccuracy, he certainly obtained the benefit from a statement in the Press that was most inaccurate, as subsequent

events clearly proved. My questions were answered by the Premier, in the absence of the Minister for Education, as follows:—

(1) The actual reference was to additions and new schools in various stages towards completion.

(2) and (3) A return is here and will be laid on the Table of the House.

That is a very different matter. People reading the newspaper statement that 39 new schools had been erected by this Government in little more than 12 months would naturally say, "My word, they are delivering the goods already." But when it is explained that the figure 39 did not refer to new schools entirely, but only to some new schools and additions to others, the picture takes on an entirely different aspect and is not quite so good. The Premier tabled a return in answer to my question in order to supply the information I sought. While I am not able to judge accurately how many of the 39 were new schools, it appears to me that there could not be more than half-a-dozen at most, and that the rest were additions to existing schools.

Carnarvon, £24,448, appears in the list. I think all that was done at Carnarvon was some preliminary preparation of the site, and so a wrong impression could be gathered from that figure. Leederville Technical College, £46,000, also appears in the list. That was well on the way towards completion when the previous Government was in office.

The Minister for Education: You will find a lot more on that list.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I think there are about 43, so the difference would not represent a lot more. I still cannot understand where the large number of new schools comes in. Busselton, £11,000, is included. At first sight that would appear to be a new school, but it is not. That amount represents additions to the Busselton school authorised before the previous Government left office. So, when one examines the list, one finds that the new schools are not very considerable in number, but that the figures refer mostly to single rooms added to existing schools.

I understand that on an average it costs £1,100 to £1,200 for a schoolroom, so a figure indicating an expenditure of £1,100 or £1,200 may be regarded as representing a new room, or possibly a new room with a

small entrance or other little addition to make the appearance of the school more presentable. Looking through the list, I find a number of very small items—Chadoora, £309, which would hardly mean a new school or substantial additions to an existing one; Cleomine, £487; Pantapin, £595; Widgiemooltha, £405; Wanneroo, £455; Miling, £553—certainly not new schools and not very substantial additions to existing schools, either; Balingup, £533; Koorda, £495; Applecross, £300. So one needs to know the full story in order to get a proper picture of what is really happening. I have a copy of a very useful paper, the "Liberal News."

The Premier: A very useful paper!

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I hope the Premier will keep it going. The writer of this article has been described by the Premier as a rattling good man. Certainly he rattles very frequently.

Mr. Bovell: To some effect.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I hope he keeps it going. In the August issue—the issue that, strangely enough, came out about the time the Minister for Education was alleged to have made the statement at South Bunbury to which I have referred—an article was published. I wonder where the "Liberal News" got the information because, so far as I know, its representative was not at South Bunbury. The information must have been supplied by someone, and it refers to new schools. It says—

Amongst activities in the Education Department since this Government came into office have been important extensions to visual educational branch by the provision of mobile units, appointment to technical staff, the taking over of educational work in schools for the blind, and the deaf and dumb—

I hope to say something about that later.

—and in providing increased financial assistance to the Kindergarten Union. School furniture and desks have been improved, and the Education Department's administrative and professional staff has been reorganised and additional inspectors have been appointed.

The department's expenditure for 1946-47 was £1,223,746. This amount has been substantially increased during our first 12 months of office. The total for 1947-48 is £1,650,719.

All those figures indicate that the information was supplied by someone in a position to give it.

When we came to power, there were 17 schools under construction. There are now 39, and in the meantime 26 have been completed. A good deal of progress has been made in regard to technical education.

Now let us make a few mathematical calculations. If 17 schools were under construction when the present Government took office and at this stage there were 39 and 26 had been completed, we have indicated to us a building programme of very considerable magnitude.

