

# Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 13th October, 1915.

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

## PETITION—PUBLIC LIBRARY, MUSEUM, AND ART GALLERY.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY (Perth) [4.33]: I have a petition to present from the trustees of the Public Library, Museum and Art Gallery of Western Australia. The petition is signed by twelve signatories, and contains a prayer for certain relief. I have examined the petition, and find that it is in conformity with the Standing Orders of the House. I move—

*That the petition be received and read.*

Question put and passed.

Petition received and read.

The Premier: What are you going to do now?

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: We will deal with it when the new Estimates are considered.

## QUESTION—EDUCATION DEPARTMENT CIRCULAR.

Mr. HEITMANN asked the Minister for Education: What is the cost to the Education Department of the publication of the *Circular*, including cost of time of Senior Inspector in charge?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: (a) The cost of the *Education Circular*, including postage, for the finan-

cial year 1914-15 was £561 6s. There were eleven issues, and the average monthly cost was £51. During the twelve months the sum of £56 was received for advertisements and subscriptions. Increased cost of printing has increased price. (b) It is impossible to state definitely the cost to the State of the time given to editing the *Circular* by the senior inspector in charge, because no special time can be assigned for such work. It is generally performed in the senior inspector's private time. The official time spent on the work for the current year does not average half a day per month: the private time averages several days per month.

## QUESTION—THE WAR, STREET COLLECTIONS.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS asked the Premier: 1, Has his attention been drawn to a report in the morning's paper, which shows that it is intended to make two street collections during the present month? 2, Is he aware that a considerable section of the public is complaining about the number of street collections which are being made. 3, Is it the intention of the Government to take into consideration the advisability of exercising some control over the collecting of money for purposes in any way connected with the war?

The PREMIER replied: 1, Yes. 2, No. 3, There is no authority under which the Government could exercise control.

## QUESTION — RABBIT-PROOF FENCES. DAMAGE BY STORMS.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM asked the Minister for Agriculture: 1, What was the extent of the damage done to the rabbit fences by storms during February last? 2, How long did it take to put the fences in a proper state of repair after the wash-aways? 3, How many extra men, if any, were employed in the work of repairing the damaged fences? 4, What was the cost of the repairs?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE replied: 1. Approximately 70

miles washed down or made not rabbit-proof. 2, Damaged positions were made temporarily rabbit-proof immediately; the permanent work took, in some cases, six weeks to complete. 3, Eleven. 4, Wages £166 6s. 9d. Spare material on spot used.

#### QUESTION—STATE TRADING CONCERNS, BALANCE SHEETS.

Hon. FRANK WILSON asked the Premier: 1, Will he see that the balance sheets for the year ending 30th June last are presented to Parliament before the Estimates of the State trading concerns are considered? 2, If not, why not?

The PREMIER replied: 1 and 2, The hon. member is aware of my instructions to departments and the Auditor General, and only yesterday I placed on the Table of the House a return showing the position of the accounts. No man can do any more.

#### QUESTION—PUBLIC SERVICE AND PAYMENT OF INCREASES.

Mr. SMITH asked the Premier: In view of his definite promise, made in this House on the 11th February last, and reported in *Hansard* on page 1507, that the Government, acknowledging that "the State is legally and morally bound, in every way, to pay the increases" due to civil servants under the Appeal Board decisions, would "not repudiate a single penny" of such payments, when does he intend to redeem his promise so far as it affects the 40 lower grade officers about whom questions have already been asked?

The PREMIER replied: This has been done by the payment of at least the minimum of the grade fixed on appeal, and this is all that the promise involved.

#### QUESTIONS (3)—EDUCATION DEPARTMENT.

##### *Kindergarten System.*

Mr. SMITH asked the Minister for Education: 1, What were the reasons for bringing a special "Montessori" instruc-

tress from New South Wales? 2, How long was the lady employed by the Department? What was the salary paid and expenses? 3, What were her duties in connection with the Training College students? 4, How many teachers apart from students attended and received instruction from this expert.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: 1, It was considered highly desirable for teachers in this State to obtain an acquaintance with the recent development in training infants under what is known as the Montessori method. The Education Department of New South Wales had despatched one of its best teachers to Rome to study directly under Dr. Montessori. On her return the system was inaugurated in a special school in Sydney and specially selected teachers were trained there. The Education Department of New South Wales generously agreed to lend one of its best exponents of the system to this State for twelve months. By this means the system was introduced and adapted to our needs in this State with little loss of time. 2, One year and one week. Salary recommended by the Director of Education in New South Wales and approved by the Minister here to this expert was £286 per annum, plus travelling expenses to and from Sydney. The latter amounted to £25 14s. 6d. Miss Stevens was paid also £24 for a course of lectures to students for two terms. 3, Lecture work on Montessori principles and demonstration work. 4, Special observation days were set apart and permission was granted to any teachers who applied to visit the centre. This permission was utilised by practically all the head teachers of all infant schools and assistants within reach. Many other teachers also availed themselves of the privilege.

##### *Inspectors' Motor-cars.*

Mr. ALLEN asked the Minister for Education: 1, Has the department made any agreement with any of its inspectors concerning the purchase or use of motor-cars? 2, If so, with whom and what is

the nature of such agreement or agreements? 3, What inspectors were supplied with yearly railway tickets, and what was the cost of each for 1914?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: 1, The department has an agreement with two inspectors to use their own motor-cars. 2, Mr. Inspector McLintock, Great Southern district, at 6d. per mile on journeys when it is the most economical way of reaching a school. Approval given on 31st May, 1915, to operate to 31st December, 1915. Mr. Inspector Wheeler, South-Western district, at 9d. per mile, no charge to be made for detention, and car to be used for approved journeys only. Approved on 5th inst., and to operate until 31st December, 1915. 3, Director of Education, all lines, £42 15s. 6d. Chief Inspector, all lines, £42 15s. 6d. Senior Inspector Clubb, from 1st August, 1914, £42 15s. 6d. Senior Inspector Klein, metropolitan, £16 1s. 6d. Senior Inspector Miles, G.S.R., £22 15s. 6d. Inspector Gamble, S.W.R., £24 9s. 6d. Inspector Wheeler, S.W.R. and G.S.R., £36 5s. 6d. Inspector Hadley, goldfields, £17 15s. 6d. Inspector Hughes, Midland, £39 6s.; Northern, £24 9s. 6d. Inspector McLintock, G.S.R., £22 15s. 6d. Inspector Gladman, Eastern G.R., £33 15s. 6d. Miss Nisbet, Sewing Inspectress, all lines, £42 15s. 6d. Advisory Teacher Murdock, all lines, £42 15s. 6d. Advisory Teacher Burns, all lines (half-year), £23 10s. Inspector, manual training, all lines, £42 15s. 6d. Inspectress, household management, all lines, £42 15s. 6d.

#### *Practice School for Students.*

Mr. SMITH asked the Minister for Education: 1, On whose recommendation was the Claremont Infants' School made a practice school for students? 2, Did the principal of the Training College deem it necessary to have more practice schools?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: 1, The Director of Education. 2, Yes. See pages 89 and 90 of Annual Report for 1913, which I am tabling. It was not possible to carry out all suggestions made by the principal in this sec-

tion of his report, but the department has endeavoured to meet his wishes in the direction of affording increased facilities for training his students in infant school methods and practice (a) by placing at his disposal an excellent infant school in close proximity to the college, an infant school presided over by a very able head mistress, who has recently spent much time abroad in making herself acquainted with the latest educational developments in the work of infant schools, particularly in Montessorian and in experimental methods; (b) by appointing to the staff of this school for a period of twelve months an assistant teacher specially qualified in Montessori methods—a teacher whose services were placed at the disposal of the department through the courtesy of the Director of Education in New South Wales.

#### QUESTION—SOUTH PERTH FERRY SERVICE.

Mr. ROBINSON asked the Premier: 1, Who prepared the design of the ferry steamer "Perth"? 2, Who constructed the steamer? 3, What was the cost? 4, What was the date of handing over? 5, For how long has the steamer been engaged on the service? 6, For how long has she been laid up? 7, How many men are necessary to man the—(a) "Duchess"; (b) "Perth"? 8, How many men were employed by the South Perth Ferry Company? 9, How many men are employed in the ferry service? 10, Is it a fact that one man is employed to sell tickets at Barrack-street and another to stand at the barrier and check same? 11, Could not the work be carried out by one man as in the company's time? 12, What were the fares—(a) in the time of the company; (b) during the period of State control?

The PREMIER replied: 1, McKie & Baxter, Copland Works, Govan, Glasgow. 2, The hull was constructed by A. E. Brown, of North Fremantle, and the machinery supplied by McKie & Baxter. 3, £7,974 8s. 2d. 4, 31st January, 1915. 5, Five months. 6, Three and a-half

months (during winter). She will resume running on 1st proximo. 7, (a) Two men and one boy; (b) two men and two boys. 8, Eleven. 9, Seventeen. The six extra hands are as follows: one man and one boy on relieving, to enable the staff to be given one day off a week, a concession granted by the Government (in addition to the reduction of hours per week from 62 to 54); the ticket collector as set forth in reply to No. 11; two extra boys for the "Perth," and the skipper of the boat engaged in the Queen street service, which was taken up by the Government after private enterprise had abandoned it. 10, Yes. 11, Yes; but such an arrangement would not meet audit requirements. 12, (a) Ordinary single 3d.; return 6d. Periodical: monthly, gentlemen 10s.; ladies 6s.; children 5s. 3d.; quarterly, gentlemen 21s.; ladies 12s. 6d.; children 10s. 6d. (b) Up to 1st October, 1915, ordinary single 3d.; return 6d. Periodical: monthly, gentlemen 8s.; ladies 5s.; children 4s.; quarterly, gentlemen 21s.; ladies 12s. 6d.; children 10s. 6d. From 1st October, 1915: ordinary, single 3d.; return 6d. Periodical: monthly, gentlemen 9s.; ladies 5s. 6d.; children 4s. 6d.; quarterly, gentlemen 23s.; ladies 14s.; children 11s. 6d.

#### QUESTION — STATE IMPLEMENT WORKS, VALUE OF ASSETS.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER asked the Minister for Works: 1, What was the value of all stock and implements on hand at the State Implement Works on 30th June, 1915? 2, What amount was due by sundry debtors on that date? 3, What provision at that date had been made for bad debts? 4, What was the total value of all other assets, including buildings, on that date? 5, What amount was due to sundry creditors on that date? 6, What was the total amount at that date which had been written off for depreciation since the inception of the works?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, £49,689 5s. 4d. 2, £41,684 12s. 10d. 3, £2,097 7s. 4, £83,902 8s. 2d.

5, £5,566 10s. 6, £6,310 4s. 11d. These figures are subject to amendment as a result of audit.

#### RETURN — EDUCATION DEPARTMENT, TEACHERS TRANSFERRED.

On motion by Mr. HEITMANN (Geraldton) ordered: "That a return be laid upon the Table of the House, showing— 1, the number of teachers transferred during the period from 1st November, 1914, to 1st March, 1915, 2, The cost of the department in travelling expenses, train, coach, and other allowance."

#### PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Premier: Public Service List, 1915.

By the Attorney General: Education Department report for 1913.

#### SELECT COMMITTEE, WYNDHAM FREEZING WORKS.

##### *Extension of Time.*

Mr. GEORGE: I have to ask the indulgence of the House once more. There are so many papers to go through that it has not been possible to complete the report to permit of its presentation to-day. I therefore move—

*That the time for bringing up the report of the select committee be extended for one week.*

Question passed.

#### ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1915-16.

##### *In Committee of Supply.*

Resumed from the previous day, Mr. Holman in the Chair.

Attorney General's department (Hon. T. Walker, Minister):

Vote—Attorney General, £70,770:

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. T. Walker—Kanowna) [4.55]: As this is only an administrative department, although it involves one or two new features, I do not think the Committee will expect from me a long introductory

speech. Moreover, I know that hon. members are anxious that the Estimates shall be disposed of as quickly as possible. I want, however, to say how much we all regret that since the Estimates of this department were last considered, we have lost a very valuable officer in the person of the late Crown Prosecutor, Major Frank Parker, who died whilst on service. The late gentleman was not killed, but he succumbed to an illness in Egypt. I desire to place on record my appreciation of the services the late Major Parker rendered to the State. The feature in connection with these Estimates, to which I have already referred, is that there has been added to this department the State hotels, Tourists' Bureau, and inspection of liquor. An apparent anomaly has been created by placing one of these departments under the heading of the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court is practically saddled with the cost of these departments and hon. members when considering the Estimates must not judge the cost of justice by these additions. I do not think there is any necessity to go into details. If the Committee desire further facts, I shall be pleased to supply them when the items are being considered.

Hon. FRANK WILSON (Sussex) [4.58]: I have very little to say about this department, but I want to endorse the remarks which fell from the Attorney General with reference to the late Major Parker. The loss of that officer is very severe to the State of Western Australia. The late Major Parker was also an excellent citizen and he had previously done his duty to the Empire in South Africa. I am sure our hearts go out to his widow and his children and also to all the members of his family. With regard to the department, I desire only to say that when there is, to some extent, depression in the State, one would imagine there would not be the same necessity for expenditure in such a department as this. Perhaps, however, that does not always follow, for hard times often bring more litigation.

