

considerably increased by the end of the month, when the annual tax of £2 15s. will become due. Many dogs have been disposed of by the Animal Welfare League and by private veterinary surgeons in addition to the foregoing.

Queensland.—The Emerald Shire Council last month decided to impose a registration fee of £3 5s. on Alsatian dogs. Any dog not registered is to be destroyed and the owner prosecuted.

We are not asking for anything more drastic than is found in the other States, with the exception of South Australia. If the same precautions were taken in South Australia, we would have no need to worry. No great hardship is entailed by this Bill, which means that lovers of Alsations will have to leave them until they reach the age of three months before they bring them into Western Australia. That is the only extra hardship we are imposing upon people. It is vitally necessary for sheep owners that a measure of this kind should be passed. Mr. Holmes suggested that we should exclude these dogs altogether. I would like to see that done, but think it might be a little too drastic. I trust I have said enough to convince members of the desirability of passing the measure. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by the Chief Secretary, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 6.12 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 29th September, 1938.

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

### QUESTION—RAILWAYS.

*Institute for Collie.*

Mr. WILSON asked the Minister for Railways: 1, What is the position in regard to the proposed construction of a railway institute at Collie? 2, Can he state the probable date when the building of the institute will be proceeded with?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, The matter is being considered in connection with the loan proposals for the current year. 2, No.

### QUESTION—NORTH-WEST CATTLE.

*Transport to Goldfields: Precautions.*

Mr. BOYLE asked the Minister for Agriculture: 1, Is he aware that North-West cattle, consigned to the goldfields and being sent through Merredin on the hoof by train, are detained at Merredin into stock yards used by other stock, and watered there, before resuming the journey to the goldfields? 2, In view of the public danger resultant from this practice, will he order that these cattle be slaughtered at port of entry and conveyed to their ultimate destination on hooks?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE replied: 1, Cattle are allowed to be unloaded only under special circumstances, such as when they are sick or get down. Loading is then permitted under the supervision of a health inspector or police officer at any station where facilities are available. 2, Under the conditions set out, the Chief Inspector of Stock advises there is no risk of infection spreading locally.

**QUESTION—MILK AS FOOD.***Medical Officers' Opinions.*

Mr. SLEEMAN asked the Minister for Health: 1, Has his attention been drawn to an article in the "West Australian" of Monday, the 26th September, entitled "Milk as a food"? 2, If so, will he advise the House of his medical officers' opinions on the article?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH replied: 1, Yes. 2, The Commissioner of Public Health states that the facts set out in the article are substantially correct, but since the introduction of more hygienic methods of milk handling and pasteurisation the dangers mentioned in the article have been markedly reduced in all countries. A detailed discussion of the questions raised in the article would necessitate a report of considerable length which cannot be supplied without longer notice. Some of the statements are still controversial.

**QUESTION—ELECTRICITY SUPPLY.***Extension to Riverton.*

Mr. CROSS asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Has a request been made to extend electricity supplies to Riverton, including Riley-road? 2, Has an estimate of the proposed extension been prepared? 3, If so, what is the estimated cost? 4, Will he give consideration to making the Riverton extension.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, Yes. 2, Yes. 3, £580. 4, This proposition will be considered in conjunction with other proposals in hand.

**ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1938-39.***In Committee of Supply.*

Resumed from the 27th September. Mr. Sleeman in the Chair.

*Vote—Agriculture, £110,100:*

**HON. P. D. FERGUSON** (Irwin-Moore) [4.36]: The Estimates of the Department of Agriculture show an increase over last year's expenditure of some £6,000 or £7,000, including, of course, expenditure on Muresk College. Probably most of the increase relates to that college, and is due to the greater activities in connection with extended facilities for study of the dairying

side of the agricultural industry at that institution. In a country predominantly agricultural in its outlook, any expenditure incurred by the State in encouraging the various phases of the industry is amply warranted. I could wish that the State was in a position to place at the disposal of the Minister for Agriculture an even greater sum than is here proposed. Undoubtedly the agricultural industry and the State generally have been well served by the Department of Agriculture for very many years past. All the officers are keen on their jobs, and are doing their utmost to assist men who try to wrest a living from the soil. Unfortunately the outlook for the season is not wholly encouraging. Figures quoted by the Minister for Agriculture, when introducing his Estimates, as to losses sustained by the pastoral industry imply a tremendous setback for that industry. Even after we return to a period of good seasons—which we have every right to expect after so many bad ones—it will take a long time for our pastoralists to re-stock their holdings and bring them up to anything like the numbers they carried prior to the drought. In addition, it is doubtful whether finance will be available for those pastoralists to embark upon the purchase and breeding of stock of the same standard as they ran previously. For many years most of the profits of the pastoral industry were put back into improvements of the holdings and the raising of the standard of sheep. So much money was spent in this direction that the wool-cutting capacity of sheep was increased a hundredfold during comparatively few years. It will take quite a lot of money to bring our flocks up to anything like the standard that obtained prior to this unfortunate drought. Those who are engaged in that section of the industry will therefore be entitled to all the sympathetic consideration the Government can give them.

As regards the agricultural industry also, the season so far has been somewhat indifferent. In the early stages of the season grave concern was caused to our farmers, our wheatgrowers and our sheep-raisers by the low rainfall; but, buoyed up by the belief that Western Australia's seasons in the agricultural districts were always reliable, more reliable than the seasons in any of the other States, we all felt that

sooner or later there would be a good downpour and that some of our worst troubles would become things of the past. At this stage of the season, September, we have no right to expect heavy downfalls of rain. Unfortunately, there is no reserve of moisture in the soil. The crops have used up all the rain that has fallen, and so sufficient moisture is not left in the soil in very many districts properly to mature the wheat crops. I am afraid the estimate of the wheat yield will not be realised. The early sown crops are doing well; but during the seedling season a dry spell occurred and the crops that were planted when the next rains fell are in most districts a total failure. The outlook for the wheat industry is therefore not bright. The average yield will not be up to normal and, with prices at the present low ebb, the outlook is indeed discouraging. Much concern is being felt by people in stock-carrying districts because their water supply, even at this period of the year, is insufficient. In many districts dams are not full; and in every district underground water supplies have not been replenished. In some places I know of, wells are at a lower level now than they usually are in the months of March and April. Members will therefore realise the difficult time facing the producers who depend upon underground sources of water supply for their stock during the summer months.

I desire briefly to make reference to some officers of the Department of Agriculture whose services have recently been lost to the State—Dr. Sutton, Mr. Pittman, the Plant Pathologist, and Mr. Hughes, principal of the Muresk Agricultural College. These three officials have rendered excellent service to Western Australia, the Director of Agriculture, Dr. Sutton, while in charge of the department; the Plant Pathologist in his particular branch; and Mr. Hughes, the first principal of the Muresk Agricultural College. In my opinion, Mr. Hughes has done wonderfully good work. He has succeeded in impressing upon the students of the college the duty that devolves upon them in return for the State's help in equipping them for their job in life. Very few men could have achieved what Mr. Hughes has done in that respect. One has only to meet an ex-student of the Muresk Agricultural College to verify what I have said. I do not know the newly-appointed principal of the

college, but I express the hope that his work will prove as satisfactory as did that of his predecessor.

One branch of the viticultural industry is experiencing a very difficult time, although it may not be regarded as of very great importance. It nevertheless is rendering a very useful service to the State. I refer to that section of the viticultural industry which is engaged in wine making. The dried fruits section of the viticultural industry has been placed on a satisfactory basis, due mainly to the beneficial effects of marketing legislation. I say this notwithstanding the discussion on marketing legislation that took place in this House last night. The producers of dried fruits are at present on a good wicket. Those engaged in the wine-making industry, however, are experiencing a lean time. Not many producers are engaged in the industry and they do not produce sufficient of their commodity to supply the requirements of the State, but they are faced with very severe competition by the wine makers of the other States. The surplus wine produced in the other States has to be exported overseas, although the prices received for it are not particularly remunerative. The result is that the wine makers in the Eastern States are dumping their commodity in Western Australia and selling it at an extremely low price, but not lower than the export parity. They are selling wine at prices with which our local wine makers cannot hope to compete. The cost of production in Western Australia is higher than it is in the other States, particularly South Australia and New South Wales, from which States this imported wine comes. The Government of the day should give some consideration to protecting this section of the viticultural industry. Unfortunately, some wine makers are extending the area under cultivation. I am afraid they do not appreciate the danger to the industry from over-production. Increased production of this commodity can only enhance the difficulties of those already engaged in the industry. Those who are planting further areas to-day cannot hope to make a financial success.

I propose next to refer to the dairying industry. This is now on a very satisfactory basis, due to two causes, the price of butter fat on the world market and the benefit of organised marketing. I dare say

this section of the agricultural industry is probably in a more satisfactory position than is any other phase of the industry. Side by side with the dairying industry ranks the fat-lamb raising industry. If there is to be an upset in world conditions, our calculations may be upset, too; but a genuine attempt has been made by lamb raisers in Western Australia to place upon the markets of the Old Country a fat lamb that will appeal to the consumers there. I believe that attempt has proved an unqualified success. The fat lamb raised in Western Australia to-day ranks amongst the very best on the Smithfield market. That is largely due to the fact that enterprising persons in Western Australia were brave enough to invest money in stud flocks, particularly of the Southdown breed. Those persons have made available rams of high quality to our lamb raisers. Other persons have imported stud sheep from the Eastern States, but some of the very best have been produced in Western Australia. Our lamb raisers have also been able to select a suitable type of crossbred ewe. The resultant progeny has been what we are particularly proud of on the overseas market, our fat lambs. Those stud breeders deserve every encouragement from the Government because they perform a very useful service. The Fremantle freezers are to-day working to capacity. I was informed recently that no one could book space at the freezers at the present time because they were working to their fullest capacity. It is very satisfactory to note that the Government has gone to the assistance of the freezing company by furnishing additional finance for it to provide for increased killing facilities with a view to coping with the considerable extension that is taking place in fat lamb production. Further increased production will take place in the near future and it will be necessary again to extend the killing facilities at the Fremantle freezers. The same applies to Albany, where a considerable increase in fat lamb production must take place. I had an opportunity not long ago of seeing the hinterland of Albany and of running through to the Esperance district, and in my opinion huge areas of that country are capable of producing excellent lambs. The markets of the world would appear to be capable of consuming additional quantities and if there is any part of Western Australia likely to be able to provide fat lambs in large num-

bers, it is that part that lies along our south coast. That particular country is capable of producing all sorts of fodders necessary for the production of high-class lambs, and for the maintenance of the mothers of the lambs in the very best of condition all the year round; and that, as any practical sheep man knows, is essential if satisfactory export lambs are to be produced. It is not generally recognised that on the south coast there is a regular rainfall for 11 months out of the 12. With such a rainfall as that, we should not allow so many millions of acres to lie idle as they are at present. I look forward to the time when that country will be developed and when Western Australia will get the benefit of the increased production. We saw some wonderful results of the 11 months' rainfall while we were at Esperance. Although it diminishes a little to the east of Esperance, beyond Esperance there is a regular rainfall for 11 months of the year and most of the country can be utilised for stock production.

I was interested to hear the Minister's remarks regarding locusts, which are generally known throughout the wheat belt as hoppers. I notice that the amount proposed to be expended in dealing with the pest this year is much less than that expended last year; but I am hoping, judging from the absence of hoppers in many districts so far this year, that even the amount estimated will not be required. However, it is essential that the officers of the department should always be on the alert so that when locusts do make their appearance they may be dealt with. I should like an assurance from the Minister that this will be done, because I noticed that in a reply to a deputation that waited upon the Minister for Lands, that Minister said that grasshoppers had now been declared vermin. The eradication of most vermin is regarded as a job for the local vermin boards, but I hope that the Minister does not intend to shift on to the local governing bodies the responsibility of dealing with grasshoppers, because their finance is already insufficient to enable them to cope with other pests.

The Minister for Agriculture: Would you say we have been unreasonable?

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: The hoppers have not made their appearance yet. It is only a month since they were declared vermin.

The Minister for Agriculture: Would you say that we have been unreasonable in the past?

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: No. I commend the Minister for what was done last year. Nothing is further from my mind than to suggest that he will be unreasonable.

The Minister for Agriculture: Would you be satisfied if I assured you that the same attention will be paid to the matter as was paid last year?

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: No, because only half the amount provided last year is being allocated this year.

The Minister for Agriculture: That is wrong.

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: If it becomes necessary for the same work to be done this year as was done last year—though I hope it will not—insufficient money has been provided on the Estimates.

The Minister for Agriculture: Not five per cent. is available outside of what is provided by the Government.

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: I am not arguing on those lines. What I say is that the estimate this year is considerably reduced as compared with the expenditure last year.

The Minister for Agriculture: There is not the same necessity.

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: I hope it will not be necessary for the Minister to spend the amount provided on the Estimates. Although the hoppers have made their appearance in some of the northern districts and the eastern areas, I think that in view of the fact that we have reached this stage of the season, the pest is not likely to be nearly as extensive as it was last year. At any rate, I am hoping that will be so. The point is that I do not want the fact that the hoppers have been declared vermin to provide an opportunity for the Government to say to the local governing authorities, "This is to be more your pigeon than it has been in the past when grasshoppers were not declared vermin." The pest should be controlled by the Government. Of such Australia-wide importance is it, that I regard it as one of those problems in the solution of which the Government might very legitimately seek the assistance of the Federal authorities.

The Minister for Agriculture: "Seek the assistance!" I am glad you used the word "seek."

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: You will not get anything unless you do seek it. Will it be possible for the Minister to give the House some information as to the possibility of increasing the number of veterinary surgeons in the department? I am aware of the difficulty that exists. I know the scarcity of veterinary surgeons throughout Australia, but Australia is not the only place where there are veterinary surgeons; and such good work has been done by the veterinarians of the Department of Agriculture, that I think there are few, if any, matters that could more beneficially engage the attention of the Minister than that of increasing the number of veterinary surgeons in this State. A demand for their services exists in many parts of the State. The work they have performed has been appreciated by settlers throughout the length and breadth of the country, and particularly does this apply to the work of those who have been engaged on the scientific investigation of some of our stock diseases. In this connection I would refer to the activities of Dr. Bennetts and those associated with him in relation to Gingin rickets, toxic paralysis, braxy-like disease, wasting disease at Denmark and the falling disease which is making considerable inroads on some cattle of the South-West. Wonderful success has been achieved by Dr. Bennetts, who has been engaged in scientific investigation of those diseases, and the result has been the saving of many hundreds of thousands of pounds to the stock-raisers of this State, who greatly appreciate what has been done. I would have liked the Minister to tell the Committee of the tangible way in which the stock-raisers a little north of Perth recognised Dr. Bennetts's services in investigating Gingin rickets in lambs. Stock owners there appreciated his work so much that they made him a handsome presentation in the form of a cheque, which, if it were made public, would indicate the value they place upon the services of this official. There are many other diseases that are not quite as bad as those I have mentioned that require further investigation; the best place to investigate them is here in our midst, and the best officers are our own officers of the Department of Agriculture. If it is possible I should like to see some further expenditure in this direction because there is ample scope for the

energies of additional veterinary officers. There is only one matter that is required at this stage other than a good fall of rain, and that is the provision of ample markets for our commodities. If, however, I attempt to discuss that question, you, Mr. Chairman, will say that it does not come under the Vote now being considered. I express the hope that the Government will use some of its energies, as has already been done, in respect of the recent visit to the Near East just carried out by the Minister for Agriculture, and endeavour to find further markets, and so increase the number already available to our producers. There is no doubt that with the increased use of superphosphate additional areas will be brought under cultivation by means of the planting of subterranean clover. This will probably be most marked from the point of view of fat lamb raising and dairying, both of which industries should expand by leaps and bounds. A few years ago we were led to believe that subterranean clover would not thrive north of Perth. To-day we have it growing satisfactorily as far north as Northampton. That means that a huge area of country between Northampton and that part of the State that we thought was the limit where subterranean clover would grow, will have its stock carrying capacity increased to a considerable extent. On both sides of the Midland railway line every farmer is doing his utmost to grow the clover, and speaking from my own experience, I have found that the early varieties of the clover give promise of yielding satisfactory results. Thus with the promise of that increase it is necessary that we should have, more than anything else, additional markets for our commodities. Given those markets, the men on the land will do their best, provided, of course, they can be assured of a reasonable return for their labour.

