

support of the views held by the controlling bodies. That is a proper and right course to pursue when the subject is coming before Parliament. The sensible thing is to put up to members of Parliament information supporting one's case, so that legislators may have full information upon which to form a judgment. I submit that racing and matters associated with it—the intense publicity campaigns, the intense wireless campaigns, and the ramifications of betting—are long overdue for a comprehensive overhaul. Legislation dealing with racing, betting and associated features should be re-examined. Exhaustive inquiry should be made with a view to garnering all the information available and giving everyone who has an interest the opportunity to present his case in circumstances where it can be combated by opposing interests, the evidence thus being tested.

I repeat, an inquiry is long overdue. A select committee of this House would do valuable work, and would gather much helpful information. It may be said that the inquiry should be by a Royal Commission instead of by a select committee. For my part, so long as the job is done, I care not by what means it is done. In my opinion there is not great need for a Royal Commission in this case, because nobody is being hurt and nobody's personal interests are at stake. The inquiry would be one of an abstract, impersonal nature, the object being to gather information for the use of members of this Chamber. The inquiry could well be undertaken by a select committee of the House. Accordingly I move the motion standing in my name.

On motion by the Premier, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 9.13 p.m.*

## Legislative Council,

*Thursday, 31st August, 1939.*

Address-in-reply, eleventh day—conclusion	PAOB
Adjournment, special	458
	478

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

### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

*Eleventh Day—Conclusion.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

**THE HONORARY MINISTER** (Hon. E. H. Gray—West) [4.32]: The seventeenth Parliament opens in an international atmosphere of tense suspense and anxiety. The allegedly civilised nations of the world are standing to arms, and may be engulfed at any moment in a terrible struggle which may permanently disable, and perhaps destroy, every nation participating in it. The present frightful position has been preceded by an unprecedented campaign of hideous cruelty and persecution against thousands of innocent men, women and children. The British nation stands solidly behind its leaders, and all thoughtful people will fervently pray that the statesmen of the democracies will guide the nations away from the threatened international catastrophe.

The Commonwealth has suffered a severe loss through the passing of the late Prime Minister, Mr. Lyons, who, through a lifetime of service to his native State and to the Commonwealth, built up a sound reputation for honesty and integrity of purpose. The sudden passing of the late Premier of Tasmania, Mr. Ogilvie, is a very severe blow to that State and to the Commonwealth. In this State the sudden death of Miss May Holman came as a severe shock to every section of the people. Miss Holman worked unceasingly in many public activities in this State. She was a champion of the underdog, and devoted her life to the social advancement of women and children. As a woman member of Parliament, she set a very high standard of efficiency, which will be very difficult for other women to emulate.

Members' criticism of the Government's financial administration has followed along

usual lines. A statement is made that over a certain period of years expenditure has increased by such and such an amount, and this is all the information our critics require. From it they are immediately prepared to argue that the Treasurer has relaxed his control over the finances of the State. Mr. Baxter's strictures on the Government's financial policy afford a striking example of the type of criticism to which I have referred. He quoted figures in respect of expenditure from the Consolidated Revenue Fund for the years 1932-33 to 1938-39, showing that the total had grown from £9,196,000 to £11,170,000 during the period of the Government's occupancy of the Treasury benches. Mr. Baxter said—

There is only one conclusion to be drawn from such a heavy increase, and that is that the finances of the State are in the hands of a Government that is not competent to control them.

Similar, but less extravagant, criticism was made by Mr. Seddon and Mr. Nicholson. Mr. Seddon said—

When one looks at the returns, one cannot help thinking that supervision might have been closer than it has been.

Both hon. members' statements on this important subject would have been considerably more impressive if accompanied by a critical analysis of revenue and expenditure as disclosed by the public accounts.

Hon. J. Cornell: If possible.

The HONORARY MINISTER: In the absence of such an analysis, however, their arguments can only be characterised as pure conjecture. On previous occasions it has been emphasised that when Government expenditure is dissected it is disclosed how very small is the proportion of the total outlay affording scope for effecting economies. Thus, of the total expenditure of £11,170,000 incurred last year, £8,288,000, or almost 75 per cent of the whole amount, was devoted to servicing the public debt and to expenditure on public utilities for the purpose of earning revenue and providing essential services. Details of such expenditure are as follows:—

	£
Interest and Sinking Fund ..	3,889,000
Exchange .. ..	471,000
Public Utilities .. ..	3,928,000
	<u>£8,288,000</u>

Then, again, payments have to be made under the various Special Acts under which revenue is appropriated for such purposes as pensions and retiring allowances parliamentary allowances, the reforestation fund, the University of Western Australia and so on. Under these headings, expenditure last year totalled £381,498. When these and the other payments I have mentioned are offset against the total expenditure for 1938/39, there is left a balance of something under 2½ millions, the major portion of which represents disbursement for salaries and wages to departmental officers whose remuneration is fixed by awards and agreements. Such disbursements amounted last year to £1,666,169 so that actually the field affording opportunities for curtailed expenditure is less than £850,000. This latter figure, of course, represents various departmental contingencies. It includes expenditure—other than administrative salaries and wages—on social services and departmental activities such as relief of the aged, indigent and infirm child welfare, miners' phthisis, care of the sick and mentally afflicted, unemployment relief, education, agriculture, mines and so forth. Although the Grants Commission has penalised the State from time to time for the liberality of its social services, it is unlikely that even Mr. Baxter would charge the Government with extravagance on this score. A comparison of the expenditure during 1932-33 and 1938-39, grouped under the headings mentioned, is as follows:—

	£	1932-33. £	£	1938-39 £
Servicing of Public Debt .. ..		4,071,873		4,360,2
Public Utilities .. ..		2,840,904		3,928,4
Other Special Acts .. ..		236,554		381,4
Other expenditure—				
Salaries and wages .. ..	1,147,916		1,666,169	
Contingencies .. ..	890,487		893,792	
		<u>2,047,403</u>		<u>2,499,0</u>
		<u>£9,196,234</u>		<u>£11,170,1</u>

The respective increases were:—

	£	£
Servicing of Public Debt .. ..		288,8
Public Utilities .. ..		1,087,5
Other Special Acts .. ..		144,9
Other expenditure—		
Salaries and wages .. ..	518,253	
Contingencies (decrease) .. ..	65,095	
		<u>452,5</u>
Total .. ..		<u>£1,978,8</u>

Practically the whole of the increased expenditure arose in fields outside the Treasurer's control. The increased cost of servicing the public debt is due to the added loan liability during the past six years.

members are aware, the moneys raised have been used for a sound programme of public works, which has provided employment instead of sustenance to men dependent upon the Government for work, and at the same time has increased the productive capacity of the State. Despite reforms in budgeting methods made by the Government, to which I shall refer later, the percentage of earnings of loan assets to all public debt charges has increased from 52 to 56. Public utilities were responsible for over 55 per cent. of the increase in expenditure. The actual increase—£1,087,505—was attributable mainly to increased salary and wages payments, and to expansion in the scale of operations to earn an additional £1,142,650 of revenue.

Hon. J. Cornell: No expenditure on the railways?

The HONORARY MINISTER: Increases under Special Acts were due either to the restoration of depression cuts, or to increased payments into special funds necessitated by increased receipts. The net increase in all other expenditure was £452,558. This sum is more than accounted for by additional expenditure, totalling £518,253, incurred for wages and salaries, on account of the restoration of salary and wage cuts, the reclassification of positions in the service, the application of basic wage fluctuations to the adjustment of salaries and normal expansion in departmental services. In the field affording opportunities for economy—contingencies—the Treasurer, far from relaxing control over expenditure, has actually brought about a reduction amounting to £65,695. Had the Government been unsuccessful in its efforts largely to eliminate the necessity for sustenance payments, this decrease would have been converted into an increase of £234,000, since unemployment relief payments have shrunk approximately £300,000 during the period under review. At the same time, members will realise that as a direct result of the improvements effected in the unemployment position during the Government's tenure of office, we have been able, not only to restore votes for essential departmental contingencies to a normal basis, but also further to liberalise the scale of assistance to widows and children and sustenance workers, without causing any increase in total expenditure in the field affording scope for economy.