The Attorney General: It is about normal.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Some of the items may possibly stand a little reduction in order to assist in the general economy which was outlined by the Treasurer when he introduced the Estimates. The note of economy sounded so lately has not gone very far.

Mr. WILLMOTT (Nelson) [5.0]: Let me endorse the remarks of the Attorney General and the leader of the Opposition. I had the great pleasure of knowing Major Parker from the time when he was a little boy, and he had the affection of everyone who knew him up till the day he left our shores. I do not intend to delay the Committee on the Attorney General's Department; being such a young politician, perhaps it is inadvisable for me to do so, but I will just say I would sooner be a young politician full of vigour than an old politician bordering on senility.

Hon. J. MITCHELL (Northam) [5.1]: I do not agree with the member for Nelson; I think the Attorney General is full of vigour. I notice the Attorney General has employed outside counsel during the last few months. I suppose the fact is that a successor to Major Parker has not been appointed and the Attorney General has had to go outside for assistance. This method of doing business is likely to be expensive to the State.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. T. Walker—Kanowna—in reply) [5.2]: The positions of those officers who have gone away are being kept vacant for the time being. Major Parker is not the only officer whom we have lost from the office, but we have lost several since the Estimates were completed. Some very valuable officers have gone away and we do not intend to fill the positions if we can get along without doing so. We have been saving expense by giving out briefs. As the leader of the Opposition has said, litigation has not been quite as extensive as in more prosperous times. As hon. members know, law is more or less a luxury. We have, I venture to think, saved some little money. The office of Crown Prosecutor will have to

be filled, but we do not intend to fill offices that have been vacated unless we are obliged to.

This concluded the general debate on the Estimates of the Attorney General's Department; votes and items discussed as follow:—

Vote—Salaries, £53,480:

Item—Clerks, £3,058.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Last year 17 clerks were employed; this year 18 are to be employed; the vote is increased by £251 over the amount for last year. These little items aggregate a big sum. The Estimates ought not to show increases in the staff if the departments are unable to show decreases.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: It is true there is an increase, due to the fact that we have been doing work for the Industries Assistance Board. The increase in cost is due in a measure to automatic increases. The increase of £201 is made up as follows:—£60 automatic increases, one officer who was previously paid from extra temporary assistance, £120, which is a saving on the amount for last year of £20.

Item—Clerks of court, £9,768.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: There is an increase of five in the number of clerks. What work has there been to warrant these clerks being appointed?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: These clerks were previously paid from the temporary assistance vote. They having passed their examinations have become junior officers and are classified on the permanent staff. Previously they were temporary hands waiting the passing of their examinations.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: That sounds very well but it is not borne out by the figures. Although the expenditure on clerks has increased by £393, the temporary clerical assistance vote is also increased by £246.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The increase is accounted for by automatic increases and some officers have previously been paid out of the temporary vote.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Are these five clerks additional officers?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The increase in the number of employees refers altogether to juniors.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: But the temporary vote is increased this year.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Slightly because we did not spend all our temporary vote last year.

Item—Temporary clerical and other assistance, including provision for payment of temporary officers who may be appointed to permanent positions, and who, when appointed, will be paid from this item if provision is not made elsewhere, £2,450.

Mr. ROBINSON: From the remarks of the Attorney General one would have expected that the vote of last year would have been reduced, because one clerk previously on the temporary staff has been placed on the permanent staff, and five other clerks had also been paid from the temporary vote and the salaries of these clerks total £553. Instead of a vote of £2,450 it ought to have been something like £1,500. In these days of stress there should be no temporary men who can be done without, and there should be no overtime or extra temporary assistance. The work should be done by those occupying permanent positions.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: This item shows an increase on last year's expenditure of £246, which is purely due to the savings effected last year. The estimate this year is no greater than was the estimate last year. One of the officers was off during a portion of the year and £30 of his salary was not expended, but we have to provide for his salary this year. Then, £260 is for services rendered to the Industries Assistance Board. Under the Crown Law Department there is a net increase of £334, but that is made up of £260 for the clerks provided for the Industries Assistance Board and an automatic increase of £20 for the telephone attendant. Another man left last year and his salary was saved, but we shall have to fill his position this year. There are three other officers who went to the war. Exclusive of the £260 mentioned, the net increase is only £70. Conse-

quently it is not so alarming as members have inferred.

Mr. Robinson: There would be no automatic increases to the temporary staff.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: We have to pay the increments to those officers in the Crown Law Department, and the money comes out of this item.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I protest against the farmers being debited with the increases made in every department. When we passed the Industries Assistance Bill, we understood that the simplest possible arrangements would be made to register the advances to farmers.

The Attorney General: We are not charging the farmers, but the Crown Law department.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: We understood the particulars would be kept in the Agricultural department and that the ordinary method of registration would be avoided. There is no reason for an increase in this item. The increase on clerks alone amounts to about £1,400.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The Estimates are not framed on the same principle as last year. This item applies to the Land Titles, Crown Law and Supreme Court offices and to the magistracy. The only increases are due to the increments and to the Industries Assistance Board work.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: The Attorney General's argument contains sufficient justification for reducing the item. The department did not spend the money last year and, therefore, should not need it this year. As the member for Irwin remarked yesterday, if the departmental officers have a large incidental vote, they will find use for it. An item of this kind is really an open purse over which the Minister cannot exercise any real control. So long as the money is provided, it will be spent.

The Attorney General: We cannot do without it.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: A sum of £246 was saved last year, and this year the cost should be no greater. I move an amendment—

*That the item be reduced by £450.*

Mr. ROBINSON: I was hopeful that the Minister would agree to a reduction to £2,000, because, according to his own figures, some of the expenditure last year will not recur this year. There is less work in every law office in the State this year, and any office which cost £2,000 to run last year should cost less this year.

Mr. ALLEN: The increases on the three items amount to £840. The Minister said some of them are accounted for by automatic increases and some by the Industries Assistance Board work. It would be helpful if he would give the various items. If some officers are at the war and are not being paid, there should be a substantial decrease in the expenditure.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I hope the item will not be reduced. This money is pledged.

Hon. Frank Wilson: A temporary vote is not pledged in advance to the hilt.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Last year these items were allocated to each sub-head, whereas this year they are lumped in the one sum of £2,450. If this vote is reduced, we cannot possibly guarantee to carry on these services of the country. We have to deal with temporary assistance and the relieving of magistrates and clerks of courts all over the State.

Mr. James Gardiner: Has not that always been a charge?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Yes.

Mr. James Gardiner: Then why should it be more this year?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: We are not increasing the regular charge except to provide for automatic increases.

Mr. James Gardiner: Automatic increases cannot account for this.

Hon. Frank Wilson: From your description, is not this expenditure rather permanent than temporary?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: These men are practically permanent and, if not otherwise provided for, must be paid out of this item.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You said you are committed to this expenditure. I do not think you are.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Last year we lessened our expenses through some officers going to the war and a decrease in business. We are practically asking for the amount voted last year. A reduction of £450 would stultify us in our estimate. We must meet our obligations this year, and pay for work done.

Mr. Robinson: But that observation does not apply to prospective temporary staff.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Undoubtedly. While the work is going on, temporary services must be obtained when necessary. We tried to save as much as possible last year, and on that account, it seems, we are to be crippled.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Attorney General is a good special pleader, but I am afraid his knowledge of accountancy does not equal his knowledge of law. All these items have been somewhat increased, by £700 odd in all, as compared with last year. The total figures certainly do not show severe economy, but only a saving of £117. This year the number of clerks is to be increased by six. The Attorney General appears to be under a wrong impression with regard to this temporary item. He argues that the Government are committed to the expenditure under it. But the very nature of the term "temporary" shows that the Government are not committed to the expenditure. What is there to warrant us in believing that this year the Attorney General must spend £2,450 whereas last year he spent only £2,204, and seeing that five officials have been transferred to the permanent staff?

The Attorney General: This item covers no less than five branches.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: But why spend £2,450 this year?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I repeat that we are only asking what we asked last year. Take the item of stipendiary magistrates. Under this item we have to make provision for no less a sum than £200 for Doctor Gurdon.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: Where is he?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: At Derby.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: The Colonial Secretary's Department pay him.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: No. We pay some doctors who act as resident magistrates. It is a matter of arrangement between the departments. At the present time we have to provide for relieving at Derby, Bunbury, and Fremantle, and later we shall have to provide for relieving at Northam, Katanning, and Kalgoorlie.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You had the same obligation last year.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Not necessarily.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: Do you say a relieving magistrate is paid out of the temporary vote? Is he not a permanent officer of the department?

Mr. Taylor: He would be on the permanent staff, and this item deals with temporary officers.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: We must have a vote to pay an officer who may be sent temporarily to Derby.

Mr. Taylor: He would be paid out of the permanent vote.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: This item deals with other assistance generally, and it leaves no margin for meeting any emergency. Hon. members must admit that we have not been extravagant but, on the contrary, have kept as close as possible to necessities. We are asking for more than was spent last year, but not for more than we were granted last year. We do not want to go on the principle of exceeding our votes.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Altogether you are asking £590 more than last year.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: People look on the Government as agents for facilitating justice as much as possible, and for that reason we want to have justice fairly administered not only in Perth but in every part of the State, and therefore we require this item to meet any possible emergency. If the money is not needed, it will not be spent.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I am afraid the more the Attorney General explains the deeper he will get into the mire. He is asking for £500 more than he asked for last year. It is true that he shows a decrease of £2,429 on the total vote but why is there a decrease? Because



there are decreases of £1,694 under the heading of "General election," and £1,363 in connection with election expenses. On those two items alone we have a reduction of £3,000.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I am asking the Committee to give me what was given last year under this vote.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Attorney General is not showing why he should expend more this year than he did last year. For temporary and subsidised clerks of courts the Attorney General is asking for £1,700 when last year he only expended £1,636, and yet this year he is going to have a slack time.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: If we were a ridiculously extravagant department there would be some justification for the reduction, but hon. members know that there is no more cautious man in this State than Mr. Hampton, the Under Secretary.

Hon. Frank Wilson: I admit that.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Hon. members can rely upon that gentleman being thoroughly watchful of every officer who has the expending of money during the ensuing year.

Hon. Frank Wilson: I want you to be watchful.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I am watchful, but I hope hon. members will not cripple me and so prevent me meeting cases of emergency when they occur. If the services are not rendered the money will not be spent.

Mr. Taylor: It is an incentive to spend it when it is there.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: It is not.

Mr. Taylor: That is what you argued on the House Committee Vote.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I did not. I hope the Committee will carry the vote as it stands. Notwithstanding the sophistry of the leader of the Opposition I want to repeat that I am only asking the Committee to vote what was voted last year.

Mr. TAYLOR: The argument of the Attorney General that because he was given this sum last year it must be voted again this year must fall to the ground.

No one will say that the time has not arrived for economy. Indeed, we must practice economy more this year than before and the Committee must ask the Attorney General to live within his means. That is not too much to ask. If the Committee reduce the item, no hardship will be placed on the Attorney General's department. Perhaps the reduction asked for is too much, but if the department lived on £2,204 last year, it should live on at least the same amount this year.

Hon. Frank Wilson: And they transferred five officers to another vote.

Mr. TAYLOR: That indeed gives them more this year than they had last year. The argument about the money having been voted last year should have no force with the Committee. We have realised only this year the necessity for applying the pruning knife and it is our duty to direct the Government in the manner in which economies can be effected. I am certain we shall not impair the efficiency of the department by reducing the item.

Amendment put and passed.

Item—Night watchman, caretakers and cleaners, £1,600.

Mr. ALLEN: This item appears to have increased considerably. I have the Estimates of last year before me and they show that the amount which was voted was only £650.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: This amount of £1,600 is made up of £962 for caretakers' of courthouses throughout the State and £624 for caretakers, night watchman, cleaners, etc., for the Supreme Court, Crown Law, and other sub-departments, leaving £14 for eventualities.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: How is it that on page 76 of last year's Estimates we find the amount is only £650?

The CHAIRMAN: Hon. members must recognise that this year the item includes all branches.

Item—Chainman, £140.

Mr. ROBINSON: In what section of the department is the chainman used?

The Attorney General: In the Titles.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Contingencies, £22,290:

Item—Law Books, £250.

Mr. FOLEY: In the vote "Literary and Scientific Grants" we passed an item of £100 for law books. In the discussion which took place on that item, this item was explained to be an amount for the purchase of law books for the use of the legal profession. I think lawyers should purchase their own law books. I move an amendment—

*That the item be struck out.*

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The previous item referred to has no relation to this. The law books here provided for are for the use of the Crown Law officers, magistrates, and the judges in the administration of their duties. The money is already ear-marked, and we have to meet these obligations.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Could you not do without some of these this year?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: No. They are delivered regularly as issued, on order. There is a £40 increase on an order for the *English Reports Annotated*, the subscription to which is £40 per annum for three years.

