

# Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 30th October, 1947.

	PAGE
Personal explanation, Mr. Smith and Increase of Rent (War Restrictions) Act Amendment Bill	1604
Bills: Increase of Rent (War Restrictions) Act Amendment, 3n.	1605
Farmers' Debts Adjustment Act Amendment (Continuance), report	1605
Municipal Corporations Act Amendment (No. 2), report	1605
Road Districts Act Amendment (No. 2), report	1605
Industry (Advances), Message, 2n.	1605
Rural and Industries Bank Act Amendment, 2n.	1606
Optometrists Act Amendment, Com., report	1643
Annual Estimates, 1947-48: Vote4 and items discussed	1607

## PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

*Mr. Smith and Increase of Rent (War Restrictions) Act Amendment Bill.*

**MR. SMITH** (Brown Hill-Ivanhoe) [4.34]: I crave the indulgence of the House, Mr. Speaker, in order to make an explanation regarding some remarks that I made recently on the Increase of Rent (War Restrictions) Act Amendment Bill, which was introduced by the Attorney General. I desire to complain about a report of my remarks on that occasion, published in the "Kalgoorlie Miner" in the issue dated Monday, 27th October, 1947. Under the heading "Assembly Debates" and the sub-heading "Goldfields Topics Reviewed," written anonymously by a person using the pseudonym of "John Dee," there appears, at the foot of the column, a report which purports to be my remarks in connection with the amendment providing for the exclusion of licensed premises from the operation of the Act. This portion of the report is under a subheading "Goldfields Hotels" and it states:—

In a long sitting on Thursday the only point of particular interest to the goldfields was a tilt by the member for Ivanhoe-Brownhill, Mr. F. C. Smith, at hotels, especially goldfields hotels.

He was speaking on an amendment to the Rent Restrictions Act to exclude hotel licensees from the protection of the Act as regards termination of tenancy.

The hotels and the Licensing Court had not discharged their duty to the public, he said. With the aid of the court many hotels, particularly in goldfields towns, maintained a monopoly which they abused by not giving service to the public. One hotel he had in mind had been allowed to spend £2,000 on its bar, but had not been required to spend anything on its lavatory accommodation or bedrooms which were a disgrace.

That part of the report is nothing but a deliberate and malicious misrepresentation of my remarks when speaking to that amendment. With your permission, Sir, I will read what I did say on that occasion, so that members may see for themselves how what I said has been misrepresented. My remarks were as follows:—

We can always be assured of raising an argument in this Chamber on any question dealing with licensing. This is a matter in which there are some difficulties in the way of making a decision. We must weigh the arguments of both sides to see which has the greater weight, and give our decision accordingly. Licensees of hotels are charged with a grave responsibility to the people of this State and to its revenue-earning possibilities through the service they can render to tourists who might be anxious to see the attractions we have to offer. attractions about which members will hear something during the debate on the Estimates. No member can conscientiously aver that all licensees in this State have discharged their responsibilities to the community. That applies also to the Licensing Court, which over the years has shown a distinct bias in its outlook, in favour of bar trade and not residential accommodation. I know of one hotel where the lavatory accommodation is a disgrace, yet the Licensing Court agreed to that hotel spending £2,000 on the bar, but did not compel it to improve the lavatory or bathroom accommodation. The member for East Perth says that these are licensed premises, which should therefore not be excluded from the measure. In my opinion that is why they should be excluded.

In many countries hotels are not licensed and anyone can provide such a service to the public. The result is that the hotels provide good accommodation and meals, as well as spirituous and fermented liquors. The service to the public is guaranteed by the fact that anyone is entitled to start up in opposition. In some of our country towns there is a virtual monopoly, as there may be only one hotel. There was only one hotel at Norseman for a long while after there should have been two, and there are only two at that centre now. Both owner and lessee have a responsibility to the public. I have heard no protest from licensees regarding this amendment, which has received wide publicity. Under the Licensing Act it is possible for an owner to take action against a lessee who does not serve the public properly. I have seen such action taken and the court has terminated the lease, but this amendment does not deal with the termination of existing leases. If an hotel lease has two or three years to run this provision will not affect it until after that time.

Mr. Graham: Most of the leases have already expired and the tenancy is now on a weekly basis.

Mr. SMITH: I know of an hotel in Kalgoorlie where the lease had only two years to

run. The lessee tried to get rid of it but could not get anyone to take it over, as it needed a lot of money spent on it and the expenditure was not justified without a long lease that would give some possibility of recouping the expenditure. An extension of that lease for another seven years was secured and £2,000 is to be spent to put the hotel into decent condition. Lessees want to know where they will stand when their leases expire, and the owners also wish to know what their position is to be. Many lessees are anxious to secure a renewal of their leases. One man went into an hotel in Subiaco and in ingoing and rent paid £50 per week. He was there for seven years, and at the end of that time, if the owner was not willing to renew the lease on the same terms, he knew he would have to get a new lease. The owner in such a case would be within his rights in taking the hotel over, and that is the basis upon which a licensee goes into an hotel. The time has come when the interests of the people of the State should be considered, as against the interests of the licensees, many of whom have neglected their responsibilities.

To this anonymous writer, "John Dec," I say that there are in his report of these particular remarks, a deliberate and malicious misrepresentation of what I said. It is an abuse of the privileges of this House. I could have moved under another Standing Order, and unless I get some redress in this matter I shall have to consider doing so. Reporters have certain privileges and certain obligations. With a speech such as I made, for any reporter to have said that I tilted especially at Goldfields hotels, when the whole of my remarks had a State-wide application, as was indicated in what I have just read and which can be seen in "Hansard," is utterly wrong. Particularly is that so when he could go on to assert that I said—

With the aid of the court many hotels, particularly in Goldfields towns, maintained a monopoly which they abused by not giving service to the public.

To attribute to me such a statement is a deliberate lie on the part of that reporter. I said nothing of the kind. There was malice aforethought behind such a report. That also applies to his reference to my drawing attention to the condition of bedrooms in hotels in this State. I said nothing about bedrooms.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: It is a pity the publisher was not more careful.

Mr. SMITH: Yes, it is a wonder. I do not know but I think this representative whoever he is—this anonymous writer—has misled and let him down. I do not think

"The Kalgoorlie Miner" would deliberately do such a thing. I draw the attention of the House to the fact that this particular column, which is to be written up by this anonymous writer, is to be a weekly contribution and as this is the first of them, if we do not draw attention to the matter now, we will not know where we will be by the end of the session. I trust that, having drawn your attention, Mr. Speaker—as well as bringing it before the House—to this misrepresentation that has appeared, "The Kalgoorlie Miner" will make due amends to me.

#### **BILL—INCREASE OF RENT (WAR RESTRICTIONS) ACT AMENDMENT.**

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

#### **BILLS (3)—REPORT.**

1, Farmers' Debt Adjustment Act Amendment (Continuance).

2, Municipal Corporations Act Amendment (No. 2).

3, Road Districts Act Amendment (No. 2).

Adopted.

#### **BILL—INDUSTRY (ADVANCES).**

##### *Message.*

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

##### *Second Reading.*

**THE PREMIER** (Hon. D. R. McLarty—Murray-Wellington) [4.47] in moving the second reading said: When the Rural and Industries Bank was established it was intended that it should take over the work previously done by the Agricultural Bank as well as become an ordinary trading bank. One of the functions to be carried out by the Rural Bank was to become the agent for the Government in rendering financial assistance previously made by the Treasurer under the Industries Assistance Act. Section 24 of the Act authorised the Treasurer to grant assistance to any person engaged in mining or other industry who could

satisfy him that in the interests of the State such assistance should be given—

Hon. A. H. Panton: That is a pretty hard job.

The PREMIER:—and that it was not practicable for the applicant to obtain the required assistance through ordinary channels, except with financial assistance from the Treasury. By Section 5 of the Rural and Industries Bank Act, 1944, Section 24 of the Industries Assistance Act was repealed. Certain machinery provisions were embodied in the Rural and Industries Bank Act which, it was thought, gave the Treasurer the right to grant assistance that he had previously exercised under the Industries Assistance Act. The powers of the Treasurer in this respect have been queried and the law officers of the Crown Law Department agree that there is a doubt as to whether the Rural and Industries Bank Act gives the required authority. To overcome the difficulty, approval is now sought to the passing of this Bill.

In addition to authorising the Treasurer to do what it was thought he had power to do under the Rural and Industries Bank Act, the Bill validates any assistance given by the Treasurer since the commencement of that legislation. The Solicitor General considers that the object can be better achieved by the introduction of this Bill than by amending the Rural and Industries Bank Act. I wish to emphasise that the purpose of the measure is to give to the Treasurer beyond any doubt powers which it has always been considered he possessed and which are essential for the encouragement and development of industry.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Does this come under the agency section of the bank?

The PREMIER: Yes, under the general banking section. Many industries have been assisted in this way and the Bill will also validate any assistance granted between the repeal of Section 24 of the Industries Assistance Act and the passage of this legislation. I think I have clearly explained the intention and move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. A. H. Panton, debate adjourned.

## BILL—RURAL AND INDUSTRIES BANK ACT AMENDMENT.

*Second Reading.*

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS** (Hon. L. Thorn—Toodyay) [4.52] in moving the second reading said: At the outset I should like to explain that I propose to deal with the Rural Bank generally when speaking on the Estimates. The activities of the bank at the moment are very brisk, and this amendment is necessary to permit of the bank accepting the business that is offering.

The amendments to the Act embodied in the Bill are designed to give the Commissioners greater elasticity in the making of advances to clients of the bank. Section 58 of the Act restricts the making of advances to a limit of £10,000, which sum can only be exceeded subject to special circumstances, which apply mainly to the transfer of the activities of a farmer to other sections of agriculture. With the impending possibility of the nationalisation of banking, the business of the bank will be considerably extended and the restriction of advances to £10,000 will preclude the Commissioners from transacting a considerable amount of sound business. It is desirable that they have the powers contained in the Bill in order that they may be able to meet all contingencies in the matter of lending money in circumstances which, I believe, are likely to arise, in order that they may be in a position to transact business without the restriction of limits where the security is sound and the business satisfactory.

Because of the provisions of Section 58 (a) of the Act and the necessity for giving the Commissioners wider powers, the whole of paragraphs (a) and (d) of that section must be deleted so as to remove the restrictions that were imposed. The proposed amendment of Section 65 (b) is consequential and necessary to the wider powers provided under amending paragraph (a). The amendment as proposed will give the Commissioners those powers which are necessary to and consistent with the provisions of Sections 19 and 46, and the powers so conferred are also necessary for the requirements of general banking that the Commissioners are required to undertake. Section 19 (b) provides that the Commissioners shall and may exercise authority to carry on the business of banking generally in all

forms authorised and recognised by law. Section 46 (g) further empowers the Commissioners to do any of the following things:—

Grant overdrafts payable on demand to persons who are depositors of money in the bank, whether carrying on any rural industry or other industry or not, on the security of land, crops, wool, live-stock, plant or machinery, personal security, guarantees, promissory notes, bills or exchange or any other security approved of by the Commissioners.

It will be readily appreciated that the Commissioners would be quite agreeable to providing financial accommodation to sound and successful institutions if they were not restricted by the limit of £10,000, and so we desire to remove the restriction in order to give effect to the provisions to which I have referred. With the restrictions placed upon them, the Commissioners are unable, even where the security is gilt-edged, to make any advances exceeding the sum stipulated in the Act. The difficulties created by the £10,000 restriction have more or less been overcome by agreement with the Treasury so that the necessary accommodation could be provided from the Rural Bank and Government Agency Section. This, however, has proved to be unsatisfactory for the reason that delay was experienced in dealing with business and bookkeeping difficulties also arose, and the business that would normally and properly be that of the Rural Bank Department was divided by the unwarranted restriction and necessitated division of the security between the two departments.

The proposed amendment will enable the Commissioners to transact the whole of the business on Rural Bank Account, without the necessity for obtaining the State Treasurer's agreement, and at the same time it will remove the other difficulties to which I have referred. The Commissioners will be restricted to limiting advances to 70 per cent. of the sale value of the security, excepting in cases where good cause is shown to their satisfaction. The reason for an exception being provided can be appreciated from the following set of circumstances:—Section 46 (g) empowers the Commissioners to lend money, by way of overdraft, without limit, on personal security, guarantees, promissory notes, bills of exchange, or any other security approved by them and, in these cases, 70 per cent. of the value of the security could not possibly

apply. For instance, it is competent for them to advance up to 100 per cent. on gilt-edged securities, such as Government bonds, etc.

In cases where it is necessary to transfer a farming undertaking from one farming activity to another, further funds may be required in order to have such reconstruction work carried out. The amending paragraph provides the Commissioners with those powers which are necessary and which are consistent with earlier sections. In general terms the Bill aims at providing the Commissioners of the Rural and Industries Bank with powers enabling them to give effect to the intentions of the Act; that is to say, to carry on business in all its forms, to provide financial accommodation where the security is good and gilt-edged, and to make advances in excess of 70 per cent. where the security is without doubt, to make advances up to 70 per cent. of the sale value of the security when loans are made on farm land securities, industries, etc., except in such cases where for sound reasons advances are required in excess of that sum. The proposed amendment is not loosely constructed, as the responsibility of the Commissioners of the bank in exceeding such limit of 70 per cent. of the sale value of the security is substantially emphasised. It gives me much pleasure to move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. A. H. Panton, debate adjourned.

## ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1947-48.

### *In Committee of Supply.*

Resumed from the 28th October; Mr. Perkins in the Chair.

*Vote—Forests, £81,285:*

**THE MINISTER FOR FORESTS** (Hon. D. R. McLarty—Murray-Wellington) [5.1]: For the financial year 1946-47 timber royalties yielded £142,756, exceeding the Estimate by £7,750. Whilst the demand for timber is increasing, the industry is still affected by shortage of manpower and it will be necessary for the department to continue its assistance to the mills by supplying labour for felling, etc. During the coming year it is expected that three additional mills—two sawmills and one casemill—will commence operations. The revenue from

royalties, it is estimated, will increase further by approximately £7,250 to £150,000.

Following the passing of the Forests Act in 1919, a detailed assessment was made of the marketable timber available throughout the South-West; and, based on this information, working plans were prepared for jarrah and karri. These working plans, which have been revised from time to time, provide for the regulation cut from Crown lands and State forests: For general purposes mills, approximately 600,000 loads of jarrah and karri per annum in the round; for sleeper mills, approximately 25,000 loads in the square. This cut is equivalent to 225,000 loads in the square of sawn timber. Owing to delays in establishing new mills and to difficulty in obtaining labour even for existing mills, production is considerably below this figure. It stands at present at approximately 150,000 loads in the square. During the past two years numerous additional small mills have been established to operate on logs obtained from private property. These 70 new mills indicate the value of and demand for jarrah and karri and are demonstrating the successful utilisation of small-size and low-quality logs.

While Australia as a whole faces a serious timber shortage, having always imported more than one-third of her requirements, Western Australia is fortunate in having a surplus beyond her immediate needs with her present small population. This surplus consists of high-quality hardwoods which are in such great demand overseas and which have been exported to almost all countries of the world. At present some timber is being sent to the sister States of South Australia and Victoria, which are able to obtain only scanty supplies elsewhere. In anticipation of a severe shortage of world timber supplies following the war, the Forests Department sold additional sawmilling areas to enable the State to make as large a contribution as possible to Australian and Empire requirements, consistent with sound management of our existing forest resources.

I regret that owing to shortage of manpower these mills have not been built. Moreover, the total production is still only about two-thirds of the permissible yield of the State. This unfortunately prevents Western Australia from taking advantage of lucrative markets overseas and building up a

strong trade for the immediate future. The importance of the timber trade to the State is well known; and, with an annual production value approaching £3,000,000 for all products, on a return to normal conditions it will continue to exert a powerful influence upon the development of the State. Every effort must be made to preserve it. Jarrah forests hitherto regarded as comparatively poor and therefore sought for settlement, yield valuable timber today for sawmilling and in the interests of the continuity of the timber industry must be retained as forests for the time being.