Some reference to Mr. Baxter's statements on the revenue position is necessary. The hon. member, after remarking on the increase in expenditure, said—

On the other hand, the revenue mainly through heavier taxation has returned substantial increases. Thus, if the position was controlled by a competent Government, there should be a surplus each year.

Similar arguments have been advanced from time to time. Members criticising the Government's financial administration have urged that, with the extra money yielded by the financial emergency tax, the Treasurer should be accumulating handsome surpluses, or doing more to extend the scale of our social service. When members advance these arguments, however, they have no regard to the effect on the published revenue position of the reforms instituted by the Government in the presentation of the public accounts. That is a point members should bear in mind. As members are aware, the Government, by abandoning the unsound practice of charging to loan account, items that should properly have been met from revenue, has been presenting budgets that are an accurate reflex of the actual Treasury position. When the Government took office in 1933, the practice was to credit to revenue the amount of interest due by the Agricultural Bank in excess of the sum actually collected from settlers. Mr. Holmes called attention to that practice at the time. The moneys were taken from a trust fund containing not only settlers' interest payments, but also their repayments of capital, so that the Bank was often left with insufficient funds to make further advances. Money for this purpose had therefore to be obtained from loan funds, and the net result was that loan funds were transferred to revenue. Now, however, the Treasurer receives only the amount of interest actually collected from settlers, the deficiency being made good from revenue.

Mention might be made of other items of expenditure, previously charged to trust accounts or loan that the Treasurer now charges to revenue. For example, money was advanced by the Commonwealth Government to permit of providing settlers with wire netting on long term credit. The practice was to credit the receipts from the sale of wire netting to a trust fund

and to charge the fund with interest and repayments due to the Commonwealth. When the trust fund became overdrawn, the overdraft was made good from loan moneys. Since this practice was discontinued, the whole of the amount due to the Commonwealth has been met from revenue. Examples might be multiplied, but enough has been said to indicate that the book-keeping methods obtaining to-day afford a more accurate picture of the State's financial position than those in vogue when the Government first took office. Members may be surprised to learn, however, that had we followed the old method last year, we would have been able to claim credit for a surplus of £583,000. In other words, the cost of the reforms mentioned amounted to £803,000, equal to the greater part of the receipts from the financial emergency tax.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Did not the Commonwealth Government insist upon those reforms in the keeping of the accounts before it would advance the money?

The HONORARY MINISTER: I believe the Premier has always been keen to make these drastic reforms in the keeping of accounts. The total of £803,000 includes the following items:—

	£
Agricultural Bank and Soldiers' Settlements .. .. .	445,000
Group Settlement .. .. .	260,000
Trading Concerns .. .. .	29,000
Agricultural Land Purchase .. .. .	30,000
Wire netting .. .. .	26,000
Cartage of ore .. .. .	13,000
<b>Total .. .. .</b>	<b>£803,000</b>

I wish to refer briefly to the employment position. The Government is fully seized of the magnitude of the problem of dead-end employment for youths, and with the serious results caused to our young people by unemployment. In Melbourne on the 19th and 20th July a conference of representatives of the Commonwealth and all State Governments was held, and at this conference I represented the Western Australian Government. I was greatly impressed by the obvious sincerity of all the representatives, who fully appreciated the seriousness of the problem, especially in Victoria and New South Wales. If effect can be given by the various Governments to the resolutions passed at the conference, a long step will have been taken towards the solution

of the problem. The resolutions carried read—

Resolution No. 1.—With a view to contributing to the continued employment, as adults, of male persons who enter employment as juniors, the conference affirms the desirability of all competent industrial tribunals considering (and where necessary for this purpose being given power to consider) the fixation of interim maximum ratios of minors to adults, and of females to males, who may be employed; and that the Governments concerned, including the Commonwealth, should take the necessary steps, legislative or otherwise, to implement this resolution.

Resolution No. 2.—The conference recommends that the State Governments take steps to introduce legislation to raise the minimum school leaving age to 15 years by at least three successive steps of four months starting from the 1st July, 1940.

Queensland dissented from this resolution, as it is the intention of that Government to introduce during this session legislation raising the school leaving age to 15 years, but giving the right to Executive Council to proclaim the new Act in districts as required. Industrial centres are to be proclaimed first, bringing the new principle into gradual operation all over the State, as finance permits. It is of course necessary for the proposal to be examined closely by educational experts.

Resolution No. 3.—(This resolution deals only with the Commonwealth, New South Wales and Victoria.)

Resolution No. 4.—The conference recommends that there be established in each State a research organisation with at least one research officer appointed by that State on a full-time basis to attack the problem of employment and unemployment; that the Commonwealth appoint qualified research investigators responsible primarily to the Commonwealth Bureau of Statistics to act in close co-operation with employment research organisations in the States; and that for the purpose of ensuring the continuous collaboration of the Commonwealth and the States in dealing with the problem of employment for young persons this conference should constitute itself as a continuing body to be convened by the Commonwealth, meeting at least twice a year.

Resolution No. 5 provides that the first inquiry shall be to ascertain the extent of dead-end employment of young persons, to suggest remedies, and to ascertain the effect of such remedies on industry. Resolution No. 6 asks that steps be taken to bring about uniformity of legislation on the subject in all the States. Resolution No. 7 asks for the appointment of a competent autho-

rity to inquire into the practicability of adopting a shorter working week, and to make a recommendation. These resolutions are now receiving the consideration of all the Governments.

Suggestions for the improvement of the working conditions of single men have been made during the debate. It is not financially possible to increase the working period to single men; and if sufficient funds were available, repercussions in the country districts would create a grave problem for primary producers. In addition to this, it would be necessary to follow through with increased working periods to married men. This at the present time, for financial reasons, the Government cannot do. The suggestion that single men be allowed to work continuously for a period and then stand down has been tried and proved a failure. In the course of my duties as Assistant Minister I have to meet young men out of employment. I hate the single men's camps with a fervent hatred, and do everything possible to persuade young men from going there. Such a camp is no place for young men to go to. In this effort I have been signally successful. The popular idea that the single men's camps are comprised of very young men is wrong. As a matter of fact, a large number of the men are past middle age, and are quite content with the conditions offering. I ask members to bear in mind that the Government is faced with the task of providing work or sustenance for nearly 8,000 men. The numbers have increased of recent months through pastoral difficulties in the North, which need no stressing, and the low prices of primary products.

In the Lieut.-Governor's Speech reference was made to the marked increase in last year's expenditure on school buildings. Commenting on the added facilities provided by the Government, Mr. Baxter said—

Each and every one of the buildings that have been provided has been built at a very high cost, and it is strange that in every instance these buildings have been erected in districts represented by members of the Government. There is no doubt that this work has been carried out for the purpose of gaining votes at the elections.

A scrutiny of the list of school buildings completed and authorised during the period covered by the Speech discloses how completely reckless and remote from the truth, was the hon. member's statement. In all

cases the only factor that has influenced expenditure on school buildings has been the urgent educational necessity for their provision. Taking the items mentioned in the Speech in their order, I would first mention the new High School at Geraldton. The agitation for the establishment of that institution started in 1916, and although anti-Labour Governments have been in power for five sessions of Parliament since then, it remained for the present Government to authorise the establishment of the school. An opening enrolment of 190 students shows that the Government's action was fully justified. It is interesting to note that high schools established at Northam, Albany and Bunbury by the Mitchell Ministry at approximately the same cost as the Geraldton school, opened with enrolments of 130, 166 and 130 respectively.