Mr. Heitmann: You got these last year?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: No; they are now on order, to be delivered, and we cannot do without them. It is necessary that we should have the latest reports.

Mr. ROBINSON: There is a law library at the Supreme Court which the judges use, and to which the members of the legal profession have access. We have already passed an item of £100 in respect to that. The law books mentioned in this item have been fully explained by the Attorney General. The books are for the use of the Crown Solicitor, the Attorney General's Department, the magistrates and, possibly, the judges. The Attorney General referred to the *English Reports Annotated*. Every member of the profession who can afford to pay for these reports is doing so. Every lawyer's office in town possesses a large library.

Mr. Willmott: Which the public have paid for.

Mr. ROBINSON: We expect the latest information from the Crown Law officers, and therefore we must put the necessary tools at their disposal. These *English Reports Annotated*, which are just being printed, are a recast of thousands of volumes which have been annotated and brought up to date. It would cost, perhaps, £1,000 to buy the books which this work summarises. The fact that the Attorney General's department is purchasing this work shows that they are trying to keep up to date. I should be sorry to see the department, by a catch vote, deprived of useful and necessary books.

Mr. FOLEY: With a view to moving a further amendment, I would like to withdraw the amendment I have moved.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

Mr. FOLEY: I move an amendment—

*That the item be reduced by £43.*

After listening to the Attorney General and the member for Canning, I think we should cut down this item. There has not been the same amount of law this year and, therefore, there is no need to have the same provision on the Estimates as appeared last year.

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

*[Mr. Holman took the Chair.]*

Mr. FOLEY: In moving that the item be reduced by £43, I think a good argument to use is the fact that £250 per annum has been voted for law books. I do not want to be one of those to cut down an expenditure if it would debar a young rising lawyer from taking advantage of the facilities afforded or place him at a disadvantage with those who are in more affluent circumstances. If the whole amount was struck out we would be doing a great amount of good to the State. These books are a disadvantage to the State. If they were not used, the laws that we make would be put into use by the lawyers, by the judges, and by everyone connected with the Crown Law Department. Instead of that, this State provides money for books for lawyers in order that they may do away altogether with the work we have performed here in Parliament. They

bring down from some dark ages an annotated report, or revised annotated report, or something that was done in Germany or in Britain, or which might date back to the time of Cicero. It would be a good thing if the books were not used, because every time a litigant goes to the court he is up against some precedent which has been established, and which is only established through these books. If we had none of these books we would have no precedents. If a man was pleading my case in a court without these books, he would use his common sense and knowledge of what was the meaning of the law framed in this and other Chambers of the sort. If the State could reap any benefit from these books, I would say "Let the State have them." But I contend that in all justice and fairness we ought to cut them down. I hope the cutting down would mean that the books would not be used to such an extent by the lawyers, who for the most part have their own sets, and that precedents would not hold so great a sway as formerly so far as the administration of our laws is concerned.

Amendment put and negatived.

Item—Incidental, including postage, stationery, travelling, information etc., £6,350.

Mr. HEITMANN: Can the Attorney General give me some information in regard to the procedure adopted in the case of the prosecution by John Darling & Sons of a certain individual, which prosecution was first heard in Geraldton, where he was discharged, and subsequently held in Perth? I am informed that the expenses of this firm in connection with the prosecution in Perth were paid to them by the Crown Law authorities. This seems to me to be entirely wrong.

Mr. O'Loughlen: It appears from the evidence that the firm was looking for trouble.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): And they should have got trouble.

Mr. HEITMANN: Was the procedure adopted on this occasion unusual, or was it the procedure regularly followed?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I should prefer that the hon. member would give notice of a question of this sort. I cannot retain in my mind every incident connected with the many cases which pass through the department.

Mr. Heitmann: I will accept that.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: There has been no unusual departure in the case referred to. As a matter of fact the firm were compelled to pay certain expenses in connection with the matter. Representations were made by them to the effect that a fair trial could not be obtained in Geraldton and the firm were informed that if it was desired to change the venue of the trial they would have to pay the costs.

Item—General election, £3,000.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: I should like to hear from the Attorney General why this item appears here at all.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: We shall have the Legislative Council general elections next year, and this item is to meet the expenses which will have to be incurred. It is practically as costly to hold an election for a third of the members as it would be if they all went up for re-election.

Item—Extra assistance in the preparation of electoral rolls; fees to returning and presiding officers; payments to police and others in connection with electoral canvassing; advertising, printing and other expenses in connection with by-elections, etc., £3,000.

Mr. HEITMANN: I would like to hear from the Attorney General what has been done in connection with the scheme for the amalgamation of the State rolls with those of the Federal department. When the Attorney General went to the Eastern States it was said that he was going into this question with the object of bringing about, if possible, that amalgamation.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: This matter was gone into elaborately when I was in the Eastern States with the result that a conference of electoral officers met, with a view of bringing about uniformity not only between one State and the Commonwealth but between all the

States and the Commonwealth. The Chief Electoral Officer of this State went to the East and met the various electoral officers. He has presented his report and I believe that the representatives of the various States have recommended to their Governments that there should be an alteration of the local law so as to permit of uniformity with the Commonwealth provisions. I have the report of our Chief Electoral Officer under consideration, but to effect the reform there will be needed an alteration of the existing law. That will require legislation and on that account the matter has not been seriously considered for this session, because we gave an undertaking that controversial matters would not be dealt with and this is certainly a controversial matter. The scheme to bring about uniformity will therefore be submitted next session.

MR. O'LOGHLEN: I am delighted to hear the Attorney General announce that some progress has been made in this matter, but I must confess to a feeling of disappointment that greater progress has not been made.

The Attorney General: It could have been introduced this session.

MR. O'LOGHLEN: Even then we have no guarantee that the other States would act simultaneously. On the face of it it seems a simple proposition. It has been advocated by public bodies in the State, and while I have no doubt that the Attorney General did his best at the Premiers' conference, I feel that those conferences and conferences generally are getting beyond a fair thing in Australia. No matter what subject of public importance is raised, a conference is summoned. In regard to this matter, I trust that finality has been reached so far as conferences are concerned. The frequent conferences held between departmental heads on various matters and between Ministers at which finality is not arrived are becoming too numerous. So far as I can judge, at the Premiers' conferences they generally allot to one Minister the task of drafting a Bill and submitting a report to the next conference, and if he does not happen to be present

at that, the matter is lost sight of. I hope early next session the Attorney General will be able to lead the Australian States by having this amalgamation brought about.

MR. WILLMOTT: Is the Attorney General agreeable to having printed on ballot papers opposite the name of the candidate the party to which the candidate belongs?

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member cannot deal with that matter, because it would require legislative action.

MR. B. J. STUBBS: In regard to the Legislative Council rolls, we find that in the case of many electors there is a duplication of their qualifications, that is to say, if they hold various parcels of land they are all enumerated beside the name. In some instances, the particulars occupy four or five lines of printed matter. I have been informed that some hundreds of pounds could be saved in connection with the printing of the rolls if only one qualification of an elector was given. Surely that should be sufficient. At a time like the present, when money is so urgently needed for other purposes, we should study a question like this.

HON. J. MITCHELL: The Attorney General will remember that last year something was said about the necessity for claim cards, and I understood he intended to have those cards signed so as to straighten out the confusion. I would like to know what has been done in that direction. Will the people whose names are transferred from the Federal rolls to our rolls be required to sign claim cards?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Claim cards have never been abolished. They were used to the very last; every one sent in was utilised. It will be remembered that we did not have time to carry out a canvass just before the last election and that canvass was abandoned, and we had to bring the rolls to as near a state of perfection as we could. The policy of the Government is not to disfranchise anyone and to give everybody the fullest chance to be able to exercise a vote. As we did not have time to adopt the ordinary method of canvassing the country, what was done was merely as a tempor-

any expedient and not with the idea of rejecting claims or nullifying the value of claims. It was an expedient to get as perfect a roll as possible. In regard to the suggestion of the member for Subiaco, I think it is a good one, but hon. members know that while a man may own a number of properties scattered throughout the province, in the course of the year he may part with one or two or even three of them, and we want to know exactly what his qualification is at the time he is exercising the franchise. Therefore we must put in all his qualifications. We are obliged to comply with the terms of the Act and show the qualifications for the Legislative Council.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The position in regard to the rolls is entirely unsatisfactory. The Attorney General set aside the provisions of the Act; and to-day we have on the rolls many names taken from the Federal rolls without the proper procedure having been followed. The Act provides that they must sign claim cards.

The Attorney General: The subject is dead.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: It never will be while there is anyone on the rolls who has been put there illegally. We should have clean rolls.

The Attorney General: Do you infer that we have not?

Hon. J. D. Connolly: We did not at the last election.

The Attorney General: They were perfectly clean.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: You had 20,000 more names on the rolls than there were people in the State. The Attorney General admits that he did wrong. We want him to set the wrong right. Will he strike off all the names of persons who have not signed claim cards? He disorganised the card system, and to-day we have a number of people who have been wrongly and illegally enrolled. The system was adopted because the people were not given time to get on the rolls before the election took place.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The hon. member knows there was a special occasion where we had to resort to meth-

ods perfectly lawful.

Hon. Frank Wilson: But very unfair.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Perfectly lawful.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Against the spirit of the Act.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: And the word of the Act also.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: No thing of the sort.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Will you straighten it out?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: There is nothing to straighten out. Within a week of the election every name on the roll was sifted. The principal work of the electoral officers to-day is, not putting names on the roll, but taking off every name about which there is the slightest doubt, and supplying a claim card to the latest address of the person whose name appears on the roll. We are taking off every doubtful name, that we may make inquiries as to its bona fides. An honest procedure is being pursued by the Electoral Department; in fact, I believe that if the officers of the Electoral Department were directed to do an illegal thing they would not do it.

Hon. Frank Wilson: It must be illegal if you have 20,000 names more on the roll than there are people in the State.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: There may be an error, but there is nothing illegal.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You instruct the electoral officers to do it.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: We instructed them to take the most up-to-date roll, on the same qualifications for voting, which was then available, warning them at the same time that whoever endeavoured to vote without being entitled to vote should meet with the penalty of the law.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Have you found out how these 20,000 names got there?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The hon. member knows how they got there. Hon. members were then continually asking questions about this, and their innuendoes were proved to be baseless. The Chief Electoral Officer acted in strict

equality in the preparation of the last roll. Every care is being taken by the Electoral Department to have a pure roll.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: All we are asking is, are the electoral rolls being put in order?

The Attorney General: They are in order.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Attorney General should satisfy the Committee that the work is being done. I am not satisfied.

The Attorney General: Then bring a direct charge. Do not throw out slurs and sneers.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I am entitled to say that I am doubtful if the work is being done.

Mr. Heitmann: Over 800 names have been struck off the Geraldton roll.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: But 200 may still be improperly on it.

Mr. THOMAS: On a point of order, this discussion as to whether names are on the rolls in order?

The CHAIRMAN: The item covers the placing of names on the roll.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The hon. member must have been asleep?

Mr. THOMAS: On a point of order, object. Is the hon. member in order in suggesting that I have been asleep?

The CHAIRMAN: The member for Northam must accept the assurance of the member for Bunbury that he has not been asleep.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Even at Bunbury it would probably be found there are names improperly on the rolls. However, we can only take the Attorney General's assurance that the rolls are being put in order.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: The Attorney General has not answered the very pertinent questions asked by the member for Northam as to what has been done in regard to cleansing the rolls, and the disgraceful state of the rolls existing at the last elections.

The Attorney General: What information do you want?

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: The information we want is as to that found in the principle of the Electoral Act, that no person shall be on the electoral roll unless he or she signs a claim card. We find, however, that prior to the last general election the Attorney General became a law in himself and ordered that the whole of the Federal roll should be transferred *holus bolus*.

The Attorney General: You are going over dead things.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: And I will go over them again.

The Attorney General: You live in the dead past.

Mr. Green: These complaints were all disproved when the hon. member brought them forward before.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: These votes were transferred illegally by the order of the Attorney General.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: How long ago?

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: A little over 12 months ago.

The Minister for Mines: The last election has nothing to do with this item.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: This is a vote dealing with the preparation of the rolls.

The Attorney General: Does the hon. member insinuate that the Electoral Department or the Government are acting dishonestly?

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: I say that the Attorney General acted illegally in having those names placed on the roll. The result is that we found something like 23,000 more names on the roll at the last general election than there were adults in the State.

Mr. Foley: Is that why you counted every illegal vote at your election?

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: I will show from the evidence of the Chief Electoral Officer that I had very good grounds for doing so. It is within the recollection of hon. members that the Attorney General acted in his usual dramatic manner when I asked questions in respect to this matter.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: The Electoral Department gave you a slap over this.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY : The Attorney General reported that in the Perth electorate he had been notified that the names of 389 people, who were stated to have voted wrongly, were being investigated. Of those, 156 were found at the addresses given, 70 of them were found at other addresses but within the Perth electorate, and the balance, 163, had not been located in any part of the State. And then two months afterwards I asked a question as to whether these names had yet been located, and I was informed that they had not been.