A small revenue is expected from royalties on mallet bark. There are small areas of natural mallet stands in the Narrogin district which are being stripped for bark. The bark is an important source of tannin. We are hopeful of supplying the local demand for this bark from the native stands until the plantations, already established to the extent of 17,000 acres, are ready for thinning, as they will be within the next few years, when a regular supply should be available from this source. I think the present plantings are about 100 acres per annum. The small sum obtained from the sale of wandoo logs to the tannin extract plant at Boddington does not give any indication of the extent of the operations of this factory, whose main source of supply is at present from private property. Owing to the recovery of the market for sandalwood in the Far East, revenue from this source last year amounted to £93,686. With a buoyant export trade and the demand for sandalwood for oil distillation, it is anticipated that receipts from this source will, during 1947-48, reach £100,000.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Have you any idea how much you have stacked now?

The MINISTER FOR FORESTS: No. I cannot give the hon. member that information. Departmental, inspection and miscellaneous fees, sales of trees and seedlings and pine timber are expected to yield £100,000 more than the previous year. Owing to the curtailment of firewood production, receipts from this source will drop by £6,500, resulting in a net decrease of £5,500 under the heading of Departmental. From the small area of pine plantations, consisting of 13,000 acres, 320,000 cubic feet in the round were removed as thinnings during

the year 1946-47. These thinnings can be expected to increase in volume from now on. They contribute in a small way towards our requirements of softwoods for cases, turning, joinery and puller logs for plywood. I think that any members who have not had a chance to inspect some of these pine plantations should take the opportunity to do so. They would then get an indication of just what wealth is being produced from some of the poorest of our land.

What surprised me most when I visited a pine plantation recently were the experiments that have been carried out to show what superphosphate will do to encourage the growth of pine trees. In the middle of a pine plantation, a small area was wired off in which there were a number of trees that had never made any growth; in fact, some appeared to be almost dead, and others had a most unhealthy look. That was only because they had not had a little superphosphate given to them by hand when they were planted. If any members are interested and would like to see what is being done on these pine plantations, arrangements could be made to let them do so.

On the expenditure side, the estimate for salaries for 1947-48 is £30,560, an increase of approximately £3,000 over last year. The increased expenditure is mainly due to a rise in the basic wage and the appointment of additional staff owing to increased activity in the timber industry. Provision is made for £1,500 under the heading of "incidentals" for the establishment of a nursery at Kalgoorlie and three arboreta to propagate trees in the dry areas of the State. Efforts with these species at the Hamel nursery have not been successful. Sales will be made to farmers and public bodies. Travelling and mileage allowances and other incidentals are expected to increase by approximately £300.

Dealing with the timber industry regulations, expenditure under this heading covers travelling and other expenses of two inspectors and the printing of forms and stationery required under the Timber Industry Regulation Act. With regard to pine conversion, in addition to a continuance of last year's operations, three new pine mills will commence operations in the coming year at Harvey Weir, Ludlow and East Kirup.

Mr. May: Are those plantations much of a success? They did not appear to be from the outside.

The MINISTER FOR FORESTS: I think there is considerable value in them. I do not know of any pine forest that cannot be classed as a success, though some are better than others.

Mr. May: It did not seem to be the most suitable pine.

Mr. Reynolds: There have been some wonderful sticks of timber from Ludlow.

The MINISTER FOR FORESTS: I hope to have a look at them before long, and perhaps the hon. member will come with me.

Mr. May: I would be delighted. They do not appear to be very good, from the outside.

The MINISTER FOR FORESTS: At the three plantations I have mentioned, work will begin at the mills during the coming year, while thinning operations at the Collier Plantation will provide logs for conversion. Basic wage increases are also reflected in this item, which is estimated to exceed the 1946-47 expenditure by £3,000. The value of pine timber for many purposes and the desirability of making the State self-supporting in the matter of soft-wood supplies and the possible need to augment supplies of timber in, say, 30 years' time, when the cut from our hardwood forests may have to be reduced, all point to the necessity for additional areas. The Government has given consideration to finding these suitable areas, and I think there are many of them throughout the State.

In regard to the direct conversion of forest produce, the greater portion of expenditure under this heading is for the production of firewood for the Goldfields Water Supply Nos. 1 and 2 Pumping Stations, where reserve stocks are very low. It is proposed to cut 14,500 tons in the Mundaring division and rail 5,000 tons from stacks in the Dwellingup Division. From these latter stacks it is intended, provided rail transport is available, to forward 10,000 tons to metropolitan woodyards and 1,000 tons for other Government requirements, leaving a balance of 5,000 tons available for Nos. 1 and 2 pumps next year. Direct conversion in the Kirup

Division provides firewood for the dehydration factory at Donnybrook, while operations at other centres supply logs for sawmilling and the plywood factory. The estimated expenditure of £40,250 is approximately £8,900 less than last year, owing to the reduction in firewood-cutting operations.

Expenditure under these Estimates is a charge against revenue from the forests, after which three-fifths is paid into the Reforestation Fund. Details of the proposed expenditure from this fund have already been tabled, and provide for an expenditure of £180,000 for the current financial year. No efforts must be spared in the care and rehabilitation of our virgin and cut-over forests. Fire has caused untold harm in the past. While destruction by this cause has been checked in a considerable area of the northern forests, further developmental work is required to consolidate the position and the extreme South-West has yet to be brought under protection.

Outstanding work in the field of pine nutrition and pine establishment has been done in this State, paving the way for expansion of the already successful plantations established. Some of these, together with our mallet plantations, are outstanding examples of the use of otherwise waste land. The need for additional timber, if our State is to achieve the development expected, requires us to set in train immediately a programme of afforestation development. An appreciable expansion of the activities of the Forests Department cannot be expected immediately because of the shortage of manpower and equipment and housing, but the first steps will be the provision of modern tractor and bulldozer equipment for the primary work of opening up roads of access and firelines. Advantage was taken of the holding of the Empire Forestry Conference in London this year to send a representative from this State in the person of the Conservator of Forests so that he might obtain the latest information about the developments in forestry science.

Hon. A. A. M. Coverley: That is one good job you have done.

The MINISTER FOR FORESTS: I was going to say that I noted, when I called for the file regarding this conference, that my

predecessor in the office of Minister for Forests, the member for Kimberley, was very keen that the Conservator should attend this conference, and I agree it is necessary that we should seek the most scientific and practical advice possible in regard to forests. I am sure there will not be any criticism of the Government for sending abroad the Conservator to attend this Empire Conference. The member for Kimberley knows he is a man who has a tremendous amount of interest in his work, and not only does he work by day but also by night. I feel that his trip abroad will be of benefit to forestry work in this State generally.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Will members be able to see his report? It should be an interesting one.

The MINISTER FOR FORESTS: I have not yet read the report of the Conservator, although I have had long discussions with him. I agree with the member for Leederville that it will be interesting to read that document, and I will see whether it can be made available to members. The Government intends to pursue a vigorous policy to encourage forestry and to protect our forest estate and our timber industry, for it must not be forgotten that the maintenance of existing important industries is vital to the State. I have given a general outline of our forestry. I have heard some criticism about the amount of timber that we are sending out of the State. Some people are of the opinion that we are exporting too much. I assure members that we will not allow our housing position to suffer because of the timber we export. It is our intention to review the position immediately in order that we shall not be short of any particular class of timber because of exports.

Mr. May: Will you make sure of a plentiful supply of flooring boards while you are doing that?

The MINISTER FOR FORESTS: We will make sure about our timber, in every direction.

Mr. Hegney: Is that timber exported outside the Commonwealth?

The MINISTER FOR FORESTS: Yes, and inside, too.

Mr. Fox: Suppose you want baths from another State, and it wants our timber?

The MINISTER FOR FORESTS: I am coming to that. If any member considers that a particular class of timber is being exported to the detriment of our own housing programme I shall be glad to hear from him. I assure members that immediate consideration will be given to such complaints.

Mr. Hoar: What is being exported today—about 35 per cent?

The MINISTER FOR FORESTS: I thought I might have that question shot at me, so I came prepared for it. The programme of sawn timber production for the current six months, July-December this year, provides for the following amounts monthly:—

	Loads.	per cent.
Western Australia ..	10,250	60½
Interstate .. ..	3,940	23½
Exports Oversea ..	2,700	16
	<hr/> 16,890	<hr/> 100

The distribution of the 10,250 loads set aside for consumption within Western Australia is, roughly, as follows:—

	Loads.
Houses, at the rate of 3,000 per annum .. ..	3,250
Sleepers .. ..	1,530
Cases and case timber .. ..	1,200
Building up yard stocks or for seasoning .. ..	500
For general use .. ..	3,800
	<hr/>
Total ..	10,250

The member for South Fremantle suggested, so I understand, that if we do not export some timber we may suffer in regard to certain materials or articles that we need from the Eastern States. That is so. We are dependent on the Eastern States for many of our housing requirements. To assist other States, particularly South Australia and Victoria, which are short of timber for their housing programmes, and urgently need what we can allow, we permit of a certain amount being exported. By doing that we get from them certain commodities which allow us to continue with our building programme. We all know that the timber industry is short of manpower. Some big mills, in the electorate of the member for Nelson, would be started at once if the necessary manpower could be obtained. The Government is

anxious that these mills should commence and that timber production be stepped up.

HON. A. A. M. COVERLEY (Kimberley) [5.26]: I do not see much difference between the Estimates presented by the Minister for Forests and those introduced by the previous Government last session. For that reason, I shall not keep the Committee very long in declaring that I have much pleasure in supporting the Estimates. The one and only vast difference that I see between the introduction of these and the previous Estimates is that on this occasion we have a convert to the Forests Department. Whereas I came from the heart of the timber industry in the South-West and have been a constant supporter and believer in the Forests Department, I am afraid my successor, by virtue of his farming interests, has preferred to see land cultivated for the purpose of running dairy cows, or something else. From what the Minister for Forests said when introducing the Estimates I am satisfied that he will, from now onwards at any rate, be a strong supporter of our Forests Act.

It is not my intention to go through the history of the department to show what it has meant to the development of the South-West, or to point out what a wealthy industry it is, because I think those things are sufficiently well known to members. I was pleased to hear the Minister indicate that it will be the intention of the Government to foster the timber industry from all angles, because the Forests Department, while being the one and only Government department privileged to spend a portion of its own revenue, has always, as far as I can gather, found difficulty in getting the Treasurer to produce the necessary financial assistance to develop the industry in a thorough manner. In that connection, I refer firstly to reforestation, and secondly to the protection of our forests. In the olden days, when a few men were employed with rakes and wet bags, it was difficult to protect our forests from fire. Today, with modern implements and progressive methods I am satisfied that the Forests Department will, to a greater extent, be able to minimise the damage done by fire.

It was my privilege while Minister for Forests, to influence the then Treasurer to make available the sum of £16,000 or £17,000 for the purpose of buying some mobile units



and some wireless apparatus which were no longer needed—hostilities having ceased—by the Air Force and other branches of the Services. With the building of a couple of extra towers and an increase in the number of mobile units the Forests Department is in a happier position, but is still understaffed and short of firefighting machinery. I appeal to the Premier to give earnest consideration to supplying the department with at least two more bulldozers and further firefighting apparatus. This is essential if we are to support the efforts of the department to protect this valuable asset. The Premier was good enough to refer to the visit of the Conservator of Forests to the Empire Conference, and I congratulate the Government on having permitted our Conservator to attend that conference.

Western Australia is fortunate in having Mr. Stoa as Conservator, controlling this vast and valuable industry. To my personal knowledge he could have had a better position had he agreed to leave the State, as did other senior officials of that department. However, he decided, as a true Western Australian, to stay with the department in which he had grown up. We are fortunate, also, in the soundness of the planning that was embodied in our Forests Act, as put into operation by Mr. Lane-Poole, who was one of the best forest officers in Australia. His successor, Mr. Kessell, was and is recognised as one of the highest forestry authorities in the Commonwealth—so much so that when war broke out he was seconded to the Commonwealth Government to occupy the highest position existing in Australia in the timber field during the war. Many of his senior officials left Western Australia for better paid positions.

This will indicate how lucky we were to have Mr. Stoa to take over from his predecessor. He took over this important department with a staff of nine fewer senior officials than Mr. Kessell had at his disposal. Despite that, he had to deal with the vast increase in timber production due to war causes. I might mention that so many employees of the timber merchants had enlisted that, to overcome the difficulties of the situation, the Forests Department had to take over the provision of firewood to the metropolitan area, and many of the pumping stations that supply Kalgoorlie with water. All this extra work was thrown on to the department, which had no organisation in

that direction and no experience of the industry. From the Conservator down, right through the staff and employees of the department, all did an exceptionally good job during the war and I am pleased to give them full credit for the work.

I hope the report of the Conservator of Forests will be available—after the Premier has received and read it—for perusal by any member who is interested in it. Knowing Mr. Stoa as I do, I am sure he will give a full report, and one that will be of great value to Western Australia in the future. I hope the Premier will not forget to pay particular attention to the necessity of supplying more bulldozers and firefighting apparatus for the protection of our forests, which played so great a part in opening up the South-West.

**MR. LESLIE** (Mt. Marshall) [5.35]: I would like the Premier—when replying to the debate or at some later stage—to give the House some information regarding the pine plantation at Mundaring. Pine wood is practically unobtainable from outside Western Australia and there is a supply available from the pine plantation that I have mentioned. I take it that that plantation is under the jurisdiction of the Forests Department. It has come to my notice that the privilege of cutting pine from this area has, for a number of years, been reserved to one firm, a case-making firm, in this State. So far as I am able to ascertain, at no time have tenders been called for the cutting of this timber, which at present is in such short supply and great demand. I understand that the people who have the right or concession to cut timber from this plantation are keeping the supply to themselves and are not making any of it available to other case-making firms in the metropolitan area.

I hope the Premier will investigate the position. If a monopoly over this timber was granted years ago it may have been justified, owing to an insufficient demand for the available supply, but today the situation is entirely different and this timber is in such short supply that it is extremely valuable. Pine timber is necessary to many firms if they are to carry on their operations. It is only right and proper that this concession should be open for tender and that supplies of pine timber should be made available to other firms. It is particularly necessary that this question should be raised at the pre-

sent stage as I understand that, in conjunction with the raising of the Mundaring Weir, a considerable area of this plantation is to be cut out. If we allow the one firm, which has had a monopoly of this timber for many years, to have the 100 acres of pine that is to be cut as its sole perquisite, an injustice will be done to many others interested in obtaining this raw material.

Another matter I wish to mention is that I hope the Premier, who is in charge of the Forests Department, will not meekly accept the dictates of the forestry officials, who for years have pursued a policy of holding on to valuable gully land. I fully appreciate the fact that reforestation is a most valuable and necessary operation for Western Australia, but I am also aware that equally valuable and highly productive areas, held for forestry purposes, could be put to more intensive productive uses, and if that were done it would not in any way restrict the reforestation programme. There is any quantity of land in this State suitable for forestry requirements which would be unsuitable for intense cultivation. It would be a far better proposition for the State from an economic point of view if that course were adopted rather than to continue permitting the Forests Department to hold on to rich gully land, which could otherwise be used for closer settlement and agricultural development.

I have heard all the arguments advanced against the use of these areas such as the danger from fires and so forth, but most of them cannot hold water when properly examined. I suggest to the Premier that instead of meekly accepting the policy as laid down by the departmental officers in the past, he should investigate the position and reach his own conclusions. He should do so particularly as there is no shortage of suitable forest land in Western Australia. I refer to land that is, while being suitable for reforestation, not adapted to intense cultivation.

**MR. FOX** (South Fremantle) [5.43]: Many complaints have been made about the planting of pines in the Bibra Lake and North Lake Road areas. Last year the Forests Department started further planting in that district and the people there are much perturbed about it. Pines stop the wind currents that turn the windmills, and the district includes some good agricultural

land. It would be much preferable if the department went six or seven miles further out. A large tract of land is available at that distance from the present settlement and is quite suitable for pine plantations. I do not think it is right to use fairly good land so near the metropolitan area merely for growing pines. Then again complaints have been received about the effect the pollen has on many people, some of whom suffer from asthma and are allergic to pine pollen. In fact, people have had to leave the district to get away from the infection due to the pollen. When the Premier quoted figures regarding the quantity of timber shipped from Western Australia to the Eastern States, he did not make any distinction between the types exported. He did not say how much jarrah and how much karri had been shipped. In my opinion, we should send away as little jarrah as possible. Karri is not the best timber for house building purposes in the metropolitan area.

The Minister for Forests: They are very keen to get it in South Australia.

**MR. FOX**: I would give them the karri and keep the jarrah in this State.

**Hon. A. H. Panton**: Do they not have white ants there?

**MR. FOX**: I have seen a number of houses where a couple of pieces of karri have been put in and in every instance the white ants have eaten those pieces out and left the jarrah alone.