The necessity for the provision of post-primary facilities for children living south of the river has been apparent for some years. Owing to the very rapid advance of settlement in this area and the consequent increase in the number of children available for post-primary work, the position became so acute that at the beginning of the year it was found necessary, as a temporary expedient, to establish post-primary classes at the Victoria Park and East Victoria Park schools. The same conditions regarding lack of accommodation applied at the Perth Technical College, the Fremantle Technical School, and the Kalgoorlie School of Mines, and the strong demand for the provision of facilities for training young people for industrial and technical occupations necessitated the erection of a metal work centre at Collic and the School of Mines at Wiluna.

Other school buildings authorised during the period covered by the Governor's Speech are as follows:—

New brick schools—Dulkeith, Corrigin, Mandurah and Narembeen.

New schools—Agnew, Cox's Find, East Popenning, Yallabatharra, Carrabin Springs, Culbin, Pingaring Siding, and Tinkurra.

New class rooms—Bieton, Busselton, Eden Hill, Jitarning, Kwolyin, Palmyra, Queen's Park, Reedy, Rivervale, Scarborough, and Youanmi.

Hon. G. B. Wood: All very small schools.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Members for the South-East Province have again urged that the Government should consider the establishment of a high school at Narro-

gin. Similar representations have been made from time to time since as far back as 1914. The Minister and the Director at the time considered these requests very carefully, and the petitioners on each occasion were told that the number of children available for high school education did not warrant the establishment of a high school at Narrogin. Arrangements, however, were made some years ago for children to take a three years' secondary school course, including French and science, up to the junior certificate standard. Children who pass the "Junior" from this school may complete their secondary education at any country high school, and will receive a living away from home allowance of £24 per annum for the two years. The policy of the department has been that no high school could be established until there was a possibility of about 200 children for the post-primary classes, namely, above class VI., with a possibility of ten proceeding for the fourth and fifth year course. At the present time the enrolment in classes VII., VIII. and IX. at Narrogin totals 95.

Speaking on the Supply Bill, Mr. Cornell said that the inadequate school facilities at Norseman "have been the bugbear of the local people." He added that "at Norseman there are more children under school age than there are at present attending school and there are 380 attending now. Members will recognise the urgent necessity for an adequate school building being constructed." Mr. Williams also referred to the same subject last night. Mr. Cornell is somewhat mistaken in his figures. The enrolment is 291 and the average attendance 253 pupils. When the present additional room now being erected and the proposed alterations are completed, there will be accommodation for 280 pupils on the basis of last quarter's average attendance. This should be adequate to cater for all present requirements. The department is aware that a denominational school is to be erected there shortly. This should further ease the position.

Referring to the building accommodation provided at the Naremben school, Mr. Wood said—"It is not right that country children should be deprived of primary education." The hon. member's observation is scarcely pertinent. The facts show that the enrolment is 98, while the average attendance is 87. At present there are two rooms

affording accommodation for 90 pupils. The department is erecting a brick room, the nucleus of a permanent school, to accommodate 50 more pupils. With regard to the Merredin school, expenditure has been authorised for the raising of the rooms and the conditioning and draining of the grounds.

Reference has been made during the debate to the industrial dispute at Fremantle, in which 250 employees are involved. As there is a compulsory conference sitting to-morrow, I do not wish to say anything that may in any way prejudice a satisfactory settlement. It is easy, of course, to blame the strikers, but those with inside knowledge of the causes of the dispute, marvel that industrial trouble has been so long delayed. The attitude of the employers is hard to understand. This trouble, if commonsense had been exercised, could have been settled in five minutes. The managing director of Mills & Ware's, Ltd.—a comparatively young man—betrayed his inexperience by his conduct during the dispute. Being stiff-necked and arrogant will not achieve a settlement, and there are indications that he is being used as a catspaw by the Executive of the Employers' Federation. The firm of Mills & Ware has established a thriving industry in this State. The quality of the products cannot be expelled by those from the Eastern States or oversea. The firm has been protected very fully by the tariff, and by comparatively high shipping freights from the Eastern States. Neither could success have been achieved without the assistance of the respective Governments, who, by a continuous local products campaign, created the necessary psychology for success. This is the one industry in the State that received the full benefit of the local products campaign begun by the Mitchell Government and carried on by succeeding Governments. No firm or individual in this State owes more to the Government or the public than Mills & Ware, and the principals should realise that they are more than proprietors. They are trustees with duties to fulfil to their employees, and they must not be allowed callously to disregard the future welfare of the young people who happen to be working for them. This view has also been expressed by people who do not belong to the Labour Party. Employers in different parts of Australia

realise that they must be something more than bosses towards their employees.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Are not Mills & Ware's employees already working under an agreement?

The HONORARY MINISTER: They are working under an award.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: I think you will find there are two or three awards there.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Even if Mills & Ware can afford to have the factory closed down, the State cannot afford to have so many people out of employment. The employers must have some regard for the welfare of the State.

Commenting on the manner in which the Transport Act is administered, Mr. Bolton mentioned several cases that seemed to him to indicate that the Minister concerned does not give the same consideration to locally-made as to imported articles. Mr. Bolton made an excellent speech and created a strong impression on members. I propose to deal with some of the statements made by him and what I have to say will throw a different light upon the matters referred to by him. The first case instanced by the hon. member related to the licensing of parlour coaches. He said—

An excellent regulation is one that provides that a parlour coach must have a door on either side of each seat. There are only two coaches in the State that do not conform to this regulation and they were built in South Australia. They were constructed for the contractor to the Tourist Department of this State. Being required for tourist activities, they had to be licensed no matter what regulations happened to be in force.

Continuing, Mr. Bolton said that permission was subsequently sought and refused for the construction of more coaches of a similar nature. He declared that the Traffic Department explained that—"the coaches imported from South Australia were licensed because—well, because they had to be licensed." The parlour coaches referred to by Mr. Bolton are omnibuses licensed to carry up to 14 passengers. I am advised that at the time the Tourist Bureau's parlour coaches were first licensed—April, 1936—the Traffic Regulations did not provide, as Mr. Bolton stated, that "A parlour coach must have a door on either side of each seat." The parlour coaches were built and licensed and were in operation before that regulation was

framed. That takes all the sting out of Mr. Bolton's statement.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: It does not justify their continuing to be run on the roads.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The regulations read—

(j) All doors to open outwards having a fastening device that may quickly be released in case of emergency, but which shall be protected against accidental opening.

(x) All other requisites for the securing of proper cleanliness and due provision for the safety and convenience of passengers shall be provided to the satisfaction of a traffic inspector.

Since the licensing of the vehicles referred to by Mr. Bolton, the regulations have been amended to read—

238. (1) In the case of a single-decked vehicle fitted with a permanent top, or in the case of a lower deck of a double-decked vehicle—

(a) There shall be not less than two means of entrance and exit, which shall be situated on different sides of the vehicle (the front or the back of the vehicle being regarded as the side of the vehicle for this purpose). One of these means of entrance and exit may be restricted to use in case of emergency.

I know that from Mr. Bolton's statements some members concluded that something very wrong had occurred, but I think the explanation I have given removes any impression of that kind.