Mr. Foley : How many of these 163 voted?

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY : The whole lot.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL : I submit that this matter has all been settled and done with in the past. The charges the hon. member is now bringing have all been answered.

The CHAIRMAN : Is the Attorney General raising a point of order?

The Attorney General : I raise a point of order that the hon. member is not in order in bringing forward a matter which has already been dealt with.

The CHAIRMAN : The hon. member is in order in referring to the administration of the past, and pointing out defects which occurred in the past which he thinks should be rectified in the future.

The Attorney General : He is going over the whole ground again.

The CHAIRMAN : If the hon. member repeats what he said I can stop him.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY : I want to refer to the state of the rolls, as admitted by the Attorney General, on behalf of the Electoral Department last year. We want to know what the Attorney General is doing and what the Electoral Department are doing in regard to cleansing the rolls, and putting them into a legal form. Are those people who get on the roll outside the forms laid down in the Act to remain on the roll, or are steps to be taken, if they are still in the land of the living, to make them sign the necessary cards?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL : This matter has been thrashed out, settled completely, and done with.

Hon. J. D. Connolly : It has not been done with.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL : It has been done with. Everything has been done that the law prescribes, or the intelligence and common sense of the Electoral Department can bring to bear to purify the roll, and to have a correct and reliable roll for every electorate in the State.

Hon. J. D. Connolly : That is something refreshing.

Mr. MALE : Will the Attorney General give us his assurance not only that the rolls are being cleansed and prepared and put in order, but that neither he nor the Government will interfere with them when they are put in order? It appears to me that the card system which was introduced some years ago was entirely knocked on the head when the Attorney General gave instructions that a whole lot of names should be added to the roll irrespective of the card system at all. We have no assurance that he will not repeat that again, and that the whole card system will not be knocked on the head. What is the use of our passing money for the preparation and cleansing of the rolls when it is going to be futile? We should have an assurance that the work will not be nullified by any action on the part of the Government.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL : The hon. member has no right to ask these questions. Suppose I had asked any hon. member of this House if he would give his assurance that he would not act dishonestly or dishonourably, what would he think of me for asking such a question? I ought not to be asked to give any assurance of this kind at all. I am in charge of the department, and if I did not act honourably or rightly there is a remedy.

Hon. Frank Wilson : You know you made a mess of the rolls.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL : I have made no mess of the rolls.

Hon. Frank Wilson : You did.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I made none whatsoever.

Mr. Male: You knocked the whole of the card system on the head, and wasted a lot of money.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You did.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I did not.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Then who did?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Nobody did; there has been no wrongful act done, either by the Minister or by the department.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Are there not 20,000 names wrongly on the roll? Are you going to do this again?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I will do right, whatever else I do.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You did not do right on that occasion.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I will not give any assurance, because it is not necessary that I should give such an assurance that I will not do anything wrong. I intend to stand by the law, and the administration of the Electoral Department, in a clean manner. Speaking for my officers, I will say that they are equally as honourable as any hon. member who is criticising that department for its action to-night.

Mr. HARDWICK: I would like to know from the Attorney General what instructions are issued to post office officials at election time. It was brought under my notice at the last campaign that post office officials would come into a room in company with a canvasser and perhaps two or three other persons, and that a vote would be recorded there so that everyone could see it. It was also conveyed to me that the voting is done at Yandanooka in such a way that it is quite possible for any person who votes there, other than in the direction of assisting the Government, to do it in fear or else not to do it at all. That so many illegal votes have been cast is a matter which cannot be settled easily. I am anxious that we should have a clean roll.

The Attorney General: Is the hon. member insinuating that the rolls are not having all the attention that is necessary?

Mr. HARDWICK: It does not appear that they are when all those votes that we have heard about have been cast illegally.

The Attorney General: There have not been 163 votes cast illegally. It is pure fiction.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: The report of the Electoral Department says they cannot be found.

Mr. HARDWICK: I say that something should be done in regard to the question I have raised about the post office officials. I also had another case brought under my notice of a canvasser visiting an aged person in company with a postal officer. The lady assured me that she intended to cast a vote for me, and it was suggested to her that she should give me No. 5, which she duly did.

Item—Witnesses and jurors, Supreme Court and Quarter and Petty Sessions, £5,000:

Mr. ROBINSON: The amount spent last year was £4,633 and we are asked to vote this year £5,000. I do not know that this is an item that can be governed by any particular set of circumstances, but I should think £4,500 would be ample to meet the case for the reason that the Attorney General has stated that there is less work in the Law Courts this year than last year.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: This is one of the votes we cannot do as we like with. If we have not the witnesses we shall not have them to pay, but it would be ridiculous if we did not have the money with which to pay the witnesses fees.

Vote (as reduced to £75,320) put and passed.

This completed the Estimates of the Attorney General's Department.

Education Department (Hon. T. Walker, Minister):

Vote—Education, £322,941:

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. T. Walker—Kanowna) [8.35]: I am not sure whether it is necessary for me to go into the question of education at any length. I would rather prefer, if it were necessary, that I should reply to



any objections or criticisms than that I should deliver an introductory speech.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Can you explain why you want £10,000 more?

**THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION:** Hon. members will see that we are increasing the vote by £10,642. As a matter of fact we are not increasing it so much as we increased it last year over the year before, and I can assure the Committee that the amount of the increment this year is purely that which comes about from the natural growth of the country. We are opening new schools, and we are re-opening schools that were closed, and we are finding new teachers even for the old-established schools. The increase is due to the fact that new pupils are coming into our school ranks from day to day almost throughout the year. Last year we opened 46 new schools and we re-opened nine others, and as we go further into the country and take education into the back-blocks, we have to provide for teachers the purchase of furniture, etc. We have got to that stage that in the country districts it is costing us now close upon £10,000 a year to convey the children to school. Last year we spent £6,900 in forage allowance for those who are conveying children to school. We have asked for an increment of £900 on that vote this year so that there is not one penny of excess over the last Estimates than is demanded by the natural growth of the State. In the matter of education we are obliged to keep pace with the growth of the population. Every year brings children to the ranks of school age and we must provide education facilities for them. I do not think that we can in justice to the community diminish any portion of our educational estimates. The value of education needs no eulogy from me. Everybody knows it is an asset to the State to have an educated community. The success of nations in every kind of battle for superiority depends upon cultivated intelligence and application of knowledge.

Mr. O'Loughlen: We are a bit ahead of the times with the University.

**THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION:** I am not speaking so much about the University, but we have done all we can to carry the children up to the doors of the University. I want to say on this matter that we have tried to meet the requirements of every possible section of the community and we have of course to keep pace with the growth of population in that respect. To give an idea of the growth of the system, I might quote some figures from the very able report of the Director of Education, Mr. Andrews, which I laid on the Table of the House this afternoon. In 1910 we had an average enrolment of 32,664 and an average attendance for that year was 27,742. In 1911 the average enrolment was 34,969 and the average attendance 29,448. In 1912 the average enrolment was 38,684 and the average attendance 32,959. In 1913 the figures increased to 41,558 and 36,254. In 1914 they still further increased to 44,086 and 38,518. I have not yet the figures for this year but they have increased proportionately and the excess upon the Estimates over last year is to make provision for the natural growth. As far as possible it has been the aim of the Education Department to make education in this State thoroughly democratic. We not only have done so with regard to the children themselves but I do not believe that in any other part of the world similar provision exists for smooth working as is the case in Western Australia.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Have you the number of children under school age?

**THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION:** I have a return here if the hon. member would like to see it, but I do not wish to deal with it to-night.

Hon. Frank Wilson: The Premier mentioned the other night about babies attending and the schools being turned into nurseries.

**THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION:** I can supply the hon. member with a copy of the return which gives the number of children under school age. As an instance of the efforts which are made to bring about smooth working throughout the Education department I might state

that we allow the Teachers' Union to come into contact in conference with the Director of Education and the inspectors for the purpose of discussing grievances and suggesting improvements and removing friction throughout the rank and file of the teaching staff. I do not think any other part of the world can boast of a similar parliament so to speak for the purpose of smoothing over difficulties and arriving at an understanding. We have as the result of such gatherings, more zeal and more genuine earnestness on the part of the teachers and inspectors than can be found in any other State of the Commonwealth. I do not think that in any other country is education so popular, so ideal, and is the work done so much appreciated as in this State. And that is because our inspectors have not taken their duties as a mere matter of routine, but have been in thorough earnest in their work. I want specially to mention Inspector Clubb—although it is somewhat invidious to mention him because all the inspectors are particularly zealous in their work and give every impetus to that spirit which fits the mind for the reception of knowledge. I mention Mr. Clubb particularly because I believe there has been some criticism in regard to our Continuation classes.

Hon. J. Mitchell: There should not be.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I agree with the hon. member but I have heard whispers and I have heard criticism in some parts of the State in connection with the Continuation classes. So far as I am concerned, my only regret is that we cannot further extend them, that we cannot take them into other portions of the State. That is all due to want of money.

Mr. A. A. Wilson: They are doing good work.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The work is of a specially beneficial character because it touches the keynote of democracy. The Continuation class is the preparatory school to the University amongst the children of the poor of the State.

Mr. Griffiths: It should be made compulsory.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: To make it compulsory would entail on the country an enormous increment of expense. But on that point I submit this State is an example. We take the lead in attendance and in accomplishment. There is no part of the world where the average attendances are up to the standard of this State. Take, for instance, the attendances at Sydney. There, with their enormous population, they can only muster 3,100 pupils. In this State, small, youthful in every sense of the word, we have made this growth: in 1913 the attendance at the end of the second term was 967, in 1914 it had grown to 1,757, and in 1915 to 2,310. I consider that very creditable indeed to our population, a population that has a duty fixed on it, at any rate on its male members, by the Commonwealth law, of attending at least once a week at the drill hall; and some of them have to attend late hours in the shops. It is a great credit that we can have these attendances night after night, three nights a week. Children who have to come from the suburbs, and that after a tiresome day's work, go cheerfully back to these classes and sit there, arriving home again at ten o'clock or after. Some will say, "But a lot of them drift away." In all voluntary efforts there is a certain amount of drift; but it is another testimony to the spirit abroad in this State that we have only about 16 per cent. of drift in our population. Out of 1,623 students on the roll at the end of 1914, 922 resumed work for a second year's course in 1915, and 566 sat for their final certificates, of whom 379 were successful. Those 379 students either completed their course fully or were eligible for higher work at the Technical School, to which place it is known very many of them went; and 922 came back for further work in the continuation schools. This is rather a fine record for 1,300 students. Out of 2,300 students on the roll at present, 1,476 have enrolled for the third term of this year. Take in comparison with that, the figures presented by Eng-

land, a country old and established in education. They cannot show the same zeal for attendance in any sense, in proportion with the population, which we do here. Out of 47,150 students, there were 45.8 per cent. who made less than 14 hours attendance during the term. I think the credit is due entirely to this young State of ours for zeal, for attention, for self-sacrifice, for self-denial in the interests of education. No one can have attended these continuation schools without being struck by the earnestness, first of all of the staff, and in the next place, of the pupils. They have in their homes felt the need of education, and they have shown that they appreciate its blessings by the sacrifices made to attend. It means that we not only have those young boys and girls attending continuation schools for the period open to them there, but we can take them further—and they do go further through our technical schools—rendering them proficient in the course of life they want to take up, or preparing them for that still higher course in our University. I do not think that in any other part of the world is the same spirit shown. Much of it is due to Mr. Clubb. He carries the enthusiasm with him. It becomes contagious; the teachers get from him that *esprit de corps*, and the scholars take the same sentiment and feel it is a pleasure, a dignity, a something that elevates and lifts them out of the ordinary rut of life, to participate in the draught from the stream of knowledge. This is a matter that I think we could not curtail our expenditure upon, and my only sorrow is that we cannot extend the blessings of these classes. We have not only in that respect shown our desire to lift the sons of the poor to the level of those who are able to buy knowledge from the richness of their parents, but for those who desire to go through our day course, we have provided our central schools which carry them on far higher than the ordinary primary education suggested by the law. We have then, too, gone a stage further and provided that magnificent institution the Modern School. Travellers from all parts of the world with whom