**MR. WARNER** (Mount Marshall) [5.4]: The hon. member who has just resumed his seat has covered most of the ground that I intended to touch upon, and to that extent he will save me from repeating what he has said. I realise that the Department of Agriculture has spent a considerable sum of money on the work of destroying locusts in the past year or two. Last year the Estimates contained a provision for the expenditure of £12,000, while actually £21,160 was

spent. This year the Vote is £11,000, a reduction of £10,160. I should like to ask the Minister whether the amount in this year's Estimates is intended to cover any of the expenditure up to the 30th June last incurred in the way of breaking up land. I am aware that a good deal of money has been spent in that direction. Some road boards have spent all that they had available on the destruction of locusts, and unless they can get further assistance they will not be able to continue the good work upon which they started at the beginning of the year. There is no doubt that grasshoppers were more numerous than was ever expected; they were spread over big areas. It would seem that quite a lot will still have to be done this year if we are to prevent the further spread of the pest. Will the Minister advise whether he will use his best endeavours to carry out this work if the road boards find that they are not able to finance any further work in that direction; or will he agree to go to their assistance in preventing the spread of the locust? The number of road boards interested in the work this year will be double the number of last year. I should like to have this information from the Minister.

**MRS. CARDELL-OLIVER** (Subiaco) [5.6]: I should like to have an assurance from the Minister that he will make provision for the supply of milk for undernourished children in the schools. As the Minister already knows, in some areas, fully a fourth of the number of school children are very under-nourished.

The **CHAIRMAN**: The hon. member will be able to discuss that matter under the next Vote—Education.

**Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER**: But we always go to the Minister for Agriculture when we require information on this subject.

The **CHAIRMAN**: The question can be raised under the Education Vote, which will be considered next.

**MR. DONEY** (Williams - Narrogin) [5.7]: As a member of the Country Party I recognise that the Department of Agriculture is one of the most efficient branches of our public service. Irrespective of which party happens to be in power, I am prepared to say that the department does its work in a thoroughly sound and practical though unpretentious manner. By way of evidence that the department nevertheless

errs occasionally, I should like to call attention to the appointment of Mr. Morgan to the position of organiser to the Dairy Products Marketing Board. Conceivably the Minister's explanation will disclose that there was nothing whatever improper in that appointment, and I dare say it can be shown that Mr. Morgan knows something about butter and butter marketing, and is in every way a suitable man for the job. I asked a question of the Minister a week or two back as to whether applications were invited by advertisement in the usual way for the position of organiser, and he replied that they were not. The best man should certainly have been obtained for the job. Applications should have been invited. I agree that the amount to be paid to Mr. Morgan per week, £4 4s. 6d., is not considerable, but after all it stands to reason that there are always opportunities for advancement. That fact in itself is worth something. More than one man is entitled to that particular opportunity, and therefore if the Minister has any information to offer on the subject I shall be glad to hear it in due course.

I wish to read a letter I have received from Queensland on the subject of the dingo and fox menace. The letter refers to the method of poisoning the pests adopted with marked success in that State. The Minister, I am sure, will allow his department to experiment with any method that is shown to be worth while, and that to which I propose to refer comes within that category. If it were not worth while, I am convinced that the Queensland Government would not have supported it as a means of getting rid of the dingo pest. The letter is from Mr. A. W. Johnston, who writes for the secretary of the Land Administration Board of the Department of Public Lands in Brisbane. He says—

I am directed to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 9th instant making inquiries regarding the poison bait supplied by this department for the destruction of dingoes and foxes, and in reply to advise that as a measure of assistance to landholders in the State, a specially prepared bait is supplied in cases each containing approximately 250 baits at 5s. per case, which is less than cost.

I want members particularly to note the words "less than cost," and for that matter, also what I am about to read now.

Free railage to the nearest railway station is also provided. Where landholders form them-

selves into groups of four or more for the purpose of making a systematic distribution of the baits in infested territory, the baits are given free of any charge. The baits are made from boiled corned bullock's brisket fat, cut into suitable sizes, with a strychnine tablet inserted. Each bait contains sufficient poison to kill any dingo. A pamphlet on the subject is enclosed for your information.

If you so desire, a sample case of the baits will be supplied to you without charge, except that you would be expected to meet the transportation charge.

The letter is addressed to the secretary of a farmers' organisation in this State. I desire to call attention to the very generous and helpful tone of the letter. I am rather anxious to express appreciation of the attitude displayed by one Government towards another, and it is my desire that this should be recorded in "Hansard." I might also explain that I based a set of three questions on this letter, and submitted those questions to the House through the usual channel. In those questions I asked the Minister whether he was aware of the existence of this method of destroying dingoes, and went on to say that if he was so aware, whether he would consider the desirability of informing himself as to the suitability of the bait and adopting distributive methods in this State. The reply that the Minister gave was not particularly informative. He said that the matter was already being inquired into, but no decision had been arrived at.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is not in order in quoting from "Hansard" of the current session.

Mr. DONEY: That is not the only mistake I have made this afternoon. I would be pleased if the Minister would amplify the answer he gave to a question I asked in this House, and if he would state more fully the reasons why he thought it unlikely these baits would be adopted in Western Australia.

MR. DOUST (Nelson) [5.15]: I was pleased to hear the remarks of the Minister, and his references to the South-West. Judging from the expressions we hear, we might imagine that in the South-West people were living in the most important part of the State, so far as the making of a livelihood was concerned. These certainly contrast strongly with statements I heard when I first came into the House, about two and a half years ago, at a time when the State was

in difficulties over group settlements. Happily those difficulties are to-day not so accentuated. Whilst the South-West may be more prosperous in comparison with other parts of the State, people must not conclude that everything is quite right, even there. We may call it God's own country, and may go into rhapsodies over the glorious South-West, but we still have to remember that many hundreds of people there are working long hours, passing through great trials and tribulations, and at the end of each year finding that they have not derived the wonderful benefit that might be imagined. I congratulate the Minister on the progress made by his department. According to the increasing amounts that appear on the Estimates, the importance of the department is becoming more manifest every year. The Minister has a great grasp of his work, and recognises the necessity for securing funds with which to carry out further experiments, for grappling with the various problems that confront the man on the land, and for assisting farmers generally. Whilst a certain amount of praise is due to the Minister himself, I must at this stage add my congratulations to the officers of the department, the men whom the Minister is fortunate enough to have under him. Go where we will in Western Australia, we have only to mention something about the work of the officers of the Department of Agriculture to learn that universal praise is accorded by all who understand anything about the department's ramifications and the value attaching to the work of the officers. A considerably increased sum of money has been provided on the Estimates for vermin destruction, grade testing, and as a pure-bred bull subsidy, all matters of vital importance to the South-West. At this stage I should like to draw attention to several matters which suggest that the position is not as bright as has been indicated by the Minister. I was surprised to hear him complain about the poor quality of the fruit exported from Western Australia during the past season. Although I live practically in the heart of the fruitgrowing country, this is the first intimation I have had that all is not well. I have made several inquiries in the city since the Minister made his speech, and find that even the exporters appear to be somewhat in the dark as to what the Minister meant. Possibly half the fruit

exported from Western Australia is passed through the packing-sheds under the supervision of Government inspectors. These officials are on duty practically the whole time, looking after the grading of the fruit. At the port of export, the fruit is again examined by Government inspectors. Strange it is that after all this supervision and all the restrictions that are imposed, there should still be room for complaint. I feel sure that growers themselves will be even more surprised than I was at the Minister's remarks. Even allowing for the world conditions and for the possibility that a great catastrophe lies immediately ahead of us, I am afraid that those engaged in the fruit industry will find themselves in a difficult position, not only in the coming year, but possibly for some years ahead. I refer particularly to what would appear to be the unfortunate agreement that has been made concerning a quota for the export of fruit. That the agreement was unfortunate is clearly shown by the results obtained last year. On that occasion we had rather a light crop. In the previous year, the industry suffered severely from disastrous hailstorms, which reduced the exportable quantity by a considerable amount. The previous year was also a light season, and the quantity of fruit available did not come up to requirements. Although we have been able to export under the quota system about 400,000 cases per annum in addition to what we have sent to the Near East, if the estimate of the department is anything like correct, for the coming year we shall be in a very unfortunate position. We know that farmers and fruitgrowers have taken full advantage of the local market by using cold storage throughout the year, and one can imagine they will go on doing this, as far as they can. Even after having taken full advantage of the local market, it would still appear that we would have to export at least twice as much as we did last year, although, under the quota system, we shall be unable to do that. This will mean having something like 500,000 or 750,000 cases of fruit on our hands that we cannot sell locally, and will not be allowed to export. If that is the position, our outlook will be very bad. The Minister referred to the probable destruction of black spot and codlin moth. Both he and his officers may be congratulated on what they have done in that respect. The State is also deserving of congratulation because of the steps taken



by those settlers who are unfortunate enough to have their industry seriously affected by these pests. If the department sent an officer around the Nelson electorate, to select a farm that was occupied by a capable and honest man, who would deal fairly and squarely with such an outbreak, that officer could not find one who had done more than the gentleman whose holding was this year stricken with black spot. I am sure the Minister himself will agree with me in that remark.

I wish now to refer to the tobacco industry. For some time past this has been looked upon as a very profitable industry for Western Australia. Judging by Press reports and the remarks of the Minister, we may be inclined to think that everything in the garden is lovely. I assure members, however, that the tobacco growers are by no means satisfied. After conducting experiments for 15 years, as some have done, and after the majority have conducted experiments for the last four or five years, increased their acreage under crop, and definitely improved the quality of the tobacco, the growers still find the market price is gradually coming down. Some four or five years ago the growers received an average of 2s. 3d. per lb. for their tobacco, but the price fell, first to 2s. 1d., then to 1s. 11½d., and last year, I think, to 1s. 8¾d. Sales this year have so far shown a slight improvement, but the returns are not yet to hand. A large quantity of the lower grade of tobacco is still on hand for this year, and has not been sold. This indicates that whilst the returns may show a higher average price per lb. of tobacco sold, the average price for the whole of the tobacco grown will not be higher than that of last year. If that is the case, I doubt very much whether the industry will continue to develop. Of two of our largest growers, one who came across specially from Victoria to embark upon the industry here, has gone out of the business entirely. He had under crop approximately 30 acres. After paying all the expenses attendant upon the development of the industry, he found it was not a payable proposition. Another fairly large grower, who has 20 acres under tobacco, came from India. He expressed great confidence in the early stages, but he now finds that, even with improved methods of cultivation, increased costs have made tobacco-growing an unpayable proposition. There are about 93 grow-

ers in the Manjimup area, and one, Michellides Ltd., has probably half the total area under tobacco. The majority are farming on a small scale and deal with an average of about four to ten acres. While they hope for better prices, and look forward to improving their grades of leaf, they find the industry much more difficult than they anticipated, and so far have not met with the success which they expected or their efforts deserved. Another matter vital to the establishment of the tobacco-growing industry here is that in all computations allowance should be made for fair standard wages for employees. That is not possible in the industry to-day. I am doubtful whether the basic wage is paid even by those who are more or less permanently established in the industry, and certainly those who are at the struggling stage cannot afford the expenditure. If the industry is to be established under those conditions, I think it would be better for the State if it were abandoned in the initial stages. I am not prepared to advocate the establishment of any new industry that is not capable of paying employees at least the basic wage.

When looking through a catalogue of a recent sale in Queensland, I noticed that there were 27 different grades. While no bids were received for a number of the lower grades, quite a number of sales were effected in respect of over 20 grades. I mention that because it is contended by the growers here and in Queensland that the average price for tobacco leaf should be not less than 2s. 6d. per lb. I am well aware that it may be contended that growers in Western Australia are receiving that price for suitable grades of leaf. That may be quite correct when applied to ten or a dozen grades, but would not be if the return for the whole of the tobacco crop were considered. If all the leaf that could be sold at that price were harvested and the rest burnt, the result would be that a crop of 800 lbs. to the acre would probably be reduced to one of 400 or 500 lbs. Consequently, if we examined the contention of tobacco leaf purchasers in particular, we would find that the quantity of prime-grade leaf, for which 2s. 6d. per lb. was paid, would represent about 400 lbs. That return cannot be regarded as the fair average price to the growers. If it were possible for the Minister to authorise the establish-

ment of an experimental station in the tobacco district, where investigations could be carried out with the object of demonstrating to the growers how to produce a type of leaf that would meet the requirements of such purchasers as the British Australian Tobacco Company, and increase the production of such leaf to 600 or 700 lbs. per acre, there would be something in the contention that Western Australian growers were being paid a sufficiently high price for their leaf. At times we hear that a grower has received 3s. 6d. or 3s. 9d. per lb. for his crop, but when we investigate the position we ascertain that that price was paid for perhaps 15 or 20 lbs. out of a crop running into several tons, and that, spread over the whole crop, his returns had averaged about 1s. 6d. per lb. In one respect the growers are unfortunate in that there is little competition. The representatives of only one company come from the Eastern States to buy tobacco leaf, and, as far as I can gather, the local purchasers are fully supplied. Michelides Ltd. has its own plantation and also draws supplies from a few other growers to whom assistance was rendered in the early stages. As far as can be ascertained, Michelides Ltd. appears to pay an average price of 2s. 6d. per lb. for all tobacco and has generally supported the industry well from the start. One of the largest growers has been supplying that firm from the outset and from 20 acres last year he harvested 18,000 lbs. of tobacco leaf. He did not even have the trouble of grading the leaf but merely baled it up and transported the leaf to the railway station at Manjimup, for which he received an all-round price of 2s. 0d. per lb. When it is considered that the grower has to face the cost of freight and of grading, which represents about 4d. per lb., it will be admitted that Michelides is paying almost the price that the growers consider is necessary to enable the industry to be established on a satisfactory basis. In this State we certainly can congratulate ourselves upon having locally a purchaser of leaf such as Michelides Ltd. According to a statement that appeared in one of the local papers, the growers themselves recently advanced a number of points to the Minister to demonstrate the necessity for a general all-round price of 2s. 6d. per lb. for tobacco leaf. The matter was dealt with in a letter sent by Mr. R. F. Crowe, secretary of the W.A.

Tobacco Growers' Association, to the Minister for Agriculture and the communication was published in the paper under the headings "Tobacco Growers' Difficulties. Average Price of 2s. 6d. Required." The points advanced in favour of the request for that average price were—

(1) To grow tobacco is both costly and risky; costly for reasons that—

(a) Operations commencing in June of one year, when the seed beds must be prepared and the seed sown, yet the grower does not receive his return from the sale of the resulting crop until August or September of the following year;

We are nearly into October now and, as far as I am aware, the returns are not yet to hand. That means that the settler has to finance the whole of one year's crop in advance and has to pay quite an appreciable sum in connection with the next year's crop before the returns for the first year's harvest are obtained. During the past year one storekeeper at Manjimup—he was one of six or more who have been called upon to render assistance—advanced £8,000 to tobacco growers to enable them to put in their crops last year and will probably have to make a further considerable amount available this year, although he has not yet been repaid for the earlier advances.

(b) curing kilns and grading sheds must be erected;

(c) the crop requires at least 10 cwt. of expensive fertiliser per acre;

(d) the cost of insecticides during the growing period is considerable;

(e) wages have to be paid during the curing and grading periods at least.

During February and March probably 400 people are employed in the tobacco industry at Manjimup and most of those are engaged for the two months only. Some are retained for grading, which continues for several months. Many of the settlers are endeavouring to do that work themselves but it requires experience. Many have yet to learn that phase of the business, and it cannot be picked up in a few hours. Then Mr. Crowe explained why the industry is risky, and he gave the following reasons—

(a) Tobacco is subject to many diseases and suffers from any adverse seasonal conditions, neither of which can be covered by insurance;

(b) it may be damaged or ruined by hail or frost and to ensure against these is beyond financial reach of growers under the prices they have hitherto received for their leaf.

2. Tobacco growers have to work long hours, particularly during the curing period when kilns have to be watched and tended continuously throughout the 24 hours of each day.

3. It is contended that, for the reasons given in (1) and (2), tobacco growers (proprietors) are entitled to receive remuneration very much above the basic-wage level.

4. There can be little doubt that, with the inducement afforded by adequate remuneration, W.A. can easily produce at least half of the requirements for Australian leaf. If this requirement is calculated at 8,000,000 lbs. annually at present, the industry in W.A. could advance from 750,000 lbs. as now to 4,000,000 lbs., and could continue to advance as the consumption of Australian leaf increased.

5. Given an average price of 2s. 6d. per lb., growers would not have to market every lb. of leaf produced in order to carry on, but could afford to destroy such leaf (which must occur in every crop) as is not up to a certain standard. This price also would enable growers to use better cultural methods. At present green manure is not practised as much as it should be owing to lack of sufficient funds.