**Hon. A. H. Panton**: You can see that with nearly every picket fence in the metropolitan area.

**MR. FOX**: That is so. If we are to export timber, I hope the Government will send away as much karri as possible and keep the jarrah in Western Australia for building purposes.

The Minister for Works: That is a very charitable proposal!

**MR. FOX**: At any rate, it is sensible. White ants may not be as bad in other States as they are here.

**Hon. A. R. G. Hawke**: The red ants are bad in the Eastern States!

**MR. FOX**: If a piece of softwood is put on the ground, it will be eaten out in no time. I do not know what it is like in the Murray-Wellington district.

Mr. May: The ants eat the galvanised iron there!

Mr. FOX: I am not quite sure on that point! At any rate, I am convinced that we should keep our jarrah supplies here. I understand there is likely to be a shortage of newsprint. In view of what the member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe said this afternoon, I do not know that that is not a good idea. However, we ought to be able to produce our own newsprint requirements. If we had thousands of acres of pine plantations, it should not be long before we could instal a mill and provide for the local demand for paper. I trust the Government will pay attention to this matter and, if it is necessary to export timber, that karri will be sent away and jarrah retained.

MR. HOAR (Nelson) [5.47]: I had not intended participating in the debate because I felt the previous Government had established such a sound forest policy that it could not be interfered with although there has been a change of Government.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Hear, hear!

Mr. HOAR: After listening to the remarks of the member for South Fremantle regarding the quality of karri, I have to defend what I know to be the facts. It is quite true that karri is very susceptible to attack by white ants, but nevertheless I think the Premier would be well advised, generally speaking, not to take much notice of the statements of the hon. member. The area under karri is restricted, whereas the jarrah forests comprise between 2,000,000 and 3,000,000 acres. Consequently we have a large quantity of jarrah to export, and by all means let us do so within reason. It is a timber the quality of which is readily acceptable by people overseas.

As for karri, we must remember that the mining industry depends to a great extent upon that class of timber. Karri is far superior in every way to jarrah or any other timber that we know of for the purposes of structural work. I imagine that in the years to come with the possibility of further development, the State will need this class of timber and we would make a very grievous mistake if we allowed it to be exported on the assumption that it is readily affected by white ants. So long as it is kept away from the ground karri is possibly the finest timber of all for building purposes.

Mr. Fox: Yes, if you keep it off the ground.

Mr. HOAR: That is so. If karri is protected against attacks by termites it is certainly the best timber of all not only from the standpoint of breaking strain, but from that of general strength and reliability. I know a little about this subject; I do not know that the member for South Fremantle does. Certainly he is much mistaken when he starts running down the qualities of karri, and I would not be doing my duty as the member for the constituency where a considerable proportion of that timber is growing, if I did not rise to put him in his proper place.

The Minister for Forests: I think you ought to know more about it than does the member for South Fremantle.

HON. J. T. TONKIN (North-East Fremantle) [5.50]: I was interested in the figures the Premier gave of the quantities of timber being produced and exported. I had hoped that he would give further figures to complete an inquiry I intended to make. Despite what he said about the quantities being exported, the ratio of timber going overseas and to the Eastern States, there is an idea prevalent that the State is not getting a fair deal in the use of the timber produced in the State. Personally I know very little of the matter, but from time to time builders complain to me that they are certain that the right figures are not being supplied. They feel that the market overseas is so attractive that those in the timber industry are exporting as much timber as possible in order to take advantage of the high price and are not very much concerned about the needs of Western Australia. I repeat that I do not know whether there is any truth in that statement.

The Minister for Forests: It would be very easy to get a check on the exports.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Possibly it would be very easy for the Premier, but not so easy for me.

Mr. Marshall: A lot is sneaked out through Busselton, I believe.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Builders recognise that there is a very great shortage of various lines required by them and no doubt they are induced to think that the timber they ought to get is not being made available. That is understandable. There may be no

ground for their suspicion, but each time I meet a builder actively engaged in erecting houses, I am told he believes that a great deal more timber is being sent oversea and to the Eastern States than should be exported—more than a fair proportion. I should like to know, of the total quantity reserved for use in this State, how much is reserved for housing.

The Minister for Forests: Up to requirements for 3,000 houses a year. I gave those figures when introducing the Estimates.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I am aware that the Premier gave us that information, but if we had a fair percentage for local use, it might be possible to build 4,000 or 5,000 houses a year.

The Minister for Forests: I gave the percentages, too.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I regret that I missed those figures. The figures in which I am particularly interested are: What quantities of timber are being exported oversea and to the Eastern States? What proportion of timber produced in Western Australia is being reserved for local use?

The Minister for Forests: I gave those figures.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: What proportion of that is being reserved for housing?

The Minister for Forests: Sufficient for 3,000 houses.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: If authentic figures were published, it would go far to satisfying builders and homeseekers, who feel that at present the State is not getting a fair deal in relation to the quantity of timber being produced in the State. I think the Premier would be well advised to give full publicity to the actual quantities and percentages so that people would understand the position.

**THE MINISTER FOR FORESTS** (Hon. D. R. McLarty—Murray-Wellington—in reply) [5.54]: I regret that the member for North-East Fremantle did not hear the percentages I gave. Unfortunately I have sent the papers away. I gave the percentages of timber being used locally and being sent to the Eastern States and oversea. I also explained that sufficient timber was being kept for supplying the requirements for 3,000 houses.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: The timber being reserved for housing may be only 10 per cent.

of the timber available. I want to know what proportion is being reserved for the State and what proportion of that is for housing. Is it one-half or two-thirds?

The MINISTER FOR FORESTS: I cannot give that information offhand. We are going to review the position regarding timber exports, and I give the Committee an assurance that full protection will be given to local requirements. We shall not be exporting to the detriment of our people who require houses.

Mr. Reynolds: Last year we produced just over 10,000,000 cubic feet, and, according to the figures you gave this afternoon, it appears to me that 40 per cent.—

Hon. A. H. Panton: Who is making this speech?

The MINISTER FOR FORESTS: There is no doubt that the figures I gave are correct, and I thank the hon. member for mentioning the fact. As to the question raised by the member for Mt. Marshall, there is a constant demand for forest land. I have heard a lot about these fertile valleys, but difficulties arise when land is granted in a forest area because frequently requests are made for still more land.

Mr. Marshall: If Governments had met all the requests, there would have been no reforestation at all.

The MINISTER FOR FORESTS: I know that this question crops up continually. There is a world shortage of timber and we must be careful to safeguard our forests, but, as I have explained, when timber land is made available to settlers, requests for more land frequently follow.

Hon. A. H. Panton: You stick to the Forests Act.

The MINISTER FOR FORESTS: Each session a Bill is introduced to make available some areas from forest reserves. The questions raised by members will receive attention.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Education, £1,411,910:

**THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION** (Hon. A. F. Watts—Katanning) [5.58]: I trust that I shall not be ruled out of order, Mr. Chairman, if I say it is my intention to deal with the Education Estimates and

the Votes that follow, including town planning, in one speech, and leave the Vote for the Department of Industrial Development to another speech, because it seems to me that, to take them together, would be improper and, in view of the circumstances, I consider that I should not adopt that course but should deal with them separately.

The CHAIRMAN: If no member of the Committee objects, we shall follow that course.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Thank you. In introducing the Estimates of the Education Department, I should like to express my appreciation—and I think the appreciation of every member—of the excellent service that is being rendered to the State, not only by the teaching staff of the department, but also by the administrative and other officers engaged in the service. I feel sure we all recognise the exceptionally good work which is being done, under great difficulties, difficulties which so far as the staff of the department is concerned are caused by the large expansion of the work to be done compared with the work of a decade or so ago.

Considerable difficulties exist over which the teaching staff has no personal control. I could, for example, point to the difficulty of providing suitable quarters for teachers, especially those in country districts. The time was when the Education Department was responsible for the provision of quarters wherever it thought these were necessary, and the department made its own arrangements as to the payment of rent. I understand the position was changed in 1944, when the Workers' Homes Board, as it was then—now the Housing Commission—assumed the responsibility for the provision of houses not only for the ordinary people coming under the aegis of the board or Commission but also for schoolteachers.

Instead of the Education Department now providing teachers' quarters where it thinks necessary, the Housing Commission acts on purely what might be called a hardship basis, as is the case in all other applications. There is, of course, a measure of justice in that, I admit, but it does accentuate the difficulties in those districts where teachers are not able to establish themselves at a reasonable cost in the social life of the community and where they are very often ob-

liged to accept what are unsuitable quarters or, alternatively, take very expensive ones. That is one of the difficulties which the majority of the teachers are putting up with bravely and I sincerely hope it will not be long before some amelioration of this position can be found.

Then, too, we find that in many districts they are teaching a far greater number of children than modern thought and practice indicate is right and, indeed, more than it is reasonable to ask them physically to cope with in some cases. This is a problem which cannot readily be solved, although I am hopeful—as I think everyone is—that it will not now be long before at least a start can be made in amending that situation and so overcome some of the difficulties. Bearing those matters in mind and others which I can think of, and which members may have in their own minds, I wish most sincerely to thank the people I have mentioned for their excellent co-operation in the service they have rendered to the State during the past few years. I am sure that my predecessor in office, the member for North-East Fremantle, would be foremost in joining with me in those sentiments.

The Estimates of the Education Department provide for an anticipated expenditure for the financial year 1947-48 of £1,411,910, of which sum £1,138,490 represents salary costs and £273,420 incidental expenditure. Of the total increase of £188,000 odd, increased salaries represent an amount of £116,381, so that there is approximately £72,000 increased expenditure contemplated in items other than those which relate to salaries. The estimate of salary costs will, however, probably be greatly increased when the Public Service Teachers' Appeal Board releases its determinations on the appeals lodged by the Western Australian State School Teachers' Union on behalf of all the teachers in the State against the classification of the teaching service made on the 1st July, 1946. These appeals were based principally on the anomalies which it was claimed existed between salaries paid to our teachers compared with those paid in the other States of Australia. In all but one case the salaries fixed by tribunals had very materially increased in recent times.

The appeals were lodged shortly after the issue of the classification of July, 1946, but up to the time when I took office—in April

last—it had apparently not been possible to find a judge of the Supreme Court to take the chair of the Appeal Board. When the matter was brought to my notice some time during May and I caused representations to be made to the Chief Justice through the Attorney General, it was only with some difficulty that a judge could be made available for a sufficient time to undertake the hearing of the numerous appeals which were listed. In consequence, it was not until early in September that the Appeal Board commenced its sittings. The hearing of the appeals lasted for a period of over three weeks. Here, again, I wish to pay tribute to the work of the Secretary of the Education Department in regard to the appeals. The great quantity of work that will have been involved, and the very considerable increase in expenditure that will have to be undertaken, may perhaps be gathered from the fact that the recommendation of that gentleman is that if the various adjustments are to be made before the school year closes, it will be necessary for certain officers of the Education Department to work a total of 350 hours overtime in the next five weeks.

There is, of course, not only the question of the salary increases themselves but the numerous adjustments that have to be made principally connected with the alterations in the basic wage—three in number—which have occurred since the 1st July, 1946, to the present time. I believe that the majority of the increases that are likely to be granted—as to which, of course, I have some general but at this stage no detailed knowledge—will be well justified because it is clear, I think, to most of us that the circumstances of the times and the work of the profession warrant a return in remuneration comparable at least with that received by similar persons in other parts of Australia.

The matter has, of course, involved the question of how near we can approach to the level which has been fixed in one of the standard States, such as, say, New South Wales; but I have no doubt that all those considerations, which must have their effect when the Grants Commission is conducting its inquiries into the State finances, were all taken fairly into consideration by the Appeal Board in arriving at its assessments, and I believe that

the teachers of the department will be well satisfied with the results of their appeal. I think that those results, if they are along the lines I have reason to believe they are, will be amply justified and I feel that we may expect to receive, if it were possible, even closer co-operation from teachers in the interests of the children of our State.

As members were aware, what was known as the consolidation of schools had progressed to a very considerable degree. In consequence of that, a very large number of bus services had been instituted. Those have, in recent months, been increased so that there are now 191 actually in operation, and 11 more have recently been approved but not yet commenced. There is, unfortunately, considerable difficulty in obtaining buses. Chassis are not readily forthcoming, and the building of bodies is frequently long-delayed. Consequently, it seems to me to be rarely practicable to obtain a vehicle within four months of the time of application for it, especially when, as is quite proper, that vehicle has to comply with certain conditions which make for the comfort and convenience of those to be transported. In some cases, further consolidation has to be delayed, particularly where overcrowding would obviously ensue and cannot readily be relieved. I will deal to some degree later on with the question of buildings, which is one of the essentials in relieving overcrowding or congestion at schools where consolidation has taken place, or could take place, and cause it.

To return for a moment to the question of buses, I took up the matter with the Main Roads Department of assisting local authorities to provide more trafficable roads where bus routes have been authorised. Of course, there is the same difficulty there. It is possible to authorise a bus route today and vary it in a few months' time to suit the changed circumstances of the district, and it would be possible for money to be spent on the original road, only to find that the variation was as bad as, or worse than, the road with which we had already started. So considerable controversy took place between the Main Roads Department and myself in regard to this question, but finally it was decided that some special allocation would be made to local authorities and

that the expenditure of those amounts would be approved only if priority were given to bus routes. I feel convinced that in a number of districts this is being taken full advantage of, and the prospects of more traffickable roads for our bus services are now, in a number of areas, well in sight.

I consider that local authorities have not, of their own revenues, sufficient moneys to keep roads suitable for bus services in areas where perhaps in the normal way there would be very little traffic, and that is the reason why I think some assistance should be provided by the Main Roads Department. In the last few months, allowances paid to students at the Training College have been increased by £10 per annum.

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

**THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION:** I was saying that the allowances to students at the Training College have recently been increased by £10 a year, and arrangements made for payment, by the Government, of one-third of tram and trolley-bus fares, to those who use such means of transport, by way of concession. Some representations were made on that subject, and such an arrangement was finally agreed to. But the fact of increasing the allowances to trainees, and that two years at the Training College is now required, produced some representations in regard to the penalty which could be obtained from a student who did not complete three years' teaching, having been offered a suitable appointment by the department, after leaving the Training College. The maximum figure which could be claimed from a trainee who did not serve any appreciable portion of the three years would have been a sum of £280. Strong representations were made, particularly on behalf of the female students who contended that the payment of such a sum, or the fractional part of such a sum in respect of two years out of three, was a hardship which modern considerations led them to believe was hardly fair.

After consultation between the Director and myself, it was decided that an alteration should be made in the agreement, and that the penal sum should be fixed at a maximum of £150 in all cases, reducible £60 after one year's service, with a further

£50 for the second year's service and the balance of £40 for the third year's service. Sound reasons may, of course, be advanced as to why there should be no such bond at all. But we must not lose sight of the fact that the Education Department undertakes two responsibilities in connection with the students. One is to train them, and make them some allowances, whether they be adequate or not, during their period of training, and the other is the responsibility to the public and the children of the State to provide teachers. It is, therefore, reasonable to anticipate that some sufficient return, not exceeding three years, shall be obtained from every student who passes through the college.

At the present time it does not seem practicable to abandon altogether the idea of the bond, or the penal sum, but I think the new proposed method will provide some relief for those who hold the view that there should be no penal sum at all while, at the same time, preserving the right of the Education Department to expect some return from the trainees after the completion of their training. The correspondence children now number only about 1,200. Some bus services have been authorised to smaller schools where transport to central schools was impracticable. These buses can, in many cases, pick up the children who were previously on correspondence. It is hoped to extend these services to other areas.

Correspondence lessons must be recognised as excellent, and the results achieved as very good, if not excellent. Nevertheless, in my experience, parents desire that their children shall attend a school, if at all possible. There is this very important point also, that contact with other children should be encouraged and obtained wherever possible. So, a good deal of consideration has of recent weeks been given to the position of correspondence children. Hitherto, the postage on correspondence papers and the cost of returning educational aids, supplied by the department to the correspondence pupils, have been paid by the parents. It is proposed that in the future the department shall pay these charges both ways, and so relieve the parents of them. Every effort is being made, when children from small country schools are allotted to camp schools, to include correspondence children who live in the vicinity.