Then the hon. member said that the Swan Portland Cement Co. had desired to place on the road four vehicles to cart limestone. He continued:—

A regulation provides that the over-all length of a motor truck and trailer must not exceed 33ft. . . . In order that it might be able to carry a payable load the company asked that an additional 3 feet—18 inches on each vehicle—should be permitted in respect of the four it was ordering. The traffic authorities refused the request, and the vehicles had to be constructed according to the regulation. In spite of that, within a few days a vehicle was licensed that was 42 feet overall, that is, 9 feet more than the regulation permitted.

I should like the House to know that the vehicles the company proposed to put on the road were articulated vehicles—that is to say, semi-trailers—and not, as stated by Mr. Bolton, motor trucks and trailers. The agents for the vehicles applied on behalf of the company to license semi-trailers—vehicles that would be 38 feet 8 inches in length and of a gross weight of 22 tons. As these dimensions contravened the Traffic Regulations which provided for a maxi-

imum overall length of 33 feet for articulated vehicles and a maximum gross weight of 12 tons—or ten tons less than the gross weight of the vehicles the Swan Portland Cement Co. wished to place on the road,—the application which was referred to the Minister was disapproved. As to the hon. member's statement that within a few days of the rejection of the company's application a license was issued for a vehicle that was 42 feet overall, such a vehicle was never licensed in the metropolitan area, nor has any application been made by a local authority to the Minister outside that area to issue such a license. So the hon. member made a very bad mistake.

The next case mentioned by Mr. Bolton related to the Fremantle Tramway Company's buses. The company applied to the Transport Board to license its buses with a proposed width of 8 feet, and was referred to the Traffic Department, which refused to issue a license. Thereupon the buses were built to conform to the regulations, which provide for a maximum width of 7 feet 6 inches. It is quite true, of course, that trolley buses are eight feet in width, but as these vehicles are not subject to the regulations made under the Traffic Act, the Department has no jurisdiction in the matter of their dimensions.

With regard to the licensing of a semi-trailer of a width of 8 feet 1 inch the owners, Cadd & Co. Ltd., approached the Police Department for a license. They were told that one could not be granted, but that the matter would be referred to the Minister for Works. The Minister agreed to license the vehicle to be used only in the metropolitan area between Fremantle and Perth, and mainly on the south side of the river. The Commissioner of Police then recommended that the regulation in connection with the width of the vehicles should be repealed. The Minister would not agree to that, but suggested that a regulation be made granting him the power to give permission in special circumstances for the licensing of a vehicle exceeding the prescribed width. This amendment was subsequently gazetted on the 7th July, 1939. Since then permission has been given to an oil company to license three new vehicles at 8 feet which are to be used only in the metropolitan area. The bodies of these vehicles are being built in Perth.

The last case mentioned by Mr. Bolton concerned the importation of some buses from overseas. He said:—

Recently a well-known company imported four buses from England. The company never worried about the traffic regulation. When the buses arrived it was discovered that they were nine feet high from the ground, whereas the regulations provided they must be no more than 8 feet 6 inches. Once again a regulation was put through . . . to permit of these buses being licensed.

The only comment I have to offer on this statement is that the regulations have provided for a maximum height for single decked omnibuses of 9ft. since 1st November, 1935. In this regard the hon. member made another mistake. This has been a rather lengthy explanation. However, I feel that at a time when the Government is making every endeavour to encourage the expansion of secondary industries in this State I could not overlook unfounded statements to the effect that Ministers granted concessions in favour of imported articles. The explanation I have given, I think completely clears up the allegations made by Mr. Bolton. He was certainly responsible for some serious mis-statements, though I do not doubt he was convinced of the truth of his remarks.

Mr. Parker offered strong comment on the administration of the Firearms and Guns Act. He said that the measure had become a farce and that it was administered in an extraordinarily strict manner through the regulations. It is a fact, as the hon. member pointed out, that a person has first to obtain a permit from the Police Department before acquiring a firearm. This is surely a perfectly reasonable provision. If the permit system were not in operation the present control over the unauthorised possessors of firearms would be seriously weakened as many persons acquiring arms would fail to take out a license. Mr. Parker pointed out that firearms may be procured from another State without the knowledge of the Police Department here. Persons doing so run the risk of prosecution if they do not apply for a license. The fact that there is a loophole for evasion is no reason why we should relax the present precautions that are taken to prevent arms and ammunition falling into the hands of undesirable persons. The hon. member stated that a person from the country visiting Perth, and taking a fancy to a gun on display in some shop could not afford to purchase "because he has first to get a permit from the police-



man in the place where he resides, and further, because the permit under the regulations is good for only 24 hours." Under ordinary conditions it is reasonable, I submit, to request a person to obtain his permit at the nearest police station. However, that rule is not strictly enforced where it would result in undue inconvenience.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Yet the Minister is introducing new regulations.

The HONORARY MINISTER: As to the regulation requiring the acquisition of the weapon within 24 hours of the time of issue of the permit, I am informed the department has for some time realised the impracticability of its enforcement.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: The department still enforces it.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The department says it does not.

Hon. J. Cornell: It is like starting-price betting.

The HONORARY MINISTER: This regulation was amended recently, but owing to a technical error in the amendment, is being further recast. The proposed amendment will make provision for a person to obtain a permit to complete the purchase of a firearm within a time stipulated on the permit instead of within a period of 24 hours. That should meet the hon. member's objection.

Hon. E. H. Angelo: So you are taking notice of what the hon. member said and are amending the regulations?

The HONORARY MINISTER: I take the view that all constructive criticism is good, and we are only too pleased to give effect to suggestions that are helpful. Mr. Parker chose a rather extreme case when he instanced the operation of the regulations in relation to a passenger from a mail boat who might wish to buy ammunition in Western Australia. Neither the Act nor any of the regulations makes provision for the supply of ammunition to persons not licensed to possess a firearm, except in the case of exempted persons or those acting as agent for a licensee.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: "Firearm" includes ammunition under the Act.

The HONORARY MINISTER: One would need to have a license to obtain ammunition.

Hon. E. H. Angelo: Nobody observes these restrictions just now.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I understand that cartridges for clay pigeon shooting on shipboard are always procurable on the boats.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Why cannot we trade as well?

The HONORARY MINISTER: Provision for the contingency mentioned by the hon. member would be a remarkable example of the type of "hard-luck" legislation he has so frequently deplored in this House. With regard to a certain incident that happened in Fremantle, Mr. Parker said:—

A man with a gun goes to register and the gun is confiscated . . . In one instance a man who had a .22 rifle in his house went away for a trip and upon his return found the rifle was gone. He subsequently recovered his rifle at Fremantle, but the police would not give him a license and would not register his gun, because, they said, they did not know what had been done with it in the meantime.

I submitted the hon. member's statement to the Commissioner of Police who advised me that a firearm can be confiscated only by order of the Court.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: I said they would not license it and that they also took it.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The Commissioner of Police went on to say:—

The facts of the Fremantle episode are that: The rifle was reported stolen. The owner subsequently produced it and admitted it had been in other hands. The licensing of the rifle was held up pending inquiry. The owner could have been prosecuted on two counts, but no action was taken.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Why; because he applied for a license? As soon as he complied with the law, he was prosecuted.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Mr. Parker had a good deal to say about starting-price betting. He made statements that sounded very nasty.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Quite right, too.

The HONORARY MINISTER: They constituted a serious reflection upon the administration. The hon. member said—

We know that if such laws are only partly enforced Ministers and their officers have only themselves to blame if remarks of a personal nature are hurled against them. We all know that there are starting-price betting shops that are never raided and never charged, though carrying on quite openly.