I have had the pleasure of conversing, and who have seen that institution, assure me there is no institution its superior in any part of the British Empire with like aims and purposes. Its effect upon the mind's training, the character, the ambition, the aspirations of the youth of the State, have not been calculated. We have endeavoured to plant a similar institution on the goldfields; the High School, between Boulder and Kalgoorlie, is following in the same course, and the refining, the elevating, the ennobling influence of education is working there on the goldfields the same ends and purposes we see here in Perth. It is building the true citizen; not the selfish, brutal, ignorant peasant, but the noble manhood and womanhood that is to dignify and ennoble this State in the days to come. This is the work that is being done, and we are so careful, so anxious for it, that we say that those who take charge of the minds of the youth ought themselves to be drilled for the purpose. There is no more delicate instrument than the mind; the shaping of it, the natural growth of it, the expansion of it, the filling of it, is not a work of chance, is not a work of indiscretion, but is a work of special knowledge, of experience. The mind can be spoilt, can be injured permanently by unskilful treatment, and therefore we have our training college for the special purpose of training our teachers to take charge of the minds of others. That is a charge on our Estimates, that costs us something, and the benefit of it is given to the daughters and sons of our poor people who cannot afford the collegiate education which elsewhere the State provides for them. We have our two years' course, and our six months' course, giving to those who wish to start upon their career their first little taste of discipline and training, fitting them for teaching. Our purpose is to extend this, to give all a thorough training before they go out and take charge of the minds of the young. But again that means expense. It is a reform that has yet to come. I am very grieved indeed that we cannot do more for our present training

college—I mean more in the way of making further provision for the numbers who can attend there. At present the accommodation is very limited, is adequate only for some 60 or 70, and the provision made for the reception of pupils, females especially, is very inadequate. I am desirous of seeing the necessary improvements effected, but we are met again by want of funds. I have not the means of getting all the money I require for necessary reforms. I only want to say what the aim of this education is. It is to give preliminary training to every teacher before being sent out to take charge of a school, however small. Because we recognise the value of mental force, we recognise that all the physical agencies in the world are waste and useless unless utilised and directed by mental force. We want to increase the mental store of this State, to have an acquisition of mental resources, of mind forces: because we know that Nature will, in answer to the touch of that force, bring forth her increase, and the blessings of mankind will come in proportion as the mind has the power to appreciate and utilise it. That is our aim, and so I think we can be proud of the system which not only co-ordinates all our educational branches together, which can carry the child from the Montessori school right to the very temple of knowledge that we know as the University, but which makes all the branches accessory to each other, helpful, so that there can be no real, genuine excuse for ignorance. Everyone in the community can reach the University, either through our primary schools, our secondary schools, and our high schools, or through our primary schools and the continuation classes and the technical schools. We have aimed at making this free. I will admit we have increased the cost of education per head somewhat largely since we came into office. It has been done because we have abolished the fees that existed at the technical schools, and at the School of Mines, and which existed in other of our schools when we took office. All these fees have gone. We have recognised the value of the teacher

so far as our funds would permit. I am free to confess that I am by no means satisfied with the pay the teachers receive. I think that the services of those who have such important duties, and who have not only to train the intellect and fill the memory of the child but to aid in the formation of character and build up the true citizenship of the State, should be better recognised than they are at the present time. We have recognised them to some considerable extent and that has increased the cost of education. In this respect, of course, my estimate has been made somewhat bigger than was the case before this Government took office. No reform can be effective if the real genuine spirit of those who have charge of the details of the direction of the course of education in this State is not keenly alive to the necessities of the moment. The spirit of every inspector is sound and healthy, and breathes enthusiasm and devotion to his work. Life springs up in response to their energies, and finds a reflection throughout the whole of the State. Right away to the far backblocks, in the small lonely farm and the uncultivated settlement, we find that desire for knowledge. We find a yearning for more light and a zealous desire for the truths of nature. It is the one cry in every new district which has been opened, "Give us a school. Send us a teacher to enable our children to obtain knowledge." I submit that the true spirit is animating this State. If it continues for another generation or two then I am quite convinced that our mental attitude, our quick intelligence, our technical acquirements, will be quite sufficient to enable us to cope with the greatest advance made in any other part of the world, and that there will be a commensurate blessing upon our achievements and our performances.

Mr. GRIFFITHS (York) [9.3]: I must congratulate the Minister for Education upon his fine discourse upon the vote under discussion. When speaking upon the Estimates last year I gave him an assurance that any criticism I offered in this Chamber would

be well meant. I do not mean to-night to re-echo that because I think the hon. gentleman knows by now that whatever I may say with regard to the education vote is well meant. I do congratulate him upon the continuation classes and the progress they have made. In conversation with the Attorney General last evening I learned, much to my surprise, that the continuation classes in this State had made very much better progress than those of the Eastern States. Anyone starting to argue as to the merits or necessity for this is acknowledging that he has not been following the trend of educational thought and action in those countries which are in the van of educational progress. I am, however, struck with the fact that here our Educational department is as the voice of one crying in the wilderness pointing the way in regard to the progress of continuation classes. I congratulate the Minister for Education upon the progress of our State in this particular and I would like to say that day continuation classes, with compulsory attendances for all those children between the ages of 14 and 18 who are not already receiving instruction in technical or similar institutions, are to-day amongst the most urgent needs for our educational progress. Here is a comparison that I have made between the present day and four years ago. Taking the age of children under the heading (a) for five years and under we find that in 1911 there were 34,924 children, and that last year there were 39,915. Under the heading (b) between five years and 14 there were 52,610 children in 1911 and last year there were 60,268. Between the ages of 14 and 18 in 1911 there were 22,593 children and last year we had 25,819 children. These figures show the number of children who should be too young for enforced attendance, under (b) the primary school age, under (c) those eligible for continuative instruction. A comparison of those who during the same period availed themselves of the provisions made by this State for post primary education shows the urgent need for legislative compulsion to force benefits upon those who are

so blind to their own interests as to neglect what is freely offered to them. The Minister has pointed out that this is going to entail a large increase in our expenditure. I think it is being generally recognised in every part of the world that there is an urgent need for legislative compulsion and for enforcing attendance upon those who are neglecting to take advantage of the benefits which are freely offered to them. Taking the pupils under 18 years of age in our technical schools, in 1911 we find there were 1,356 and in 1914 there were 618 students. The pupils in the 7th and 8th standards of our State Schools in 1911 numbered 1,225, whilst in 1914 we had 1,764. The pupils attending evening Continuation classes in 1911 were nil, whilst in 1914 there were 1,697. Monitors preparing to enter the training schools in 1911 numbered 106, and in 1914 they numbered 177. Children under the age of 14 in orphanages in 1911 numbered 58, while in 1914 they numbered 64. The pupils attending high State schools in 1914 under 14 numbered 33 and over 14, 193, but in 1914 these totalled together 532, which is a very big increase. At the Narrogin Farm school there were no students in 1911, but in 1914 there were 30 students. All these pupils total for 1911 2,971, whilst in 1914 they totalled 4,882. These figures appear to show a very big increase and no doubt there is a big increase, and they reflect a great need for the better organisation of our Education Department. When one compares the 22,593 pupils who were eligible for training in 1911, with the 25,891 pupils who were eligible in 1914, one can see that there is not a great proportion of the pupils availing themselves of the facilities offered. It, therefore, appears that the State organisation reached in 1911 only 13 per cent. of the boys and girls of the State of the ages between 14 and 18, whilst in 1914 the percentage is 19. An increase of 6 per cent. is not sufficient for a four years' organisation and the lavish advertisements which have been issued. It only amounts to an increase of one in five, or allowing for private, denomina-

tional, and commercial enterprise—one in four—and does not show a satisfactory appreciation on the part of adolescents who are receiving continuative education. If such a deplorable position was confined to Australia we might expect local conditions, social prejudices, and the character of the instruction given to be responsible; but the voluntary system under which we labour shows a like result in every country, State, or even district where compulsory attendance is not legislatively enforced. In no country in the world has education become such a living, vital, and everyday force as it has done in Scotland. Crofter and laird alike paid homage, while office boys see in it the road to advancement, and managers the ladder by which they climb. Yet, Scotland tells the same story. Here is an extract from an educational report which says—

In Edinburgh, the city which has most consistently and thoroughly exploited the system of voluntary attendance at continuation schools, there was a decrease last year of 4 per cent. in the enrolment.

It draws attention to the fact that as a result of active and efficient organisation the attendance rose in seven years from 3,000 to 11,000, but still 5,000 were without the pale. This only partly gives the true position. The report goes on to say—

The first continuation code was issued in Scotland in 1901 with an attendance of 78,000, which rose in a decade to 150,000. Compulsory legislation introduced in 1908 was followed by a sudden jump in numbers from 108,000 to 144,000. The possible number of students in Scotland is 275,000, and the immediate problem is to bring in the lapsed 46 per cent.

Here, in face of compulsory legislation, is the big leakage. One naturally asks the question why this is so? The answer is that it is due to defective machinery which does not make it obligatory upon local boards to enforce compulsion. Only 18 boards have exercised their full power in this. We, with our State system of education, would be free from this bar to success. I can give

an instance showing the futility of leaving organisation to even the best intentioned employers. One of the chief firms of dyers and cleaners in London, employing from 180 to 200 boys and girls under 17 years of age, made a special effort to induce these young people to attend evening classes. They agreed to pay the fees, explain the prospectus, and offered a bonus to every student who attended 75 per cent. of the possible attendances. The result was a complete failure. Of 20 girls attending one institute, only two qualified for a bonus. Four made 50 per cent. of the attendances, and five scarcely attended at all during the second term, while nine were entirely absent during the latter term. This firm is convinced that compulsory attendance at free classes is the only solution. A technical report issued in London shows that this applies to those who passed the first blush of youthful exuberance and thoughtlessness.

The Premier: What age is represented by the first blush of youthful exuberance?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: In a report for June, 1915, it is stated that classes were recently established for 10,000 workers, learners, mechanics and foremen engaged in the gas industry, and for the session just ended only 600 enrolled, showing that the compulsory system was a failure. Our report shows that through the short-sightedness of our students only 1,024 out of 2,031 were enrolled in 1913, and that only 1,623 students enrolled out of 2,879 in 1914, and completed the full instruction at our voluntary courses. The encouraging increase at our evening continuation classes from 989 in 1913 to 1,697 in 1914, or  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., is discounted by the fact that during the vogue of these classes the enrolment of students under 18 years of age at the technical schools has decreased from 1,356 to 618, or 55 per cent. I understand from the Minister, however, that we have done much better in this respect than the Eastern States. All this points to the fact that the necessity exists for legislative enactments to bring about a better state of affairs. By way of

contrast, we can refer to the records of Munich, where, under a compulsory system, 97 per cent. of elementary school children go straight from the primary schools to the continuation schools. There is rather an encouraging side to the Education Department, and I find that the criticism I passed upon this department last year has directed the attention of the Minister to the continuation and technical classes for students after they have passed the age of 14 years. The figures which I gave when speaking last year showed that there were 2,342 students attending the continuation and technical classes, whilst this year the number has increased to 3,609, and the cost was only £340 additional. I take this opportunity of saying from the saving the Minister has brought about, that my criticism last session was justified. I offer my congratulations to the Minister on that saving. While I do not claim the expert knowledge of an inspector of schools, I do claim a breadth of view and an intelligent interest in what I observe. When the last Estimates were before us, acting in accordance with the dictates of my convictions, I offered in the kindest spirit, constructive criticism upon certain aspects of our system as they appealed to me. I am certain that in the whole course of my speech not one single statement could have had a personal application. No one dislikes personal attacks more than I do. I spoke of systems, and offered criticisms with a view to bettering our administration, in order to gain more effective results in the grand work of education, and no reference was made to any officer in the department. On page 57 of the report of the Education Department for 1914, one of the inspectors of schools has descended to sarcasm at my expense. I never object to a controversy so long as it is conducted in a gentlemanly way, but that anyone occupying the position of a senior inspector of schools should so far forget himself as to sully a report on his work for the year by interpolating mawkish satire redounds to his personal discredit and reflects upon the responsible person

who allowed it to come before this House. I believe that if the Director of Education had not been absent through illness, such irrelevant vindictiveness would not have been found bespattering a Parliamentary report, and worse than all, coming from a department from which we expect good form and the maintenance of high traditions. I criticised the system, and was personally quoted and attacked by senior Inspector Miles, B.A. I would draw the attention of hon. members to this officer's report. In dealing with the engagement of a Montessori expert, I stated "Any disinterested teacher could decide in a month whether the system is of value, but the department, not yet having made up its mind, is going serenely on with it." Senior Inspector Miles, in his published report, states—

The department has been publicly criticised by not being able to make up its mind in the space of one month as to the question of adopting the Montessori system—  
and further on he states—

It is indeed somewhat remarkable that in the twentieth century, a representative of a country constituency should be found to criticise the department for endeavouring to carry enlightenment to the outback settlements, and to demand that important and far-reaching educational experiments should be carried out in far less time (one month to be accurate) than is regarded as essential for experimenting in a new species of wheat or a new breed of pigs.