Consideration is also being given to the appointment of additional itinerant teachers to visit correspondence children in the southern areas where there are none such, so as to assist those children in their work and, in some degree, relieve the parents of the burden it is alleged that supervision casts upon them. There are many difficulties associated with an undertaking of that character. These young people are, in the main, fairly widely scattered, and their opportunities for obtaining contact with an itinerant teacher will not, if itinerant teachers are appointed, as I believe they will be, be as frequent as one would hope. At the same time, it is a step in the direction of affording equality of opportunity for those youngsters who have to remain on correspondence lessons.

The payment of the supervisor's allowance, in respect of correspondence children, has been extended to the South-West Land Division. It is paid where some person is employed who can supervise the children's work, even if that person is a member of the family other than the father or mother. Strong representations have been made that employees are not available, and in such cases, and in others where no member of the family, other than the parents, is available, it has been claimed that the parents should receive the allowance. I have not been able to agree to this course, because I cannot satisfy myself that such payment would render any contribution to the better education of the children. I think that is the aim we have to achieve in making such payment.

We should only make the payment if it would ensure an improvement in the children's educational opportunities. I do not think the granting of an allowance, direct to a parent, would be likely to achieve that end. But, as I have said, in an effort to improve the opportunities available to these children and to minimise, where it is possible, such burden as lies upon the parents in that regard, the matters that I have mentioned have been approved or are receiving close consideration at the present time. If any other practical suggestions can be offered that will make a further contribution to that end I shall be only too happy to consult with officers of the department in regard to them and, if they are practicable, to place them in operation.

Pursuant to the policy that was declared at election time, there is to be an increase in the scholarship allowances. I have here some particulars of the increases that are proposed. They are an increase in the scholarship allowance from £30 to £40 per annum, at an estimated cost of £4,500. University exhibitions, which were reduced in 1930 from £40 to £32 and £60 to £48—and not readjusted—are to go back to the original figures, at an estimated cost of £300. An increase in senior and junior scholarships from £8 to £12 and from £30 to £40 per annum, represents an estimated increase of £600 per annum.

Expenditure has been included in the Incidental Vote of up to £8,000 for assistance to school libraries and the modernisation of departmental libraries. It is suggested that £1,080 should be expended on the modernisation of departmental libraries, including the Teachers' College, the Technical College, Correspondence Classes, Departmental Teachers' Reference Library, and £250 for the country schools' Hadley library, and £250 for the Junior Farmers' Clubs. A further £500 has been provided for plant, seeds and fertilisers in connection with school gardens. It is felt that encouragement should, where practicable, be given by the Education Department in furtherance of that work.

An item which has always been of considerable interest to me is now provided for to some extent. I refer to assistance to Parents and Citizens' Associations. I am more interested in this matter in respect of those branches of the association that show an aptitude, as it were, for self-help. Many of them are responsible for raising a great deal of money and expending it on matters, closely associated with the education of children, which in many cases are virtually essential for that purpose. It is intended, in some small degree at all events—I think for the first time on an official basis—to recognise and assist in the work being done by the Parents and Citizens' Associations.

I had the privilege, last Saturday night, of attending at Como—at the invitation of the Parents and Citizens' Association of that neighbourhood—to open a hall that had been erected there almost entirely by voluntary labour. I do not think that hall, in the ordinary course of events, would cost less



than £3,000 to build. The greater part of the material in it had been obtained by the acquisition of Army huts and the whole building, which was approximately 100 feet long by 40 feet wide, reflected the utmost credit on the people who had spent their time and energy in erecting it. It cost them, I am informed, in actual cash—principally for the purchase of the Army huts and some odd amounts of other material—approximately £800. Its value to the school children of that neighbourhood, for whom it is reserved—except on the rarest occasions—will be great. It stands in the school grounds and is therefore, legally, the property of the Education Department.

Hon. A. H. Panton: That is one of the great dangers in that regard.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: It will be used for such purposes as physical training, visual education, and the like. It may be, of course that a proposition of that kind would be regarded by some people as being too ambitious, but my point is to demonstrate—which perhaps needs no demonstration to members here—the fact that Parents and Citizens' Associations will go to great lengths if they are enthusiastic enough, as they are in many cases, to make some contribution towards providing better opportunities for the young people of their districts. It is proposed, as a start, to provide about £3,500—the exact application of it has not yet been determined—for such things as assistance in the acquisition of projectors for visual education, the maintenance of essential school pianos, and assistance in providing Oslo lunch rooms, and other matters of that kind which the department considers are essential will receive consideration.

A sum of £3,500 is also included in the Incidental Vote for the payment of subsidies for school hostels. It seems quite likely that when the building position eases there will be some districts where serious consideration will have to be given to the opening of Government hostels, especially where children have to travel long distances to junior high schools, when those are established in rural areas. In larger centres of population there will doubtless always be people ready to receive children as boarders, but even in such instances is there not some doubt whether those children—without supervision during their out-of-school hours—are receiving opportunities equivalent to those

of children who, because of their more fortunate circumstances, are under some recognised control during the time that they are not engaged in actual school work? Those considerations, of course—I desire to be perfectly plain—are for the future. Our present problem is to remedy the lack of suitable and sufficient school premises, in the many districts where such accommodation is absolutely necessary.

School buildings are in course of erection or have in recent months been authorised in many places, to the capacity of labour and materials to provide them after urgent building needs have been met, as far as is possible, but there are many of our schools which, while they serve the purpose at the present time, are old and out-moded. They may be capable of handling the children who attend them now but, when one compares them with premises that have been built in recent years, one can understand the representations that are continually coming forward for some improvement in these structures. It is obviously our duty to deal with the most inadequate first. This inadequacy, of course, arises from two or three causes. The first of them is the consolidation that has taken place in some instances without the preparation of buildings for the purpose.

In other instances where there has been, in addition to the consolidation, some influx of population as well, in which case there is obviously considerable overcrowding, every effort is being made to meet the needs by providing for the most inadequate as early as possible, and a list has been drawn up of approximately 40 schools which it is anticipated will be either remedied or a start made on their construction during the current financial year. Building costs have very considerably increased and I think a further increase on all the estimates that have been made with regard to these buildings will be apparent immediately or in the near future. I do not draw upon my own conclusions for that statement, but on those of the Principal Architect, whose view it is that most of the estimates that have been made with respect to those buildings will be exceeded by at least 10 per cent.

Hon. A. H. Panton: The basic wage went up 1s. 6d. today.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: In those places\* where the population has expanded through housing the problem has been increased because the buildings are not

in a position to contain the children who want to go there. The State Housing Commission erects dwellings in accordance with a plan to allow families with the most children to occupy them, and consequently the difficulty increases on that score. That applies most of all in certain parts of the metropolitan area, but also to some degree in country centres. All these things have to be dealt with as they crop up.

It is virtually impossible, as I see it, to establish a fixed priority list. If we were to attempt to do so and decided that first priority should go to such and such a place, No. 2 priority somewhere else and so on, the chances are that before we could make a start we would find that, owing to some influx of population because of the reasons that I have just mentioned, some other place was more urgent than the one which we had accorded first priority. An attempt has been made to lay down a series of those that are regarded as most important and, to the utmost of the physical ability of the Public Works Department, I have no doubt it will be adhered to. Consequent upon these difficulties, which may be said to be chiefly those of primary schools, the plans of the department for building junior high schools and certain high school buildings have been held over.

Subject to certain modifications that population statistics may require, it is hoped during the next financial year to lay down a list in regard to this type of school so that we can provide higher educational facilities in various parts of this large State, but it is impracticable at this juncture—in my opinion, it should certainly not be done—to say where such work should first be undertaken. It can only be undertaken in the light of circumstances as they are and as the physical position will enable a start to be made on the work. Furthermore, the statistics in some places must change from time to time.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: You have found that out!

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: It did not take much finding out; I was well aware of it before that statistics change from time to time. On the national fitness side, the Government has decided to make some small contribution from State revenue to supplement the amount received from the Commonwealth. It is not large enough to

be regarded as anything more than a gesture, in my opinion, of readiness to recognise the valuable work that is being carried out by the National Fitness Organisation and the Youth Committees associated with it. An amount of £1,200 has been made available on this year's Estimates for the betterment of the camps at Bickley and Point Peron, and of that, £200 will be made available for additional leadership training.

It is proposed to spend a further amount on assistance for the free kindergarten movement, which has been subsidised on a per capita basis in past years. About a year ago the subsidy was increased—I think it was doubled—with the result that approximately £1,500 was made available for that purpose during the last financial year. The position with regard to the Kindergarten Union is, financially, not very satisfactory. The extension of its work, the need for assistance in the training of its teachers and other considerations have induced the Government to the belief that further aid is warranted. I gave some evidence before the Grants Commission on matters that related to education and I made a number of references to the Kindergarten Union. I expressed the opinion that to place it on a reasonably firm basis in Western Australia would require an expenditure by the Government of about £10,000 per annum. I understand that in South Australia the amount that has been granted by the Government to the kindergarten people is approximately £9,000 per annum, or at least was that amount during the current or last financial year.

In the other States the assistance varies, but the amounts provided are considerably greater even in proportion to population than is that which we provide in this State. Negotiations are now taking place between the Kindergarten Union and the department as to the assistance that must be forthcoming to enable the functions of the union to be conducted successfully and, to some small degree, to be extended. At the moment I cannot say just what amount will be available, but it will be considerably more than has been paid hitherto.

Hon. A. H. Panton: The extension of existing buildings is one of the difficulties. We have one that provides for 50 and we want room for 100.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: That is so, and we are now engaged in negotiations with a view to devising something within our capacity for the further assistance of the movement. The expenditure on the living-away-from-home allowance and the correspondence supervisor's fees, which last year amounted to £16,000 may rise to £35,000 for the current financial year. I have already dealt with the question of correspondence supervisors' allowances, which is a comparatively small proportion of this sum. That is to say, the increase in the South-West Land Division has not as yet shown any considerable improvement in the total amount.

The question of the living-away-from-home allowance is somewhat involved, and I propose to ask the Committee to bear with me for a few moments while I mention some of the difficulties I see in that particular matter. The living-away-from-home allowance has not been paid in respect of a child who is able to attend a Class IV school or better, within, I think, five miles of its place of residence. Many applications have been received for these allowances from people whose children do not at present come within the conditions laid down, and these applications are made principally on the ground that, as there are no educational facilities of a secondary nature available on what they might call a proper basis in their neighbourhood, it is necessary, or desirable, to send the child to a far distant place to acquire that standard of education.

The departmental view has been that, firstly, it should not be encouraged because there is a necessity to build up a school population for secondary facilities in the area in which the child lives; secondly, that there is an inclination on the part of parents to say that they wish their child to go to some far distant place for this purpose when actually it is only a desire to send the child there without any real intention of providing it necessarily with a higher or better education; and, thirdly, because the accommodation at secondary schools in the distant places is limited, and it would be impracticable to allow everyone who wanted to go to be accepted if this allowance would cause them to desire to move to those places.

With two of them, I think it is fairly easy to agree that they must be taken into consideration, but as to the third one, namely, that at a Class IV school or better, the correspondence papers and the supervision of the head teacher are sufficient to bring about a reasonable equality as against the actual attendance at a secondary school, I must say that I find it difficult entirely to agree. It is quite obvious to me, and to many others, that so long as there are not those facilities of a secondary nature in the actual neighbourhood of the child's residence, correspondence lessons, plus supervision of the head teacher in subjects which are not normally taught at the school, are hardly sufficient.

The question is being very closely investigated at present to determine whether some way cannot be found to overcome that difficulty while, at the same time, ensuring that the allowance is not paid to a child who has no real need for the extra subject or subjects involved in the discussion. It is no part of the Education Department's business, I think, to do other than ensure, as I said on another matter earlier, that whatever it does is aimed at the betterment of the child and its opportunities, and I am firmly convinced that a way can be found out of this difficulty, even if it be restricted to some certification from the head teacher or other suitable authority, and restricted in some areas until such time as the Government is in a position to provide for the type of education which the child's needs appear to warrant.

In anticipation that some alteration may be made and that the need for some further expenditure may be involved, in addition to the normal increase to be expected on the two counts mentioned, there is some further provision in the Estimates. The expenditure on school bus services is expected to be not less than £100,000 for the current financial year in lieu of £89,000 last year. I have already made reference to the bus services themselves, but that is roughly the financial position for the 12 months.

During the last few weeks, the premises of the Goldfields Fresh Air League at Bunbury became available for purchase. It was intended apparently to sell them for removal. At the same time the Country Women's Association at Bunbury, which had for some

years been running a hostel for high school scholars, found itself in a position where the tenancy of the premises being rented would be coming to an end owing to their being required, I think, for use by the Marist Brothers, who had purchased the freehold. Representations were made to the Government to render some assistance in the acquisition of premises at Bunbury.

At first the application was not favourably considered, but subsequently it transpired that the premises were to be sold for removal, and a further inspection was made. It was decided to purchase them for the sum of £500, which was an extremely low figure. They will require some renovation, for which an estimate is being obtained, but the amount is not expected to exceed £1,700 to £2,000, and they will be let to the Country Women's Association for the continuance, and to some degree extension, of the hostel which it has been running at Bunbury. The premises, too, will be used when the school holidays are on for the purposes of a camp school, and the co-operation of the Country Women's Association has been sought in that regard. The association has been extremely co-operative in all the discussions that have taken place.

This is to some degree an extension of the activities of the Government in regard to school hostels. I made some reference to the future possibilities a few minutes ago, but in the particular circumstances of this case and in view of the difficulties experienced in placing those who had been accommodated at the C.W.A. hostel at Bunbury in other places, the possibility of their being unable to carry on made it reasonably necessary for the Government to try to fill the gap. I fancy that this proposal will pan out fairly satisfactorily. In any event, and if the premises are not used after a couple of years for hostel purposes, they will be of considerable value for the other purpose that I mentioned.

A sum of £3,500 has been included in the Estimates with the idea of assisting by subsidy, probably on a per capita basis, hostels which have been opened for the accommodation of school children by enterprising bodies such as I have just referred to. This also has been the subject of many representations to and discussions between the Director and myself. It has been de-

cided to make this amount available. The determination of the method of distribution, which will probably be on a per capita basis, will be made shortly. I think it will be of considerable advantage to the people who have been struggling along under rather adverse financial conditions in the maintenance of these premises. The average parent whose child is housed in such premises receives a living-away-from-home allowance of £15 a year, which is roughly 7s. 6d. per week for the school year. The parent in some cases also receives, often only theoretically, £15 a year child endowment. But even if both are received, they do not measure up to anything like the cost of maintaining the child; and it is thought that some assistance for these hostels will enable them to keep down the cost of the child and thus make it easier for the parent whose child has to go to school in those circumstances. Provision is also made to the extent of £3,200 for manual training, both for the replacement of obsolete tools and the establishment of new centres.

Last year's expenditure on visual education will be almost doubled this year. Consideration is being given to the establishment of some statutory authority to act as a film advisory board, in lieu of the present unregulated committee, to advise on and co-ordinate this visual education, which is today playing, and rightly so, a most important part in the education of our children and indeed in the education of those who are older. Both those sections of the community have much to learn from visual education and I feel sure that the matter is in good hands in those of the Education Department. Members who were able to attend the 6AM-PM theatrette some weeks ago to see some demonstration work done by Mr. Uren and his associates have, I think, been extremely gratified to think that films of such a good character and of such an informative nature are available for the use of the children of the State. It becomes desirable to afford these facilities to less populous centres wherever practicable and to seek the assistance, as I suggested a few moments ago, of the Parents' and Citizens' Associations on a co-operative basis. Last year the member for North-East Fremantle explained, in the course of his introduction of the Education Estimates, at some considerable length and in a most interesting

manner the activities of the department at that time in regard to Rubella children.

The Premier: He might have something to say on that subject to-night.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: That would not surprise me in the slightest degree. In fact, I would be surprised if he did not. I was merely making reference to a most interesting observation he made at that time. Anyway, for the information of the Committee, Rubella classes have been established in four metropolitan centres, namely, Cottesloe, Dalkeith, Highgate Hill and Victoria Park. There is also one at Boulder. Special teachers have been chosen from the ordinary staff, and special technique for the teaching of these children has been developed. The department must do all it can for each of these children, who are of various degrees of deafness. It must give them an opportunity to prove that, with the help of lip-reading and hearing-aids they can be absorbed ultimately in the ordinary school classes. From the tuition which they will gain there, it is hoped that a fair percentage will not have to go into deaf and dumb institutions. It is quite clear that some will fail to qualify for tuition in the ordinary classroom. To a degree the work is, of course, experimental, but so far the experiments have met with such a measure of success as to justify the hope that in many cases they will prove entirely successful.