Mr. Fox: Were there 72 new schools?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: No, that figure is not correct. The paper indicates that 48 schools have been constructed by the Government or are in course of construction. If members have any doubt about those figures, I suggest they work them out. Here are the figures: 17 schools under construction when the Government came to power; 26 completed and 39 now under construction. This makes a total of 48 schools which have been completed or are nearing completion apart altogether from the 17 schools which were commenced when the Government assumed office; because in the figures I have given there is a total of 65 schools, of which 17 were under construction when the Government came to power. So the Government has been responsible for building some of these 17 schools, increasing the number under construction and completing 26. Well, Mr. Chairman, the figures are ridiculous. I should like to know where this rattling good man obtained them. They are absolutely absurd. Is it part of the general policy of the Liberal Party to keep on misleading the public?

Mr. Marshall: This is the only time they have had political existence. They did not obtain it on merit. They must lie to the public if they want to keep it.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I think it is as well, if the public are to be given information, that it should be factual. If the public are to be told about the schools which are being constructed or which are in the course of erection, they should be told the truth or should not be given the information at all. The Government is faced with as big a building programme at present, because of the increased settlement in various parts, as it was when it took office; and although it has completed some schools

and commenced others, new schools are still required. That is inevitable.

As the State Housing Commission acquires new land and proceeds to erect homes, in a very short time—in view of the fact that persons with large families will go into those homes—schools will be needed. Therefore, the demands on the department, instead of being lessened, are increasing despite some improvement which was to be expected in the building programme. But we should not mislead the public about the position; they should be told the truth. The Minister mentioned his difficulty in regard to consolidation. He said consolidation is still proceeding. I am glad it is, as it is consistent with the policy of the previous Government. The Minister very kindly explained that although this consolidation resulted in overcrowding in certain instances, it was nevertheless proceeded with because the parents preferred it. Of course they do, and they did when we were in office, but that did not stop the supporters of the present Government from criticising the previous Government for carrying on with consolidation.

Mr. Reynolds: Shame!

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The member for Irwin-Moore, for example—

Mr. Marshall: Oh, God, do not mention him!

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: —waxed eloquent last session about this matter. He complained bitterly about the policy of the previous Minister and the previous Government in proceeding with consolidation, which resulted in overcrowding. Here is his own Government doing the same thing. Why? Because it is the correct policy. It is not a matter for criticism. It is the correct policy because even though the children are subjected to a certain amount of inconvenience through overcrowding, the higher standard of education available in a consolidated school more than compensates for the inconvenience. It would be a retrograde step to hold up consolidation until such time as the requisite building could be erected, as that would inevitably mean in many cases that the children would pass through the various standards without the benefit of consolidation at all. So, instead of denying them these benefits the previous Government proceeded with consolidation

and I am pleased to see that this Government is carrying on with that sound policy. But what was apparently a matter for criticism when we were in office is not so now, or at least we have heard nothing about it.

The Minister also said that he had some problems with regard to hostel accommodation for children. I knew he would have, because those problems were of considerable magnitude in my time and showed evidence of greatly increasing. This Government, however, deliberately increased its own difficulties because it made a promise to the people. Fortunately, I have here the Policy speeches of the Premier and the Deputy Premier and in the report of the Deputy Premier's Policy speech I find this—

Mr. Leslie: Do you keep that in a safe somewhere?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I find this—

We will establish hostels at high school centres.

There is the declaration to the people! So there is an obligation on the Government to establish hostels—in the plural, mind you, Mr. Chairman—not “We will establish a hostel,” but “We will establish hostels.” Therefore, it was to be the policy of the Government to establish hostels. It now seems that it is trying to “crawlfish” out of it.

Mr. Reynolds: It will do that successfully.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I do not think it will.

The Minister for Lands: You seem to be out of step with your leader tonight.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Of course, the people, being aware of this promise, will want its fulfilment and so the Minister's difficulty will be largely of his own making. It is not so easy to provide these hostels at high school centres.