Hon. members will note that in each case inspector Miles has misquoted me by substituting the word "department" for "teacher," and having set up the skittles he promptly knocks them down and imagines he has demolished my statement. Experts agree that the best way to kill the Montessori system is to allow quacks to dabble with it. This inspector who poses as a Montessori expert—beyond a visit to New South Wales to see the Montessori schools there and reading the books which are available to everybody—has no quali-

fication upon which to base his statement that he inspected closely the work done in the Montessori schools there. Mr. Miles only saw the work done in New South Wales before Miss Simpson had gone to Rome for instruction, and not after her return. Under these and many other circumstances, it is safe to say that his claim to expert knowledge upon Montessori methods stamps him as a person of inordinate pretensions. I might mention in passing that this expert takes my figurative statement that Montessori originated in the Ghetto quarter of Rome, as literal. As a matter of fact the system originated in the Via Morsì and the Via Campini. One would at least expect knowledge from such a critic certainly as to the origin and history of the Montessori method. For £286 we secured the services of one of the best Montessori teachers in New South Wales, and he asks "What other State in the Commonwealth is getting so much for so little expenditure in the Montessori experiment as this State." I am informed that the expert referred to, Miss Stevens, was, like the inspector I am dealing with in that she was trained by Miss Simpson before that lady went to Rome to get Montessori tuition. So she evidently has very crude second-hand knowledge of Montessori. The question therefore is not which other State is getting so much for so little, but which other State is making such a fuss and pretence about getting so little for so much. In regard to the *Education Circular*, about which I asked some questions in this House, I stated that there was altogether too much scissors and paste used in the compilation of what were purely official documents. I now learn that this same inspector is the editor of the *Education Circular*. Hon. members will notice in the annual report that this inspector replies regretting my criticism, and then he proceeds to a pompous justification of the *Circular*. He appreciates the fact that teachers are very tolerant of his hasty work and errors, due to pressure of time not allowing editorial revision. Further along he writes—

By means of scissors and paste the department has been able to convey to the farthest outback stations, where the daily paper is unknown, the thoughts and aspirations of the great men who are at present guiding our ship of Empire through one of the most awful storms it has ever experienced.

One would think the daily papers and the *Education Circular* were the only two sources of knowledge. In that sentence "where the daily paper is unknown" I wonder to which part of the State he is referring. I have travelled over the State for the past 20 years, and I do not know of any place where at least a weekly paper is not obtained. The *Education Circular*, therefore, cannot have the great educational and patriotic value its editor claims for it. My experience of the back-blocks is much wider than that of Inspector Miles, whose sojourns have, I believe, been designedly brief. From my more extensive knowledge of the back-blocks I say he is depending upon his imagination for his facts. In no portion of this State are the teachers so dead to the importance of the great national struggle that they wait for a monthly circular to learn the outcome of mighty issues. I have found them always up-to-date and keen upon having the best and latest information. To argue that a bulky circular costs not materially more than a 12-page issue—a self-imposed maximum—is an opinion that shows the person giving voice to it is not personally concerned in the cost of production, or he would soon learn the truth. I have had extensive newspaper dealings, and except for a McCinty article and similar effusions I cannot learn that he has had much Press experience. His remarks confirm this. As I understand it an inspector should be a cultured, self-contained, level-headed, self-controlled man. But a man who can so mix up his annual report of work done with controversial matter dug up from *Hansard* must be temperamentally unbalanced, easily depivoted and unfitted to pass judgment upon other men. I do not know this inspector except by



this report, but judging him by that alone, I say unhesitatingly that it stamps him as unfitted to occupy a position where unbiassed judgment of other men's work is concerned, for in it he reveals an unbalanced temperament. I commend him to the most careful vigilance and oversight of the Director of Education and the chief inspector, who, I note in the annual report of the Teachers' Union, stand high in the teachers' regard. I repeat that I believe had not Mr. Andrews been absent on sick leave, the annual report to Parliament would not have been disgraced by the inclusion of Inspector Miles' intended-to-be smart, but really empty replies to perfectly candid, well-meant criticism I believed it to be my duty to utter on the floor of this House. At many country schools fine work has been done and is being done in the matter of agricultural education, but not generally is this the case. Here and there an enthusiast devotes his time and energy with very fine results quite evident to those living in agricultural centres fortunate in having such men in them, but there is a great field waiting to be cultivated. In a State system of education, vocational training should chord with its chief industrial activities. According to latest available statistics only 6 per cent. of our population are independent, 3 per cent. are professional, 6 per cent. domestic, 6 per cent. commercial, 4 per cent. engaged in transport and communication, 12 per cent. form an industrial group, 14 per cent. are our primary producers, and 4 per cent. are unspecified, leaving 56 per cent. to be classed as dependants. To increase the efficiency of these workers in their daily avocations, there have been established corresponding classes at the University, domestic economy classes, commercial courses in the grades, and schools for mining and technical instruction. But for the great body of agrarian workers and rural boys there is only one farm school, at the Narrogin State farm, and short University courses for more advanced students. No doubt when there is a revival in our finances

it will be possible, not only to make the educational system coincide more nearly in this respect with the daily life of its people, but to instruct them along what lines new industries can be profitably developed. A vast field of tropical and subtropical agriculture lies before us for investigation and effort; the establishment of manufactories for dealing with primary products, and many other avenues of national wealth only await the assurance of practical experiment to spring into existence. This must be the work of educators, such as we have in Commissioner Sutton and Professor Paterson in our wheat industry. Teachers themselves evidenced this thought at their recent conference, as shown on their agenda paper, "That systematic provision should be made for the increasing needs of education, and that the Government be asked to appoint a commission to devise a scheme for this object." The question of children under six years of age being stopped from attending school is receiving attention at the hands of the department. I would point out that whilst there may be arguments against the too-early attendance at school of the very young children, particularly the precocious youngster, the department must not inflict a hardship upon those many deserving, hard-working women who perhaps send a youngster of five with the elder children to school, whilst she is at work earning the daily crust for the bairns. Whilst on this question I would point out to the Minister how this proposal will act with bad effect upon such schools as, say, Glenluce, Kokerbin Hill, Yoting, Kuminin, Totadjin, and Jacob's Well. He will find some of these schools are only able to keep up their average by some one or two children below the six years' limit, and there is a great likelihood that these districts may lose their schools through the proposed regulation. The question as regards country children and those of the town, in respect to the too-early teaching and consequent cramming is vastly different. In the country the conditions are healthier than in town, and there is not

the same tendency to over-stimulate the childish brain. Last year my figures regarding the Training College were a little astray, but although the amount for the period was wrong, still, taking the longer period, a big saving is to be made just the same. Last year the cost of the Modern School pupils was £5,934, or approximately £20 per child per annum. I am pleased to see that a reduction has taken place in that cost, and although the amount is larger in total, the cost per child has come down to £14 13s. Compare this with £10 13s., the cost in one of our public secondary schools. As regards the conducting of the teachers' examinations, many people feel that our University professors might well attend to this without putting the State to the expense. The introduction into our schools of the teaching of physical science has been much discussed, and the generally expressed opinion is that, if such is introduced, it should be amongst the adolescent students and under the direction of duly qualified medical men; that at any rate, if undertaken, it should not be tinkered with. I have just one more little complaint to make.

Mr. Allen: You are not going to stop, are you?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Why, are you interested?

Mr. Allen: Yes, aren't you?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: One of the most curious commentaries on the administration of the department is its utter lack of confidence in the teachers of the larger schools in the metropolitan area. I do not know whether this distrust is in the ability or in the integrity of those teachers. It is passing strange, when we recall that eight out of nine inspectors were themselves recruited from the metropolitan area head teachers, and when, probably, various head teachers will in the future be transferred to the inspectorial staff, when, as a matter of fact, they, from time to time, go out as acting inspectors now. In spite of all this the department, by its actions, lays down the principle that, if these schools are not criticised, examined, tested, surprise-

visited, analysed, and percentaged again and again, the head teachers with their staffs cannot or will not do their work satisfactorily; that if the inspectorial lash is not cracking incessantly these teachers cannot or will not do justice to their schools. Surely the teachers of our leading schools are neither inefficient nor loafers. Even Inspector Miles speaks of their loyalty and enthusiasm. Yet what do we find? Not only are the Director of Education and chief inspector located in the metropolitan area, but three senior inspectors have the strenuous duty of seeing to it that the teachers in 92 State schools and sundry private schools do not shirk their work. Inspector Clubb, in his annual report says, "As far as possible the schools receive at least two visits per year." But it is common knowledge that many of them receive four, five, or even six visits. The only inference to be drawn is that either the inspector or the head teacher concerned is wasting time. Again, granting the large size of some of the schools, should it be necessary for inspectors to spend anything from three to ten days, and sometimes more, at one inspection in weighing up these schools and teachers? It must be remembered that such schools are staffed by trained, experienced and highly certificated teachers under head teachers, many of whom are of from 10 to 20 years' standing. Common-sense says that either the inspector or the head teacher should go. Inspector Clubb's report, at a later stage says this, dealing with country schools, "The size of the districts makes it impossible for the district inspectors to visit every school twice." This is a startling admission, as true as it is lamentable, as lamentable as it is disgraceful. While we have these three senior inspectors placing their expert and highly paid knowledge at the disposal of 92 schools of the highest grade and the most experienced teachers, six inspectors of less experience are called on to attend to 510 schools, many of them one-man schools, and even more one-woman schools. Here are found the teachers of lowest scholastic attainment, and of limited,

if any, experience although of undoubted zeal. Surely here lies the field where inspectorial service and tuition may best be given. It is all an illustration of centralisation run mad, and it calls for more than Inspector Clubb's feeble complaint about the impossibility of visiting each school twice. The country is clamorous for reform in this matter. While railways may not be brought to the settler's door, while many of the blessings of civilisation must necessarily be denied him, there is no reason why the settler should not be given every facility in the matter of schooling for his children. Extra expense need not be incurred, if only the department will trust the efficiency and integrity of its proven teachers, wherever they are located. Let one, if not two, of the senior inspectors be taken from their tramcar route and let them display their educational wares before the inexperienced teacher.

The Minister for Education: It is not only inspection but a comparison of ideas and suggestions. It is not the old dominie.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I am after decentralisation and the contrast I have made shows that we have centralisation run mad. Some of these inspectors should be sent out into the country districts. There is the matter of advisory teachers. On the agenda paper at the last conference the following appeared—

The appointment of advisory teachers meets with the approval of conference but advisory teachers should not be inspectors.

I noticed in the report of the proceedings of that conference that no inspector had visited the North-West; they had had only advisory teachers. It appears that the department are getting lower salaried advisory teachers to act as assistant inspectors, which seems to me to be something in the nature of sweating. I do not think I need say anything further. I could go on all night but will not do so.

Mr. HARRISON (Avon) [9.47]: There is just one matter I wish to refer to in regard to the Education department.

It appears that if there is any slight damage done to an inland school, someone has to go out to see what the damage is; then another person is sent to repair it, and finally a third person goes to inspect the repairs and certify that the work has been properly done. If there is any regulation which prevents an officer in the country from spending a small amount on repairs which would have the effect of saving the travelling expenses of three other persons, the regulations should be altered.

The Premier: I want some check on the expenditure.

The Minister for Education: They have power to spend £1 in repairs on schools of one room and £3 on a big school.

Mr. HARRISON: Then evidently the teachers are not aware of it. I am given to understand that in the matter of any small repairs the outline I have described has to be followed. If what the Minister says is the case, the amount should be increased to, say, £5. The travelling expenses of one or two officers and the value of the time lost would soon exceed that amount. This matter was brought under my notice and I have mentioned it with a view to suggesting an alteration in the regulations if such is necessary.

Mr. THOMAS (Bunbury) [9.49]: I have been very much impressed by the speech delivered by the member for York (Mr. Griffiths), and I desire to take advantage of the opportunity to extend to him my congratulations upon not only the length of his effort but the mass of figures he has collected, the perseverance and energy he has displayed and the clear manner in which he has placed those figures so impressively before the Committee. I have been watching the face of the leader of the Opposition and the look of alert intelligence and keen interest displayed by him showed that the hon. member had completely gripped the House. I feel sure that his effort will be memorable in the history of this Parliament. The amount of knowledge he has conveyed to the members of this Chamber, his detailed information and his lucid explanations are in advance of any-

thing we have previously experienced in this Chamber. I trust the hon. member will in the near future again favour us with a similar effort when we shall all listen to him again with the most profound attention.

Mr. Foley: Are you proposing a vote of thanks?

Mr. THOMAS: I followed the hon. gentleman with the keenest pleasure and enlightenment right through the whole of his speech. I am sure I agree with everything he said, though I really do not know what he said, but I feel sure that no matter how long this debate might continue to-night, there will be no hon. member on the floor of the House who will be able to refute what the hon. gentleman has said, because that would be impossible. So far as the hon. member's figures and the details and the enlightenment he has given to this House are concerned, up to a certain point I quite agreed with him, but I think he detracted from the great credit which was his due when he for some minor cause descended to the abuse of an officer of the department. The lofty altitude to which the hon. member had risen before this portion of his speech, should have led him clear of such a mistake as to take advantage of his position to unreasonably and unfairly criticise a member of the Education department who has no opportunity to reply to him. The basis of the hon. member's attack, which was fierce and unfair and ungenerous in the extreme, was a brief paragraph in which Mr. Miles said—

It is indeed somewhat remarkable that in the twentieth century the representatives of a country constituency should be found to criticise the department for endeavouring to carry enlightenment to the outback settlements. In listening to the speech of the hon. gentleman one could see there was nothing very remarkable in that.

Mr. Griffiths: Have you read the report?

Mr. THOMAS: One does not need to read any report after listening to the exhaustive resumé delivered to the House by the hon. member.

Mr. Griffiths: That is no answer; have you read the report?