6. With an average price of 2s. 6d. per lb. operating in Australia buyers would not wish to buy low grade leaf, since the price for it must necessarily be low and thus add to the price they would have to pay for the higher grades.

I wish members to understand that the Tobacco Growers' Association is not asking for a price that would include this very low-grade and almost useless leaf. The people of Australia cannot be expected to purchase and smoke that class of leaf, and consequently it should never be placed on the market.

7. If or when Australia is producing a sufficiency of good grade leaf it were found that manufacturers were importing supplies instead of buying locally it is thought that control could be exercised by allowing imports only in definite ratio to purchases of Australian leaf.

8. While low prices are being paid for tobacco leaf—

- (a) efficiency in production is curtailed, and
- (b) the standard of living of those engaged in the industry suffers.

9. A glance at the history of the tobacco growing industry in Australia is sufficient to show its instability during the past. It is contended that the proposals now put forward would stabilise the industry if given effect to. The industry is unique for the following reasons:—

- (a) It is not governed by world parity but may be made subject to local control, and
- (b) the price paid to the grower and the price at which it is sold to the consumer are easily ascertainable as, also, are the costs of manufacturing the leaf into the consumable article.

10. The need for planned economy in industry is becoming increasingly apparent. The tobacco growing industry appears to offer unique opportunities in this direction.

11. In the evidence given before the Select Committee on the Tobacco Industry in New South Wales, the following may be noted from the Queensland growers:—

R. A. Ray, when asked "Do you think tobacco growing is paying you?" replied, "It is not nearly paying me for my work."

G. Piagno, when asked, "Are you making a living?" replied, "Just a living. We sometimes draw rations." (Government relief.)

V. G. Veness, when asked if the members of his association were making a do of it, replied, "They are battling."

William Lennon, when asked what price would be required to warrant his staying in the industry, replied, "I think somewhere about 2s. 6d. to 3s. per lb."

Mr. Atherton has stated that less than five per cent. of those engaged in tobacco growing in Queensland have made the basic wage.

Members will agree that at least a payable price should be assured to the growers of tobacco. Judging by the reports and balance sheets of tobacco manufacturing companies, if one company alone paid 10s. per lb. for all the tobacco grown in Western Australia it would still have made sufficient profit to pay a dividend of 10 per cent.; and if that company manufacturing probably half the tobacco in Australia paid 1s. per lb. for all the tobacco grown in Australasia, it would still have been able to show a profit of 10 per cent. I admit that in the individual States very little power exists to ensure the scales of justice being held evenly between the grower and the consumer, but I believe that the Commonwealth Government has ample power to secure a better deal for the growers. I appeal to the Minister to utilise whatever funds can be made available to carry out further experiments in the growing of tobacco. If the people engaged in the industry can be assured of a reasonable living, we in Western Australia have the land and the people willing to engage in the industry, and a very large industry it would become in the South-West and possibly in other parts of the State, but particularly in the Manjimup area, where most of the tobacco is being grown at present. I appeal to the Minister to do all in his power to make this industry successful.

**MR. SAMPSON** (Swan) [5.51]: My first word is one of commendation for those who are assisting the Young Farmers' Clubs to function. I especially refer to Mr. A. E. Ball and Mr. N. Elliot, both honorary workers, who are giving splendid service to develop this effort. That love of the land be developed in the boyhood and young manhood of the State is important. It is essential that the drift to the cities be stopped. This drift to the cities, as I shall show by figures presently, is not confined to Western Australia, but is almost universal. As has been said a thousand times, Western Australia is a primary producing country, and efforts should be made to keep our young men on the land. To do that, life and work on the land must be made interesting. Admittedly, the Education Department is doing something to that end. It has approved of the appointment of an able officer to act as secretary of the State Advisory Council of the Young Farmers' Clubs, but the Department of Agriculture so far as I can ascertain, has failed to do anything. Doubtless there is a thick file of correspondence at the department built up by the answers to inquiries, but whether any work of a helpful nature has been done remains to be shown.

Mr. Watts: The department frequently helps.

Mr. SAMPSON: Then I am unaware of it, and I cannot run the risk of spoiling anything I say by departing from the strict line of truth. I made passing reference to the fact that people on the land are drifting to the cities. Figures are not available to show the number of people on the land in this State, though statistics of owner-farmers may be had. Recently an English journal, "The Farmers' Weekly," stated that in 1921 agricultural workers in the British Isles numbered 816,000. In 1937 the number had fallen to 631,000, a reduction of 23 per cent., which is a very serious decline. That is symptomatic of what is happening in many countries. In Britain during 16 years people left the land at the rate of 12,000 a year. Those under 21 years engaged on the land averaged 145,000 for the years 1921 to 1924, and for the year 1937 the figure had dropped to 94,000.

Higher rates elsewhere entice workers from the land. There is no protection in respect to payments to workers on the land,

and the reason is well known; there are no definite prices for products from the land. These points have evidently not occurred to the Minister for Lands, in whom I am greatly disappointed. In his youth he showed great promise, but with the years his outlook has become more and more clouded until he now shows a disregard or lack of regard for those people who depend upon the land for a living.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: But he is one of them.

Mr. SAMPSON: In secondary industries as well as land industries, mechanisation is playing an increasingly prominent part. Although awards do not apply to the agricultural industry, the increase of wages paid elsewhere is having the effect of reducing the number of workers prepared to accept employment in the country. Costs of production render the use of machines essential. The more labour saving machinery we purchase—this applies to secondary industries as well as to land industries—the more money we have to send out of the State, but payment could be made with our primary products. I believe in the use of machinery because, despite the opinions of the unthinking, the less the amount of human endeavour required to produce a given quantity of commodities, the better for the human family.

The Minister for Mines: You mean the greater the number of humans that will starve.

Mr. SAMPSON: Not at all. Years ago 12 hours might have been required to produce three bushels of wheat under the methods then adopted, but with the aid of labour-saving machinery, the time may now be calculated at three hours. That is not necessarily bad for the human family; more time is available for leisure and study, and in the Minister's case, more time is available to him in which to grow roses, disport himself in his garden and attend shows. There is no objection to the Minister's doing that. Any objection that might be taken to the Minister's movements would not apply to his production of roses or attendance at flower shows.

The Minister for Mines: Thanks for that. It would be useless to come to you to get leisure hours.

Mr. SAMPSON: There is no virtue in working long hours if an equally good job can be done in shorter hours. I know that

school teachers generally are prepared to give up spare time to assist in any work that concerns the children of any particular town or district. This applies especially to farming matters. I gladly pay a tribute to the work of the school teachers in this respect. Agriculture should be included in the curriculum of all country schools. I understand that book-keeping and other subjects which have a tendency to take boys and girls to the city have in certain cases been substituted for agricultural subjects. On the other hand, it is noticeable that in New South Wales agriculture is receiving special attention. In that State there has been a gradual introduction of agricultural subjects. They have been introduced into 15 rural schools, nine high schools, and three intermediate high schools. It is of the utmost importance that the attention of the scholar should be drawn to the interesting things of farming, by which the lad's ability will be increased. To quote from an article which I read recently—

It may be said that when the boy leaves school and begins to work on the land, his mind is progressive in regard to agriculture, and he possesses that interest in and love for his calling so essential to success in any walk of life.

When all is said and done, that is the note to be struck, that is the viewpoint to be taken by boys concerned with agriculture. I ask the Minister to do all in his power to encourage that viewpoint, to seize the opportunity which he possesses—filling as he does the dual offices of Minister for Agriculture and Minister for Education—to ensure that consideration is given to our boys in connection with the curriculum and later, so that their knowledge of agriculture may be encouraged subsequently to their leaving school. It is the opinion of many people, an opinion to which I subscribe, that a knowledge of farming means a love of farming. It is the absence of knowledge that frequently brings about the failure of farmers. Those who succeed are those who understand the science and the work of farming. I envy the Minister the opportunity he possesses, and I earnestly hope that he will do everything in his power to assist towards this end.

The Department of Agriculture unquestionably has good technical officers, but it is remarkable that we are continually losing them. They are attracted to other States. Is it not possible for the officers of our Depart-

ment of Agriculture and our other departments, having been trained in this State, to be retained here? One thing of much importance in connection with the Department of Agriculture is the establishment of an experimental farm in the hills. There should be at least one in the eastern hills of this State. This would mean that many problems which the ordinary grower cannot afford to tackle, and therefore is unable to solve, would be taken up by the department and much good would be done. There should be experimental farms for fruitgrowing just as there are experimental farms for the production of wheat. Then we would know what varieties are best for different districts, and we would better understand methods of culture and treatment. The ultimate result is bound to prove a paying proposition. Unfortunately, either the department has insufficient money or there is insufficient interest in regard to the work. In the highly important phase of the production of citrus there is no special officer, no citriculturist. I have mentioned this previously; and I hope that to-night, should the Minister reply, he will make some reference to the subject.

The district fruit inspectors are doing better work to-day than was the case not so long ago. That is a tribute to pay. I am not going to make any fuss about it. I consider that the work should have been done better previously. Undoubtedly there was opportunity for improvement. From all I can gather, the appointment of additional inspectors means that the work is being done better than before.

The Minister for Agriculture: The inspectors have been very active in prosecuting.

Mr. SAMPSON: Just so. I did intend to refer to fruitfly. With the present methods there must always be trouble. In my opinion there should be community control of baiting and spraying in regard to fruitfly. The Minister may reply that there is plenty of legislation on the statute-book. I understand that is so, but I also know that in order to provide the necessary inspection considerably more inspectors than at present employed are needed. The Minister must find more inspectors, or do something to bring about compulsory community spraying. When that is done we shall approach a time when fruitfly will have been brought under control. We know what has been done

by voluntary methods, but, unfortunately, voluntary methods are not permanent. For a while all is well; then a few drop out, and eventually the position is as it was originally. Compulsory community baiting and spraying are essential. The imposition of the registration fee of 1s. per orchard has not resulted in over much revenue. I understand that commercial fruitgrowers have expressed themselves as prepared to pay an additional amount in order to make inspection and control more generally possible.

The Minister for Agriculture: Some owners of property are very careless.

Mr. SAMPSON: Where there is an absence of compulsion, there is always someone to undo the good that is being done. The majority of fruitgrowers are earnest and thorough in doing what is required, but the neglected property of an odd grower breeds so many fruitflies as to minimise the good resultant from the efforts of careful orchardists.

The Minister for Agriculture: Do you think such careless people should be dealt with?

Mr. SAMPSON: I think the department should do its duty. Where there are neglected fruit trees, steps should be taken to do what is needed. The question of the Minister suggests a subtlety which makes me wonder what is at the back of it. I could make a retrospective reference over a few years and advise the Minister of what happened when I bought an orchard. I would like to do so. On the trees of that orchard there was a heavy crop of pears, a very fine class of pear suitable for export.

The Minister for Mines: Did you buy the orchard as a going concern?

Mr. SAMPSON: It was bought as a going concern, and on the following day I got a departmental notice that unless the fruitfly were cleaned up I would be forthwith taken into court. That was an entirely proper action of the department. As it happened, I had already engaged an orchardist to pick the fruit and burn it in the orchard. The department will have a record of the notice issued to me. I should say there were not less than five tons of pears hanging on those trees, and positively there was not one pear free from infestation by fruitfly.

The Minister for Agriculture: Have you ever been caught since?

Mr. SAMPSON: No, but I believe several efforts have been made to catch me. On one occasion I was informed that the one tree growing on a property in which I am interested was infested by fruitfly. The department stated this, not with undue glee, but evidently with some degree of "slow success at length achieved."

The Minister for Agriculture: The department has not caught you this year, has it?

Mr. SAMPSON: I do not think that occurred during this year. The Minister may be able to give the exact details, because, when all is said and done, I have striven in every possible way to allow this responsibility to be accepted by those who should carry it. If by chance I fail, and fall a victim to the sometime vigour of a departmental inspector, then I am afraid my misfortune will be a matter of ungodly joy in a department whose lack of interest I have so often criticised.

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

Mr. SAMPSON: In reviewing matters relating to the work of the Agricultural Department, the various pests that have to be dealt with should not be overlooked. I was dealing with the ravages of the fruitfly, and members will agree that, in overcoming the difficulty with regard to fruit exported to Colombo and other overseas centres, the Minister achieved results that must be regarded with satisfaction. The difficulty was serious, and I trust the occasion will not again arise necessitating his undertaking such a journey. While congratulating him upon successfully overcoming the problem, I trust there will be no recurrence of the fruitfly trouble, but there certainly will be unless provision is made for compulsory community baiting and spraying.

The Minister for Mines: You did not tell us what you were going to do with the pear garden.

Mr. SAMPSON: I told the Committee that there was not a single pear not contaminated with fly and that all the fruit was burnt, the work starting on the day after I purchased the garden. I hope the Government will follow up the visit of the Minister to the Orient and establish trade agencies in the various centres as an initial step towards placing Western Australian fruit on the markets there. The retirement of Mr. H. Willoughby Lanec, the

Government Apiculturist, is pending but I trust that an additional inspector will be temporarily appointed. There have been a number of outbreaks of disease in connection with bees and it is essential that all the hives in the State shall be inspected. The future outlook for honey production is promising, provided the necessary protection is afforded beekeepers. The executive of the beekeepers' section of the Primary Producers' Association views with serious alarm the appearance of the particular disease that I have in mind in extensive areas not previously affected as well as in districts affected last season. The opinion is expressed that unless the hives are immediately thoroughly examined, serious losses will occur. This might have the effect of forcing many beekeepers out of the industry. I know the industry is confronted with the danger of a severe setback, and I hope the Minister, when he replies, will inform the Committee whether it is intended to appoint an additional inspector. I view the prospect of the retirement of Mr. Willoughby Lance with great regret. A man's ability and energy, his capacity and usefulness, cannot be assessed by mere years. Some men are energetic at 75 years of age, whereas some are indolent and inefficient at 45. Mr. Lance has done more than his duty. He has found in his office at the Agricultural Department a real hobby, and all his spare time is devoted to his work. Candidly, I have never known a man more fascinated by his work than Mr. Lance. I am under no obligation to him, nor is he to me. My admiration of him is justified because of the interest he takes in his work and because of the manner in which the bee-keeping industry has developed since his appointment. Although I know it is the policy of the Government to retire officers when they are 65 years of age, I hope that course will not be followed with regard to Mr. Lance. Special efforts are required to cope with the disease to which I have referred, and Mr. Lance is acquainted with the districts where the outbreaks have occurred. A new appointee would require some time before he could learn all that was required of him. Instead of Mr. Lance's services being dispensed with, I urge that he be given additional assistance during the busy season. Those engaged in the industry are scattered over widespread areas, and a new man would require quite an appreciable time in order to

locate all the bee-keepers, and to become acquainted with conditions so as to enable him to tour the country economically and quickly. Queen rearing and the supplying of pure-bred Carniolan bees to apiarists has been of great benefit to the industry. This branch of apiculture is a scientific study of its own, and few bee-keepers are capable of breeding first-class queens, as it requires study and experience. The queens supplied by the department have given great satisfaction. Mr. Lance understands the work of breeding queen bees. It is a very fascinating study, and, in addition, bee-keepers know Mr. Lance.

Hon. C. G. Latham: And the bees know him too.

Mr. SAMPSON: The bee-keepers know how earnestly he works for the advancement of the industry. Another officer whose association with the department is, I fear, approaching the end, is Mr. G. W. Wickens, the Superintendent of Horticulture, and already fruitgrowers have expressed their regret at the prospect of losing the services of that well-known and capable officer. Wishes have been expressed that his services may be retained at least in an advisory capacity. I have great respect for Mr. Wickens, as, indeed, has everyone who knows anything of his work and its ramifications and the interest that he has always shown in it. When a new officer is appointed to his position, I hope he will be sent abroad to visit Canada and the United States. While in the United States, he should give particular attention to California. We are notably backward in certain matters affecting fruit culture and fruit marketing. This State would be benefited in many ways if the officer had such an opportunity. In the United States, particularly in California, apart from officers in control of the agricultural industry, there are those who travel as salesmen to other parts of the world. I think we should follow a similar course. We have, in fact, already done so, because the Minister's journey to parts outside Western Australia has proved a distinct advantage in a business sense. In addition, the new officer would have an opportunity of learning the best and latest methods of fruit culture and fruit marketing. Fruit marketing is a matter to which the Government might well give special consideration.