I have taken the opportunity during recent months to attend two of these schools. I have not only seen the work of the children but have also discussed their problems with the teacher in charge. I must say that the type of teacher in charge indicates that if there is a real prospect of success, as I believe there is, they are the people who will achieve it. I must admit they were not only capable but most sympathetic and patient, and patience in this matter, so far as I can see, is the main consideration towards success. I hope that it may be possible to include in this experiment children who live in other parts of the State, though they may be few in number and somewhat scattered, who are affected in this way. It will not be easy to include them, but I will say that if any such cases are brought to the notice of the department, and if it is possible for arrangements to be made for their inclusion in these classes, I shall be

prepared to endeavour to make such arrangements, in order to help the parents of those children, to have them removed.

The Careers Research Branch of the Education Department consists of a superintendent and six guidance officers who divide their time between the high schools of the State education system. Those officers are responsible for the collection of information concerning the occupational potentialities of boys and girls approaching the school age and the conditions obtaining in Western Australian industry. With those two classes of information at their disposal, they offer vocational guidance both to the children and their parents. Each year approximately 4,000 young people and the parents of 3,000 receive this service. Special cases are referred to the guidance officers, cases of more than ordinary educational or social maladjustment which come under the notice of the welfare officer. The Careers Research Branch also carries out such other investigations in the educational field as the department may require. The main point I want to make is that both the parents and the children concerned are recognising the value of the work of these officers, and I anticipate that it will grow in value as the years go by.

The department is still hampered by the existing shortage of teachers, but it is hoped that the shortage will be overtaken very soon. At present there are 360 students in the Teachers' College. Of these, 160 will complete their two-year course at the end of this year, and at least 220 will enter the college at the beginning of 1948. Therefore, it is expected that there will be 420 students, or thereabouts, at the college next year, of whom approximately 200 will come under the Commonwealth Re-Establishment Training Scheme. I think I have dealt in the main with all the items of expenditure which appear in the Education Estimates. I will conclude by saying that it is the desire of the Government to maintain the standard of education in all parts of the State at the highest possible level, to ensure, first of all, that there is a reasonable measure of equality, so far as that is practicable, between all parts of the State. Having reached that at the highest point of the present level, it is thereafter desired progressively to improve standards throughout Western Australia. To that end, neither trouble, activity nor, so far as it is humanly pos-

sible to obtain them, money and materials will be spared.

I have already referred to the vote of thanks which I think we should record to the staffs, both administrative and professional, of the Education Department. I would extend that word of thanks to the Parents and Citizens' Associations in various parts of the country, and to all those who have co-operated with the department at any time in the past, and more particularly during recent times, in the improvement of educational conditions. I would also express appreciation of the patience with which a great number of people are helping to face the problems of education at present. They know what they want. They are continually saying what they want. Much of what they say they want is entirely justified, but they realise it cannot be achieved all at once. So long as some progress is being made towards it, and above all so long as they are certain that those in authority are anxious to make some progress towards it, they are prepared to wait such reasonable time as the exigencies of the times demand.

Much has been said of the need for the expenditure, or the acquisition for expenditure, of a tremendous sum of money in regard to education in Western Australia. I do not think that if it could be obtained at present we would, in many aspects at least, know what to do with it. But I do say that steady increases in expenditure in the Education Department on both sides of the Estimates—and when I say both sides I mean the salary side as well as the general and incidental side—must be anticipated and provided for each year, not only from the point of view of any increased population or demand we may expect but also from the point of view of the need for improvement in the general standards. I have no doubt that movement will take place throughout Australia. I believe it can with advantage take place a little faster here than it is likely to take place elsewhere, and I am convinced, after the time I spent with the Grants Commission, that any reasonable approach to this question as the years go by will be met in a reasonably favourable manner by that body. I think I may safely say that financial matters connected with education or the welfare of children generally will have less chance of meeting with difficulty from the Grants Commission than any other

matter which could be brought before it. In short, I think that we are perfectly safe in assuming that our reasonable requirements, so long as the present Commonwealth-State financial set-up remains, in regard to education and matters allied to it, will be met.

I notice that immediately underneath the Education Vote and before that of Industrial Development there is an item, "Town Planning"; and I would like to say a word about that. The amount involved is very small. It is made up of salaries £2,350, incidentals £350, making a total of £2,700. The board meets twice a month owing to the amount of work which is now involved in town planning matters, and the incidental expenses cover travelling, board fees, stationery, etc. There is a secretary, a draftsman, a typist and a junior typist, as well as Mr. Davidson. So it is quite clear that for the amount of work that has to be done the office is not overstaffed. But why I want to refer to these Estimates in particular is to say that I am hopeful that a committee consisting of representatives of the Government departments concerned and of local authorities will be set up very shortly to investigate and report on the question of consolidation of the local government Acts—the Municipal Corporations Act and the Road Districts Act—into one statute, and to recommend also what alterations should be made in the existing laws as applying to those two types of local governing bodies.

The request for this has been made by the Road Boards Association and, I think, by the Country Municipalities Association also, and both those bodies are prepared, as is the Local Government Bodies' Association of Employees, to send representatives to that committee. It is proposed that the Town Planning Commissioner should be a member of the committee, as he has a remarkable knowledge of local government law and practice and will, in my opinion, make a very good contribution towards improving and consolidating the law dealing with local government in Western Australia. Mr. Davidson has resigned from some other committees on which he has acted for some time, and is quite prepared to undertake some of the work involved in this proposed preparation of a new statute, and I think much of value will ensue from this inquiry,

which will not be of a public nature, as it is intended to go into the matter, as it were, in committee. Mr. Davidson is to be congratulated on being prepared to add to his present work by undertaking a job of this nature. I have pleasure in submitting the Estimates for those two departments.

**MR. GRAYDEN** (Middle Swan) [8.29]: I would say at the outset that the matter on which I would claim the attention of members is not a Party one. It is, however, one which is relevant to this debate inasmuch as it concerns the education that the children of this State receive. If we are to budget for a maximum in order to improve education in this State—and that must always be our aim—we require to know, for that reason alone, that such money will be spent wisely and to the best advantage. It is because I think our educational system is perpetrating inaccuracies which are obvious, and of considerable importance, that I raise the matter at this juncture. In addition, there is a very great principle involved to which every member will surely subscribe. It is a principle deeply rooted in the history of this country, but at the same time, it is being violated and distorted in Western Australia.

The principle I refer to is that history should know the truth. Many things occur in the country's life which are not recorded; many things are not worthy of record. I have no grievance against that. My grievance is that there should be a distortion of the facts which are available for all to see. It is incumbent upon each and every one of us to point out such distortions of truth when they occur, even if the subject-matter be distasteful to us. Therefore I bring forward facts which are available for all to see and which should have been more generally known long ago. I refer to the Goldfields Water Scheme.

I bring these facts forward in the hope that the Government will see fit to have a full and complete inquiry conducted into the charges I make. If that is not done we will simply be providing money so that our children may be taught untruths and distortions of truths. The inquiry I suggest would have to be a full one, and I propose to ask for it in order that the children of this State shall be taught the truth. I have already said that many things occur

in the country's history that are not recorded and many things are not worthy of being recorded, but the matter of the Goldfields Water Scheme has been recorded, and it is because the true facts have not been told to the children that I raise my voice tonight.

To substantiate what I have said, let me read extracts from our school books and history books that are misleading and grossly inaccurate. The extracts I refer to are widespread throughout the State. I have here three school books which I have chosen at random, and this is the kind of thing contained in them—

To his far-seeing judgment and the great skill of the Engineer-in-Chief at that time, we owe the Goldfields Water Scheme.

That is in "The Swan History" book which is circulating in our schools. I have here another history book, "Australia since 1606" which has this to say—

Then Forrest did a bold thing. The Engineer-in-Chief for the colony, proposed to dam the Helena River, eighteen miles from Perth, and then to pump the water 330 miles to Kalgoorlie. Three hundred and thirty miles! That makes you gasp. It made everybody gasp except Sir John Forrest. He backed the Engineer-in-Chief's scheme and secured money from London to finance it.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman; Do not you agree with that?

Mr. GRAYDEN: This is the point I make: These statements are not in accord with fact. I assure the member for Fremantle that they are bogus and without foundation, as I propose to show in a minute. Yet, this is the sort of thing that has been taught our children for many years. Let me quote from Dr. Battye's "History of Western Australia" as follows:—

Convinced that something of a comprehensive nature must be carried out, the Engineer-in-Chief, to whose genius, energy, and boldness the colony owes so much, brought forward a scheme (Votes and Proceedings, 1896 Vol. i Paper No. 10) for carrying water to the Goldfields from the coast. Shortly, his suggestion was to build a huge reservoir on the Helena River near Mundaring, in the Darling Ranges.

That again is a gross distortion of the facts which are available for all to see. I have here a booklet written within the last few weeks to commemorate the centenary of Sir John Forrest. It contains an article written by a pupil of the Forrest High School, and it clearly emphasises just what our children

are being taught in connection with this matter.

After inquiring into suggestions for overcoming the great difficulties, the Government decided to adopt a scheme proposed by the Engineer-in-Chief for Western Australia.

So it goes on through the history books. Now let me quote from the report of the Parliamentary Royal Commission of February, 1902, appointed to inquire into the Goldfields Water Scheme. It is not necessary to go beyond that Royal Commission to discover how bogus and misleading are these school books. This report contains the following statement by the Engineer-in-Chief himself:—

As is clearly evidenced in my report I was not responsible for the initiation of the scheme and am merely responsible for the designing and carrying out of it.

In spite of that emphatic denial we find the school books of this country continue to contain statements that are obviously entirely without foundation. Both Sir John Forrest and the Engineer-in-Chief deliberately and categorically denied authorship of the scheme to which I am referring. In his report to Parliament, the Engineer-in-Chief said—

When the proposal to supply five million gallons of water, by pumping from reservoirs in the Greenmount Ranges, is referred to, it frequently has been referred to as being my proposal, it can therefore only properly held to be so in so far as being, in my opinion, the best means of attaining the object in view, and not in any way as being a fancy project of mine (as some persons have described it) which I am desirous of thrusting upon the Government and the country.

Referring to these and other categorical denials by the Engineer-in-Chief, Sir John Forrest, on the 5th August, 1896, said that there appeared to be a tendency to misconception, and because that misconception had already arisen the Engineer-in-Chief very properly said the proposal was not his. I will refer now to what Sir John Forrest said—

Mr. Reynolds: Do you think the scheme was a wonderful one?

Mr. GRAYDEN: I am not referring to that aspect but to some untruths in connection with the scheme. At page 284 of "Hansard," on the 5th August, 1896, Sir John Forrest, referring to the Engineer-in-Chief, said—

I am quite sure that anyone reading his report cannot come to that conclusion, although the Engineer-in-Chief quite properly says that he is not responsible for the project, being only the adviser to the Government. But to say that he is adverse to the scheme or that it has been pressed upon him by the Government against his wishes, is as far from the truth as the poles are asunder.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Did he say which was the furthest?

Mr. GRAYDEN: It is slightly ambiguous, but Sir John was defending the Engineer-in-Chief at that time. I think that establishes that at that time there was never any suggestion that the Engineer-in-Chief was the author of the scheme.

Mr. Hegney: Who originated it?

Mr. GRAYDEN: I will tell the hon. member later. Would what Sir John said convey that the man to whom he was referring was the author of the scheme? Of course it would not. The school history books of this State are publishing statements on this matter that are utterly inaccurate. Those statements have been denied by the two persons most vitally concerned, Sir John Forrest and the Engineer-in-Chief. The school books are distorting the truth. If we are to be fair to future generations in this State we must teach the truth, and if the matter is to be cleared up it must be done now. I will now deal with another angle, at the conclusion of which I will, I hope, have established the need for a full inquiry into such distortions of truth in matters of historical fact. In this State there is a body known as the Historical Society, and naturally the findings of that body carry considerable weight in the public mind. I believe that the Historical Society of this State has lent itself to a distortion of the truth.

This is a serious charge but I make it in all sincerity and I think the position warrants an immediate and full inquiry. The Historical Society has made every possible effort to refute Sir John Forrest's own statement, made at a banquet at Kanowna in 1895, when he was visiting the Goldfields in an effort to overcome the water problem. The society has not made any effort to consult those who are in possession of the true facts regarding the genesis of the scheme, who can point out, for all to see, where the true facts are recorded and available.



Mr. Hoar: That is a serious charge.

Mr. GRAYDEN: I fully realise that. The Historical Society has not consulted or made any effort to consult those who were at that banquet when the scheme was first propounded.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Have you read John K. Ewers's letter on it?

Mr. GRAYDEN: The Historical Society appointed a special sub-committee to inquire into this matter and although it did not make any effort to consult those who could have enlightened it on the subject, it arrived at a finding—which I have here—that shows bias in its worst form.

Hon. A. A. M. Coverley: Perhaps that is where this originated. Was the member for Nedlands present at that party?

Mr. GRAYDEN: This is the finding of the Historical Society:—

The design and construction of the Goldfields water scheme were in the main carried out by the Engineer-in-Chief and his staff under the direction of the Government. The inspiration behind the Bill authorising the work was the driving power and far-sighted vision of the Premier, Sir John Forrest. Since Sir John Forrest was the author and the Engineer-in-Chief the designer and builder, we do not agree that the school books are in error in giving the credit to them for the Goldfields Water Scheme.

That report shows clearly that even the Historical Society has abandoned the Engineer-in-Chief myth. It shows also that the society now attributes to Sir John Forrest the authorship of the scheme, and in doing so it is actually refuting Sir John Forrest's own statement on the matter. In 1895 Sir John Forrest toured the Goldfields in an endeavour to solve the problem of supplying them with water. To illustrate the position existing at the time I will read an extract from the "Daily News" of the 26th November, 1895, emphasising that no scheme had been evolved or decided upon at the time of Sir John's visit to the fields.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Is the "Daily News" as old as that? No wonder it is becoming decrepit.

Mr. GRAYDEN: "The Daily News" said—

Captain Oates asked that the Government set aside £10,000 to bore for water in the neighbourhood of Kalgoorlie. Mr. Moran,

M.L.A., advocated a scheme of water supply by the construction of numerous covered-in tanks at Hannan's Lake, seven miles distant. The requests of that deputation show clearly what the position was when Sir John toured the Goldfields. I will now read a statement by Sir John Forrest himself during that tour. This is an extract from his speech at the banquet at Kanowna on the 24th November, 1895, and reported in "The West Australian" of the 27th November of that year—

One of the greatest difficulties to be grappled with is that of water, and one of the chief objects of my visit is to find out how best the Government of the Colony can assist in the matter. The difficulties to be encountered with regard to the scarcity of water will, I believe, be overcome although I cannot say how. What a transformation there would be if the district had a stream of fresh water running through it.

This is the relevant portion—

How a supply can be obtained, I repeat I cannot say, but it must be secured.

Surely that is emphatic enough, and that appeared in "The West Australian." Yet the Historical Society has made every effort possible to refute that statement! At that banquet the proposal for a goldfields water supply scheme was put up to Sir John Forrest by Mr. N. W. Harper in his response to the toast of "The Mining Industry." I shall quote from the "Daily News" of the 26th November, 1895, two days after that speech at the banquet and to which reference had been made on the subject at Kanowna—

Mr. Harper, manager of the Robinson Gold Mines, responded recommending the bringing of water from the Avon River near York for use on the goldfields.

At the banquet Sir John Forrest had said he did not know how the water supply could be provided, and so Mr. Harper made it clear to him.

Hon. A. H. Panton: "John Dee" must have reported that!

Mr. GRAYDEN: At the conclusion of the banquet Sir John went to Mr. Harper and suggested that instead of looking to the Swan as the source a better and purer water supply could be obtained from the Helena River. The late Messrs. J. Wolcock and J. Bray, both capable engineers well-known in Coolgardie, took part in a long conversation with Sir John Forrest after the banquet, and both supported Mr. Har-

per strongly with regard to the proposition. I will read an extract, which will indicate to the House the frame of mind in which Sir John Forrest returned to Perth from the fields. Here is an extract from a speech by Mr. Venn in the Legislative Assembly on the 5th August, 1896, in which he said—

When this thing took on with the hon. gentleman, as usual with him, everything was swept out of his way like a tornado . . .