Mr. Marshall: And it is not easy to look after them when they are established.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The Minister was fully alive to the weaknesses of the proposition. I could see a whole heap of trouble if the Education Department went into the boarding house business in this way. That is why we refrained from doing it and endeavoured to make the path as easy as possible for those who would be prepared to carry it on. I have to pay a great tribute

to country women who have performed a magnificent job in various parts of the State in looking after the children who are obliged to live in certain centres in order to get this additional secondary education. There has always been quite a big demand for this accommodation and the action taken by the Minister has again increased the problem; because he has stated tonight that whereas under a previous policy children in country centres who could attend Class IV schools or upwards were not granted a living away from home allowance he has now excluded the Class IV's and restricted it to the Class III schools and above. So children who previously could not get a living away from home allowance if they could attend a school of Class IV are now permitted to go to a high school centre and get the allowance.

Hon. A. H. Panton called attention to the state of the Committee.

Bells rung and a quorum formed.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Before that interruption, I was endeavouring to explain that in making this change of policy the Minister had increased his hostelling difficulties by enabling a greater number of children from country districts to get the advantage of the living away from home allowance. I very much doubt whether that policy will be found eventually to be in the interests of the country districts. I admit that so far as children who are able to benefit from the allowance are concerned, it will be an advantage because they can immediately obtain the benefit of a higher standard of education; but it will mean that whilst youngsters in districts where schools of Class IV are established are encouraged to leave their own districts and go elsewhere for secondary education, a longer time must elapse before such districts will have a higher standard of schooling.

Mr. Leslie: The homes remain; only the children are absent.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The homes do not make any difference. It is the youngsters that indicate the size of the school.

Mr. Leslie: When the numbers increase they will get a higher standard school.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: How can the numbers increase if children leave the district?

The Minister for Education: When the provision is made the living away from home allowance will not continue.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Surely the Minister can see that while children are going away provision cannot be made. Provision for an increase in the standard is not made until the average attendance indicates that the school has gone up a grade.

The Minister for Education: At that rate you must deprive this generation of all hope.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: No. I have already said that I admit an immediate benefit is conferred on the children concerned, but inevitably the time when a higher standard of education is provided in the country districts is deferred much longer.

The Minister for Education: Nothing of the kind.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Yes.

The Minister for Education: The allowance is cancelled as soon as we are ready to provide the facility.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: But the facility cannot be provided until the numbers in attendance justify that.

Mr. Leslie: The department knows the numbers.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Not at all. If the member for Mt. Marshall knew anything about the subject he would not make a statement like that.

Mr. Marshall: A fool speaks eloquently on a subject he knows nothing about.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Surely the hon. member has a mere elementary knowledge of what is required for the establishment of a school! In the first instance, the people in a district have to show that they have a certain number of children of school age who would attend a school if it were erected. If they have that number a school is erected and it usually starts at Class VII. It will remain Class VII no matter how many houses are in the district so long as the average attendance—not what the attendance might be—is below a certain figure. When more children attend the school over a period—not for a few days—and the figures for 12 months show a higher average attendance, the department will reclassify the school. That is the way in which schools start at Class VII and then go to Class VI

and Class V and so on until eventually, in closely settled districts, there are Class I and Class IA schools.

If the children in a country district, instead of attending their own school, are encouraged to leave their district and attend some other school, the figures which the teacher is able to show each year with regard to average attendance will be much lower than they should be. But it will be on those figures that the department will appoint a head teacher and classify the school. So if the figures keep a school on a Class IV basis, the living away from home allowance will still be paid and will be paid for many years longer than it would if children had remained in their own district. So I repeat that I very much doubt whether, in the long run, the alteration the Minister has made will benefit children in country districts. My opinion is that it will be the other way round.