I do not propose to offer any comment on the hon. member's statement beyond mentioning that I submitted his remarks to the Commissioner of Police, who furnished me

with the following report made by the officer in charge of the branch engaged in the suppression of betting houses:—

As sergeant in charge of the staff whose duty it is to attend to this work, and, having had many years' experience of the subject, I can say without fear of contradiction that no betting houses are being openly carried on that have not been raided or charged, particularly during the past six months.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Let the officer look at some of the premises near the Norwood Hotel.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The report continues—

It is well known in official circles, of course, that the more openly betting premises are carried on the easier is it to obtain the necessary evidence. There are, however, several starting-price premises that are carried on by credit betting, correspondence, and an approved clientele, and their business is conducted in such a quiet manner that no ordinary person about town would know that they were betting houses.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: I was speaking of the "open slather."

The HONORARY MINISTER: The officer in charge of the branch in question denies the statements of the hon. member.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Did the Commissioner tell him what he told me?

The HONORARY MINISTER: The hon. member should not make an interjection of that character. The report continues:—

In connection with the latter class, every endeavour has been made to obtain the necessary evidence against them. A few months ago we obtained by correspondence, from as far away as the Bannister, the necessary evidence against three out of four offenders, with the result that they were convicted after being ably defended by counsel. So careful was the fourth suspect that he returned the postal notes to the sender and did not accept the bet. The fact that certain names appear on certain premises is no guide to-day as to who is the actual occupier. This often leads people erroneously to think that the premises have not received attention from the Police. Then again it is most difficult in many cases to establish who is the real occupier. To give some idea of the difficulties in this connection, I would refer you to the case of —, Highgate Hill, which has been reported on. To add to our trouble on this point, the Commonwealth departments refuse to assist by supplying any information that would disclose who is paying for the telephones on the premises in question. The police are making every effort to cope with the problem that the law allows. It will be noted that recently there have been several dismissals of some assistants and users on what appeared to

me to be a weak defence. I mention this to show that it is not a simple matter to present a water-tight case to the Court. Some idea of the activities of the police against betting houses will be obtained from the report I submitted, showing that for the year ended the 30th June, 1939, the penalties imposed on those connected with starting-price premises aggregated £21,000 with £600 costs. This was achieved by the efforts of the members of this branch.

Hon. J. Cornell: In no case do you catch the real culprits. You ought to amend the law.

The HONORARY MINISTER: It is difficult to catch the actual culprit.

Hon. J. Cornell: If you amended the law as Forgan Smith did, you would catch him quickly enough.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Caustic criticism of the sale of town lots on the goldfields was made by one or two members. Referring to this question Mr. Seddon mentioned that very high prices were being paid by people who were purely speculators in the land, whereas he considered it was the desire of the Government and Parliament that the blocks should be available to the people requiring them at as reasonable a price as practicable. The hon. member, as well as Mr. Williams, suggested that people would get a better deal if the blocks were balloted for. As members are aware, provision is made under the Land Act for the sale by public auction of town and suburban lands, though they may be leased on such terms as the Governor may think fit.

Hon. J. Cornell: The real object of the absurd prices that were paid for land was to keep out the legitimate man. I refer to the prices given by agents of jerry-builders.

The HONORARY MINISTER: These lots are auctioned under two different conditions:—(1) with the right to the freehold; (2) with the right to a lease for 99 years only. In the case of leases, the amount of the bid over the upset price has to be paid in cash before the lease issues. In all instances where leasehold tenure is taken, the purchaser must build within six months, and cannot transfer the land until a building is erected. Contrary to the statements of Mr. Seddon, I am advised it is the department's experience that this condition has been effective. If it has not entirely eliminated speculation, it has considerably reduced it, particularly where land agents are concerned. In the last six months, 71 lots have

been sold, without the right to the freehold, at an average price of £24. The average premium was £11. This does not appear to be excessive, considering the genuine demand for land in Kalgoorlie and Boulder.

Hon. J. Cornell: No less than £105 was paid for one block practically out in the bush, at the back of Half-Way, and more than half a mile from the post office.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The department states that the hon. member's reference to the high prices being paid by speculators probably refers to the sale last month of a block of land recently released by the Mines Department, and cut up for sale. The other portion of the reserve had been allotted by a land board some time ago to various applicants on payment of a premium in each case of £12 10s., and an annual rental of ten shillings. Values have been rising since then. The department's experience showed that land in this locality was valuable; and, in accordance with the usual practice in such cases, the lots in the balance of the reserve were sold by auction with the right to the freehold. No doubt there was a genuine demand for the land.

Hon. J. Cornell: Could a man be forced to build on leasehold land?

The HONORARY MINISTER: The department's experience in regard to speculation is that it is most rife where the speculator has obtained the land at a low figure, and not where he has been forced by genuine demand to pay the full value. Numbers of lots are available for sale in both Kalgoorlie and Boulder. Usually these are put up to auction when applied for, but at the usual monthly auction next month it is intended to put up a number that have not been applied for. An application has been received to make blocks available by ballot, by which the department presumes is meant the previous method of allotment by a land board. This application is at present receiving consideration, but no decision has yet been arrived at.

The Government's policy in regard to certain land at Rocky Gully in the Frankland River district was criticised by Mr. Witteboom. The hon. member stated that the land had not been cared for and was in fact "reverting to nature." He said that one reason why people had not taken it up was because it could only be procured under lease. He suggested therefore, that it

should be placed on the market for sale at reasonable terms. The work of clearing and fencing the land referred to by Mr. Witteboom was commenced in 1932 under the Mitchell Government and terminated in June 1934. At that time, of course, hundreds of improved farms were vacant in the South-West, for which genuine settlers could not be secured. Over the period during which improvements were carried out the department incurred an expenditure of £63,930, yet in October, 1934, a valuation made by a senior staff surveyor showed that these improvements were worth only £10,312. In August of the following year the locations were made available for selection at prices ranging from 9s. 10d. to 45s. 11d. per acre, inclusive of improvements and the purchase money, which included interest on the improvements, was payable over a period of 30 years. It was expressly provided that selectors would be required to maintain the existing improvements. The improvements consisted mainly of part clearing and fencing.

Hon. L. Craig: That means nothing.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Only one block was selected under conditional purchase conditions.

Hon. L. Craig: The value of the improvements had gone.

The HONORARY MINISTER: In September, 1936, portion of the area was made available in three sections for leasing for grazing purposes, subject to the following conditions:—

- (a) The leases to be for a period of 10 years;
- (b) That the successful applicant shall be required to topdress annually all land sown to pasture with a minimum of 60 lbs. of super to the acre;
- (c) All suckers on cleared and partly cleared land to be destroyed, and this land kept free from suckers and seedlings during the term of the lease;
- (d) That any timber felled and not burned shall be cleared up by the lessee;
- (e) That any fencing erected by the lessee may be removed at the termination of the lease;
- (f) That no rent be payable during the first three years of the lease, and after that a rental as fixed by the department shall be paid for the remaining seven years of the lease;
- (g) That each lessee shall deposit a sum of £10 with the department, such sum to be forfeited if the foregoing work is not carried out to the satisfaction of the Minister.

Only one area, however, was selected. The lease was cancelled a few months ago for non-compliance with the conditions. Representations were recently made to the Minister for Lands concerning the encouragement of settlement in this area. No decision has yet been made in the matter, but the Minister informs me that he hopes at an early opportunity to visit the district with officers of the department, after which the position should be clarified.

Mr. Tuckey drew attention to the extent of poison land in the Upper Blackwood district and suggested that the area should be reclassified by the Department of Lands and Surveys. The provisions of the Land Act are such that applications for review may be made by persons who consider the price charged for land held under C.P. contracts is excessive because of the presence of poison. Each case is investigated by the department, and a decision reached according to the merits of the claim.