A pest of which fruitgrowers are naturally afraid is the codlin moth. We have so far been able to control this pest, but we have had a good deal of luck. We are fortunate because we have been able to control the codlin moth whenever an outbreak has occurred. The present position, however, is neither reasonable nor proper where growers are concerned, particularly apple and pear growers. People coming from the Eastern States are able to bring with them apples, pears and quinces grown there.

The Minister for Mines: Quinces?

Mr. SAMPSON: Yes; if they so desire they bring with them a quince or two, a pear or two or an apple or two in their bags. Their luggage on arrival in Western Australia is not checked or examined by an officer of the department. We are aware that notices are posted along the Trans. line, but who makes a practice of reading them? The present position is dangerous, because the codlin moth is in Eastern Australia. To bring apples, pears or quinces into Western Australia is illegal, but, in the absence of examination of passengers' bags, it cannot be prevented. We are not treating our growers fairly if we allow this menace to continue.

Mr. Cross: Put up another notice.

Mr. SAMPSON: Various growers have sacrificed their crops on an outbreak of the codlin moth. They have done so in their own interests and in the interests of their fellow growers; but it should not be necessary for them to do so. At all events, we should lose no opportunity of prohibiting the arrival in Western Australia of fruits that carry the codlin moth.

The Minister for Mines: Why should they bring quinces and apples in their carpet bags to a place where they can get better fruit?

Mr. SAMPSON: Should the Minister happen to be in Adelaide, quite likely a cousin or a friend would bring him a bag of fruit to the train. Possibly the Minister, being obsessed with health matters—

The Minister for Mines: You could not tempt me with an apple.

Mr. SAMPSON: At all events, the matter is very important. I hope some means will be devised whereby bags and suit cases of passengers coming from the Eastern States may be examined previous to the train's arrival at Kalgoorlie. That could be done, and

we should ensure that it is done. It is done in California and in other parts of the United States. A person there cannot alight from a plane without having his bag examined. Every effort is made there to prevent the introduction of disease.

Mr. Warner: The search made there is for opium.

Mr. SAMPSON: The matter is not one for levity; it is serious for the fruitgrowers. It is a matter for action, and should receive the consideration which I am hopeful the Minister will give it.

Mr. Seward: The Minister does not like the suggestion that passengers' bags should be examined.

Mr. SAMPSON: There is lack of distribution of fruit and vegetables in the State, particularly vegetables. I have been in country towns where the only vegetables available at the local hotel were potatoes and pumpkin. The department should do something towards securing better distribution. The department should give every encouragement to marketing schemes, because I believe such action will result in adequate fruit and vegetable supplies to all the towns of the State. The importance of publicity cannot be gainsaid. I would suggest that the Metropolitan Markets Act should be amended so as to provide that some of the profit derived from the markets can be applied to advertising fruit. In this State we are unable to read of the advantage of citrus. In other parts of the world where fruit-growing is regarded more seriously, the benefit to health from the use of citrus is well advertised.

The Minister for Employment: You have a chain of newspapers.

Mr. SAMPSON: I am prepared to allow the Minister free use of them for this purpose. Early in the season a local marketing committee gave consideration to the question of further publicity efforts along lines similar to those followed during the previous season. In anticipation of the necessity for such work, the proprietors of various cool stores were approached for their co-operation in the collection of a publicity levy for the financing of such work. This was promised by all of them. Concurrently with this action, the Australian Apple and Pear Council approached the Federal Government for a grant for an extensive Commonwealth advertising campaign, and received an offer of £5,000 for



this purpose, provided the various State Governments also contributed on a pound-for-pound basis. The W.A. Fruitgrowers' Association therefore approached the State Government for a grant to subsidise the Federal offer for publicity work in this State, but I regret to say it was not forthcoming.

The Minister for Agriculture: Do not you know the reason?

Mr. SAMPSON: I should be glad to hear it.

The Minister for Agriculture: You do not know it?

Mr. SAMPSON: No. There is much talk of statutory control, but the Apple Sales Board deserves a tribute. This is a voluntary organisation that has done and is doing very good work. Admittedly statutory control is, generally speaking, essential. There is usually a frantic undercutting amongst most of those engaged in business and no matter how strong an effort may be made in the direction of fixing prices, there are always rebels who undercut and nullify the efforts made.

The Minister for Agriculture: Do you think the price of newspapers is too high?

Mr. SAMPSON: That is a matter on which I can speak with some enthusiasm.

The Minister for Lands: The price of some newspapers only.

Mr. SAMPSON: I am prepared to issue a special newspaper if it will have any influence on the Minister for Lands and bring him back—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Does the hon. member's remark relate to agriculture?

Mr. SAMPSON: Yes, it relates to the early thoughts, aspirations and convictions for the Minister for Lands. Only last night we found that he had recanted—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The Minister for Lands is not under discussion.

Mr. SAMPSON: He should be. Another important matter to which I shall refer is very unpopular; that is, the bringing of fruit and vegetables to this State from South Australia. That is a very sad commentary on our production. Here again the department might be of assistance in encouraging improved packing and the fullest possible activity to ensure proper inspection of the produce brought from South Australia.

Mr. Cross: Is packing a matter for the growers?

Mr. SAMPSON: Certainly it is. The growers who do not pack directly might

obtain valuable advice from the inspectors. I am prepared to assist the member for Canning in any way possible.

Mr. Cross: I do not want them to pack in my electorate.

Mr. SAMPSON: Not long ago I had a letter from a resident of the Canning district asking why the cost of sending vegetables from Fremantle to Kalgoorlie was greater than the cost of sending them from Adelaide to Kalgoorlie.

The Minister for Agriculture: Did you refer the writer to the member for the district?

Mr. SAMPSON: I considered the best course was to give him the most reliable information available and advised him accordingly. It is a sad reflection on our producers, particularly vegetable growers, that cauliflowers and certain other vegetables should be brought from South Australia and should command better prices than does the locally grown produce sent to Kalgoorlie. This is a serious matter to which I hope the department will give the fullest consideration.

I desired to say something about grass and to point a moral on the importance of improving our pastures. Bound up with this is the appointment of an agrostologist.

The Minister for Agriculture: We have one.

Mr. SAMPSON: One officer is not sufficient for the big task to be done. Members have noted with great satisfaction the marked development of the dairying industry in the South-West, and given the help of an additional agrostologist, further progress could be achieved. I hope the department will be able to assist in securing an improvement in the quality of meat sent overseas. Recently I read with regret some comments on Western Australian meat from which it appeared that the quality is not now better than it was many years ago.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: That does not apply to fat lambs.

Mr. SAMPSON: No, the quality of the fat lambs being produced is satisfactory and the State is achieving a fine reputation for them. As to beef, however, we have a long way to go if we desire our product to compare with that of the Argentine. In that connection much remains to be done and I am anxious that practical consideration in respect to improved stud stock shall be given.

**MR. WITHERS** (Bunbury) [7.58]: The Department of Agriculture being of such importance in the affairs of State, I must make my contribution to the debate. I appreciate the work of the officers of the department. The development that has taken place in the South-West has been definitely due to the assistance and advice afforded by the experts of the department. When the Minister was introducing his Estimates he gave some valuable information about the raising of fat lambs and dairy products. This is due to the fact that in the first place we have been able over a period of years to create pastures on which to raise the fat lambs and the dairy stock that are giving such wonderful production. I pay a tribute to the officers who have been responsible for stimulating that development. The Minister told us how the export of lambs had increased to practically double the number sent away in the previous year. I appreciate that the production of fat lambs will not be confined to the areas in which it is undertaken to-day. Because of the experience I have had during the last two months as a member of the Light Lands Royal Commission, I realise there are other places in Western Australia capable of producing lambs, provided there is a market for them. The same thing would possibly apply to the dairying industry. What more concerns me is when we are likely to reach saturation point in the export of these different commodities. Session after session, I am sorry to say, a doleful tale is told on behalf of our wheatgrowers. This indicates that we did not know when to stop in respect to the production of wheat. Most of the commodities we produce are subject to overseas prices, because we have to export so many of them to overseas markets. I hope the time will not come when our dairy products and our fat lamb industry will be in the same position that wheat occupies to-day. During the discussion on the Lands Estimates the other evening, the Leader of the Opposition referred to the wheat market, and also to the pig industry. He said that the pig industry could be built up. We know that quite well. Strange to say, when the price of wheat went down, many of our wheatgrowers engaged in the pig-raising industry. Immediately the price of wheat began to rise, they forgot about the pork side of the business, and the means of marketing their wheat through the pig. They rushed back

to wheat itself, and forgot all about the pigs. When a man loses his stud flock, no matter what the breed may be, it is very hard to build it up again. The same thing may be said of pigs. Possibly in districts where there is a surplus of skim milk and buttermilk, a greater inducement is offered to people to keep pigs as a sideline. The time is long past when the wheat-producing section of the community should take seriously into consideration the possibility of organising along the lines suggested, namely the sale of their wheat through the pig. The Minister has told us there is a definite market for pork and pork products, and we hope it will last for some time. Last year we exported £26,044 worth of pork overseas, but at the same time we imported from the Eastern States bacon and ham to the value of £76,350. I am glad to know we have exported pork overseas, and that there are possibilities of increasing the trade. Why not breed sufficient pigs in Western Australia to enable us to retain within our borders the £76,350 we send to the Eastern States? This is not a perishable commodity. When bacon and ham are cured, they can be stored for considerable periods, whereas butter cannot be stored without special supervision. Our farmers might well take a serious view of the possibilities of getting rid of their wheat through the pig-growing industry. That would create another asset for Western Australia. Some time must elapse before we can reach the saturation point in the matter of export, or in respect of over-production for our own requirements.

Last year we exported overseas £224,360 worth of butter. According to the figures given to us by the Minister the other evening, that volume of trade will be increased this year. Side by side with butter export was the despatch overseas last year of £234,754 worth of fat lambs and mutton. There was a matter of only £10,000 more in favour of the fat lamb and mutton trade than there was in the case of the butter trade. If we export 85,000 boxes of butter this year as against 64,721 boxes last year, that will represent a wonderful increase. Out of the 64,741 boxes of butter that were graded for export last year, 64,721 went overseas, which meant that only 20 boxes remained behind. This shows how good the grading was. In the last couple of days I

noticed that people in Great Britain were endeavouring to stabilise the market for butter. Major King and Mr. A. W. Wilson, members of the Australian Dairy Produce Board, passed through Fremantle recently on the liner "Oronsay." When interviewed concerning the marketing of dairy products, they said—

The Australian and New Zealand boards are doing very good work in London in the organisation and regulation of supplies of butter, and in providing the necessary supervision over the selling of them.

We need some control so that we may be assured that we have at least an organised market in England for our surplus butter. I noticed, too, from yesterday's paper that a move is being made to fix a maximum price for butter at Home during the next fortnight. The price of Kangaroo butter was fixed at 114s., and pastry butter at 106s. per cwt. If we average about 110s. a box for our butter, our producers will be greatly encouraged. We would like to get more if we could. When, however, the price drops to 84s., our producers have not the same opportunity to make good.

Herd-testing is a particularly important matter, and the success already achieved under this heading is definitely due to the activities of the dairying branch of the Agricultural Department. The officers were responsible only a few years ago for promoting the system of herd-testing. As a result of the activities of this section of the department, and the efforts of those who first took on herd-test recording, such wonderful strides have been made that to-day over 10,000 cows in the State have been dealt with. Not long ago we were not milking 10,000 cows. According to the figures given to us by the Minister, the average yield of those 10,000 cows is 203 lbs. of butter fat. In the past we had big herds producing large quantities of milk and of cream, and at that time the testing question was not given much consideration and dairy farmers believed they had good herds. As a result of herd testing, however, it was discovered that cows which had been considered good cows should be culled. Some cows in the herds were then found to average a production of 160 lbs. To-day some of them average over 400 lbs. However, the present average of 203 lbs. shows that wonderful progress has been made. A fortnight ago tonight I had the pleasure of listening to an

address by Mr. Baron-Hay in the Capel district on the subject of herd testing. I was astounded at the progress made in that district. One young man, who had been encouraged by the success of others, put in 10 cows for this particular year. He won handsomely, his average per cow being so much higher. Possibly it is easy to get 10 cows of that quality, though it might be difficult to secure a herd of 40 such cows. That young fellow has taken advantage of herd testing so that he may do the right thing in his business. Thus he will not be feeding and milking a considerable number of cows more than are required in order to get the same result. A sorry feature is that in the first instance the Federal Government gave the Western Australian Government assistance by way of a grant to encourage herd testing. That grant dwindled year by year as we made progress, until for this year it is down to a miserable £1,000. To cover the cost of herd testing the farmers last year had to find £2,000, and the State Government, according to the Estimates, no less than £4,780. The amount on the Estimates for the current financial year rises to £5,479. I understand that the Federal Government will not in future be as generous as it has been in the past.

The Minister for Agriculture: It has given us notice not to expect any more.

Mr. WITHERS: That means the farmers will have to find an increased quota and the Government also an increased quota to keep herd testing going. For some time there has been a good deal of interest taken in the suggested establishment of a dairying agricultural college. The Minister has told us exactly what has happened so far as the matter has gone. He pointed out that he had to accept what the Commonwealth Government was prepared to give towards the establishment of a college factory at Muresk which college can be used for refresher courses by those engaged in the dairying industry. We all acknowledge that in the circumstances the Minister could do no more. We appreciate that if the industry, which is doing so wonderfully well, is to progress in future as it should progress, and become a stronger competitor with the corresponding industries in the other States, further assistance will be required for the establishment of a dairying agricultural col-

lege. Without being parochial, I consider there is a place for a dairying agricultural college in the dairying district. It is nice to know of the courses available at Muresk, but considerably larger numbers could take advantage of those courses, the ordinary and the refresher, if the college were established nearer the centre of the dairying industry. I hope the Minister will not lose sight of that aspect. I have here another letter from the Butter Fat Zone Council of the Primary Producers' Association of Western Australia, dated the 27th August last, which states—

Representations have again been made to the Hon. the Minister for Agriculture stressing the urgent necessity for the establishment of a dairy college in the South-West, and the support of all South-West members for this project is respectfully requested.

I quote that portion of a long letter to remind the Minister of the wishes of dairy farmers in the South-West.

Mr. Marshall: Where do you suggest the college should be established?

Mr. WITHERS: I have not chosen a spot. If I did, I might say "In the Bunbury electorate." But I will not be so parochial as to suggest that the college should be located in my district if its location elsewhere would prove of greater benefit to the industry. However, I know where the Minister can repurchase an estate in the Bunbury district which will be quite suitable for such a college. I want the Government to do the right thing by the industry. Let the college be located where it will prove most serviceable—in the Collic electorate, or the Wellington or the Forrest or the Nelson or the Sussex electorate, or in my own. I cannot be more fair. If I wished to be parochial, I could suggest Bunbury. The member for Nelson (Mr. Doust) dealt extensively with the tobacco industry, which would be a useful adjunct to the dairying industry of the South-West. However, if I tried to add to what the member for Nelson has said, the whole thing might go up in smoke.

**MR. McLARTY** (Murray-Wellington) [8.18]: All country members are pleased to see an increase in the vote for this department. I was greatly interested the other evening when the Minister for Agriculture unfolded his tale regarding the agricultural

and pastoral industries of the State. I was, however, sorry to hear the doleful story he had to tell regarding many of the pastoral areas, especially in his own electorate. We know what lion-hearted men the pastoralists in the outback are. They certainly deserve better fortune than they have experienced during the past few years. It is to be hoped prosperity will soon return with good seasons, and that those pastoralists will be able to recoup some of their heavy losses. I agree with the Minister that the officers of the Department of Agriculture generally speaking have done good work during the past year. For my part, I find that when I approach them for information or assistance on behalf of any part of my constituency, it is always most willingly given. References have been made to the young farmers' clubs. I am glad indeed to find that the Agricultural Department and the Education Department have co-operated in every possible way to assist the movement. By so doing, they are following the example set by other States where the Governments realise its importance. The member for Irwin-Moore (Hon. P. D. Ferguson) commented upon the shortage of veterinary surgeons in Western Australia, and that is indeed a serious matter. I suggested to the Minister previously that some of the most promising lads should be provided with scholarships to enable them to take a course in veterinary science. If that were done, it would be necessary to insist upon their residing in Western Australia for a specified number of years on completing their studies. Such a step would be a striking indication that the Minister and the Government appreciated the work of the young farmers' clubs. The member for Irwin-Moore also referred to the position of the dairying industry and pointed out that those engaged in the industry were receiving encouraging prices and, with the advantage of organised marketing, were doing fairly well. I stress the fact that organised marketing is vital to the industry. I am pleased to say that the dairy farmers are determined to insist upon it. They know perfectly well that, should they revert to the old system of marketing they will probably face bad times in the future. The dairying industry is organised in all parts of the world and there are probably few industries that are regulated to the same extent. That in itself should demonstrate that organisation in Western Australia is absolutely necessary. Then

again, in all countries where the dairying industry is organised, home consumption prices obtain. The Minister knows that there are those that would break down our present marketing system. If that end should be attained, the Government will lose tremendously, and special efforts should be made to prevent a breakdown of the system.