While it might be necessary to impose some hardship on children who are kept in their own district, I think that would be justified because we must not lose sight of the fact that all children from such districts where Class IV schools are established will not get the living away from home allowance but only those children in the post-primary classes. If the children in the post-primary classes are granted the living away from home allowance and they go in sufficient numbers, they could conceivably reduce the school from Class IV to Class V with a consequent loss of high standard in the headmaster and the loss of some of the assistant teachers, because the department will staff on numbers and not on probabilities. Surely members can see that if children who ought to be attending the school in their own district attend one elsewhere, that could quite easily result in a reduction in classification of the school. If that takes place, the children who remain, and who are not old enough for a living away from home allowance, suffer as a consequence.

This matter is not as simple as it appears on the surface. However, it is the Government's policy and it remains to be seen just how it will work out. The Minister made some reference to the amicable relationship which exists between him and the Teachers' Union. As a matter of fact it is a good relationship; the Minister is the white-haired boy. In this respect he is singularly fortunate. I get "The W.A. Teachers' Journal"

by courtesy of the secretary of the Teachers' Union. I was very interested to read the leading article, under the heading of "Administration," in the issue of the 2nd November, as follows:—

Recent administrative developments in our own Education Department indicated that the exploitation by overwork of a too conscientious director is being dropped. It is apparently recognised that the education service requires more delegation, and that for the concentration of authority in one head a real leadership with the leader as the first among equals is to be preferred. If this be so, then we may look for an atmosphere of mutual co-operation and enthusiasm descending from the leader through all ranks until even the office boy feels that he counts.

Here we feel that the Minister deserves a pat on the back. He has recently strengthened the administration by adding to the Superintendent of Technical Education, a Superintendent of Primary Education, a Superintendent of High School Education and a Chief Administrative officer. And a recent amendment to a regulation indicates that the appointment of a Deputy Director is in contemplation. Hence we seem to have the beginning of an administration on truly modern lines.

The Minister did not make any reference tonight to his proposal to appoint a Deputy Director, so I do not know whether that is a correct supposition or not. However, members will see that the union commended the Minister for the change in administration.

The Minister for Lands: It reads well.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: It does. Of course, the Minister inherited this plan.

The Minister for Education: You cannot have it both ways. You want credit for what you did, and what you did not do, too. I did this; you only thought about it.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Will the Minister admit he inherited the plan?

The Minister for Education: I will not.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The plan was in my drawer.

The Minister for Education: I had to ask for a reform of the department before it was given to me, because I could see that was what was required to be done.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: If the Minister will be fair, he will tell the Committee that the reason this plan was not implemented before he took office was that there were certain difficulties in the way which could

only be resolved by the effluxion of a few months.

The Minister for Education: I have no knowledge of that.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I tell the Minister that is so. This plan was not conceived by him.

The Minister for Education: You cannot have it both ways. If you want the credit for what you did you cannot have it for what you did not do, too.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: That is the point. I got no credit for what I did, but plenty of blame for what I did not do. That is my complaint.

The Minister for Lands: What is wrong with the union?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: My remarks are not directed at the union. I did not look for any credit from it, neither did I get it. I am talking about the public generally. I repeat, the Minister inherited this plan.

The Minister for Education: It is the first time I have heard of this legacy.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: It is true the Minister put it into operation. I dare say that just as he inherited a number of schools already erected and declared them open—

The Minister for Education: And a lot of schools not erected, too.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Yes. The Minister inherited some erected, and declared them open. In the same way, I suppose, some future Minister for Education will inherit schemes and schools from his predecessor. But I think it is only fair that we should let the people know that this administrative change was not wholly the idea of the Minister; although it is true his Government can claim credit for putting it into operation.

Mr. Leslie: That is the main thing.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: No, it is not. If a person has not an idea, he cannot put it into operation.

Mr. Leslie: You might have an idea for years and do nothing about it.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Like the hon. member.

Mr. Leslie: Quite. It is of no use arguing about it.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I am not arguing; I am stating facts.

Mr. Leslie: You are trying to.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I am stating facts, and I defy the member for Mt. Marshall to prove they are not facts.