In dealing with these applications, the department takes into consideration such matters as the date of selection, the nature of the land carrying poison, cost of eradication of poison, productivity or carrying capacity, and so on. I am advised by the department that if any C.P. selectors in the area referred to desire a revision of the Crown price, it will be necessary for them to submit an application to the Under Secretary for Lands setting out, in full detail, the evidence upon which they base their claims for reduction, with particulars as to the actual locality and extent of poison on each block. Careful consideration will be given, of course, to any such applications. The department points out that in arriving at the original prices for land selected under C.P. conditions, allowance was made for the existence of poison as disclosed by the classifications. In a number of instances in the Upper Blackwood district further reductions have been granted where evidence has been adduced to show that the poison was a more serious detriment than appeared from the evidence available at the time when the original price was fixed.

One of the hardy annuals during the Address-in-reply debates is adverse references to the railway refreshment rooms.

Hon. J. Cornell: The customers require to be hardy.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Mr. Fraser, for example, suggested that the

department should take over the dining car services from the contractor, while Mr. Piesse scathingly commented on the Perth refreshment room. Replying to Mr. Fraser, the department states—

For a period of nearly 20 years, all dining car and buffet rail services were run by the department. From the inception of refreshment services, rooms and stalls have been leased. Even under departmental control it was not found possible to please all patrons, and complaints from the public filtered through from time to time, even as they do to-day.

Hon. W. J. Mann: No one at all is pleased nowadays.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The departmental reply continues—

Western Australia is not so favourably circumstanced as the Eastern States in so far as density of population is concerned, and the department considers that the present policy of leasing premises is the most satisfactory under existing conditions.

Hon. J. Cornell: The most popular dining room in Australia is a railway refreshment room—but it is not in Perth.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I think the argument advanced by the department is sound. Mr. Cornell would not require a station like that erected at Adelaide. A refreshment room there must of necessity be very attractive to make it pay.

Hon. J. Cornell: One requires a stomach like that of a horse if he enters the refreshment room on the Perth railway station.

The HONORARY MINISTER: With regard to Mr. Piesse's criticism, it is rather difficult to draw a comparison between the Adelaide refreshment room and the Western Australian services. The Adelaide station is a comparatively new building and, moreover, with heavy passenger traffic from and to Melbourne daily and three trains weekly from and to the West, ideal conditions obtain for the successful operation of a refreshment service at such a busy centre. I regard that as a sound argument, and really a statement of fact. The sweeping assertions made by Mr. Piesse regarding the refreshment room at Perth are not very helpful to the department. If complaints were brought under notice of the railway staff at the station immediately, corrective measures could be applied, but to ventilate the matter in Parliament some months later admits of little opportunity to investigate conditions

that may have called for improvement at the time. Fortunately, all travellers do not have the unhappy experiences detailed by hon. members, as appreciative references to the refreshment services of the W.A.G.R. have been received from time to time from seasoned travellers, whose journeys have not been confined to the railways of the Commonwealth.

Hon. J. Cornell: They would require to be seasoned travellers indeed.

The HONORARY MINISTER: At any rate, they would be experienced travellers. That statement indicates that everyone does not growl. Mr. Wittenoom referred to the lack of refreshment facilities on the Great Southern line. At one time sit-down meals were available at the Mt. Barker refreshment room, which was very attractive, but, owing to lack of patronage, the lessee was compelled to resort to the supplying of light refreshments only. This also proved unremunerative, and the lease was surrendered. As no other tenant could be induced to take over the business, the department had no option but to close the room.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Very decent meals were served there years ago.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Yes; the refreshment room was excellent, but the business was not profitable to the lessee. The Wagin refreshment room was affected by the change over to the Diesel-electric services, and, despite an offer of 25 per cent. reduction in rent, the lessee at that centre elected to terminate his connection with the department.

Hon. J. Cornell: Would it not be preferable to permit someone to conduct the premises free of charge rather than allow the refreshment room to remain idle?

The HONORARY MINISTER: Evidently the lessee did not make a counter offer. Regarding Mr. Wittenoom's request for an accelerated train service between Perth and Albany, I am advised that the traffic is not available to warrant a daily express train between those two points. However, each week one fast train is run in each direction. While motor car speed is not possible of attainment with the existing railway rolling stock and track, the 19 hours for the journey quoted by the hon. member is by no means correct. Monday's train from Perth completes the journey in 17½ hours, and Saturday's train

in 16½ hours, while the Friday service lowers the travelling time to 15½ hours. When it is found necessary to substitute a steam train for a Diesel-electric rail car, the latter's schedule is closely adhered to by imposing severe limits on the loading and curtailing of stops for refreshments.

Commenting on the existing railway facilities on the Goldfields, Mr. Seddon said that it was time we had "a transport service there more in accordance with modern ideas." The hon. member contended that a system of transport that would provide the people of the Goldfields with the daily paper on the day it was printed, and which would deliver vegetables in a reasonably fresh state, would also secure a large increase in traffic. He said—

At present it took nine or eleven hours to deliver vegetables by rail to Leonora or Laverton, whereas if a motor truck were employed, they could be delivered in four, and five and a half hours respectively.

The comparison made by Mr. Seddon is scarcely fair. Leonora is 161 miles from Kalgoorlie and Laverton 211 miles, thus a motor truck would require to average 40 miles an hour to make the times he suggested. The roads would need to be excellent to attempt such speed, and it would be rather hard to reconcile such a speed with the conditions of the Traffic Act, which prescribe limits of 15 to 30 miles per hour, according to the class of vehicle. In any event, for a motor vehicle to run non-stop between Kalgoorlie and Leonora or Laverton is a totally different proposition from that of a train that has to cater for the requirements of from 17 to 23 intermediate settlements. The Commissioner of Railways advises that vegetables sold in Perth, say, on Monday morning may be consigned any time the same afternoon for delivery at Kalgoorlie, 375 miles away, the following morning. This speedy transit is made possible by utilising the express trains running between the city and the goldfields, but, with the limited traffic offering for centres beyond Kalgoorlie, combined goods and passenger services must necessarily operate until sufficient business is forthcoming to make special passenger and perishable services practicable. The Commissioner adds that the conversion of motor trucks to enable them to be run on railway lines, as suggested by Mr. Seddon, is by no means a complete answer to this transport problem. The department has a vehicle so

equipped at Port Hedland, and, apart from mechanical troubles, it has proved totally inadequate to handle the perishable traffic, not to mention passengers.

Hon. G. W. Miles: A proper trial with perishable traffic is not allowed.

The HONORARY MINISTER: But the department claims the vehicle at Port Hedland is totally inadequate.

Hon. G. W. Miles: It has never been tried out. The department will not give us a decent service. The vehicle is shut up in a shed, and the people are starved for fresh vegetables.

The HONORARY MINISTER: According to the Commissioner of Railways, the vehicle has been tried out.

Hon. G. W. Miles: It is about time the department was told to keep the truck running.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The Commissioner points out that the vehicle at Port Hedland has proved totally inadequate to handle the perishable traffic, not to mention passengers en route to Marble Bar, and that district cannot be compared with Laverton and Leonora from the standpoint of population.

Hon. J. Cornell: It is one of the worst sections of railway service in the world.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The Commissioner points out that the Diesel-electric rail car has proved highly efficient. He considers that type of unit offers greater possibilities than expedients in the shape of converted motor vehicles. The Minister for Railways has informed me that the question of additions to the present fleet of six Diesel-electric rail cars is now under consideration, and when new routes are being examined the claims of Laverton, Leonora and the Esperance lines will not be overlooked.