That shows what Sir John Forrest thought about it when he came back from the fields. Next I will quote from an original letter sent by Sir John Forrest in his own handwriting to Mr. Nat Harper. If any member would care to see these letters and other documents, I shall be pleased to make them available for perusal. The letter, which is dated the 20th March, 1897, was sent from the Colonial Secretary's office, Perth and read—

My dear Harper, I am glad to get your letter and should be delighted if you could get in. I sent you some copies of my speech at Bunbury. I am the only one who had done anything for the 'fields—all the others have done nothing. I cannot understand what the oppositionists have to find fault with. We are spending this year £200,000 on water on the 'fields and the great water scheme is ours.

The word "ours" is underlined in the original letter. Next I would refer members to a letter from Mr. Nat Harper to Sir John Forrest and read by the then Minister for Mines, Hon. E. H. Wittenoom, which will be found in the Parliamentary Debates for the session held in 1896, Volume 9, in connection with the Coolgardie Goldfields Water Supply Loan Bill. That was on the 13th August, 1896, and the letter was written on the 3rd August. That letter was used by Sir John Forrest to canvass members in connection with the Bill. This correspondence and the extracts I have furnished cannot be denied; they are irrefutable. Yet—and this is the point—the Historical Society has made no effort to consult those who have these documents in their possession. Have they ever done so? The answer to that is that they have not.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Then they should be disbanded!

Mr. GRAYDEN: Next I shall refer to a speech made by Mr. Lefroy in the Legislative Assembly in August, 1896, which appears

in "Hansard" for that year at page 295, as follows:—

These "childish" minds of ours, on this side of the House, can quite realise that, if it is possible to pump water 300 feet, it will be possible to repeat, over and over again, the pumping of that water until it is elevated to the height required.

In that speech Mr. Lefroy mentioned the pumping of water to the Goldfields, and that was the first time pumping water in stages had been referred to. Sir John Forrest was doing his best to get the Bill passed by Parliament, and on more than one occasion he stated that he had to fight to get the Bill through, politically and departmentally.

Mr. Marshall: When you say "departmentally," what opposition and by whom?

Mr. GRAYDEN: I cannot say offhand, but he was confronted with tremendous opposition departmentally, and that is referred to in "Hansard." On the 11th of that month, Sir John Forrest sent a wire to Mr. Harper asking for permission to publish an extract from a letter that he had received. This letter was written on the 3rd August, and Sir John had already used it to canvass members. I have the original telegram here which reads—

Many thanks for your letter. Have you any objection to my publishing extracts from it under your name. I feel it would do much good. The Bill is now safe.

That letter was read by the then Minister for Mines two days later in the Legislative Council. It had tremendous political significance and had it not been for the letter it is not likely that the Bill would have been passed. In "Hansard" there appears a report of a three-hour speech by Sir John Forrest dealing with the introduction of the Coolgardie Water Supply Loan Bill, during the course of which he stated:—

I have it on the authority of one of the leading mine managers, Mr. Harper, who was manager of Fraser's Goldmining Company at Southern Cross, and who is now manager of the Mount Robinson mine, near Kanowna, that 10,000 gallons of water is sufficient to keep a 20-head battery going for 24 hours.

Nowhere in the course of that three hours speech did Sir John Forrest mention any name except Mr. Harper's. Sir John Forrest asked that permission on the 11th and it appeared in "Hansard" on the 13th and the letter was written by Mr. Harper on the 3rd. Now let me read a letter signed "Robert Beveridge" of Glen Iris, Victoria

and published in "The West Australian" of the 14th November, 1935, as follows:—

To the Editor: Having been on the engineering staff of Babcock and Wilcox (London), Melbourne office, the firm of contractors who supplied the boilers for the pumping plants for the Goldfields Water Scheme, I am naturally much interested in the correspondence which recently has appeared in your columns. During the time I was with Babcock and Wilcox I came to know the late Lord Forrest well. On one occasion when on a journey to Adelaide, en route to Port Pirie, I met Lord Forrest on the Spencer-street Station, Melbourne, and he invited me to share his compartment. Lord Forrest was going to Adelaide to catch the R.M.S. Orsova for Fremantle. I happened to mention the object of my journey to Port Pirie, which was to supervise the landing of the pipes for the Umerumberka water scheme to supply Broken Hill. Lord Forrest was intensely interested. The mention of pipe lines, he told me, brought back pleasant memories of the great Coolgardie Water Scheme. I asked him then was it not solely and wholly his scheme. "No, Beveridge," he said, "A man named Harper was the father of the scheme; I was the mother."

I wish to emphasise the last sentence, "Harper was the father of the scheme; I was the mother." Yet we have the school-books of this State printing distortions of the truth; there is no other name for it. We have the Historical Society—and this is more serious—upholding those distortions of truth. I submit that if we are going to uphold the principle that history shall know the truth, then we must have a very full inquiry into these charges—

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: What about another Royal Commission?

Mr. GRAYDEN: —the charges that the school history books of this State are printing distortions of the truth and the charge that the Historical Society is upholding those distortions of the truth.

**HON. J. T. TONKIN** (North-East Fremantle) [9.2]: Like the member for Middle Swan I, too, shall find it necessary to delve into a little history.

Mr. Marshall: Do you want an inquiry, too?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Mine is of somewhat more recent date than that dealt with by the member for Middle Swan. The matter with which he has been dealing is now somewhat obscure, and it is difficult for us at this stage to be sure what really hap-

pened, but as I am to some extent concerned with what he said, before I proceed with the main theme of my remarks, I should like to say that, shortly after I became Minister for Education, I received a visit from Mr. Harper, who told me much the same story as I have heard here tonight. As it was not possible for me to make the necessary investigation, I referred the matter to the Historical Society for consideration and report. As a result of what was reported, I did not feel justified after so many years in making an alteration in the history books that had been used in the schools so long. It seems to me that, in years gone by, there must have been ample opportunity to make the correction, if a correction were needed.

Mr. Grayden: It should not have been needed.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The fact that a correction was not made in all those years appears to indicate that the great weight of opinion was against the case which has been presented here tonight.

The history with which I propose to deal is of very much more recent date and has a direct bearing upon the Budget and the education system of Western Australia and the proposals of the Government. Members will have it fresh in their minds that, during the election campaign, quite a lot of statements were made about the inertia of Ministers and the lack of enthusiasm in their departments and all sorts of things that were wrong. I was greatly interested to hear the Minister, when introducing his Estimates in a most instructive way, mention that the teaching staff of the Education Department, the administrative officers and so on were doing an excellent job and had been doing an excellent job for years, a statement with which he said I would agree. I do agree, but I find it difficult to reconcile the Minister's opinion with the statements made about the achievements of the department prior to the election. Of course no-one in the department has been sacked except the Minister, and the policy which was being carried out with regard to education is, so far as I can see, being carried out now with, of course, some expected developments along certain lines.

Let us see what was said about the education system just before the elections and consider whether these officers were doing

the good job that the Minister now tells us they were and are doing. I quote from "The West Australian" published on the eve of polling day wherein were set out the statements of the Leaders of the three contending parties. The then Leader of the Opposition, the present Minister for Education, said—

A crisis has arisen in nearly everything. Transport is chaotic and your money, to say nothing of your industries, is at stake. As to hospitalisation, educational facilities, soldiers' land settlement and housing, you can see muddle all round you.

"As to education facilities you can see muddle all round you." That was six months ago.

Mr. Marshall: I can see muddle coming in the near future.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: A few days before, the advertisement I have here appeared; it is familiar; it is the famous cobweb advertisement. Members will see here "Schools Muddle." The officers who are now being commended were in charge of the muddle at that time, if muddle there indeed were. Here we have it, "The Truth about Schools and Education." Let us see what the truth was—

Schools and education are other vital matters which shame the Labour Government. It has let the people down badly over the State. The grant for education is totally inadequate. There are too few schools and many existing schools urgently need enlarging. Teachers are too poorly paid. There are too few teachers and a lack of facilities for training more teachers. Classes are too large with a consequent strain upon the teachers and a serious handicap to the children. There is insufficient school equipment and no adequate provision for the systematic maintenance of school buildings and equipment. Here, again, is another of the many instances where Labour talks much but does little. Labour has been a Government in name only. This time, let's have real Government.

Mr. Marshall: Ah!

Government members: Hear, hear!

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: That is supposed to be the truth about education! If the article had been properly captioned, the caption would have been, "Lies about Education," because they were lies and not the truth at all. The Minister's statement tonight shows that he could not ask me to agree with him that the work of the officers over the years has been particularly good if during the time I was Minister there was

nothing but muddle all round me. Therefore, I say it is very difficult to reconcile the statements. True, there were not sufficient schools and there was great lack of accommodation. There still is, as I shall prove shortly, and there will be in three years' time, too. Of course, conditions will improve for the reason that we are getting further and further away from the war years.

Mr. Leslie: We are sweeping the cobwebs away.

Hon. A. H. Panton: We have to get the spider, which is spinning more cobwebs.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: While Ministers are saying today that they cannot do this or that, that they cannot build more houses or more schools, we are told that physical difficulties prevent them from doing so. What is the cause of those physical difficulties? The Premier said this, as reported in "The West Australian" during the election campaign—

The already worn-out excuse of wartime limitations, if advanced again by the Government, cannot be sustained in view of the fact that a reference to Parliamentary "Hansard" will reveal that in the years prior to the war members of the Opposition, and even members on the Government side, repeatedly drew the Government's attention to the deterioration taking place in the administration of State affairs.

What on earth has the drawing of attention to the deterioration to do with the supply of materials? We were not to use the worn-out excuse of wartime limitations, but this Government, which was going to move mountains, finds that it cannot do so because of the difficulties arising out of the war. Now let us hear what the present Minister for Education had to say about the difficulties—

While we do not deny that the war was responsible for some of the difficulties, Mr. Watts continued, it must be noted that in other States, notably South Australia, these war difficulties have been speedily overcome.

Of course, it is nothing of the sort. South Australia is in the same, if not a worse, position than we are. In this connection, it is interesting to note that as to the shortage of teachers—about which the present Minister for Education complained during the election, when he said that there was no shortage of teachers in South Australia—a few days after our election it was stated in "The West Australian" that, because of the acute shortage of teachers in South Aus-

tralia the Premier of that State was going to try to get 200 from Great Britain. I will read the paragraph from "The West Australian"—

Adelaide, April 10. Teacher Shortage in South Australia. To overcome the acute shortage of women teachers which is hampering the Education Department, the State Government is attempting to bring 200 women teachers to Adelaide from Great Britain. Particulars of the salaries scale offered by the Education Department, and other information, have been sent to London. The Premier, (Mr. Playford) said yesterday that arrangements are being made to have the teachers included in the State's allocation of passengers. It is unlikely that the State Government's request for nurses from Britain can be granted.

There was therefore also a shortage of nurses in South Australia.

The Premier: He is a trier.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Yes, but it shows that South Australia was experiencing these difficulties, notwithstanding that the people of this State were told by the members of the present Government on the hustings that the situation here was peculiar to this State, while other States have been able to grapple successfully with wartime conditions. It is interesting to see how the Government is meeting these difficulties. The Minister for Education had occasion to go to Wongan Hills to consider the question of the establishment of country high schools. With him he had Hon. C. G. Latham, M.L.C., and Mr. J. H. Ackland, M.L.A. I quote the following:—

Mr. Watts, in reply, said that the existing difficulties could not be overcome for a number of years.

This was the Government that was going to fix things! Continuing—

It was not a question of finance, but of materials and any improvement would depend on the co-operation of all sections of the community.

The next part of the Minister's statement is what I want members to take particular notice of, because it has in it, if true, something with which I feel a majority of members will seriously disagree. The Minister said—

The Government's policy was that the standard of education of rural districts should first be raised to the level of that of the towns, and then progressively to improve both.

That presupposes a wide disparity between the standard of education in the country and

in the towns, and that the policy will be to keep the towns exactly where they are until the country can catch up, and then send them both forward. A little analysis will show that if that policy is to be adopted then it will be impossible to do anything to improve education in the towns, because even if the Good Lord Himself came to earth and took control of education, He could not give to the children in the country a standard of education which is possible in the towns where there are large populations. It would be beyond the capacity of any man to do it because of the insurmountable difficulties confronting such a proposal.

All that we can hope to do is to give to the country districts the best possible scheme of education having regard to the circumstances; but if children live in such isolated areas that it is not possible to provide them with a school or a teacher, how on earth can they be given a standard of education comparable to that which children in cities receive? It cannot be done. There are many children in the country who live so far away that the only possible means of educating them is by correspondence, if they want to remain at home, or they must leave home and go to a town. If we take the districts where it is possible to establish a small country school—and there are, unfortunately, many places where a small country school is the only possible method—then a little reflection will show that, try as we might, we could not give the eight or ten children in such a school the same facilities that could be provided in Perth.

Could we, for example, establish in such a school a complete visual education unit? Could we establish for them workshops for metal work and for woodwork or a domestic science centre? We could not get a teacher capable of instructing in all those subjects in the small schools, and it would be too costly to set up separate workshops for the one or two children of the required age who could take those subjects at those schools. So it is just so much "hooey" to say that we can bring education in the country districts up to the present standard in the city. If the standard of education in the city is to remain static until such time as the education in the country can be brought to the same level, it will be static forever. Of course, the Minister will find a little later that he will have to depart a good deal from that pronouncement and will have to allow

education in the city to progress as it should do, and at the same time do his best to continue improving educational facilities in the country. And that is what the previous Government was endeavouring to do the whole time.

Now let us examine the figures. We are told that the previous Government would not spend enough money on education. I saw a statement in "The Liberal News." I am sorry I have not the publication here tonight, but I will fetch it later on, if members doubt my word. I saw a statement in this paper, about January or February, which said that the previous Government could find money for beer and betting, but no money for education. That is what we were told: that we provided insufficient money for education but had money for those other purposes. It was said that the grant for education was totally inadequate. One would have expected that if that were true then, upon accession to office by this Government, there would have been a very substantial lift in the Education Vote. If our Vote of over £1,000,000 was totally inadequate, we would have been justified in looking for a very substantial lift indeed. Let us analyse the figures.

I shall indicate the expenditure during the last year of the previous Government, and the Budget for this year. In 1945-46, the total expenditure was £1,002,520, and in 1946-47 the expenditure was £1,223,746, or an increase in the 12 months of £221,226. What is the increase proposed by this Government for the coming year? The Estimates indicate an increase of £188,164. So, if the Treasurer's estimate is realised, the actual increase in education expenditure budgeted for by this Government is £30,000 less than the actual increased expenditure during the previous 12 months. So the rate at which education expenditure was being increased by the previous Government was greater than what is actually being proposed by this Government. Therefore, if our Vote was so totally inadequate, the present Government must be sadly disappointing its supporters in this regard. The Minister for Education has always had his eye on the political possibilities of any situation.

The Leader of the Opposition the other evening quoted a statement by the Minister in which he said, in effect, that he would refrain from complimenting any member of the Government because, if he made 99

statements against the Government and one in its favour, it would be that one which would be quoted against him and, because of that, and being very politically minded, he would refrain from offering any congratulation at all. I cannot blame him for that, if he has his eye on the political situation all the time. Since he has become Minister he has continued along those lines, hoping by publicity here and there to build up the Government, and so make secure a position which is really most insecure. I propose to read a statement on educational policy dated the 24th May, which was a little less than two months after the present Government took office. Here it is—

Outlining the Government's education policy, he (Mr. Watts) referred to the difficulties faced by the Education Department, saying that they were mainly physical and concerned staffs, labour and materials. "The Government's policy in education can be summarised as being to bring secondary education within the reach of as many children as possible throughout the State, Mr. Watts said.

Although Mr. Watts did not say so, that was precisely the policy of the previous Government.

Plans are now well forward for additional high schools and the establishment of junior high schools at a number of country centres as part of the policy of endeavouring to give better and higher education (not exclusively academic and professional education) to the maximum number possible. In view of the difficulties surrounding the provision of buildings on any large scale at the present time, there must, however, be substantial delays in carrying out such a programme—

This is letting the people down lightly. In view of the promises which were made, it was necessary quickly to steady things down a bit.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: The Premier looks very guilty!

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: So the Minister was at some pains to show that there would be substantial delays—

—as it is felt that the pressing needs of many primary schools and the relief of overcrowding must first be dealt with.