The Minister for Agriculture: Special efforts are being made.

Mr. McLARTY: I mentioned that the producers were determined that orderly marketing should continue in the industry, and I am glad to say that the producers have reached a position that will enable them to oblige those who attempt to break down that system, to accept responsibility for their actions. I would like the Minister to state definitely that it is his intention to assist the dairy producers to maintain the system of marketing. I asked him some questions in the House yesterday and, judging from the answers I received, it would appear that his attitude is being misrepresented in some quarters. I hope the Minister will clarify the position when he replies. Much has been said about the matter lately and I warn members that if there is a breakdown in connection with the present marketing system for butter, it will be serious not only for the dairy farmers but for the South-West generally.

Dealing briefly with the whole milk position, here again I believe the Minister has been furnished with so much information that it is not necessary for me to cover the whole ground. I have told him already that if he desires satisfactory results regarding milk supplies in the metropolitan area, some form of centralisation must be established. I do not suggest that those engaged in legitimate business should be faced with confiscation. Centralisation does not mean that. On the other hand, when milk is sold at scores of centres, it is not possible for the Whole Milk Board to police the Act as it should be and, at the same time, to maintain prices. I am convinced that, with a system of centralisation, a better milk supply could be provided in the metropolitan area. I would be prepared to give the board control of all the milk that is brought into the metropolitan area. The member for Bunbury (Mr. Withers) referred to the need for the establishment of an experimental farm in the South-West. During his speech, the

Minister referred to some thousands of pounds that had been made available to carry out certain work at the Muresk Agricultural College. I do not wish to belittle the work at that institution, because I realise it is quite good. Nevertheless, if we are to have an agricultural college in connection with the dairying industry, the institution should be established in the heart of the dairying district. Apart from the actual establishment of the college, plant breeding could be carried on and that is necessary work. The Minister will agree that fodders that can be successfully grown at Muresk will not thrive in the dairying districts. The requests repeatedly made by responsible bodies in the South-West for the establishment of an agricultural college in that part of the State, are reasonable.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: Is the Dookie Agricultural College situated in a dairying district?

Mr. McLARTY: That does not make it right.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: Or the Roseworthy Agricultural College?

Mr. McLARTY: The dairying industry is expanding in the South-West, where the population is increasing more rapidly than in any other part of the State. When the irrigation schemes were inaugurated there, a promise was made that a plant-breeding farm would be established, and a number of farmers were induced to take up holdings because of that undertaking. I suggest that the proper place for an agricultural college, if established, is in an area where both wet and dry farming can be carried on. I regard the request as reasonable. I would like to see some of the money raised for the Youth and Motherhood Appeal applied to this purpose. If we had such a college, many youths in the South-West who are unable to attend Muresk would have the opportunity to study. I hope the Minister will give serious consideration to this suggestion. I recently read an article in the "West Australian" pointing out the many difficulties in the way of establishing such a college, but I believe its advantages would far outweigh its cost.

MR. MANN (Beverley) [8.31]: I desire to say a few words upon this important Vote. For years past Avondale Research Station, which is in my electorate, has played

an important part in the welfare of the wheat-growing industry. To-day, however, the Great Southern is rapidly becoming a sheep-producing district. While at Quairading recently, a suggestion was made to me that Avondale should be utilised for experimental work in pastures. During the last few years, areas to the east and west of Beverley, and from thence down the Great Southern railway, have come into prominence because they have been planted with subterranean clover. Land that ten years ago was worth about 15s. an acre is rapidly improving in value because of fodder production. We have been taught that the basis for building up our lands is subterranean clover and top-dressing. Two farms in Beverley have been treated in this way for a period of three years, but we have yet to learn a lot about pastures. I hope that more land in that district will be utilised for pastures, so that the lamb-raising industry may be developed, but experiments should be made to ascertain the carrying capacity of the land. I myself can visualise vast areas in the district being devoted to the lamb-raising industry. I hope the Minister will have an annual day at Avondale, as he did some time ago, and endeavour to train the farmers in pasture work.

I wish to touch briefly on the land question. We are fortunate in this State in having at the University the services of so competent an authority as Professor Nichols. While talking to him recently on the question of lamb production, he informed me that he was dealing with the problem of correct areas and right feeding, subjects in which the farmers to-day are not thoroughly versed. We have certain set ideas about lamb production, but the professor is making a special study of it and we are eagerly awaiting the results of that study. We have an unlimited market for fat lambs. We are in the fortunate position that our lambs arrive at the London market when it is bare, at the end of the season. I predict that before many years pass thousands of acres in the South-West now devoted to the dairying industry will be utilised for fat-lamb raising. Our future to a great extent depends upon that industry, and that is why I ask the Minister to make Avondale available for research work in pastures.

I would like to compliment the Minister upon the work done by the department with

the small amount of money at its disposal. To my mind, the Department of Agriculture is the most important Government department in the State. The Lands Department has gone a certain distance, but the Agricultural Department will go much further. We have no young men studying veterinary science. As a matter of fact, no inducement exists for youths to take up this study; the course is five years, the same as for a doctor.

Mr. Doney: And it is just as expensive.

Mr. MANN: Yes, and when a young man has completed his veterinary course, he receives the meagre salary of £350 a year. Make no mistake, we are living in an age of research. We have to cope with the numerous diseases that afflict our stock, and that is where the veterinarian must play a prominent part. Some people have an idea that because farmers to-day use tractors, we no longer require the services of veterinarians; but I venture to say that these men will play an extremely important part in our agricultural industry. I hope assistance will be given to young men, in the form of bursaries, to enable them to study this science. We have many young men who could easily qualify, but they have not the funds. These young men, if properly trained, would be an asset to the State.

MR. WILLMOTT (Sussex) [8.35]: I desire to touch on one or two points regarding the South-West. First, the rabbit is becoming a serious pest, particularly in the Nannup area. Unfortunately, there are vacant group holdings in the East Nannup country which are breeding places for the rabbit. I desire to impress on the Minister the necessity for devising some means whereby the Government can poison the rabbits on the vacant holdings. There is a great number of vacant blocks. The settlers on the occupied blocks are doing their best to eradicate the rabbit, but their efforts are rendered nugatory because of the fact that the rabbits breed on the vacant areas. I should like the Minister to do what he possibly can to assist to eradicate the pest.

Mr. Needham: What about the virus?

Mr. WILLMOTT: I have spoken to the Minister about the virus on many occasions and know he is doing his best to approach the Commonwealth Government on that matter. Another serious handicap in the

South-West is the absence of veterinarians. In portions of my electorate the cattle are affected with a disease known as "falling." Up to the present, neither the cause of nor the cure for this disease has been discovered. A veterinary surgeon has been in the district for some time studying the disease, but I ask the Minister to grant further assistance in an effort to stamp it out. The disease occurs for about a month only in each year—about this time of the year, from the middle of September to the middle of October. During those two months I have known some settlers to lose 10 or 12 cows. This represents a very heavy loss indeed. Recently I assisted a settler who lately arrived from New Zealand to take up a block in the Sussex electorate and he was only two days on his holding when two of his cows died. That was enough to break the man's heart. I have been to the Agricultural Department on several occasions and was pleased when Mr. Baron Hay told me recently that a doctor had been sent to the South-West to assist the veterinary surgeon in that area. I hope he will succeed in finding the cause of and a cure for the disease.

The member for Bunbury and the member for Murray-Wellington spoke of the people in those areas being very keen to secure an agricultural college or research station for the district. The Government has a property in the South-West that we consider could easily be converted into an agricultural college or research station in order that the young men of the district could be topped up in their knowledge and encouraged to undertake dairying. I fully agree with the remarks of the member for Murray-Wellington. It is all very well to spend money at Muresk, but we need a college in the areas where the dairying is actually carried on. I am sure that money spent there would be well spent; it would be far better than spending the money at a place to which the young men from the South-West cannot afford either the time or the expense to go. Such a college established in the South-West would meet an urgent need.

The Minister for Agriculture: You know that we could not have got it at all if it had not been at Muresk.

Mr. WILLMOTT: But surely it would be a far better proposition to expend the money in the district where the dairying is carried on. I appreciate the good work done by the department in the matter of herd-testing.

This is one of the most important factors making for success in the dairying industry. It is the only way in which the dairy farmer can determine which of his herd are good cows, and which are poor cows. A farmer cannot afford to keep a cow that is not giving sufficient production to pay for its keep, but if he can ascertain which are the unprofitable beasts, he can turn them over to the butcher, or otherwise dispose of them. I appreciate the work done by the department along these lines.

MR. PATRICK (Greenough) [8.43]: I should like to tender my congratulations to the officers of the department who are quietly efficient and are doing wonderful work for the agricultural community. Unfortunately, there is one thing that they cannot supply and that is rain, which is urgently needed. Undoubtedly this has been one of the most difficult seasons ever experienced in Western Australia. On quite a number of occasions the outlook seemed hopeless, but then a little rain fell, sufficient to carry on the crops for a while longer. We have had a most unusual sequence in the past four seasons. In the district where my farming interests are situated, records have been kept for no fewer than 56 years, and in the whole of that period there has not been a succession of four years of low rainfall such as we have just experienced. In fact, almost invariably an unusually dry year has been followed by an exceptionally wet year. This season there seems to be a lack of good finishing rains; a good down-pour is badly needed, particularly on the eastern fringe. In addition, this year has been quite different from last year in that we have already had a touch of very hot weather. Last Saturday I was in one of the northern areas east of a siding named Binnu, on the Ajana railway—a settlement called Balla—and the temperature was 109 degrees. On the previous day, I was informed, the temperature had been 93. The settlers stated that if rain did not fall there within a week, very little wheat would be harvested.

Some people might consider that those settlers have gone out into rather doubtful country, but it is wonderful wheat country. One settler who has his home farm at Dindiloa, on the Upper Chapman, and his farming property at Balla, has averaged  $8\frac{1}{2}$  bags in nine consecutive seasons on one piece of land without fallow. This year he

will reap very little. When a farmer can get such a return over nine consecutive years, we can conclude that it is fairly safe farming country.

One of the troubles associated with dry seasons is that various pests are prevalent. In my district the red mite is affecting the pastures badly, and in various parts of the northern districts there are outbreaks of the grasshopper pest. One feature that the department might investigate—it is a mystery to me—is that this year there is a plague of grasshoppers at Mingenew, and another at Binnu, 140 miles distant, and practically no sign of the pest in the intervening country. The question is how the outbreaks occurred in such widely scattered places—places where they had never appeared before.

Mr. Warner: They must have been starved out of my district.

Mr. PATRICK: They must have taken a very long hop to cover 140 miles. In some parts of the district, such as Carnamah, where last year the settlers poisoned heavily, there are practically no grasshoppers this year. In my opinion, the best cure for the pest will be a run of normal winters with a good rainfall. This year we have had low prices to add to our difficulties, and, with these low prices, we have had a rising tide of costs. A recent banking circular stated that since 1936-37 the export price index had fallen—to June, 1938—by a large amount and yet the Australian internal selling prices of commodities had risen considerably. If those conditions continue, the writing-down of properties, as I have previously pointed out, may prove to be useless.

Undoubtedly land settlement was pushed out too far and too rapidly. The other day I picked up an old volume issued by the Department of Agriculture, entitled "The Settlers' Guide and Farmers' Handbook." I wrote for the book when I was on the goldfields before I took up land. The date is 1897, but that was not the year in which I took up land; it was the only volume obtainable at the time. In it there is a note of conservatism and caution that did not appear later. For instance, speaking about the New Norcia district, the handbook said—

The land is rich. It is the scanty rainfall and the short season that makes wheatgrowing somewhat precarious.

With regard to the Greenough flats it said that the chief drawback of the district was the uncertainty and insufficiency of the

rains, and that nearer Geraldton cattle thrived when drought did not make feed scarce. Members can see how cautious the authorities were in those days.

Hon. C. G. Latham: It was lack of knowledge.

Mr. PATRICK: Here is another extract that may interest the Minister for Lands. This was contributed by Mr. E. Roberts, of Yatheroo, who stated that he would rather borrow privately than from the land bank (Agricultural Bank). He added that if a man should, through some special misfortune, be unable to meet his obligations, he may prevail upon an individual lender to be lenient with him, but that the bank was governed by statute and if a man did not punctually pay up he must be sold up. Not only in regard to ideas about the land, but about our agricultural conditions have opinions changed. The authorities in those days were rather over-cautious. They practically condemned the Greenough Flats and the New Norcia and Geraldton country because they said there was not a sufficient rainfall. Their successors rather threw caution to the winds and a series of Agricultural Bank loans followed the very precarious settlement. Land prices have been overhauled to some extent, but a great deal of overhauling yet remains to be done. Some country has been settled that is not only deficient in rainfall, but, as some of the members of the Light Lands Royal Commission know, part of it is also deficient as regards soil. Co-ordination between the experts of the Agricultural Department and the Lands Department might have saved many tragedies in land settlement. To save a collapse of the wheat market, an arrangement must be arrived at between the leading exporting countries. An arrangement of that sort was made some years ago, but broke down when the Argentine failed to abide by the agreement. To-day there is a tremendous surplus of wheat over what is required by importing countries, and a quota of some kind will have to be fixed. In Western Australia some districts must continue to grow wheat, for there is practically no alternative for them. It will be to the advantage of other districts, however, those that are more fortunately situated, to give greater attention to livestock. In the past when wheat prices were low, farmers did turn their attention more in



that direction. When prices rose, however, the area under wheat was increased. Many lessons may be learned with respect to over-cropping of wheat. In the first place, it is definitely bad farming practice. Over-cropping is one of the main causes of soil erosion, to which the Minister referred. It also results in loss of soil fertility, which can only be maintained by extending the periods between cropping and the greater development of the livestock side of the business. This is elementary farming practice. The continual growing of crops must represent a strain upon the soil fertility. In cases where livestock can be carried, it is good farming practice to maintain the returns on an even basis over a series of years. The Council of Scientific and Industrial Research a week or two ago issued a statement concerning reserves of feed. I noticed when travelling in the Eastern States, particularly in South Australia, that farmers were carrying reserves. On all the farms I saw were standing out in the paddocks haystacks constituting reserves against dry seasons. In the rich Riverina country of New South Wales everything was bare and there were no reserves of any kind. Dr. A. R. Callaghan, of the Roseworthy Agricultural College—he is the present principal—has been making some interesting experiments. He says he is attempting to show the farmers of South Australia what can be done by way of assuring a continuity of stock-carrying capacity. What was considered to be a maximum was reached, and endeavours were being made to maintain this by reserves of feed accumulated in good years. The area of the college farm is 1,979 acres, containing, roughly, 600 acres of fallow, 800 acres of crop, and 570 acres of pasture. It carries the equivalent of 0.92 sheep per acre, and these have been carried continually over the years of the experiments. This system prevents violent fluctuations of stock according to the season. We know that the general custom is to stock up more heavily in a good season. The result is when a dry season comes along the farmer has to sell a proportion of his stock, probably at any price he can get, and when good seasons return he has to buy other stock to take its place. All this can be avoided not by temporarily increasing the number of stock in good years, but by placing surplus fodder to reserves. I should like to see many dis-

tricts now producing wheat concentrate more on stock. The present Minister for Works, when Minister for Agriculture, once travelled over the State with the Director of Agriculture, urging the farmers to grow more wheat and put up a record crop. That might have looked all right, but it was undoubtedly bad farming practice.

The Minister for Works: I did not advocate bad farming but better farming.

Mr. PATRICK: The Minister advocated an increase in the area under wheat so that the State might put up a record.

The Minister for Works: You are wrong there.