Hon. J. Cornell: That, of course, concerns the Minister himself.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Mr. Mann drew attention to the need for increased harbour facilities in the South-West, and commented on what he termed "the extraordinary lack of sympathy" shown by the Railway Department, which is responsible for the Busselton jetty. He stated that portion of the jetty was lighted by the municipality, but that the end of the jetty was unlit. He said:—

The fact that four seamen have lost their lives there in recent years does not seem to concern the department at all.

I referred the hon. member's remarks to the department which now advises me as follows:—

The fact that seamen have been found drowned at Busselton cannot directly be attributed to the absence of lighting.

Surely Mr. Mann will agree with that contention.

Hon. W. J. Mann: They were lost at night time.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The departmental reply continues:—

The jetty is provided primarily to facilitate loading and unloading operations of vessels berthed at the port, and when work is extended beyond nightfall, ample illumination in the vicinity of the ship is provided by the vessel's own system. Therefore, for all practical purposes, additional lighting is not required.

Hon. W. J. Mann: That is quite wrong.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Further, the department reports:—

The capital cost of the structure, which is approximately  $1\frac{1}{4}$  miles in length, represents a considerable amount, while interest charges and maintenance costs aggregate a fairly substantial sum annually, and to sanction further heavy expenditure in lighting this lengthy structure is a step that, in view of the present state of the railway revenue at this port, cannot be lightly undertaken. Should, however, the business at Busselton show any appreciable increase, the matter of lighting the jetty will be given further consideration.

Members will agree with Mr. Hamersley and Mr. Macfarlane that there is urgent need for action to improve the quality of cream produced in the wheat areas. During last year an astounding increase was recorded in the production of butter in Victoria and Queensland. The whole of this increase has to be exported and sold on the British market. Whenever the quantity of export butter to be marketed approaches a point at which its sale must be pushed in Great Britain, there is a tendency for butter of higher quality to be sold more easily than lower grades, and at an enhanced price. The Commonwealth Department of Commerce has been warned that increased production in the Commonwealth will probably mean the placing of a quota on Australian butter for sale in Britain, and undoubtedly the policy, in enforcing such quota, would be to restrict the export of lower grades. The result of this would be that the lower grades of butter would have to be sold in Australia at the expense of the consumer and at low prices. This also would tend to reduce con-

sumption and thereby seriously affect the returns of the dairy farmer. In preparation for the imposition of a restriction on exports, the Commonwealth Department of Commerce last year stated that its policy was gradually to eliminate from export, if possible, the lowest grades of butter, and to commence by prescribing that the export of butter of a grade lower than 83 points should be prohibited. Fortunately, only a small quantity of such butter has been manufactured in this State. It is the stated policy of the Department of Commerce to raise the quality of export butter to at least 84-point butter.

A considerable quantity of the cream produced in the wheat areas is inferior in quality, so inferior as to be unfit for the manufacture of butter for export. This is due partly to the natural conditions under which the cream is produced, but more particularly to carelessness or lack of knowledge of the farmers.

Hon. J. Cornell: Or to transport.

The HONORARY MINISTER: During the past two years a farm-to-farm inspection has been carried out in the dairy districts; and the Department of Agriculture is insisting that wherever cows are milked for the production of cream, even in small quantities, the farmers must comply with minimum requirements regarding their premises. These are as follows: Concrete floor to milking bails, adequate drainage, a properly constructed dairy in which to store cream, and means of supplying boiling water at the dairy for the washing of utensils. It is considered that such requirements should be insisted upon in the Great Southern and wheat belt areas; and the Department of Agriculture is accordingly taking the necessary steps.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: The department is too late for this season.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The difficulty in effecting improvement in the quality of this cream is aggravated, to some extent, by the fact that some factories are misleading the farmer as to its true quality, by calling it cream of a higher grade than it is, and paying for it as such. This low quality cream is then mixed with the better products. Thus, by penalising the good producer, a butter of catable quality is manufactured which, nevertheless, is inferior to that which would have been manufactured had the use of the inferior cream been ex-

cluded. Good cream can be and is being produced on many wheat belt and Great Southern properties; and it is unfair that careful producers should be so penalised.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: Some of the farmers are ignorant, and my contention is that the duty of the department is to instruct them.

The HONORARY MINISTER: To remedy this position, frequent check grading at the factories is necessary. This should be followed up by an interview with the supplier of the inferior cream with the object of rendering him assistance and advice to correct defects. The department states that, as a rule, such advice is accepted by farmers, with good results. The department takes the view that if farmers refuse to accept advice and persist in supplying inferior cream, they should not be permitted to endanger the quality of butter made from other supplies.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: I agree, but that is not the actual position.

The HONORARY MINISTER: To carry out this educational work, the department will require at least four additional officers.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: What would be the cost?

The HONORARY MINISTER: About £2,000. As dairy farmers have received, and are still receiving, great assistance from all consumers, by reason of an Australian price, which has been fixed at a profitable level by the help of Commonwealth legislation, producers should be prepared to share in the cost of this work. If the Government is to furnish the whole of such increased funds then the taxpayers will be obliged to contribute still further to the assistance of this industry. Furthermore, the Government has made available considerable sums for a bull subsidy scheme, pure breeds herd recording and the grade herd testing of cows, experimental work, and the provision of education and technical advice to farmers. These sums are believed to be greater, in proportion to the size of the industry, than those provided for other agricultural activities. Moreover, the per capita consumption of dairy products in each State varies directly with the average quality of the product, so it may be inferred that the improvement in the quality of dairy produce in Western Australia will similarly lead to increased consumption.

If the local production of butter per head were raised to the Australian standard, then approximately half the quantity of butter now exported to Great Britain at considerable loss would be consumed locally, and this would result in a saving to producers of at least 1d. per lb. on butter fat. The producers' share of the cost of providing further educational facilities should not be more than one-twentieth of a penny per lb. for butter fat. This would probably result in a twenty-fold increase. Here I may mention that the Minister for Agriculture is at present considering a proposal which, if decided on, will enable the Department of Agriculture to employ additional dairy inspectors.

Members: Hear, hear!

The HONORARY MINISTER: With regard to Mr. Tuckey's references to contagious abortion, I am advised that the Department of Agriculture fully realises the dangers of this disease in dairy herds and the difficulty experienced in its control. The disease is of world-wide incidence, yet no country has been able to adopt measures of control which are economically sound. The cost of such methods would be fabulous, and would considerably outweigh the wastage caused by the disease. Control of contagious abortion depends solely upon the detection of infected animals. This can only be done by collecting a sample of the blood of each cow and subjecting it to a laboratory test, which would be an enormous and costly task. The sequel would be the destruction of each reacting animal; the greater number of the animals would be immune and producing to full capacity.

Hon. H. Tuckey: But when farmers know their herds are infected, would it not be well to prevent sales of cows for dairying purposes?

The HONORARY MINISTER: Immunity to contagious abortion usually takes place after the first or second abortion. Although becoming normal in all other respects, these cows are still capable of transmitting the disease. This fact is admitted by one of the dairymen mentioned by Mr. Tuckey who, for economic reasons, decided not to destroy reactors. The only alternative is that advocated by the department, namely, control by individual effort. Encouragement is given to owners

to eliminate this disease by testing their herds and destroying reactors. If the disease cannot be eradicated by this method, then the department recommends that the herd as a whole be allowed to become immune.

While the prevention of the sale of untested and infected cows is not possible, it would not be reasonable to prevent the sale of tested and infected cows. However, in the latter case, where possible, destruction is ordered. Sabina Vale is a depot for the distribution of dairy cows. Persons purchasing cattle from that depot would run the same risk as when buying at a sale, or privately from any stock-breeder in any part of the State.