This is the part to which I take very strong exception—

In various parts of the State I found when I took office that children were being taught in most unsuitable and uncongenial surroundings. In one centre, two dis-used shops, wholeheartedly condemned by the local authority, were in use as classrooms, although the

position at this centre is now in process of improvement by the letting of a contract for school additions.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: I suppose they are still in the shops.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Yes, they are. I am going to read that again because, whilst it cannot be said that it tells an untruth, it places the matter in such a light as to lead people, as it was intended to do, to come to a quite wrong conclusion—

In one centre two disused shops, wholeheartedly condemned by the local authority, were in use as class-rooms, although the position at this centre is now in process of improvement by the letting of a contract for school additions.

I would like to know whether you, Mr. Chairman, or any other person who did not know the facts, would not assume from that statement that the present Government and the present Minister had taken the necessary steps to relieve the situation. There is not a person reading that who would not come to the conclusion that the present Government was responsible for getting busy to relieve the position. I propose to tell the story of these disused shops so that we can see whether the previous Government was to any extent whatever blameworthy in the matter, and whether the Minister was justified, apart from political considerations, in making that statement. The place referred to is Big Bell. Members will recall that during the session I have asked the Minister a series of questions about these shops, about this school and the number of children in attendance, the date when the shops were taken, as to whether the children were still in the shops and so on, and the Minister has been good enough to give me the information.

The story will show just what steps were taken by the previous Government and the Minister to deal with the situation which, because of the very nature of things, developed very rapidly and prevented provision being made before the acute accommodation difficulty arose. In September, 1945, there were only 15 children on the roll at this school, which was a two-roomed one. At the end of 1945, there were 36 children on the roll—still only sufficient to be accommodated comfortably in one room, and there were two. In June, 1946, when the figures came in for the first half of that year, there were under 100 children in the

school, and so the need for extra accommodation was not urgent but the position required to be watched. Had conditions been normal, plans would have been put in train straightaway for additional accommodation. But because of the necessity to deal with accommodation problems where they were most acute from time to time—and the Minister recognised that and has said as much tonight—consideration could not be given to a school where, at the time, accommodation was adequate. On the 14th June, 1946, the enrolment at the school was 97. By July, 1946—the next month—the number had jumped from 97 to 120. I doubt very much whether there is any place in the State where, in such a short time, there would be such a substantial rise in the number of children in attendance.

So, from the position of there being sufficient accommodation, the situation developed within a matter of weeks of the accommodation being most inadequate. Because of that, plans were immediately requested for additional accommodation, and on the 2nd August, plans were sent to the Under Treasurer for approval. On the 20th August, approval was granted by the Under Treasurer, and the Public Works Department was notified. The approval was for additional accommodation at Big Bell, to cost £1,585. So there was not a delay of even a fortnight once the position developed where there were more children than we could reasonably accommodate. Tenders for the work were advertised on the 8th November, and a tender was accepted for the job on the 24th December, some three months before this Government took office. So, all that there was to be done with regard to making the necessary arrangements to relieve the position, was done.

Tenders were called and one accepted. What more could a Minister do? It was impossible to find the materials for the tenderer. That was his job. As he tendered for the job, it was expected that he had a reasonable chance of carrying it out. So, three months before we left office, and actually before the school resumed in February, a contract had been let for additional accommodation. When the school opened in February, the teacher found he had more children than he could cope with, so he used his initiative and looked for some temporary

accommodation. He found a shop—a comparatively new building, but it was not constructed for a school—which in his opinion, so he reported to the department, was satisfactory for the purpose of temporary use. He was authorised by the Director to use it, and rightly so. He took that shop on the 11th February. He subsequently found it necessary to take a second shop because the growth of numbers was so large.

So, for six weeks during the time I was Minister, the children were in these disused shops. The present Government has been in office since the 1st April. It is now practically the end of October, and the children are still in the shops, which were only condemned by the local authority in a report received after I left office. No report of their condemnation was made to me before the 1st of April. When the report was received it did not wholeheartedly condemn them, as the Minister has said, but drew attention to the fact that they were not suitable as school buildings—which everyone knew.

Mr. Marshall: That was the basis of the condemnation.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Certain things were required, such as lavatory accommodation and the like, to make them satisfactory. Was this a fair statement when everything necessary to relieve the position had been done by the previous Government, and the existing one did not do a thing? No fair-minded person, taking the developments as I have outlined them—and what I have said is accurate and can be checked—could come to any conclusion other than that the Minister and the department did the best they could in the circumstances and that there had been no unnecessary delay in providing for the accommodation of the children. I do not blame this Government because the children are still in those shops, as I know the difficulties that exist. They are physical difficulties. Men tender for buildings but cannot get material to complete them. The Premier will know that during the war period it took nearly two years to get a room built at the Waroona school.

The contractor would put in a few days and then have to cease work on the job because of lack of material, and although from time to time we threatened to take the

contract from him and find somebody else to do the work, we did not do that because we could not find anybody else, and the contractor knew it. I have no doubt he was doing his best in the circumstances, but the fact remains that it took him that time to erect one room. Those are the facts that the present Government refused to recognise when on the hustings, and instead of being reasonable about the position it talked about muddle and blamed the then Government for a set of circumstances which, as must have been known, could not have been avoided.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: And it has been on the hustings ever since.

Mr. Marshall: It cashed in on the deplorable condition that was the outcome of the war.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Let us see how the Government is shaping with regard to its plans for better educational facilities. Before the Labour Government left office a plan received Treasury approval for the erection of a school at Carnarvon.

The Minister for Lands: What a beauty!

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: It was a beauty, and it was in accordance with the Labour Government's idea of what schools should be throughout the State.

The Minister for Education: It differed very little from the one at Carnamah.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: None was being erected at Carnamah.

The Minister for Education: But it should have been.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Had one been erected there it would have been along the same lines, that school representing the standard that the Labour Government believed was the correct standard. The Minister talks about bringing education in the country districts into line with that in the city. Has he seen the school at East Perth? Would he say that the proposed school at Carnarvon was to be an improvement on the school at East Perth? Of course, he could not. There was an instance where the previous Government was giving to the country in one area—the North-West section—a school comparable with a school in the metropolitan area, but what has this Government done about it? It has slashed it in half and has cut out from that school facilities for manual training, for metal work and for



general science. All those extra facilities that are required for country children, and which the department usually finds difficulty in providing, have been taken from that school even though Treasury approval had been given for the expenditure, and now it is to be a school very much below the standard that was previously proposed.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: It is almost unbelievable.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: In the final analysis we get this, that the change of Government cost the people of the North-West substantial educational facilities. That is what it means, in cold fact. The school that they will now get will be about half as good as that which they would have got had there been no change of Government.

Mr. Marshall: God knows the people up there deserve every encouragement.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Every school that the previous Government built had the most modern facilities. Some of them, completed by the previous Government, have been opened by the present Government, and so it must know what class of school they are. Take, for instance, that at Lord-street, the Co-educational Technical High School.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: The Chief Secretary is interested in this, is he not?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Very much so, I would think. There was to be nothing provided at Carnarvon that is not provided at this school, or provided in the plans.

The Minister for Lands: Would the attendances be the same?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Of course the attendance at Carnarvon would not have been the same.

Hon. A. A. M. Coverley: That interjection comes from a Minister with North-West experience.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: If the criterion is to be that the standard of school must depend on the number of children in attendance—

Mr. Leslie: Was not that your argument to begin with?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: —then God help the children in country districts.

Mr. Leslie: Was not that your argument?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: No. I said it was impossible to provide the children in country districts with the same standard as can be provided in the towns, and I repeat that. It is impossible, but in certain places in the country it will be possible to establish schools comparable with city schools, and to encourage children from country districts to attend those schools. That was the proposal for the North-West, to obviate the necessity of children from outlying areas having to come to the metropolitan area, and to give them at that centre a school with facilities comparable with those to be found in the city. But instead of allowing that position to remain, this Government took steps to make such a thing impossible, and instead of providing for the children in the country a standard comparable with that in the city, it did the opposite.

I understand that an attempt was made to do the same thing at Collie. How far that is the truth I am not in a position to say, but I understand that the Government gave serious consideration to amending the plans for the Collie school in the same way as it amended the plans for the Carnarvon school. Probably the pressure from Collie was so great, when the idea became known, that the Government—being very sensitive to public opinion—very quickly climbed down and did not slash those plans. The Minister knows whether such an attempt was made, but I do not know.

The Minister for Lands: You seem to know.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I heard that it was thought about, but naturally I am not in a position to prove it. As is the case with many other things, we have strong suspicions of what has taken place, owing to certain developments, but cannot go beyond that.

Mr. Styants: They could do without bananas, but not without coal.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Having regard to what happened at Carnarvon, and taking a line on the interjections from the Minister for Lands, it is not beyond the bounds of possibility that some such action at Collie was contemplated. It would have been a scandalous thing, and it will be a scandalous thing if in future the Govern-

ment proposes to deny to country districts anywhere facilities for domestic science training, for woodwork, metal work, general science, visual education and so on. Those things must be provided in the towns and are being provided, and I say they must be provided in the country also.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: There are cobwebs all over the domestic science centre at the Northam High School.

Mr. Marshall: I wonder what the Country Women's Association will have to say about it all?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: It is true that some things have been done—

Mr. Marshall: There is too much in the way of schools at Pinjarra, for a start.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: That was done by the previous Government, although the Premier did not seem to know at the time or at any rate before the election. I can recall that when it was announced a few days before the election that expenditure was contemplated at South Perth and Middle Swan, the Premier made a statement that there should be some priority list for buildings and that it should be adhered to so as to prevent anything of that sort happening. I believe the Premier thought the Government had selected those places at the time to make the announcement, hoping to influence the election. Now he has heard his own Minister say tonight, and perhaps will be convinced on the point, that it is not possible to have a priority list to which there could be complete adherence.

As the Minister for Education stated, conditions change from time to time. A school that might be well down on the list today because there are places where the accommodation difficulty is much more acute, might, within a day or two, have to be placed at the top of the list because of a sudden influx of children or some other circumstances that would entirely alter the picture. That sort of thing goes on from week to week. During the course of the election and within a few days of the poll, the Labour Government also announced that substantial additions were to be made to the Busselton school. That was in an electorate where the Government had no hope of winning, yet it did not hesitate to make the announcement.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: We will win Sussex next time!

Mr. Rodoreda: That is a moral certainty.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Although the then Government had no hope of winning that seat, that did not prevent it from announcing the expenditure because the provision of that accommodation had been long delayed owing to the inability to provide the materials to enable the work to be done. The delay in providing accommodation was also responsible for deferring the scheme for consolidation in the Busselton area.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: We will be able to win the Sussex seat next on the banking issue!

Hon. A. H. Panton: The member for Sussex is blushing now!

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The Government was anxious to provide the additions for the Busselton school and, even on the very eve of the election, did not hesitate to make the announcement when it saw its way clear to have the work done and the expenditure incurred.

The Minister for Lands: That is why Bullsbrook missed out!

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: There are many places that must miss out over the years. Chickens have a habit of coming home to roost—

Hon. A. H. Panton: If the foxes do not get them!

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: In a year or two—sooner or later—the present Government will have to go on the hustings again, and no doubt there will be a few of these places missing, and the Government will be told about them. Make no error about it; they will be there!

The Minister for Lands: Then why worry about them now?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Take the school at Big Bell, where the children have been accommodated in disused shops, which they occupied for six weeks while the previous Government was in power and for six months under the present Government—and they are still there. The Minister says that he hopes they will not be there very much longer. I shall venture a guess that they will still be there at Christmas time. The use of those shops was wholeheartedly condemned by the local authority. If that is so, why does the Government leave the children there? The Government cannot help it, any more than the previous Government could

help it. That is the position the Government will find itself in next year, and the year after, with regard to accommodation for schools. If the Minister provides a new school at Carnamah, and I agree that that course is necessary, it means that some other place has to do without one until there is an opportunity to make the additional provision. That position cannot be altered, unless the Minister for Works should arouse himself and take the matter in hand.

Mr. Marshall: He does not look like it just now. He has gone into a trance.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I shall read some extracts and if he is not awake to them now, he can peruse them in "Hansard" later on. A deputation waited on the Minister from the Teachers' Union and presented the following resolution:—

That all schools near existing sewerage systems be connected with them and that where such systems are unavailable, scientific sanitary systems be installed; that better washing facilities, more adequate shelter sheds, fly-proof lunch rooms with tables for children's lunches, and bicycle sheds be provided at all schools.

The promises made by the Government led these people to be hopeful that these requirements would be provided. That was the reason why the deputation from the Teachers' Union waited upon the Minister for Works. Here is the Minister's reply—

The position at present was difficult owing to the shortage of labour and equally essential the shortage of materials. In the metropolitan area 75 per cent. of the schools were connected with the sewerage system.

That was done by the previous Government, which was said to be surrounded with muddle.

Mr. Marshall: They seem to have stung him!

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The Minister went on to say—

The architects' department was fully alive for the need of satisfactory sanitation and had, under trying circumstances, been doing its best to make good the deficiencies. The possibility of chemical installations would be investigated. He assumed the deputation did not expect that everything the resolution asked for could be tackled at once. If an erection containing shelter shed, fly-proof lunch room and bicycle shed under one roof, could be contrived, he thought that should meet the need.

This is the gem—

Unfortunately despite efforts made during recent years, the accumulation added to by

the depression and since by the war, had piled up considerably and could only be overtaken bit by bit. He feared that in the next year or two little could be done; but what little could be done would not be neglected.

We hope not!

The Minister for Works: I think you had better go back over it again.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: No, the Minister can read about it in "Hansard."

Hon. A. H. Panton: The Minister listens better with his eyes shut!

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Prior to the election, and at a time when "The West Australian" was still in a reasonable state of mind and before it went full-out as a partisan in opposition to the Government, a leading article was published on the 23rd January, in which the following appeared—

There remains, however, the problem of gradually giving effect to all these aspirations. It is easy to point out the deficiencies of State education in Australia, particularly in Western Australia with its enormous area and small population, but the critics do not always bear in mind that since the turn of the century, this young country has been involved in two World Wars and a depression, and has carried out an enormous amount of developmental work, not all of which by any means has been fully productive. Every State Treasurer would willingly spend more money on education if it were available.

That is a true statement of the position. "The West Australian" drew attention to the fact that this country, with its wide open spaces, and big problems, had been through two wars and a depression, and it was to be expected that there would be a considerable lag in the provision of educational facilities. Of course, it would have been reasonable had the members of the present Government admitted this on the hustings and endeavoured to gain the support of the people by telling the truth, but instead of that they blamed this State, said the situation was not the same in other States and that the position here was solely due to the ineptitude of the previous Government. The Minister for Education has been travelling about the State continually referring to the lack of accommodation which he finds, and he said more than once that he had no idea conditions were so bad. He could not have travelled about beforehand without having any idea. A little thought must have forced him to the conclusion that the situation could not be otherwise, because it was

possible to find a comparable situation, not only in every other State of Australia, but also in America and Great Britain.

The other evening there was present in this Chamber a young lady who works for a firm in California, the principal of which is the chairman of a local school board. Seeing the opportunity of getting first hand information about the educational facilities in California, I questioned her as to whether there was any difficulty about staffing the schools or getting sufficient schools to accommodate the children. Her answer was somewhat along these lines, "Because of the acute shortage of accommodation, it was necessary to adopt a rostering system so that one group of children attended school during the early part of the day and used the building and, when they vacated it, another group of children came in and used the building for the rest of the day, making one building serve the needs of two. Further, that all sorts of persons had been pressed into service to do the teaching and, because of that, the standard of the teachers was not as high as it had been previously or as high as it should be."

Is not that the story of every other country? It is the story of Great Britain where a lack of buildings and a shortage of teachers have made it necessary to adopt all sorts of makeshifts. We did that here in certain districts. In certain parts of Fremantle we had to disperse the children from the Fremantle Boys' School and the Princess May School and utilise certain rooms in the schools of the outer suburbs in order that all the children could be taught for the full time. That is a situation which will be with us for some time.

It would take gigantic efforts on the part of everybody to effect sufficient improvement to be able to say within two or three years that we could reach a situation where we would not have this acute difficulty. The Minister, no doubt, is anxious to put into operation as quickly as possible the Act providing for the extension of the school-leaving age to 15 years. I have no doubt that he has explored the possibility of this already and will do his best to put it into operation as soon as possible, but he must know that, as soon as he does so, he will accentuate the accommodation difficulties in certain places and therefore impose a still greater strain

upon the resources of the State to build the necessary schools to provide adequately for the children.

I, too, congratulate the officers of the department. I say there was no muddle before. The officers who are there now are the same officers and are doing the same good job as they were doing then, struggling manfully to overcome the various shortages confronting them.