Mr. THOMAS: I have heard the hon. member's speech.

Mr. Griffiths: And you ought to be satisfied.

Mr. THOMAS: Any man who wants anything more than that is a glutton. The hon. member descended to a level not creditable to him when he attacked an officer for expressing an opinion which, in the light of recent events, we are led to believe is somewhat correct.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: A very valuable officer, too.

Mr. THOMAS: The hon. member stated that senior Inspector Miles had no qualifications for his position.

Mr. Griffiths: No, I did not.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: It is a scandalous statement.

Mr. Griffiths: I said he had no qualifications to pose as a Montessori expert.

Mr. THOMAS: The hon. member said in his past history he had not displayed any qualifications which fitted him for the position. Inspector Miles is a Bachelor of Arts and one of the most valued officers of the department. I know him personally and I know something of his work in the department. He has infused very valuable enthusiasm and energy into it, which has produced splendid results.

Mr. Griffiths: The hon. member is wrong.

The Minister for Education: He is a very able officer. He could teach the hon. member for York a lot in that respect.

Mr. Griffiths: If he is such an expert, he ought to be able to do so.

Mr. THOMAS: I think the inspector in question stands so high that the rather paltry attack made upon him by the hon. member needs very little refutation. The record of that inspector will stand in the annals of Western Australia when the hon. member's is forgotten. Notwithstanding the fact that a spirit of economy has prevailed in this House during the last few days and nights, I think the Estimates of the Minister for Education will not be seriously attacked if he can show that the money is to be legitimately used for the advancement of education.

I wish at the outset to congratulate the Minister and the officers of his department upon the splendid work they have done for education in Western Australia. It cannot be gainsaid that Western Australia has never had a Minister for Education who has more honestly striven to serve the people or who has thrown more energy and more enthusiasm into his work than the present Minister. In these days, when one receives so much criticism and when so much of one's work meets with such scant approval, it is pleasing to find undisputed ground where one can do a measure of justice to an individual who has done so much for the State. The records of the continuation classes are a great credit to Western Australia. It makes one feel proud of the intellectual life stimulated into being in this country largely by the Minister and the officers of his department. The Minister spoke of one or two officers whom I know personally; I know the splendid enthusiasm they have displayed and I am satisfied these results have come from that same enthusiasm. Nothing is ever done in this world unless there is a lot of conviction and enthusiasm behind it. It is this which tells the tale in the accomplishment of all things. I have come into contact with the Education Department in Perth as well as with many other departments of the State, and I want to say that on every occasion on which I have visited or written to the Education Department I have received the most prompt and courteous attention. I think in this respect the Education Department is an example for every other department in this State. I have at times given the officers a good deal of trouble, but I am pleased to be able to say that I owe them a debt of gratitude for the courtesy they have always extended to me. The Minister has had the proud privilege, and I consider it a proud privilege, of having conferred on the children of this State the priceless blessing of a free education. He has made history in Western Australia in that particular direction.

Hon. Frank Wilson: He did not provide free education.

Mr. THOMAS: He has done so. It was never done by any other Minister in this State. He has thrown open wide the gates of knowledge, so that the poorest and richest alike might benefit by it.

Hon. Frank Wilson: It was all free barring the technical schools and the School of Mines.

Mr. THOMAS: The hon. member proposed a tax of 2s. a head on certain school children and 1s. a head on others.

Hon. Frank Wilson: The only fees abolished by the present Government are those of the technical schools and the School of Mines.

Mr. THOMAS: And the University.

Hon. Frank Wilson: No.

Mr. THOMAS: It was proposed to collect £2,000 from university fees.

Hon. Frank Wilson: It was never proposed at all.

The Minister for Education: It was carried by resolution and that resolution was moved by myself that they should be free.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You did not introduce free education into Western Australia. You do not claim that surely? Good heavens, what next! The member for Moore (Hon. H. B. Lefroy) introduced it long before the hon. member was heard of in Western Australia.

Mr. THOMAS: The hon. member forgets some of the little things he does.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You are pleased to imagine things which never existed.

Mr. THOMAS: I should like to have the hon. member's imagination. It would be very valuable in a romance. The Minister enjoys the proud distinction of having introduced the system of free education into Western Australia.

Hon. Frank Wilson: He did not introduce it. Do not misstate the position.

Mr. THOMAS: The hon. member does not like it to be known.

Hon. Frank Wilson: The member for Moore introduced it.

Mr. THOMAS: Free education did not exist in this State until the Labour Government came into power. How can the hon. member assert that it is free education when he had charges in the schools of mines and the technical schools and

proposed to have charges in connection with the university?

Hon. Frank Wilson: The question with regard to the University had never been settled.

Mr. THOMAS: The hon. member himself wanted to place an impost of 2s. per head on certain children attending school.

Hon. Frank Wilson: I did, did I?

The CHAIRMAN: The leader of the Opposition will have an opportunity of making a speech when the hon. member for Bunbury has finished.

Hon. Frank Wilson: The hon. member should stick to the truth.

Mr. THOMAS: Does the hon. member deny that he proposed to impose a tax of 2s. per head upon children attending the public schools?

Hon. Frank Wilson: Go on with your speech.

Mr. THOMAS: If he does not deny it how can he say that he has been an advocate of free education in Western Australia?

Hon. Frank Wilson: It was the member for Moore who introduced legislation for free education in Western Australia 18 years ago. Do you deny that?

Mr. THOMAS: I am not aware of the fact that he introduced legislation.

Hon. Frank Wilson: It was under the Forrest Government.

Mr. THOMAS: I am not aware that he introduced legislation for free education.

Hon. Frank Wilson: That is only a quibble.

Mr. THOMAS: I am prepared to give the member for Moore credit for more liberal ideas than those given voice to by many other members sitting opposite. When one talks about the Liberal Government instituting free education, it is like talking about the man who lays brick foundations in comparison with the man who built Parliament House. Today we have the edifice of free education complete, and if no other record of the work of the Labour Government goes down to posterity than this record of free education in Western Australia for the first time, there will be something that can be remembered for all ages.

Hon. Frank Wilson: What rubbish; what does it mean?

The Premier: It means a great deal.

Hon. J. Mitchell: You charge for books.

Mr. THOMAS: I can conceive of a Minister who would seek to place a special impost on children going to school, in order to operate as much as possible upon the ignorance of the poor people. Upon people who are not well educated one can probably graft any political institutions one desires. I say that in introducing compulsory free education we have laid the foundation stone of the truest possible democracy. There is only one thing that can lead the people as a whole to their best management of the affairs of State, and that is the highest education that it is possible to give them. When it comes, as it has today, to compulsory free education from the kindergarten to the University, we have the position that all have an equal opportunity of gaining the benefit of education, and it will tend more than any other form of legislation towards equality of opportunity, and will bring about the truest basis of democracy. I agree in some measure that it would be desirable or wise if we could make the attendances at the continuation schools compulsory. I know that there are many difficulties in the way, and that there will be much expense incurred, but the benefits will be incalculable. I do not think there is any expenditure upon which we can embark in Western Australia that is more justified than that of forcing, if need be, by compulsion, the young boys and girls of Western Australia to accept the benefits to the fullest possible extent afforded by the system of free education in all its branches. I also think that although there may be a considerable amount of expense, as we are led to believe there is, in regard to people taking advantage of the public schools, and sending their very young children for tuition, if there is an attempt—and I believe there has been—to make a sort of nursery out of our public schools, then the Minister should not hesitate for a moment to put a stop to it.

The Minister for Education: In some cases it is possible to do so, but I doubt whether it is wise in far country schools where there are so many children between the age of five and five and a half, to restrict the attendances in any way.

Mr. THOMAS: I understand that in some instances children under the age of five years have been sent to school. In my opinion it is neither desirable in the interests of the State, nor of the children themselves, that this should be allowed to continue. A child at that age is not fit to be under the discipline of a school.

The Premier: It is absolutely detrimental to the child.

Mr. THOMAS: It is an endeavour to impart knowledge where it is really impossible to do so. The brain of a child at that age is not sufficiently mature or receptive for such tuition. The child is taking on cares which belong to a later period of life.

The Premier: It is retarding the child.

Mr. THOMAS: I believe that the Premier is right, and that it would retard the child in the process of his learning. The years that ought to be devoted to play and to open air life, should not be spent in a school, but should be devoted to laying the foundation for the future work of the child. It is not fair that that period of a child's life should be taken from him in this way by sending him to school at an immature age.

The Minister for Education: There is a way of educating little ones by means of play.

Mr. THOMAS: I believe that the ordinary life of a child provides ample opportunities for this form of education.

The Minister for Education: It is better for the child to be cared for by educated people in a school than that he should play about in backyards.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I cannot hear the Premier, the Minister for Education, and the member for Bunbury all speaking at once.

Mr. THOMAS: I am afraid I am doing the least speaking of anyone. The Minister interjects that it is better they should be looked after in the schools.

The Minister for Education: In some instances.

Mr. THOMAS: I am under the impression that we do not give schoolmasters and schoolmistresses high education in order that they may take up the task of nursery governesses.

Mr. Male: Do you not believe in free kindergarten?

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): Six years is too early an age for a youngster to start going to school.

Mr. THOMAS: I think that six years of age is quite early enough for a child to begin going to school.

Mr. Male: That is a ridiculous age for a kindergarten school.

Mr. THOMAS: A child up to the age of seven should be playing about and not trying to learn. There will be ample time for him afterwards to meet with all the troubles that life holds for him.

The Premier: And he will make greater progress.

Mr. THOMAS: It is costing the country money to provide these nurseries for the children. In our most charitable moments we have never embarked upon that enterprise before.

Mr. Male: Why not?

Mr. THOMAS: We have not embarked upon these enterprises to provide nurseries from one end of Western Australia to the other.

The Premier: We cannot do it at the present time.

Mr. THOMAS: I do not know that it is desirable that we should have them connected with our public schools. The Estimates could be reduced if it were provided that this sort of thing should not go on. I maintain that at the present time the country is put to a lot of expense in providing these nurseries which it should not be called upon to provide. I maintain further that the children are being stunted in their mental growth in some instances, as well as in their physical growth. I hope the Minister will grapple with the question, for I think a good deal of money could be saved.

The Minister for Education: I am doing it now. We cannot sacrifice any of the schools in the back blocks.

Mr. THOMAS : Why not carry on with a smaller number of children if the Minister is obliged to bring up the children from the cradle, so to speak, in order to make up the requisite number in a school? Why not alter the numbers if that is all that is necessary? No member in this House has worked harder for the establishment of schools in his electorate than I have, and I believe I have been successful in getting more schools than any other member in the Chamber. If the department have erred in giving me more schools than I am entitled to, then I say they have erred in the right direction. I have had the utmost satisfaction from that department. The Minister has given me an assurance, and in contradistinction to my hon. friends opposite I have much pleasure in accepting that assurance. I only hope, seeing the good work the Minister has done, and the splendid example he has set to his officers, and the fine enthusiasm which has been displayed by these officers and the splendid results which have been achieved, that he will long continue to preside over the destinies of that department. If it was possible to make the office of Minister for Education a permanent one, I believe that every member of this Chamber would give his vote to keep the present occupant of the position in his office as long as he liked to hold it. If the department goes on improving and extending in usefulness, Western Australia will have one of the most highly educated populations to be found in any portion of the Southern Hemisphere. I trust that the achievements which have been accomplished in the past will enable us to reach the goal at which we are aiming, and I am sure that the State will derive a lasting benefit from the work which has already been done.