Mr. PATRICK: The Minister for Works may not have been the Minister, but I do remember the campaign. A good practical policy for the Agricultural Department to preach would be the maintenance of soil fertility in suitable districts by less cropping and more livestock; also, the continuity of stock-carrying capacity by fodder reserves. The department should watch the interesting experiments now being carried out by Dr. Callaghan in South Australia. If a high stock-carrying capacity can be maintained over a series of years, by building up reserves of fodder in good seasons, the policy would be a wise one. I am pleased to know the Minister is encouraging experiments in fat lambs at the Chapman State Farm. A large area of country suitable for the fat lamb industry is well served by the port of Geraldton. Part of that area, the Upper Chapman Valley, Northampton, Greenough and Dongarra, is not suitable for growing grain. It is too wet in a normal season for wheatgrowing and is more suitable for stock-raising. These conditions would undoubtedly be of advantage in the production of early lambs. Even in the case of merino sheep, many prominent sheep breeders have proved they can lamb their ewes as early as January by using lupins, which evidently have the same quality as green feed when given to ewes. Another direction in which I presume experiments will be made is the obtaining of the best type of lamb for the district. The department has suggested a type which it considers best; but the district is a very early one, and perhaps a still better type could be obtained. I note that at Roseworthy Agricultural College they advocate a Dorset Merino cross ewe mated with a Southdown ram. There they put lambs on the market

as early as the 4th June, and secure very high prices. The ewes are fed to some extent on ensilage. Personally I believe there are great possibilities in the Geraldton district, especially if freezing works are established at the port. I shall not detain the Committee longer but conclude by congratulating the Minister on the excellent staff he has and on the wonderful work that staff is doing for the agricultural industry.

**HON. C. G. LATHAM** (York) [92]: There are only two or three matters I wish to refer to. While listening to the Minister's account of the very good work done by the departmental officers—which I know to be a fact, particularly as regards those who are investigating agricultural pests and seeking to improve seed and variety of seed to bring about increased production and analysing the soil with a view to increasing its fertility—I was struck by the fact that the officers are assisting our primary industries in a general way. What concerns me most, and what I am a little worried about—the Minister made no reference to it—is how it will be possible to increase the prices of the commodities that our producers have to sell within the State. I am not referring particularly to wheat and wool now, but to what may be termed the lesser industries. These people deserve a better lot. During the last week I have had opportunities of travelling around among the small farmers in close proximity to the city, and for the first time I have seen women and girls working in market gardens in Western Australia.

Member: Was that at Osborne Park?

**Hon. C. G. LATHAM**: Not only at Osborne Park, but not very far from here. I was reminded of what I saw in Germany, where there is a standard of living altogether different from ours. I am not blaming the Minister at all; it is not his fault. However, it does bring home the fact that certain people here are not able to enjoy the standard of living of which we boast and which we desire everyone in Western Australia to have. The only way to improve the position is by investigation of better methods for fixing prices of the commodities produced by these people. We have changed our system very much in Western Australia, and that applies to Australia generally. It is about time we altered the system of having people bring their products along and

ask, "What will you pay for them?" Reasonable prices should be fixed. The Minister told us about the vast quantities of vegetables brought to the city and sold for next to nothing. Recently I noticed an instance of a truckload of cauliflowers being sold for next to nothing. Probably it is the law of supply and demand operating; probably also there is a supply greater than the demand. We have consistently believed that to a certain extent the difficulty could be overcome by co-operative efforts. Unfortunately it cannot. Some other steps will have to be taken to improve the lot of our small farmers. This remark applies not only to the vegetable grower, but also to the fruit-grower, the egg producer, and all those engaged in the smaller primary industries. After all, our prosperity can be judged only by the standard of living we give to our people generally. It is unfair to expect these small men to produce commodities and sell them at next to no profit to persons receiving far better wages. In those circumstances it is not to be expected that they will remain on the land. Now, every man who leaves the land is a competitor of men who have to seek employment in the form of manual labour. There will have to be some organised system of marketing, and for this legislation is required. If the Minister will give consideration to that aspect, we on this side of the Chamber shall be very glad indeed to help him.

The member for South Fremantle (Mr. Fox) introduced a Bill for the marketing of eggs. It is possible to produce eggs here at a payable price during certain months of the year. Eggs then are scarce. During other months there is a glut in the egg market. We have difficulty now in regard to our surplus in eggs, and shall not be able to dispose of that surplus by exporting. I wish the Minister would set aside one of his officers to investigate marketing in this State so that we may see whether a better standard of living cannot be given to our small producers.

While the price of wheat is low—the member for Bunbury (Mr. Withers) mentioned this—it is a great advantage for the farmer to be able to turn his attention to the production of pork. I have here some figures relating to a farmer at Wongan Hills. The member for Bunbury mentioned that I had said we could turn to the production of pork. Now, the man at Wongan Hills

sent down 90 pigs, excellent baconers, and they returned him £297. That is an average of £3 6s. per pig. Then he sent down 97 others, and they brought him a net return of £303, an average £3 2s. 3d. Taking into account the quantity of wheat required to feed those pigs, the return represents 5s. per bushel. I understand there is quite a good market overseas for pork. The Light Lands Royal Commission, with which I was associated, especially stressed that aspect. True, it takes some time to breed up nice stock; but pigs can be bred fairly frequently. Let the Minister get the farmers on to the right type. The aim should be to get a standard pig. I will not particularise, but I believe a cross between Berkshire and Tamworth is quite a good cross. Still, that is a matter for the experts who have improved the export lamb for us. I believe there are amongst them men quite capable of improving our pigs for export purposes. If we can change the value of wheat from 2s. 6d. per bushel to 5s. per bushel by feeding the wheat to pigs, we accomplish something worth while. As the member for Bunbury pointed out, when wheat reaches a payable price, somewhere between 3s. 6d. and 4s. per bushel, people will not incur the extra work of disposing of their wheat through pork, but will market the wheat direct. To turn it into pork requires a considerable amount of labour.

We have attempted in this State to build up a co-operative system. We have tried to inculcate in the minds of the people the advantages of a co-operative system. But, unfortunately, that has not overcome our difficulties. We have had to turn our attention to a sympathetic Minister controlling a sympathetic department for assistance in marketing our products at fair and reasonable prices. Members sitting on the Country Party benches do not desire to exploit the public, but they demand that the Government shall give consideration to the provision of a decent standard of living for the men on the land, particularly the small farmers with holdings around the metropolitan area. When we see the wives and youngsters of settlers having to go out into the gardens and work in an endeavour to eke out sufficient to obtain a bare existence, the necessity for that becomes most apparent. I appeal to the Minister to consider whether it is not possible to introduce legislation to deal with marketing in

a general way. Factors operating in the present situation include the economic conditions throughout Australia and the world generally, and the intense nationalism apparent in so many directions. If we cannot secure for the farmers a reasonable standard of living through the law of supply and demand operating in the customary way, we must legislate so as to assure them a fair return. If the Minister were to introduce such legislation as I have indicated, Opposition members would assist him in every possible way. We cannot do so, because such a measure would necessarily involve some expenditure. I do not care what form it may take. I would fix reasonable prices for all commodities, or else allow those producing the commodities themselves to fix reasonable prices. We do not suggest any more than the labourer asks through the Arbitration Court, the manufacturer through the Tariff Board, or those other people who are in the happy position of being able to fix their own prices for the commodities they produce. The privileges enjoyed by those sections of the community should also be extended to the men on the land. If there is a change of Government in the near future, the first legislation we shall introduce will be to provide the farmers with a standard of living equal to that we make possible for other sections of the community.

#### THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE

(Hon. F. J. S. Wise—Gascoyne—in reply)  
[9.12]: Although the Agricultural Department's Estimates have provoked considerable discussion, I do not wish to prolong the debate, but I feel it incumbent upon me to reply to a few points that have been made. As to the many phases of the departmental activities that were criticised or praised, I shall see that the comments of members, fair or otherwise, are conveyed to those concerned.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: They were all fair.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Probably they will be received with some appreciation, although not much by way of results may follow upon the advice so readily tendered to the departmental officers. The member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. Doney) sought information with regard to an application from a certain rural organisation for consideration in connection with the free distribution of baits for wild dogs and other vermin. He suggested that the depart-

ment should adopt the method practised in Queensland and distribute, at no charge to the settler, all the baits required for his purposes. The method adopted in Queensland is that the department undertakes to mix strychnine with brisket fat and sends the baits out in 250 lots to settlers on application.

Mr. Patrick: Free?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes. The member for Williams-Narrogin suggested that the Government would greatly assist the farmers if it also adopted that practice.

Mr. Doney: Provided you were assured as to suitability.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: It is a long time now since I made inquiries regarding this particular project. I could see certain difficulties, and also very little difficulty in the farmer doing it himself for next to nothing. In Western Australia we have had experience in the distribution of poison baits to farmers, as a result of which we found that consignments were left unclaimed and unwanted at certain railway stations. When distributing strychnine on a wholesale scale, it is essential to exercise great care. If baits are distributed in bundles of 250 each, such a supply may be far too great for the requirements of some who may apply for them. A farmer may possibly spread them freely to get rid of them, or he may put his surplus baits away and then forget them. That would be a menace, for instance, to children. Since the specified dose of strychnine effectively to destroy a wild dog is one-third of a grain, an ounce of strychnine, which costs roughly about 2s. 6d., at which price vermin boards can secure supplies through the Government, will provide over 1,000 doses. On inquiry I find that the practice adopted in Queensland could quite as readily be adopted here with the use of mutton fat or the ordinary fat available on a farm. It will be seen, therefore, that a farmer could apply to the local vermin board for an ounce of strychnine that would provide him with 1,000 doses at a cost of 2s. 6d., plus the value of the fat he used on the farm. The question was submitted to the head of the vermin branch of the Agricultural Department, and that officer's advice was that as the cost involved was so small, no good reason could be advanced why the Government should be expected to undertake the work. There is

undoubtedly an element of danger in the wholesale distribution of poison in the manner suggested. The member for Swan (Mr. Sampson) apparently has some grudge against the department. There may be a reason, and I have a strong suspicion as to what it is. Possibly I should act in a kindly manner and not mention the reason. There is no doubt he was not quite fair in his comments regarding calf clubs when he suggested that the Agricultural Department had done nothing in the matter. That contention was wrong. One reason why I did not butt in is the same as my reason for not butting into the affairs of the Narrogin School of Agriculture. The reason is that the concerns are actively handled, in the main, by the Education Department. The member for Swan should know that that is the explanation. As to his complaint regarding Mr. Willoughby Lance and his breeding of queen bees, I wish merely to say that although a deputation did desire to wait upon me to discuss the extension of that officer's term with the department, I consider that the requirements of any individual or group of individuals in relation to one man, should not be the subject of a deputation. The fullest consideration is being given to the choice of Mr. Lance's successor, who will be trained in the work before that officer's retirement. I hope that that appointment will be made shortly. One other observation among the many I noted and one of the few to which I desire to refer, was that from the member for Murray-Wellington regarding the Dairy Products Marketing Regulation Board. He said I should concern myself considerably in an endeavour to preserve that board. I do not know whether he is aware of the fact, but if I have a grey hair or two on my head, the cause is attributable to my concern regarding that matter. I have concerned myself about this matter, which has threatened the whole structure of the board, and I hope to finalise it before the middle of next month. I have taken serious steps to bring about that result.

Regarding the breeding of standard types of pigs, I would like to say, for the benefit of the Leader of the Opposition, that that is a matter in which this State can claim it has done even more than has the State of Victoria. For several years we have been engaged in raising various cross-breds, and

freezing different types of carcasses, which we have sent separately to the London market. We have had reports during the past three years showing how those pigs fatten, how easy they are to raise and the actual value of the different crosses with which we have been experimenting. We had a model made of the type that has proved so successful in this State. That model was on exhibition at the Sydney Royal Show, and was highly commended by overseas buyers as well as by Australian breeders. The remarks of the Leader of the Opposition are therefore somewhat belated. The department is now employing more veterinary surgeons than it has ever employed. To me, this matter seems to be an unfortunate complex in most districts. People think that the responsibility for veterinary services should be the Government's, that there is no room at all for private practitioners.

Mr. Doney: There are some private practitioners.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I realise that, but the general plea is for more veterinary surgeons employed by the department. Much consideration has been given to this matter. An effort has been made to obtain trainees in their fourth year from the Sydney University. We have bespoken some graduates and, while there is still need for them here, we hope shortly to fill that need. I have no further comments to make at present; but all the matters that have been raised by members and that require investigation will certainly have close attention.

Item. Salaries, £48,350.

Mr. DONEY: There has been a substantial increase in this item. Will the Minister give the Committee information as to what branches are concerned and what work the officers do?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Portion of the amount is accounted for by the increase in the basic wage; £2,500 is accounted for by the fact that certain part-time officers have, during 1937-38, been transferred to the permanent staff; the sum of £1,100 is provided for new appointments; and the sum of about £1,000 is for farm managers who have been in the service for a long time and have applied for transfer to the permanent staff. The salaries of those officers are included in the item, instead of in the item for the wages staff.

Item, Assistance to Poultry Industry, £410.

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: Will the Minister inform the Committee of the reason for the decrease in assistance to the poultry industry? That industry is extending considerably, so it would appear that it should receive greater assistance.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: There is a particular reason for the decrease. Some expenditure that was incurred in grading and handling will not have to be faced this year.

Item, Rabbit and other Vermin eradication and Upkeep of Rabbit-proof fencing, £13,800.

Mr. SEWARD: Will the Minister inform the Committee the reason for the increase in this item? In several places in my district where formerly gates in fences were always shut, they are now left open.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Most of that increase is due to the increase in the basic wage. Additional work is being done at one part of the fence.

Mr. DONEY: Has the Minister had reason to change his opinion about the continuance of the rabbit-proof fence?

Item, Subsidies and Grants to Royal Agricultural Society and other Bodies that may be authorised, £475.

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: Will the Minister inform the Committee what portion of the amount is for subsidies to the Royal Agricultural Society and to what extent other bodies will participate in the grant?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The subsidy to the Royal Agricultural Society is £400, which is the amount usually granted to the society. The amount has been varied from time to time so that special support may be given for district exhibits. As a matter of fact, £50 has been given to the Gascoyne Producers' Association to help that association with its exhibit at the Royal Show.

Vote put and passed.

*Vote—College of Agriculture, £14,870:*

Mr. McLARTY: The member for Sussex and I mentioned the need for the establishment of an agricultural college in the South-West.

The CHAIRMAN: No item is provided for an agricultural college in the South-West.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Education, £758,300:

**THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION** (Hon. F. J. S. Wise—Gascoyne) [9.28]: We had a long discussion on this subject last night, so it is hardly necessary for me, after having spoken at length on it then, to go over the same ground again. Some particulars, however, call for special attention and were outside the scope of that motion. The Estimates for this year show an increase of over £21,000. Of that amount, the sum of £16,000 represents salary increases, and the sum of £5,211 is for equipment and incidentals. Salary increases are due to additions to the staff at the Training College, promotional increases, and other staff increases. This year the appropriation amounts to £758,300. While that seems to be a tremendous sum for a State with such a small population, many laudable requests are still being received and a much greater sum could be spent had we the wherewithal to provide for the many excellent expansions desired by the department.

The expenditure on new buildings last year was £67,199, compared with £50,681 in the previous year. Of the total £52,383 was provided from general loan funds for new buildings and additions to buildings, while Consolidated Revenue provided £14,816 for renovations and other services. Members are aware that the department intends to erect a district high school at Geraldton to provide facilities for post-primary education, with Geraldton as the centre. That school will be able to tap goldfields districts and will mark a forward movement in the activities of the department. The total number of schools now open is 845, of which 64 are assisted schools catering for children with an attendance as low as five. There has been a considerable increase in the number of classes conducted at the Technical College. Classes have been established in some of the larger country centres to provide facilities there. We are hoping that this work can be extended. Great assistance has been given by organisations in those districts to establish such classes. Last night I dealt at length with the work of the correspon-

dence classes. All possible encouragement is being given to the pupils of those classes, even to the extent of special scholarships, and there is no doubt that the extensions made are rendering excellent service.

Mr. Doney: I think that is recognised.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: In the sphere of technical education we hope further to extend the services that have been available in recent years. Last year 4,836 students were enrolled in technical schools, a marked increase on any previous figure. Last year it was found necessary to provide 30 additional classes.

References will have been noticed in the Press to the Government's intention to preserve the present site of the Perth Technical College. Investigations in regard to foundations are being made and the first portion of a new block will be commenced on the Bazaar Terrace front. Before the end of the financial year we hope that a great deal of the existing congestion will have been obviated, and we expect to be able to cater for domestic science and manual training classes in another block to be erected behind the present main building on the St. George's Terrace front. Everything is being done to speed up that work so that, although much of the accommodation is purely temporary—nevertheless, it is suitable for carrying on in a temporary way—we hope to do away with portion of the existing structure and cater for additional students. At the Teachers' Training College we have reverted to the 12 months' course. Although there has been a considerable increase in the number of trainees, we shall not be undertaking the six months' course as in the past. This will lead to a more satisfactory flow and to better training. Members of country districts are aware that we have not only advocated, but put into effect the policy of consolidating small schools wherever two or three schools adjacent to a larger centre can be closed and the children conveyed to the larger school. Wherever that policy can be applied economically it will be pursued. This will result in more efficient teaching and better results for the department.