Teachers selected for the instruction of Rubella children are, as must be expected, of outstanding quality and are getting results. This is very gratifying, not only to the people of the State generally, but also to the parents of the unfortunate children, because these parents now have hopes that their children will be educated, whereas previously they thought there was little possibility of that occurring. The week before last I was fortunate enough to meet one of the parents who was taking a Rubella child home from school. I asked whether she was satisfied with the progress that the child had made. The child was equipped with one of the hearing aids. She replied that she was more than satisfied and was astonished that the child in such a short time should learn as much it had done. That is typical of the general progress of these children because of the excellent work being performed by the teachers who have been specially selected for the job.

I am glad that the Government has provided additional funds for an extension of visual education, which is one of the most important branches of the system. The Minister referred to the fact that this year an opportunity had been afforded for members to view some of the films that had been made. Unfortunately, the Minister's arrangements were such as to preclude the possibility of any member from this side of the Chamber attending. We were somewhat upset at the time because many members were anxious to see the films.

The Minister for Education: We shall provide another opportunity and give you plenty of time.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: We were disappointed at the time because it was not possible for any of us to be present. Although I myself had had previous opportunities and was fully aware of the work being done, other members on this side of

the Chamber not so fortunate would have gladly availed themselves of the opportunity to see demonstrated the work of such an excellent character.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: One of the members on this side played a leading role in one of the films.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: This is one section of the department that must develop if educational progress here is to keep pace with the progress being made elsewhere, but this is one of the directions in which the Minister will find it extremely difficult to provide for country children a standard comparable with that of the city, because, whilst it is economically possible to equip a room for the use of some hundreds of children, it is an entirely different proposition where there are only seven or eight children in attendance. That illustration will, I think, lend point to what I said earlier about the impossibility of achieving the policy that the Minister enunciated at Wongan Hills. I look forward to the big advancement of Western Australia, because our people are indeed education-minded. It is remarkable in these days to find that even people on a very low rung of the economic ladder are prepared to sacrifice themselves to educate their children.

I know of many instances where parents have left districts in which they have been residing for years. They left their homes in order to move elsewhere to provide the best educational facilities for their children. This seems to be so abroad, too. I have had brought under my notice many times in recent months instances of applications by people in Great Britain who are anxious to emigrate to Australia for the purpose of providing opportunities for their children. They say that they are well on in years and it does not matter much as far as they are concerned, but they do want to provide a future for their children and so are looking to Australia and particularly Western Australia.

Mr. Marshall: We have one in the Mines Department now.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: It is a good thing to see people looking to this State in the belief that educational facilities of a high standard are available to their children here. I hope the Government will find it possible to do much more than is proposed in this

Budget, which I notice does not give any bigger increase over last year's expenditure than the last expenditure did over the previous year's. Consequently, the Government is not moving forward any faster so far, at all events. Plans are well developed for a high school education for the various branches of primary education and I have no reason to believe that they will not be carried out and possibly further developed. The Minister has made it obvious that he is devoting to his job an energy and capacity which auger well for the development of the department, with the same officers who were there under the previous Government. There was no muddle then. There is no muddle now and, as the physical difficulties are overcome, so will we find it possible to give our children a standard of education which will be at least equal to that of the other States, if not better.

I hope the Premier will not place too much faith in the getting of money from the Commonwealth to provide for large extensions of education. If we are fortunate enough to get that money, well and good; but let us plan on the assumption that we will not get it, because I think the odds are very much against it. From time to time the Education Ministers of various States have made strong requests to the Commonwealth for substantial education aid as a straight-out grant. At one conference which I attended a resolution was carried that the Commonwealth be asked for £10,000,000 annually, but the Commonwealth did not then agree and has not yet agreed. There is no reason why the Government should not keep trying, because if it could get the money it would be very handy, but the Government should not depend on getting it. The Government should plan in the hope that from our own resources we shall be able to find sufficient to do what we ought to do. In my opinion, despite the importance of many other departments, education is fundamental. It is the basis of most of our schemes.

Without a decent educational system we must be weak in defence, for example. One of the strongest arms of defence is the Air Force. What sort of pilots could we provide for the Air Force if we did not have material of a high educational standard to train? During the last war we had to look to the high school boys to provide the personnel of the various aircraft and it was

remarkable how those chosen from this State compared with those recruited in the other States. When we have regard to the educational qualifications of those selected we stood out very well—

Mr. Bovell: They were second to none. I can assure you of that.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Proving that our educational system was at least equal to the systems elsewhere. Whilst we do not claim that it is all it ought to be—there is room for vast improvement—we need not be ashamed of it.

I ask members to cast about in their minds to see what men are occupying the top jobs in Australia to-day. They will find that a large number of them are from Western Australia. Many of them occupy top jobs in the Commonwealth today; they were taken from the various departments of this State and they received all their education here. To mention a few who come readily to mind: Dr. Coombs in the Department of Reconstruction; the Assistant Director of the Commonwealth Department of Education, Mr. Robertson, who was the Senior Inspector in the Education Department here; more recently, Dr. Teakle, who left the Department of Agriculture and went to the University of Queensland; and still more recently, Mr. Millington of our Department of Agriculture, who has taken over a job in South Australia. There are many more such officers who, in open competition with persons in the other States, were able to secure these appointments, proving that our educational system must be providing the necessary facilities. So it is quite wrong to say that during the years of office of Labour Governments in this State the Education Department was in a muddle.

**MR. ACKLAND** (Irwin-Moore) [10.18]: I think that most members present, and I know that all members who come from country electorates, will agree with me when I say there is no more vital subject in country districts than education. When on the hustings at the last election I fought my campaign on three subjects, one of which was education. Since I have been in Parliament no job has occupied my time more than that of education. Over a fortnight ago it was my misfortune, possibly, to have to follow the member for North-East Fremantle in speaking to a Bill. On that oc-

casión I believe I was more fitted to follow him than I am on this, because then I was dealing with a subject about which I claim to know quite a lot. If I did not, it would be to my discredit. Tonight I am following the hon. member purely as a resident of a country district and I am following a man who has had a great deal of experience in the Education Department. When speaking on the last occasion, I started my address with some heat and accused the hon. member of being one of three things. I am not going to start in that way tonight. I am sorry that there should have been necessity on that occasion.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: You are sorry you said it.

Mr. ACKLAND: I am sorry for the necessity of having to make them. I think he was extremely illogical in many of the things that he put before us. He misinterpreted them on several occasions. One of the complaints that the hon. member had to make about the Minister for Education was with reference to a school that I think is at Big Bell; at any rate, it is in one of the gold-mining districts. The number of school children had increased very quickly. Tonight I want to talk about conditions in the Irwin-Moore electorate, where the population has been growing very slowly indeed; where settlement, in some instances, took place during the last century, and some of it as late as during the last 15 to 20 years. I believe I was returned to this House to a very great extent on the conditions of education in that electorate. So bad were they that one of the first things I did was to try, successfully, to persuade the Minister for Education to see things for himself just as they were.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: How many new schools did you get out of that?

Mr. ACKLAND: I will tell the hon. member before I sit down.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: And you will be in much the same position next time, too.

Mr. ACKLAND: I believe the idea which, I think, came from the member for North-East Fremantle, of undertaking a policy of consolidated schools, has much to commend it; but the way in which it was introduced, and the haste with which it was put into effect, have resulted in nothing but confusion in all the schools I know. I have instances

where schools were already overcrowded and bus services were inaugurated without any apparent notice being taken of the conditions that existed. The result is that we have children being taught under impossible conditions, both for them and for the school-teachers as well.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: If the policy was wrong, why has it not been reversed?

Mr. ACKLAND: It has.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: No, it has not.

Mr. ACKLAND: I think I can give proof of that before I sit down. It certainly has been postponed in instances.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Can you tell me of one bus that has been taken off?

Mr. ACKLAND: I was particularly careful not to interject when the hon. member was speaking, though there was plenty of opportunity for me to do so. I hope he will show me the same courtesy that I extended to him. We have one instance where the parents in one of the newly-settled districts themselves built a shed which was used as a school. It was adequate for the children adjoining that siding. Then the bus service was inaugurated and the building was no longer adequate, and the children had to move into the hall. When the Minister and I visited them on what was not a particularly wintry day, and a public meeting was held, we were all wrapped up in overcoats and, in some instances, women brought travelling rugs to keep warm enough to listen to what was said by the Minister. The children attending the school were working under those conditions. Tenders were called for the erection of a school at that centre. So far, only one has been received and it was so high that it was just double the amount a reasonable tender should be. I have called upon the smaller contractors of Perth in an effort to get someone to build there, but they are not interested. I think I can give a reason for that before I sit down. Then we had two centres where the schools were overcrowded; namely, Wongan Hills and Ballidu. Bus services were run to both those schools.

Today at Wongan Hills we find the school establishments extended over a quarter of a mile, the children being in the school and in any other building that can be leased. There is a head teacher with two girl teachers, one of whom I believe is only a monitor.

The same thing exactly is happening at Ballidu. We can go through the 19 schools in that area and find that in most instances—though those are the three most glaring cases—the same sort of conditions exist. I understand from the Minister—indeed, I know it is a fact—that in one instance he will not allow a bus service to operate—that is at a place called Miling—until some provisions for reasonable and proper school accommodation can be made. The idea of consolidating schools is quite good. It is far better for school children to be brought together so that they can have a greater number of teachers, and teachers who are specialists in their own subjects; but the way in which this was done prior to the present Government coming into office was all wrong, and it has resulted in nothing but chaos. I was asked just now whether anything had been done by the present Government to relieve the position.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: No; to reverse the position.

Mr. ACKLAND: It has been done. In three centres already temporary accommodation has been made available, inasmuch as school buildings that have been standing idle and were becoming dilapidated through lack of use have been transferred to provide schoolrooms, so that the children can have better facilities.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: I do not want to keep interjecting, but what I would like you to tell me is whether any bus service I inaugurated has been discontinued by this Government.

Mr. ACKLAND: In my district, no. I do not know what has happened anywhere else.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: That is the test.

Mr. ACKLAND: That is not the test, for the simple reason that those schools had already been dismantled and the children taken from them could not be sent back there. It is a physical impossibility, because the schools are no longer there. The children have to be given some education, and facilities will be provided, and are being provided, as I have mentioned. While I am speaking of bus services, I would like to ask the Minister to give consideration to making the remuneration of bus contractors more in keeping with the work they are trying to undertake. I understand that except in one or two instances the maximum amount paid

has been 1s. 3d. per mile. In several instances of which I have personal knowledge these men are beginning to realise that it is quite impossible for them to carry on and use the sort of bus that it is rightly being insisted on by the department must be used, to take the children to school. Some competent body—not necessarily one outside the Education Department—which could co-opt further information if necessary, should be appointed to go into the cost of these buses, their maintenance, a sinking fund and a reasonable living wage for the man who operates them, to find out the correct sum to be paid so that the job can be done effectively.

Another matter to which I wish to refer is one that has given me a great deal of worry for a considerable time, and that is the question of Communism coming into the education of this State. I believe that at the University there is a distinct trend towards Communism. Our teachers when going through that institution, and I believe the Training College too, come under a definite influence which has a bearing towards disloyalty to the Crown. We see quite a lot of it in the young teachers in the country districts. There is not a good influence on the children. There should be a tightening up of the curriculum by which the teachers would be forced to give lessons having a bearing on the Empire and Australia. In the city there is a secondary school—there may be others—at which, each morning at assembly, the children before marching into their class-rooms stand at attention while the the Australian flag is run to the head of the flag-staff. It may be suggested that that is a lot of flag-wagging. To me it is a matter of extreme importance. It encourages the children to express their loyalty both to Australia and the Empire.

The Minister has, over and over again, said that he intends while administering the portfolio of Education to put first things first. I believe he is conscientiously doing that. He is first dealing with the schools most urgently in need of attention. When they are dealt with I believe he will go on with the building of consolidated schools, and then the establishment of junior and high schools. If that is his objective, it has my unqualified support. We can see instances of such a programme being adopted in the country today. I believe that with

the erection of junior and high schools in the country districts the local people will be more than willing to assist the department in providing hostels for the children during the school days of the week. It would be a good thing for the children of sixth standard and upwards to be kept in such living conditions whilst at school. I have a great admiration for what the Minister has accomplished during the few months he has been in office. In my electorate he found a tremendous amount of confusion.

Hon. A. H. Panton: I think you will be a corporal in no time!

Mr. ACKLAND: I think so. That confusion was brought about almost entirely by commencing the consolidation before we were ready for it; there were no buildings to accommodate the children. I also pay a tribute to the secretary of the department. He is the only Education Department official in Perth with whom I have come in contact. I have worried him considerably during the last six or seven months, and have at all times found him particularly helpful. For the teachers in my electorate, I have nothing but sympathy. They are trying to do a job under most appalling conditions.

**Progress reported.**

## **BILL—OPTOMETRISTS ACT AMENDMENT.**

*In Committee.*

Mr. Perkins in the Chair; the Honorary Minister in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 4—agreed to.

Clause 5—Amendment of Section 32:

Hon. A. H. PANTON: In speaking to the second reading of this Bill I was somewhat critical. The Bill is an outstanding example of the need for a full explanation of what it proposes to do being given by the Minister. On the face of it Clause 5 means that after a university student passes his first and second years, and is in his third or fourth year he can then enter an optometrist's premises and do certain work under the supervision of a registered optometrist. There is nothing in the Bill or the Act to provide how he shall be paid, how long he shall be there, or when he shall become



registered as an optometrist. I do not blame the Honorary Minister, as she gave the House all the information she had. My complaint is that she was not given the information that should have been made available to her.

I placed an amendment on the notice paper, but since then I have discussed the matter with Professor Currie, of the University, who I think instigated the proposal that there should be optometry classes at the University. He assures me that the proposal is that students studying optometry, after passing the second year, can be admitted to an optometrist's premises and under a registered optometrist do at least 15 hours per week, while also doing about 15 hours per week at the University. In that way they will get both technical and practical training over four years. If my amendment were carried it would mean the end of the University course, because they would only have done the two years and my amendment provided for at least 12 months so that they would then automatically become registered. I am informed by Professor Currie that there is contained in regulations—which may not yet have been printed—provision that after they have had at least 15 hours per week at the University and 15 hours per week under a registered optometrist over the period, at the end of four years they will automatically become registered. In view of that, I have nothing further to say about the Bill as presented by the Honorary Minister.

Clause put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

*House adjourned at 10.45 p.m.*

## Legislative Council.

Tuesday, 4th November, 1947.

	PAGE
Assent to Bills	1644
Bills: Stallions Act Amendment, 1r.	1644
Plant Diseases Act Amendment (No. 1), 1r.	1644
Increase of Rent (War Restrictions) Act Amendment, 1r.	1644
Farmers' Debts Adjustment Act Amendment (Continuance), 1r.	1644
Municipal Corporations Act Amendment (No. 2), 1r.	1644
Road Districts Act Amendment (No. 2), 1r.	1644
Companies Act Amendment, Com., report	1645
Optometrists Act Amendment, returned	1646
Town Planning and Development Act Amendment, Com., report	1647
Street Photographers, 2r.	1648
Wheat Marketing, 2r.	1653
Commonwealth Powers Act, 1943, Amendment, Com., report	1654
Commonwealth Powers Act, 1945, Amendment, 2r., Com., report	1654
Child Welfare, 2r.	1654
Land Alienation Restriction Act Amendment (Continuance), 2r.	1663

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

### ASSENT TO BILLS.

Messages from the Lieut.-Governor received and read notifying assent to the following Bills:—

- 1, Dentists Act Amendment.
- 2, Stipendiary Magistrates Act Amendment.
- 3, Coal Mine Workers (Pensions) Act Amendment.
- 4, Public Service Act Amendment.
- 5, Crown Suits.
- 6, Public Trustee Act Amendment.

### BILLS (6)—FIRST READING.

- 1, Stallions Act Amendment.
- 2, Plant Diseases Act Amendment (No. 1).  
Introduced by the Honorary Minister.
- 3, Increase of Rent (War Restrictions) Act Amendment.
- 4, Farmers' Debts Adjustment Act Amendment (Continuance).
- 5, Municipal Corporations Act Amendment (No. 2), (Hon. E. H. Gray in charge).
- 6, Road Districts Act Amendment (No. 2) (Hon. E. H. Gray in charge).  
Received from the Assembly.