Mr. Leslie: I am not attempting to.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Then I suggest the hon. member keep quiet.

Hon. A. H. Panton: He could not.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I give the Minister full marks for putting the plan into operation. It shows he has good sense and is able to appreciate the merit in a plan, even though it is not his own. There is no blame attaching to him for doing that, but I do not think he is entitled to the whole of the credit, as he would be if he had conceived the plan and the previous Government had known nothing of it. I think that is the story with regard to most things that have been done in the Education Department.

Mr. Bovell: Was this plan on the files of the department?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Yes, of course it was. If the hon. member has any doubt, I could ask for the papers to be tabled. I discussed the plan many times with the Director of Education, and we had very sound reasons—we were both agreed on this—why it could not be put into operation at that time. However, it has been put into operation and that is a matter for congratulation, because it is an improvement. It does relieve the Director of considerable detail in administration, and affords the opportunity of giving proper scope to an officer of great merit—I refer to Mr. O'Mahoney. It also enables each of the three branches of education to be under a sub-head so that closer attention can be given to the general organization of those branches with the result that improvement can be confidently anticipated.

The Minister referred to the success of the experiment in connection with the itinerant teacher. That, of course, was also commenced by the previous Government. We conceived the idea that it would be an advantage to have a travelling teacher in the far out-back. We hand-picked the person for the job and during my term of office the indications were that the experiment was a success. The Government, the

Director and I agreed that if the experiment were successful additional itinerant teachers would be appointed. I am glad the Minister sees the advantage of this scheme and contemplates its extension.

Visual education has also been referred to. That service was established under the previous Government. The Chief Visual Education Officer, Mr. Uren, was appointed by the previous Government and was given the nucleus of a staff. The developments that have since taken place are the logical developments brought about by a Minister alive to the advantages to be derived from such a policy, and prepared to extend them. Many things that were started by the previous Government have been expanded by the present Government as results have justified improvement. When is the Government going to appoint the citizens' council of education that was promised? I have heard nothing of it since the Policy speech.

The Minister for Education: It was not mentioned in my Policy speech.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: No. The Premier mentioned it, and I will refresh his memory. He said, "High standards of work and efficiency in return for high standards of wages. Federal aid in a progressive policy for education, including smaller classes, suitable buildings and improved training and conditions of teachers. Encouragement of technical, domestic science and kindergarten training. School libraries and adult education. A citizens' council of education."

The Premier: A good objective.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Yes, but 5,000 miles away.

The Minister for Housing: I do not know about that. The experts are keen on it.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Is the Government keen on it? Never mind the experts. I am keen on it, and that is why I am concerned about it.

The Minister for Housing: It could happen.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: It ought to happen, because the people were promised it.

The Minister for Education: Give us 14 years, the same as you had.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Apparently the Government is sorry it made the promise.

The Premier: The Government never loses sight of its objectives.

Mr. Styants: The Premier had his photo in the paper when that promise was made.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I wondered why we had not heard anything further about it. Like other things in the Policy speeches it was just window-dressing. I believe it was a good idea.

The Minister for Housing: It was suggested on the advice of the highest authorities.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I would be interested to learn when the Government intends to set it up, as that is important to the people to whom the promise was made. I read, in "The Liberal News," a statement about the Government taking over educational work in the schools for the blind, deaf and dumb. The Minister gave no information about that. I am interested, as the school for the deaf is in my electorate.

The Minister for Education: The agreement is in the course of completion.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The Minister has not yet taken it up?

The Minister for Education: Not yet.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Then this statement is incorrect, and again this rattling good man is making misleading statements to the people.

The Minister for Education: I understand the liability will be retrospective to the 1st July, but the position is not yet quite determined.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: It has been hanging fire for a long time.