Useful work has been done in co-operation with the Health Department. Last year 11,789 children in the metropolitan area and 8,280 children in country districts were medically examined, an increase of 20

per cent. on the numbers for the previous year. We have three dental officers who visited 40 schools and gave attention to 3,390 children. The minor activities of the department, which also are of importance, need not be given special mention, unless there is some particular point that a member wishes to raise, but a tribute should be paid to the work of the associations of parents and citizens that do so much in the country districts to further the interests of the children. Very important work is being done by the members of those organisations, often at some sacrifice to themselves. Whether in more favoured districts wherein people live who can afford certain developments in their school grounds or in districts where poorer people live, there has been no lack of enthusiasm in the endeavours to assist the department and do more for the children. Admittedly we are spending what appears to be a very large sum on education in this State, but I am sure it is simply an investment for future citizens.

**MRS. CARDELL-OLIVER** (Subiaco) [9.37]: Can the Minister give any guarantee that the children in the schools will be supplied with milk? We had a deputation to him and he was sympathetic, but I should like to have some practical demonstration of his sympathy. The Free Milk Council representatives have visited a large number of schools and have discovered that many children are under-nourished. Some of them have parents who can well afford to give them proper nourishment, but still they are under-nourished. Other parents cannot afford to give their children a ration of milk. Teachers have informed me that in some instances the children cannot learn after 10 or 10.30 in the morning; they are physically unfit. I could not help thinking that while so many grants have been made to other objects—all of importance, of course—this grant should be made for the children who, in my opinion, should come first. The reason I wished to speak about this matter—I hope you will not call me to order, Mr. Chairman—was that in one school although there are a lot of under-nourished children, we cannot supply them with milk because the milkman of the district has not a bottling plant, and as we supply only bottled milk, he cannot undertake the business. He is the only man in the district with a license. While the member for

Murray-Wellington was speaking about centralising the work, I could not help thinking of this particular place. Another man in the district would have put in a bottling plant if he could have obtained a license. It seems, therefore, that when centralisation is indulged in two sides of the question have to be considered. We have lately visited many road board and municipal areas. The local authorities have all been sympathetic. The Government might work in with the road boards and municipalities. I cannot say authoritatively, but I do think they might be approached to help in giving milk to the children on a fifty-fifty basis with the Government. In Subiaco we are peculiarly placed. The area is small but it contains a number of schools. In the main school, in Bagot-road, the children's seats have been in the establishment for over 30 years. Many of them are in a bad condition. The grounds, too, are in need of attention. I hope the Minister will, in his reply, tell me what can be done with respect to supplies of milk for the children. We could perhaps do without the extra seats, but the children must be nourished. No matter how beautifully equipped our schools may be, if the children have not health they cannot learn.

[*Mr. Withers took the Chair.*]

**MR. RAPHAEL** (Victoria Park) [9.43]: Better facilities are sorely needed at the Victoria Park East school, and the parents and citizens' association is particularly anxious that something should be done in the matter. I am thankful to the Minister for the small expenditure he has incurred in reclaiming from nature a portion of the school ground. The sand has to some extent been covered over, and the work is still proceeding. This is the largest school in the metropolitan area, but a big proportion of the ground is in the same sandy condition as when God created it. Not an inch of the ground has been bituminised. I have a letter from a member of the parents and citizen's association who is interested in the Victoria Park East school. The writer states that the condition of the school yard is deplorable, chiefly on wet days, and that if anything can be done to improve the position the parents will be extremely thankful. It is pointed out that the children's clothes get into a bad state on dry and dusty days, and in the wet weather. The letter

also indicates that nothing has been done to the surface of the ground since the writer has been a member of the association, namely, 12 years ago. All this time has elapsed since anything has been done to the original gravel surface of the yard of this large and important school. In the goodness of his heart the Minister decided to spend the magnificent sum of £300, but only after requests had been made for eight years. It was a fine effort on his part. I took him out to the school on four occasions and showed him the conditions that existed. The Government should not allow school buildings to fall into a state of disrepair. The other day I noticed that the blinds, which are supposed to protect the verandah, were torn and tied up with wire. They were in a terrible condition. I hope the Minister will do something to rectify this state of affairs. Perhaps, too, he will give instructions to the teachers, not only of the senior portion but the infant section of the school, that children shall not be taken into the washing rooms to learn their lessons. At present not only in the school proper but also in the infant school, through lack of accommodation—despite the fact that Ministers themselves sit in offices sumptuously furnished—the younger generation of Western Australia is taught under deplorable conditions. It should not be necessary to use hard words, but I noticed so much glee amongst the Ministers concerned that I thought I would wipe the smiles off their faces. It has become necessary to drive home the facts of the case in a way that a Labour man should not have to adopt with his own Ministers. However, if necessity arises I am prepared to adopt that means. I do not propose to pat the Minister on the back for establishing a high school at Geraldton.

Mr. Mann: Where do you want it?

Mr. RAPHAEL: I shall explain that a little later.

Mr. Mann: At the Causeway?

Mr. RAPHAEL: We on the south side of the river have a better claim to a high school than Geraldton has. Three times as many children will attend such a school in South Perth as will prove to be the case in Geraldton. I say South Perth and not Victoria Park, because I do not wish to be parochial. The Education Department has given consideration to our needs by resuming certain lands from the City of Perth.

Some years ago the Perth City Council was injudicious enough to surrender a large portion of land to the Government, receiving in return some ground on the other side of Berwick-street. In that instance the Government came off very well. It is coming off better now by resuming for education purposes portion of the land it originally exchanged. However, I will not growl about that if the south side of the river gets the school it requires.

In allusion to the plea of the member for Subiaco (Mrs. Cardell-Oliver) for Government assistance towards providing milk for school children, I desire to quote an article which appeared in the "West Australian" of Monday, the 26th September—the "West Australian" being a paper that is never wrong. The member for Subiaco has appealed for Government support of the scheme. Before yielding to that request the Government should make full investigation into the question whether the milk provided by the Free Milk Council is doing the children of the State much good or is possibly spreading tuberculosis among them. The article is headed, "Milk as a Food," with crossheads, "Eradicating disease—Treatment of dairy herds," and reads as follows:—

Not everyone is enthusiastic regarding the use of cow's milk as a food, according to the "Medical Journal of Australia." "It falls short, in some respects, of perfect food," the journal says. "Its protein is probably not of the best quality, iron, copper and iodine are somewhat deficient, and other constituents do not appear to be ideally balanced for the needs of the human body. Certain vitamins are deficient or absent. It has also been urged against milk that, being so satisfying to the appetite, it may prevent children from consuming a sufficiency of other foods. Many people affirm that milk does not 'agree' with them, and to infants it must be supplied in modified form. Doubtless civilisation could still survive in the complete absence of milk. At the same time cow's milk constitutes a food of the highest value to mankind and especially for the young."

Referring to a report issued by the League of Nations, which examined every aspect of the milk problem, the journal said that epidemic milk-borne diseases had had an amazing incidence. They included scarlet fever, septic sore throat, diphtheria, typhoid fever, para-typhoid fever, dysentery and gastro-enteritis. The writers of the report showed that in Great Britain in 24 years there were over 100 outbreaks of epidemic diseases affecting about 12,000 persons. In that period about 150,000 persons contracted tuberculosis of bovine origin through the consumption of milk.



"Tuberculosis of bovine origin" means tuberculosis contracted from cow's milk.

Of these over 60,000 died. The number infected with undulant fever was not ascertained, but probably amounted to several thousands. There was only one means of freeing milk from tubercle bacilli—the eradication of tuberculosis from dairy herds. Veterinary inspection alone was an unreliable method of detecting tuberculosis in its early stages, and testing by animal inoculation was too slow to prevent further dissemination of the disease. The only satisfactory way was to submit every animal to a tuberculin test and to remove the reactors. No herd might be considered free from tuberculosis until all infected animals had been removed and the entire herds had failed to react to the tuberculin test for two or three years in succession. The matter bristled with practical difficulties, but the problem must be faced. The cost of the procedure would be vast, but would be offset by very great economic gain in the diminution of certain diseases, with a resulting increase in human health and efficiency.

Dealing with diseases other than tuberculosis the journal quoted the opinion of the framers of the report that all liquid milk for human consumption should be adequately pasteurised or boiled. "It has been urged against pasteurisation that certain vitamins are destroyed or diminished in the process," it added. "This opinion should carry no weight at all, since vitamins can be adequately supplied by other means."

Having read that article one is compelled to pause and think before accepting what I may term views derived by the member for Subiaco from her unsound judgment of the quality of the milk supplied by the Free Milk Council.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: Are you agreeable that the Free Milk Council should stop supplying milk at your schools?

Mr. RAPHAEL: Definitely I am, if it is causing trouble.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: With your permission, we can stop it.

Mr. RAPHAEL: You can stop it. You can please yourself. I do not want you to supply any milk. As a matter of fact, I gave my son the money to buy milk, and when I asked him if he got any, he said, "No, I don't like the darned stuff. I bought some lollies."

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: I hope your son is strong and healthy.

Mr. RAPHAEL: He is not strong and healthy. He has cost me about £1,000 for medical attention. I hope the Government will give consideration to this matter, and ascertain whether the supply of milk to

school children, through the Free Milk Council, is of any material benefit, or is harmful to them.

MR. TONKIN (North-East Fremantle) [10.1]: I would like to see some co-operation between the Education Department and the Employment Department regarding bush camps. At present the only method available by which children in those camps can receive education is by means of the correspondence courses. Parents have not the facilities to enable them to take advantage of those courses. It is practically impossible for it to be done. If the Employment Department endeavoured to fix proper camps in connection with country jobs, schools could be established at which children would receive proper education. It would not involve much organisation or expense. Previously it was found possible by the department to provide schools on wheels. Old railway carriages were utilised, and they were shifted to suit the requirements of the children. I admit that the men on country jobs move about fairly frequently. It ought to be possible to establish centres where school facilities could be provided. For instance, men may be engaged on constructing 40 miles of road, which would take quite a considerable time. Some suitable spot, probably half-way along the length of the road, could be chosen, and a camp school established. One could easily be erected, and a teacher supplied. While the road was being constructed, the children would have an opportunity to secure far more education than they could derive from correspondence lessons. The difficulty should not be insuperable, and I trust something will be done along those lines. I do not know whether the improvement is general, but in the Fremantle area new types of timber have been supplied at the manual training centres. Year after year I have complained that the timber provided by the department was unsuitable. The two types made available formerly were *pinus radiata* and jarrah, and as a result of those difficult timbers being supplied, about 50 per cent. only of the work prescribed was carried out. This year, with additional timber much more suitable for the purpose, better and more work will be done. I trust that improvement is general,

but in any event I am very thankful that such an improvement has been effected in the Fremantle area. We are entitled to expect that this year we shall have provided additional manual training and domestic science accommodation. We have given up our claim to the establishment of a district high school at Fremantle, despite the fact that some years ago a definite promise was made that one would be erected. We accept the decision that the next high school is to be erected at Geraldton, and we believe that the claim for its provision there is superior to that which we can advance, taking all the facts into consideration. While being prepared to forego our claim for a high school, we contend we are entitled to additional manual training and domestic science accommodation. Many of our children have been denied that training for some years. It is more than five years since I was actively engaged in the Education Department, yet numbers of children whom I taught have been denied that training, and there has been no alteration since. Many children in Standards V. and VI. did not receive the tuition in manual training and domestic science to which they were entitled, and, having passed to higher standards, have definitely lost that part of their education. That is essentially wrong. The financial position of the State is better now than during the preceding five years, and we are entitled to advance strongly our claims for the additional accommodation. Recently a deputation from members representing Fremantle electorates waited upon the Acting Minister for Education and placed this matter before him. He admitted that our claim was reasonable and promised to do what he could to have our request granted. I hope he has not forgotten his promise and that he has reminded the Minister for Education of our claim. There is one other matter that is small in itself but means quite a lot to the Fremantle district. The Cottessloe school is situated on the main Perth-Fremantle road. Travellers who passed backwards and forwards could not help noticing the dilapidated condition into which the fence surrounding the school grounds had fallen. I am pleased to acknowledge that a very fine fence has now been erected, and we could not wish for a better one. We appreciate what has been done. We also realise that there are heavy calls upon the public purse and, in the circumstances, any work of this

description that is carried out, we thoroughly appreciate. If the Minister can see his way clear to assist us regarding the provision of additional manual training and domestic science accommodation, he will find that Fremantle members will not worry him so much as they have done in the past.

**MR. NEEDHAM** (Perth) [10.9]: For the past five years I have taken advantage of the opportunity annually when the Education Estimates have been under consideration, to direct attention to the necessity for increased accommodation at the Perth Technical College. In addition to that, I have been instrumental in making representations to successive Ministers for Education who have been in office during that period. On each occasion I have had an assurance that the matter was receiving consideration. I would like the Minister to inform the Committee what practical results have followed his promises for increased accommodation. There is imperative necessity to provide additional accommodation on the Mount's Bay Road frontage. The estimated cost of the building is £15,000 and of the equipment, about £2,000.

The Minister for Education: That is not so.

Mr. NEEDHAM: If I am wrong, then, I say that a suitable building could not be erected for less than that amount. I would like the Minister to inform the Committee what amount was received from the Commonwealth for the purpose of providing youth employment, how much of it was spent and the nature of the employment secured. If the estimate I quoted for the proposed additional buildings on the Mount's Bay frontage of the Technical College is wrong, I feel certain the Minister will not question the necessity for the increased accommodation. Another suggestion I would make to the Minister is that an additional storey be added to the St. George's Terrace frontage of the building, extending to and including the very old adjacent building. If the additional storey is erected, I understand the college could provide accommodation for classes for domestic science, hairdressing, tailoring, dressmaking and millinery. As a matter of fact, all the various classes would be housed under one roof. That would be of considerable help to the students and to the principal and his staff. I am led to believe that the additional storey will cost

from £100,000 to £150,000. That is a large sum of money and probably is not available just now; but the Minister could take into consideration a progressive building plan extending over three or four years.

I would like the Minister to give particulars of the allocation of the money collected from the public of this State for the Jubilee Fund for Youth and Motherhood Endowment. The sum of £50,000 was subscribed by the public, of which £25,000 was for motherhood endowment and £25,000 for youth employment. The amount allocated for motherhood endowment has been well spent in the provision of additional accommodation at the King Edward Memorial Maternity Hospital. Of the £25,000 set aside for youth employment, I understand that about £5,000 has been expended in various ways. A balance of £20,000 still remains, but the trustees are faced with trouble in trying to allocate it, so as to ensure that suitable employment will be found for the youths to benefit from the fund. I realise that £25,000 is not a sum sufficient to solve the problem of youth employment; but I think the trustees would be well advised to consider handing over the balance for the purpose of providing additional accommodation at the Technical College. I mention the matter again to-night, because technical education is an important factor in the training of our youth. The college is doing excellent work. The number of students is yearly increasing; and as the numbers increase, so the authorities find further difficulty in providing accommodation for them. I hope that to-night the Minister will not tell the Committee the matter is under consideration, but that he will definitely say certain things will be done to provide this necessary accommodation at the Technical College.

**MR. SAMPSON** (Swan) [10.18]: The Department of Education is doing excellent work and is conducted extremely well. In my electorate, many matters require urgent attention, but I doubt whether the correct procedure is to bring forward those needs now. I propose to write to the Minister regarding the needs of certain schools in my electorate, and I suggest he give the same consideration to my requests as he would do had I voiced them personally during the discussion on the Estimates. I desire to refer to a matter of general interest,

namely, restrictions at the Technical College. I have great admiration for both our senior and junior technical colleges, which are splendidly conducted; but in my opinion the restriction of certain classes to trade apprentices is wrong. I urge that every lad should have an opportunity to learn whatever the State makes it possible for him to learn. I hope consideration will be given to liberalising opportunities for our boys to receive education, as I submit that the restriction to which I have referred is unfair.

**MR. NORTH** (Claremont) [10.20]: Residents of Claremont will be pleased that the Minister has approved of the completion of the work at the Claremont school grounds. They are also anxious to see the sewerage work completed at the Eric-street school. In answer to a question the Minister told me that the matter of storm water drainage, levelling and surfacing of school grounds in the area was receiving attention.