In moving the adoption of the Address-in-reply, Mr. Fraser suggested that the Government should give consideration to the question of eliminating court fees on estates up to £200 in value. I have referred this matter to the Minister for Justice who advises me as follows:—

Court fees payable on personal applications under £200 average about £2, including the personal application fee of £1. Commissioners' fees for swearing affidavits, etc., range from 6s. to about 15s. per application, according to the number of documents involved. In any event it is difficult to see how these latter fees could be eliminated. Stamp duty paid to the Treasury (10s. on bonds over £100) in all applications for administration, and cost of forms (4s. 6d. for a full set), are further matters for consideration. It should be borne in mind that not infrequently personal applications in small estates are made not by widows or impoverished persons, but by persons in comparatively good circumstances.

The practice in the past has been for necessitous persons applying for a grant and unable to pay the court fees to apply to the Minister for a remission of the fees. Several such remissions have been allowed in recent years.

During the debate, Mr. E. H. H. Hall pointed out that when a widow or next-of-kin wishes to obtain probate or letters of administration in a small estate, the applicant must apply personally at the Probate Office. This provision, he said, placed poor people living in the country at a particular disadvantage, and he therefore suggested that the Act be amended to enable applications to be made by post, or alternatively that district agents should be appointed. The Minister for Justice advises me that it would be both inadvisable and impracticable



to allow applications to be made by post. He states—

There would in such case be a grave risk of fraud or imposture taking place, or of a grant being made in favour of a person not entitled thereto. Again, it would generally be impossible to deal satisfactorily with applicants, as in most cases the personal attendance on the applicant of an experienced officer is essential in order to have the necessary papers properly prepared and completed.

In dealing with some applications serious difficulties and delays would be unavoidable, and in any event it would be necessary to appoint an officer specially to attend to applications by post.

Dealing with the appointment of district agents, the Minister comments as follows:—

If district agents were appointed, a good deal of extra work would devolve on the Probate Office and on the typists, necessitating increase of staff and also of accommodation, which at present is cramped. At best, a district agent could only be expected to prepare a fairly simple application, and the more difficult applications would be prepared at the Probate Office on the information forwarded by the agent. There would naturally be a good deal of correspondence with district agents, whom it would be necessary to guide and assist.

In the main, members have refrained from treating the plight of the wheat and wool industries as a political issue. There has accordingly been a number of thoughtful contributions to the debate on this most vital subject, all of which have served to emphasise the difficulties that must attend our efforts to render adequate assistance to these two staple industries. With regard to the wheat industry, events in the conference chamber during the last few weeks have not brought collaboration between the Commonwealth and the States any closer; and the position to-day is that the whole question of stabilising the industry is in a state of flux. All that it is possible to say at this juncture is that the Government is prepared to give the industry all the support it legitimately can, having regard to its responsibilities in other directions.

During the course of the debate, Mr. Hamersley said—

The various Governments throughout Australia seem almost to have shut their eyes to the dreadful conditions under which farmers and pastoralists are labouring.

So far as our Government is concerned, I think that its actions have shown a full recognition of the conditions to which the hon. member referred. It is true that, be-

cause of the impossibility of anticipating future international trends in world trade, the Government has not attempted to formulate a long-range policy in respect to primary production. At the same time, however, it should be recognised that the Government has all along had regard to the fundamental difficulties of the man on the land. In this connection, I instance the amendment of the Agricultural Bank Act, which, for the first time, provided authority for the writing down of farmers' debts to the State; the reduction in the capitalisation of group holdings; the reclassification and revaluation of lands in the marginal areas; the revaluation of various repurchased estates; and the deferment, capitalisation, and suspension of arrears in respect of repurchased estates.

In the marginal areas the Government, through the Agricultural Bank, has been active in transferring settlers, thus reducing the acreage sown to wheat and assisting settlers to engage in mixed farming. Wherever it has been possible to stock the areas with sheep or cattle, every encouragement has been given to settlers to change over from wheat. The examples I have given of the Government's practical sympathy for the agriculturist could be multiplied indefinitely. Turning now to the pastoral industry, I think members will admit that the Government has rendered valuable assistance to woolgrowers during a period of grave difficulty. Pastoralists, for example, have had the benefit of the rents relief policy of the Government; and here I may mention that for the period ended December last, rents waived will probably amount to not less than £200,000. Moreover, substantial rebates have been made in the rates of transport of fodder and material, while sheep have been returned from agistment by rail free of cost.

Regarding the electoral law, Mr. Piesse and several other members suggested it should be amended to provide against the acceptance of the nomination of a person for parliamentary election, where such a person is in some way disqualified from taking his seat. I referred these suggestions to the Minister for Justice, who advises me as follows:—

Whatever amendment of the Act was prescribed, it could have no effect on the nomination, as there would have to be some inquiry and perhaps a trial to ascertain whether or not a candidate was disqualified. Against

any decision of a returning officer or a court, there might be some appeal, and the outcome would be a postponement of the election until a final decision was obtained.

The wording of the nomination paper (form 22 in the electoral regulations) could be amended by adding after the word "qualified" in the form the words "and not in any way disqualified"; and Section 188 might be amended by making it an offence for any person to nominate as a candidate for an election who is disqualified in the terms of Section 31 of the Constitution Act Amendment Act (63 Vic., No. 19). The penalty might be either a monetary one in a large sum, or else imprisonment.

Mr. Macfarlane expressed disappointment at the long delay in the provision of a new South Perth ferry. This, he said, was because the work of completing and altering the plan of the vessel from a double-ender to a single-ender had not been completed. The General Manager of the Tramways, Ferries and Electricity Supply advises me that the delay was not occasioned by the preparation of drawings of the vessel, but by the time taken for the return of tenders for the propelling machinery; and tenders had to be re-called both in England and locally.

With regard to the department's decision to discontinue the provision of an additional step on tramcars, the General Manager states that the cost of altering the vehicles to provide for three steps could not be justified in view of the financial position of the tramways. He points out that the alteration involves not merely the addition of another step, but the remodelling of the whole of the front platform of each tram. This, of course, would be an expensive modification.

I thank hon. members for the patient hearing they have given me. I am glad to report that the Chief Secretary is rapidly regaining his health. It has been a pleasure for me to fill his place, and I take the opportunity of thanking members for the very courteous treatment they have extended to me during his absence.

I have also an apology to make. I understand that Mr. Holmes wished to speak on the Address-in-reply; it was quite unintentional on my part that he did not get an opportunity to do so.

Question put and passed; the Address adopted.

On motion by the Honorary Minister resolved: That the Address be presented to

His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor by the President and such members as may desire to accompany him.

## ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

**THE HONORARY MINISTER** (Hon. E. H. Gray—West) [6.22]: I move —

That the House at its rising adjourn till Tuesday, the 12th September.

Question put and passed.

*House adjourned at 6.22 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly.

*Thursday, 31st August, 1939.*

	PAGE
Questions: Relief workers—1, Opportunities for training; 2, Settlement in the Kimberleys ....	475-6
Leave of absence .....	476
Address-in-reply, presentation .....	476
Bills: Geraldton Harbour Railway Extension, 2A., Com., report .....	476
Rights in Water and Irrigation Act Amendment, 2A., .....	477
Life Assurance Companies Act Amendment, 2A., .....	480
Swan River Improvement Act Amendment, 2A., .....	484
Contraceptives, 2A., .....	486

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

## QUESTIONS (2)—RELIEF WORKERS.

### *Opportunities for Training.*

Mr. SAMPSON asked the Minister for Labour: As the Address-in-reply debate has ended and no reply has been given to different suggestions put forward, will he now give consideration to and make a statement regarding the proposal submitted by me on Wednesday, the 16th August? The proposal referred to received favourable comment in a sub-leader which appeared in the "West