The Minister for Education: Yes, but the committee of the association has raised some difficulties that have taken time to dispose of, particularly in the Director's absence, as he conducted most of the early negotiations.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: It is highly desirable that the Government should, as soon as possible, assume full responsibility for the education of deaf, dumb and blind children. Hitherto, down the years, the public have been satisfied if Governments made comparatively small donations to the institutions looking after these unfortunate children. During the term of Mr. Willecock's Government it was decided that the Government should be responsible for the education of deaf and blind children. As a com-

mencement of the policy negotiations were opened with the committee in charge of the school for the deaf, with a view to taking over that institution and being completely responsible for the welfare and education of the inmates. I hope that policy will be followed and that as soon as possible we will be able to give these children the help of modern appliances and methods of education. In conclusion—I conclude not because there is no more I would like to say, but because, in view of the lateness of the hour, I do not think I should continue to speak on this Vote, as there will be other opportunities of referring to items of policy at some length when the need is more apparent—I would point out that I have seen no revolutionary change in the policy regarding the education of native children and the segregation so strongly advocated by the Minister for Railways when he was on this side of the House. Apparently the policy now is much the same as that of the previous Government.

The Minister for Education: There is a slight variation.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: In Geraldton and Carnarvon, but not at Katanning.

The Minister for Education: The difficulty does not arise there to any great degree.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: It did when I was Minister, and the same conditions still apply.

The Minister for Education: There is a good school at Carolup.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The policy of segregating native children from white children, which was a real problem to Government members when they were on this side of the House, is apparently no longer a problem. It is remarkable how points of view change when members move from one side of the House to the other.

The Minister for Housing: It was an individual problem.

Hon. A. A. M. Coverley: You did not always say that.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: It was an individual problem for the Minister for Railways, but he is now satisfied.

The Minister for Railways: No. There are 10 years of work in it yet.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I thought the Minister was satisfied that the education of

native children, although in accordance with previous policy, was now all right.

The Minister for Railways: No.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Then there is a possibility of change if the Minister becomes sufficiently vocal. I do not think so as it would be against the best interests of the State if that change were made. It is far better to endeavour to educate these children, regardless of the fact that their faces are black. If members have any doubt about that they should go to the Children's Hospital and see whether the nurses have any desire to treat the children whose faces are black differently from those whose faces are white. Some of the most lovable children in the hospital are those whose faces are black. It is only a matter of attending to their cleanliness to remove any objection there can possibly be to having them educated along with white children. My experience was that, so far as the children themselves were concerned, they had no objection whatever. I frequently found them going around the playgrounds with their arms around each other; white and black children linked together, indicating that they had a far better appreciation of what is right than some adults who complain about the non-segregation of these children in our educational institutions.

The department is functioning very well. The Director, who has been away for several months, will, I understand, be away for the rest of this year, but he should come back to the State with renewed vigour and a wealth of ideas which would not have come to him if he had been obliged to remain within the confines of Australia. He will have an opportunity of seeing educational institutions in other parts of the world, and although he will have but a limited time left to him as Director in this State, because he is approaching retiring age, nevertheless the State should derive distinct benefit from the fact that he has been away. There has been, in one or two isolated instances, some complaint that a man of his age was permitted to leave the State when he had such a short time left in which to give the State the advantage of his knowledge. I do not share that criticism. It would have been of greater advantage if the Director had been a younger man, but at the same time he has rendered this State very useful service, first as a teacher, then

as an inspector and later as Director. He was entitled to have the advantage of this journey when it was offering, and I am glad the Government permitted him to go, even though there will be but a comparatively short time left to him to make much use of the ideas that he has no doubt obtained. However, he is bright enough to be able to communicate to those under him what it has been his good fortune to obtain.

The Minister for Education: His report will be of value for years.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: That is so and, as far as I am concerned, I say to those who have been disposed to criticise the action taken by the Government that I think, in this connection, it was thoroughly justified.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 10.45 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Tuesday, 16th November, 1948.

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