*[Mr. Steeman took the Chair.]*

**MR. LEAHY** (Hannans) [10.21]: I should like to refer to the education facilities provided on the Eastern Goldfields. From a teaching point of view they are excellent, but during the bad times many of the school buildings, fences, etc., fell into a state of decay. That was at a time when money was not available to keep them in good order. As every member knows, the people of the Eastern Goldfields are very proud of their young children. Overseas travellers who have visited the goldfields have observed that the children there, physically and intellectually, excel those in almost any other district. We have produced some very fine scholars, including Rhodes scholars—young men who have made their mark in the world. The residents of the goldfields being so proud of the young children like to see the school buildings and fences, as well as the actual teaching, kept as near as possible to the highest peak. There are three schools in my constituency that have fallen into a state of disrepair. The fences are in very bad order; some of the rooms are in a bad state and some of the desks are equally bad. I have spoken to the Minister for Education about these matters and he has advised me that they will be attended to as quickly as possible. On behalf of the people of my constituency, I thank the Minister for that

promise and sincerely hope that effect will be given to it promptly. The education of the children, not only of the Eastern Goldfields but also of any community, is one of the most urgent matters, and if money can be made available to maintain the school properties in decent order, I consider it money well spent. Members should realise that children on the Eastern Goldfields do not enjoy all the privileges of children in the coastal areas. The goldfields children have not the sea in which to swim in summer, though they have reasonably good swimming baths, and they have not other facilities that are provided for the children on the coast. If a little more money were devoted to the Eastern Goldfields, I consider that the conditions under which the children exist there would warrant its expenditure. I thank the Minister and the Government for what they have done for those children, and I hope that the North Kalgoorlie, South Kalgoorlie and South Boulder schools will receive attention as soon as possible.

**MR. CROSS** (Canning) [10.25]: Though I could submit quite a large number of very urgent requests, I do not propose to occupy much time. One matter that I do desire to impress upon the Minister relates to the Victoria Park school. I remind the Minister that the sewerage mains have been completed. Recently I inspected the lavatories at the school and found them in a disgraceful condition. I hope the Minister will make sufficient funds available to permit of the deep sewerage being installed there. Because of the topographical position of the school, that matter should be attended to immediately. I need only remind the Minister that a few years ago, when there was an outbreak of diphtheria, quite a large number of children attending the school were infected, and we do not want a recurrence of the trouble. That outbreak played a big part in the agitation for the extension of the sewerage system on the south side of the river. Wherever sewerage facilities are available, particularly in the larger metropolitan schools, they should be installed. I hope the Minister will take the necessary steps in the interests of the health of the children.

**MR. SEWARD** (Pingelly) [10.27]: I should like to pay a tribute to the Director and staff of the Education Department. While I recognise that the Director does

not always give me what I ask for, he has granted my requests wherever possible. I know that he is limited by the funds at his disposal and cannot give me everything I desire, but from him and from the members of the staff I have always received courtesy, and it has always been a pleasure to interview them. After hearing the Minister's speech, I concluded that he had succeeded, beyond my expectations, in satisfactorily apportioning the amount of money at his disposal between the country and the city, but after listening to various speeches on the Estimates I am inclined to believe that he might revise the allocation. If he can afford to spend £300 on the gravelling of a school yard, I should like to inform him that there is much more important work in the country to which the money could be devoted. So far the people associated with the schools in my electorate have not asked me to request that any school yard be gravelled. I am afraid that if they made such a request, they would receive a direct refusal. A small work of that kind might reasonably be left for the local people to attend to. If that sum is available, there is a crying need that I have voiced on many occasions—and probably will voice again on another Bill before the House—for extensions to the School of Agriculture at Narrogin. As the Minister well knows, 30 or 40 per cent. of the applicants for admission to that school have to be turned down each year owing to the lack of accommodation. While we are looking to the rising generation to engage in secondary industries, it is only right that an opportunity should be made available to country boys to attain proficiency in the science of agriculture, so that they will be the better fitted to follow farming activities. Recently the Minister for Employment stated that a sum of £2,500 had been made available to the school out of the Jubilee Fund, I believe, but that was spent on the provision of a dining room. It did not increase the accommodation of the school. While I recognise the need for a proper dining room, some amount from the Jubilee Fund might well be allotted to the Narrogin school to increase the accommodation so that it could take all the pupils offering. With the member for Perth I join in hoping that more money will be made available for this purpose. I have no reason to voice small complaints to-night, but there is one

direction in which an adjustment should be made. The school inspector who visits my electorate has decided to live in Perth. I am not infringing on the rights of my colleague when I refer to this matter and to the school at Narrogin, because the inspector has also jurisdiction over the whole of my electorate. The present inspector, as I say, is living in Perth. I may desire to interview him about various matters, but when I am in Perth he is in his district, and when I return to my electorate he has returned to Perth. That is not right. My objection would not be so great if he had not at his disposal the facilities of an up-to-date town. No inspector could object to living in Narrogin. When a man is appointed to a position it is right that he should live close to his work. If this officer is not prepared to live in Narrogin his position should be offered to someone else who will live there. I know of no other inspector who lives out of his district. The request that he should be told to reside in Narrogin is a reasonable one.

Mr. Cross: I hope the Minister will not take that seriously.

Mr. SEWARD: Will the Minister in his reply tell us the reason for the increase of £4,000 in the amount allotted to the Teachers' College? I presume some special activities are contemplated there.

Mr. PATRICK (Greenough) [10.33]: I have always found the officers of the department very sympathetic, and limited in what they do only by the funds available to them. When speaking last night, the Minister referred to assisted schools. I know a pastoralist in a small way who has six children, and he made a request for an assisted school. The request was refused on the ground that the children all belonged to the one family. He was told that if he could get a child from outside to go in with his own children he would get the assistance he required. Unfortunately, he lives a long way from any other settler, and he could not make this arrangement except by getting a child from some town to live with his own children. A regulation such as that is not fair. The department should not be able to say to a man with perhaps ten children that he can receive no assistance because they all belong to the one family. The principle is wrong. I congratulate the de-

partment on the effort it is making with regard to consolidated schools. Not all the applications have been successful. I received a letter from a lady recently, who said her children had to ride or drive 9½ miles to school. She applied for a bus service. She has declared that if she does not get it she will write one letter a week to every member of Parliament, to the Wheat-growers' Union, the Primary Producers' Association, and the Country Women's Association. I am afraid she has a big task ahead of her. Perhaps it will be possible, for the sake of peace and quietness, to extend the required service to that particular district. I congratulate the Minister on the erection of a high school at Geraldton. Such an establishment was long overdue.

Mr. MARSHALL (Murchison) [10.35]: After the Minister has waved his magic wand and found he has a surplus in the coffers of the Education Department, I plead with him to give immediate attention to the school at Wiluna.

Mr. HEGNEY (Middle Swan) [10.36]: The need for a high school in the Fremantle district, and in the South Perth and Victoria Park districts has been stressed. Someone suggested that possibly the Geraldton district had received consideration ahead of some other locality. As the Minister knows, a high school is needed to serve the Midland Junction and Guildford districts. The suburb is growing, and for some time past consideration has been given to the question of securing a site for the required establishment.

Mr. Doney: And another at Bassendean and Maylands.

Mr. HEGNEY: I am making this speech. The entire district from Bassendean to Greenmount, and towards Belmont, has been scoured in the hope of finding a reasonably good site, but no definite place has yet been decided upon. The time has arrived when a site should be secured and the erection of a high school taken seriously into consideration. The Minister is doing good work in distributing the money placed at his disposal. He is called upon to supply the needs of schools, not only in the metropolitan area, but in the country districts and on the goldfields. The task of adjudicating be-

tween all these schools is a difficult one. Only recently I brought to the notice of the director, Mr. Hadley, the need for improving some of the school grounds. In the absence of the Minister he paid a visit with me to eight schools in the various districts during the winter. One fact stood out, namely, that in years gone by nearly all the school sites were secured on low-lying ground. Many of our difficulties with respect to playing grounds are due to that fact. Year after year we have urged the department to provide gravel and other filling-in material for the improvement of these grounds. I know the resources of the Minister are limited. If he had an additional quarter-of a million pounds he could spend it all in improving the condition of our schools. Under present conditions he obtains a good deal of relief through not having to provide so many class rooms. Convent schools are going up in and around the metropolitan area and in country districts, and are relieving the department of the necessity for so much building activity. In connection with the Bayswater school and on the Rivervale side, definite relief was recently given, because many children left the Government schools and went to the adjacent convent schools. If the Education Department had been called upon to provide all those facilities, its position would be worse than it is to-day. The Minister is trying to do the right thing for all the schools within his control. Throughout the metropolitan area schools are increasing in number, and there is continual need for additional classrooms. This applies particularly in my electorate. The Education Vote is possibly one of the most important we have to deal with, because the education of the young has a direct bearing upon the future citizens of the State. If the education we are giving to our children is not adequate, future generations will suffer. The schools must be supplied with proper facilities and up-to-date equipment necessary for modern education. The department should have more money placed at its disposal than is given to it to-day. After making interest payments on our debts the Treasurer passes out money for other departments, and as a consequence the vote for Education is not commensurate with its importance. I am pleased that from year to year the Minister has been able to induce the Treasurer to increase the vote, and thus

allow some of the problems to be dealt with. For a good many years I have harped here on the need for a playground at the Bayswater State school. I hope this is the last time the matter will have to be ventilated. The 500 children attending that school should have a reasonable playing area.

As regards the milk problem I do not agree with the propositions enunciated by the member for Victoria Park (Mr. Raphael). His reasoning is not altogether sound. Milk is undoubtedly a food highly beneficial to children; at all events, most of the authorities of to-day hold that opinion. The first food a new-born baby takes is milk—the mother's milk to begin with, and if that is insufficient the medical man concerned turns to cows' milk or goats' milk.

Hon. C. G. Latham: The mother's milk is not often examined.

Mr. HEGNEY: Tests have been made where clinics exist. If the mother's milk is found insufficiently nutritive, the doctor puts the baby on cow's milk. It has been suggested that the Education Department should make milk available to school children. When I approached the Minister for Health on the subject, he referred me to "the proper authority." I have been wondering which is the proper authority. When I discussed it with the Minister for Employment, that gentleman said he had no funds from which he could furnish money for the supply of milk. The Minister for Education, has no item on his Estimates for that purpose. Undoubtedly milk is necessary for infant life, especially for those children whose parents have inadequate incomes. I do not know from what source the money may come. The Government contends that it has no funds for the purpose, and there the matter ends.

I congratulate the Minister for Education on his methods of administration. He is a most efficient and most capable administrator of the department. He does his best in every respect. He is not one to tell you that he will do a thing, if he cannot do it. If he promises to do it, he will do it. I would much sooner have a Minister who acts in that way than one who, to use an Australianism, "kicks you up a treat." I hope the present Minister for Education will hold the portfolio for many years, that his vote will be increased, and that with a larger vote he will do even better than he has done so far.

**THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION**

(Hon. F. J. S. Wise—Gascoyne—in reply) [10.46]: I think it necessary to make my position clear. I commend the member for Murehison (Mr. Marshall) on the brevity and reasonableness of his requests.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I think you "worded" the hon. member beforehand.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I desire to explain clearly that many of the requests made do not centre around any authority of mine to make good the wishes of the members in question. For example, there are matters relating to sewerage and gravel. I do interest myself in, and press hard for the carrying-out of, certain works; but they unfortunately do not come within the scope of my Vote. I can say with considerable satisfaction that there has been much progress in the provision of facilities within the last year or two; but I assure members that they occasion the Minister for Education a great deal of worry in pressing for facilities which he knows to be necessary for the better conduct of schools, when he does not control expenditure in that connection. However, considerable progress has been made, and a lot of money has been spent, even on sewerage. The one project referred to by the member for Claremont (Mr. North), with others, will be completed this year.

An excellent suggestion was made by the member for Swan (Mr. Sampson), that though on the Estimates there is a privilege and a need for members to air their grievances against departments, by far the better course, if practicable, is to send letters, especially in relation to urgent matters. Although the occasions are rare, yet they exist when members make complaints in the Chamber without the Minister having had the opportunity to attend to those complaints. The hon. member I have in mind is not present in the Chamber, and it would be unfair to mention his name. However, such complaints are not rare.

For the benefit of the member for Perth (Mr. Needham) I mention that I have no control over, nor have I had anything to do with, moneys from the Jubilee Fund or Commonwealth moneys. They have never come under my jurisdiction; but I have endeavoured, on behalf of the Education Department and its facilities, to obtain funds from those sources, and my applications are receiving favourable consideration. With regard to technical education, for which

the hon. member is such an enthusiast, it surely is satisfactory to him that the plan of which I have spoken, for the construction of two storeys as a start on the Bazaar-terrace front, represents merely the beginning of a nine-storey building which will cover a great portion of the site now devoted to technical classes. The suggestion that another storey should be added to the St. George's Terrace frontage is not practicable. That possibility has been examined, but was rejected by the Principal Architect, whose advice must guide the Government. The foundations are now being tested for a structure that will cost approximately £25,000, not £12,000 as was suggested, and it is hoped there will be an opportunity, even during the current financial year, to start another building where the carpentry room is now situated, to cater for domestic science requirements. The complete plans are now approved and we hope that there will be progressive development until we attain full accomplishment of our objective.

Mr. Needham: Hear, hear.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The question of free milk for school children is one to which the member for Subiaco (Mrs. Cardell-Oliver) has earnestly devoted herself, with the object of arousing enthusiasm both in and outside the metropolitan area. While there may be something in the contentions of the member for Victoria Park (Mr. Raphael), it has been suggested that milk is most desirable for undernourished children. We must remember that the same claim has been advanced for many other foodstuffs. As I promised the hon. member recently, I am having the whole matter investigated, not only from the point of view of supplying milk to children in the city, but, if found feasible, of extending any such scheme to country centres. I also have in view the necessity to clearly set out just where the responsibilities of the Government begin and end in such a matter. While it is true that the Education Vote makes no provision for the supply of milk to school children—incidentally I do not mind if I am intruding upon the work of another Minister—I am having the matter fully investigated with a view to arriving at a solution, if it be a Government responsibility. Any financial assistance made available for that purpose will naturally have to be provided by the

Treasury. While it is satisfactory to receive commendation regarding the work of the department, both as regards teachers and staff, I would explain for the benefit of the member for Pingelly (Mr. Seward), who queried the additional vote of over £4,000 for the Teachers' College, that we are providing extra courses for 36 new students from July to June and increasing the number who will take the new course starting in February. Additional lecturers have been appointed, and we are endeavouring to make up for the lag in past years, which accounted for the shortage in teachers.

Vote put and passed.

Progress reported.

*House adjourned at 10.55 p.m.*

## Legislative Council.

*Tuesday, 4th October, 1938.*

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

### QUESTION—AUSTRALIAN WORKERS' UNION.

*Registration under Industrial Arbitration Act.*

Hon. H. SEDDON asked the Chief Secretary: 1, On how many occasions has the Australian Workers' Union applied for registration as a union under the Arbitration Act? 2, What other unions—if any—lodged objec-

tions to such registration? 3, On what grounds were objections lodged?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: I have a statement that answers all the questions of the hon. member. This statement I will lay on the Table of the House.

### BILL—LIGHTS (NAVIGATION PROTECTION).

Read a third time and transmitted to the Assembly.

### BILL—STATE GOVERNMENT INSURANCE OFFICE.

*Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 29th September.

HON. A. THOMSON (South-East) [4.35]: The Honorary Minister said this Bill was brought down in accordance with the findings of the select committee that sat last year. I have carefully perused the report. A statement has frequently been made in this House that the companies point blank refused to make any offer for the insurance of men who came under the Miners' Phthisis Act. Be that as it may, they were justified in asking for information that the Government apparently did not possess. The Government really took a long shot in the dark. I will not go into all the pros and cons dealing with the evidence that was submitted to the select committee. In reply to a question I asked I learned that over £600,000 had been contributed by the Government to the dependants of those who suffered from miners' diseases. I have consistently voted against legislation of this nature as it has come before us year after year, but on this occasion I may surprise members by giving this Bill my support. In the interests of what I may term social service, an undertaking of this nature should be within the control of the Government.

The Workers' Compensation Act was intended to operate compulsorily in the case of all those who would be likely to come under its provisions. Those employers who are able to pay will no doubt have relieved themselves of responsibility for accident or death by insuring their employees. Another section of the community is willing to take the risk. When accident occurs, the dependants suffer