Hon. FRANK WILSON (Sussex) [10.14] : I do not know which to admire most, the member for York (Mr. Griffiths) for his lengthy address and his voluminous figures, or the member for Bunbury (Mr. Thomas) for his exaggerations and misstatements. I had thought that I would ask the Premier or the

Minister for Education to report progress so that I could assimilate the mass of useful information which the member for York poured on the defenceless heads of members of this Committee. I certainly congratulate him upon the immense amount of work he has put into that research. He must have spent many hours in reading the records of the various States and countries, if all the information which I thought was in his speech is therein contained. I admit frankly it would take hon. members and myself some considerable time to get quite to the conclusions at which the member for York is driving; but irrespective of that fact, and irrespective of the great difficulty, under which I plead guilty to be labouring as the result of lack of educational facilities in my early days, in grasping fully, while listening to the hon. member's remarks, what he was aiming at, or the conclusions that he wished to drive home, I do realise that if one could sit down and read the speech quietly from end to end, dwelling upon the doubtless convincing figures which were quoted—

Mr. Griffiths: Without the interruptions.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Without the interruptions, it would afford very useful information to members of this Committee, and if studied thoroughly would certainly point the way to more economical administration. The member for Bunbury (Mr. Thomas) unfortunately is blinded by his intense admiration for his masters, the leaders of his party. Whilst on previous occasions we have frequently noticed an inclination on the part of that hon. member to kick over the traces and indulge in rebellion to some extent and to oppose the actions of the Government, of late years, at all events during the past two years, he has been almost, and I say it advisedly, fulsome in the expression of his admiration for Ministers, no matter what their faults of commission and omission may be. I want here to say at once that whilst I am prepared to carry all the sins of my previous administration of the Education Department, I do



protest against this incessant demand that all the credit for an undoubtedly efficient although expensive department is to be bestowed upon my friends opposite. The Minister for Education is full of enthusiasm. No one but must admit that. Unfortunately, the Minister's enthusiasm on many occasions gets the better of his judgment. However, we give him credit for that enthusiasm. In no direction and in no channel does the Minister's enthusiasm flow at a greater pace than in respect of education, and more especially in respect of education in Western Australia. I would go even further and say that his enthusiasm is all in the direction of free education. Indeed, I have heard the hon. gentleman plead for not only free education from the cradle to the grave, but free hospitals, free institutions of every description in a free country, and of late free feeds to be granted by the Honorary Minister and free beds to be furnished to those who care to apply for them and enjoy them rather than do an honest day's work. But this idea of freedom can be carried too far. Whilst we may admire all the enthusiasm of our friends opposite in this connection, surely we must have some consideration for those who have to find the money to support all these free institutions. I claim for previous Administrations, and for the Forrest Government in particular, of which the member for Moore (Hon. H. B. Lefroy) was a member, that they initiated what we understand as our free system of education in Western Australia. It is quite true that certain fees were charged for advanced education. It is true that those fees were continued during my term of office. But they did not amount to very many thousands of pounds annually. I speak subject to correction when I say that a few thousand pounds annually were paid in fees for the advanced and special education which students receive in our technical schools and in the School of Mines at Kalgoorlie. It is true that under strenuous financial conditions—which at that time were considered not only by myself but by my friends opposite, who criticised me very

strongly, to be matter of serious moment, I proposed the restricted imposition of fees in connection with our primary schools. At the time we were suffering from a shrinkage or revenue equivalent to hundreds of thousands of pounds per annum, and did not know which way to turn in order to make good the deficiency. We were not then imbued with the valiant spirit of the present Treasurer, who turns to loan moneys on every occasion, and utilises loan moneys for all purposes. I have never denied that at the juncture I refer to I proposed to charge certain students of more advanced age a fee in our public schools. I did that because, as the result of inquiry, I had found, from reports furnished by the responsible officers of the department, that fairly well-to-do parents were utilising our State schools for the purpose of giving an advanced education, practically a secondary education, to their children up to the ages of 17 and 18, and in some cases even 19 years.

Mr. Foley: Why should not they?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: At the expense of the taxpayers of Western Australia.

Mr. Foley: Well, why should not they?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: They should not.

The Premier: You are hardly correct in that statement.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: My statement is perfectly correct.

The Premier: You made the fees to commence at 14 years of age, and you did not make any distinction as regards the schools which the children were attending.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I have not said that I was drawing any such distinction.

The Premier: But you were trying to make out that you were drawing it.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I have not tried to make out anything of the kind. The Premier, as usual, is endeavouring to put something into my mouth that I never said. I ask the Premier to be fair. I have explained the reason why I suggested the imposition of certain fees. It was not an unreasonable suggestion at the

time. It would not be an unreasonable suggestion at the present time, considering the mess into which the Treasurer has got the finances of the State.

Mr. Male: It would be quite a fair thing.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: This matter has been explained times out of number. While I appreciate the efforts that have been made towards extending our educational system, I wish to point out that we have all done our little part towards it. Every member voting in this House when education is before us, is lending a hand in that direction. The growth of the Education Department, however, is not due, as the member for York has said, to the efforts of the present Minister. The member for York quoted the figures of attendance at our various public schools, and he gave the present Minister the credit for the large increases in the numbers of pupils. That increase is a natural growth, due perhaps more—

The Premier: To the virility of the parents.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Yes, and to those who so handled the affairs of this State as to induce the parents to come here and settle within our borders.

The Premier: I think the member for York (Mr. Griffiths) was referring more particularly to secondary schools.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: If anyone has a right to claim credit for the large number of pupils in attendance at our public schools to-day, it is the previous Government, and more especially my friend the late Minister for Lands, the member for Northam (Hon. J. Mitchell), the man who, with the aid of the immigration system which the previous Government inaugurated, brought people to these shores and settled them on our lands. That is the reason why the number of our schools has increased so enormously, and that is the reason why the number of children attending those schools has also increased. Whilst one and all of us may contend for credit, we must also be subject to criticism. I have never flinched from criticism. I have never taken exception to attacks on my

administration by the member for Bunbury (Mr. Thomas) or anyone else. But I certainly still hold the opinion, which I have always held, that when I controlled the Education Department I did everything that the public purse would permit me to do in order to give the people of this State the full advantage of our educational system. I am not going to apologise one iota for the attitude I took up at that time, nor am I going to retract from that attitude by one iota. I would be only too glad to give free education in every respect to every child and every young person in the State if the public finances warranted it. But we cannot have these facilities without paying for them, and to-day the result of the present Minister's administration of the department is that the cost has gone up considerably per head of our population and also per capita of the children attending the schools. To draw attention to this fact, as the member for York did to-night, does not for one moment condemn any member of this Committee. It does not detract from the sympathy with which hon. members view the Education Department, or from the admiration that they may deal out to the Minister himself for the efforts he has put forth, even though members go so far as to criticise the hon. gentleman and possibly to point out to him where, in their opinion, some saving in expenditure may be effected. For the life of me I cannot understand why Ministers should always claim credit and admiration when they point to increased expenditure. Anyone with unlimited money at his command can get good results, but the man who can obtain good results with limited expenditure is the one I would rather commend and congratulate; and certainly I would commend him rather at a time like this, when the country is up to its ears in debt. I have only one or two other remarks to make. The return which the Minister has been good enough to send across to me shows that some 2,700 children of tender years—that is, under 5½ years of age—are in attendance at our public schools. I have heard the Premier himself during this session complain that

some of our schools were being turned into nurseries.

The Premier: I repeat it.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: But it is just as bad to complain about the schools being turned into nurseries as to complain, in the way I did, when they were being turned into colleges for pupils of maturer years.

The Premier: But we do not propose to adopt your remedy of charging fees.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: No. The Government propose to turn these little children out.

The Premier: Would not that have been your proper remedy too?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: No. The proper remedy for the Premier would be to establish kindergartens, seeing that the hon. gentleman has so much money to spend.

The Premier: That is not the point at all.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: We wanted to prevent the elder pupils from attending the schools by charging a fee. It is far better to charge a fee than to turn the pupils out, than to close the doors against them as the Premier suggests.

The Premier: You should have provided the colleges.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The thing I want to make clear is that, undoubtedly, children of such tender years as under 5½ are unfitted to attend the ordinary schools of our State, and cannot possibly but be a drag upon the remainder of the pupils in a school conducted by one mistress or one master as the case may be, because we cannot successfully train babies with boys and girls of from seven years up to 14 years of age. Yet there are very successful systems inaugurated in some centres, the kindergarten and the Montessori, which do not mean education in its ordinary sense, but actually playing, as shown by the illustrations in the report of the department. In their play, controlled by instructors, these young children acquire a certain grounding which makes them fit for the higher education as they grow up and it gives them an idea of discipline which they never

gain in the home circle, and which perhaps they will never have an opportunity of gaining in any other educational department which they may be permitted to attend.

[Mr. Male took the Chair.]

The Premier: I would not like to admit that. No school teacher could teach my child discipline.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Teachers have a much better idea of teaching discipline than the parents. I never could control my children in the same way as strangers in a regulated school could control them. I also desire to refer to the question of the University. In discussing that the member for Bunbury (Mr. Thomas) claimed for the present Minister for Education that he was responsible for the establishment of a free University. The Minister was no more responsible for that than any other member of the Senate who supported the motion which he moved, that it should be a free University. I, for myself, expressed some doubt on that occasion as to whether we were justified in making the University absolutely free. I did not oppose the motion. I do not think anyone opposed it. It was all a question of the amount of money the Government could find for the institution which had been created. If they could find the necessary funds there could be no objection to the institution being absolutely free. If they could not find necessary funds to carry on the institution in a proper style, then I, with others of the Senate, thought it would be advisable to initiate some system of fees. However, it was declared to be a free institution, and to-day we are meeting with some difficulties. I doubt whether a majority of the Senate, if they had the opportunity of reversing their decision, so far as fees are concerned, would not do so. It is not that we want to put a big burden on the shoulders of those who wish to take advantage of an institution of that description. We do want to see that the students who enter

the University are those who are most likely to receive a lasting benefit from it. We do not want students to go there who are not fitted to reach the highest point of education. We want students who will be a success, a credit to themselves and a credit to their country.

The Premier: You do not suggest they are confined to those who can pay.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I suggest that a student paying fees for instruction in a University sets a much greater store by that instruction than the student who goes there simply to pass away the time listening to very interesting and instructive lectures. I know many students who attend the lectures there who have no intention of working for a degree or passing through a whole course.

The Premier: You have no right to permit those students to attend.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: How can we stop them?

The Premier: By having proper regulations.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I advise the Premier then, through his colleague, to introduce a system of that sort. He is on the Senate and he has the power to do it.

Mr. Heitmann: Those students receive a certain amount of benefit.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: They do. That brings me to the question of the outlying districts. Who gets the benefit of a free University in Western Australia? Only the students residing in the metropolitan area. Students cannot come from Bunbury, nor Geraldton, nor Cue, nor any of the outback districts. If any of them do, the number is limited.

The Premier: Would it be any easier for them if they had to pay fees?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I do not say that. I am not arguing that way. If we collected fees the students would be paying something for the benefits they were receiving. Now the whole country is taxed—and this is the aspect which has to be considered—to provide an institution absolutely free for a certain section of the community which exists in the metropolitan area. Unless we are pre-

pared to provide sufficient money to give unlimited scholarships and bursaries which the outback settlers' sons and daughters can win, if they have the ability to do so, and so become able to pay for their lodging in Perth or in the metropolitan area while attending the University, we absolutely have the doors closed against the sons and daughters of those people who live in the back blocks of the goldfields and the agricultural areas.

The Premier: That is not an argument in favour of fees.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Premier cannot see any argument at all. Would there be any hardship in charging specially favoured people fees under those circumstances? I am told that no son of a man earning £350 and upwards or a daughter can win a bursary or a scholarship.

[*Mr. McDowall resumed the Chair.*]

The Minister for Education: We raised it. It was £200.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: It was a shocking thing to say that a boy or girl who studied and won a bursary or a scholarship should be debarred from the privilege of attending the University because, forsooth, the parent was earning £5 a week instead of £4 a week. And the same thing applies so far as the present limitation of £350 is concerned. If a man is earning £6 10s. a week he may have a dozen children, whom perhaps he has the utmost difficulty in providing for, and yet his daughter or son has not a chance of getting to the University or the Modern School. This is the much vaunted system of free education on which the member for Bunbury (Mr. Thomas) is over-flowing in congratulations to the Minister for Education.

The Minister for Education: We have lifted it up.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Well, lift it up a bit further. Why should it have any limit at all, if our primary schools are to be open to all of any age? The Minister says let them go to school free till they are 21 years of age if they like.

Then, surely the bursaries and scholarships should be open to all! I only claim equality for all sections of the community. I do not think anyone can begrudge the Minister any money which the Treasurer can provide for him for educational purposes, but I say we have to go slow. With a deficit which has assumed alarming figures to-day and which will probably be nearer to a million and a-half at the end of the year than to a million and a-quarter, as estimated, with that position in front of us it behoves us, no matter how our sympathies go out to this department, that we should all be as economical and careful as possible. Although I admire the Minister's enthusiasm intensely, I do not think he quite knows how to economise as yet. I commend to him a close scrutiny of the items of this department, even as we had to point out in respect to the Attorney General's department a few hours ago, with a view to seeing whether he cannot economise even in a department which receives such general support and approbation as does the Educational Department. If he will do so he will find ways and means of economising without impairing the efficiency of the system. I always found during my three years' experience of that department that it was like Minister like man. If the Minister said in effect, "We have unlimited money" the officers of the department took jolly good care to spend it; if, on the other hand, the Minister said "Economy is to be the watchword," and insisted on it, he would find the officers responsible loyally endeavouring to meet the Minister's wishes and economies.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY (Moore) [10.45]: I think it is incumbent on me, after the rhetorical display of the member for Bunbury (Mr. Thomas), that in justice to those who in former years administered the affairs of the State, I should offer to the Committee some explanation in regard to what has taken place in the past in reference to educational matters. I have been told by my friends that I am not sufficiently assertive. It frequently happens that "the evil that men do lives

after them and the good is oft interred with their bones." Twenty years in the history of a young State like this is equivalent to a hundred years in the history of an older country, and the people very frequently forget what has happened only a few years ago. From time to time the people of the country are informed from the other side of the House that the party now in power are entirely responsible for the free education in this country. It has been said over and over again, and the desire of hon. members opposite is that that should go forth to the country.

The Premier: No, not at all.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: It is repugnant to my nature to talk about myself, but I was the first Minister for Education in this State. That was 18 years ago. When I took charge of that department one of my ambitions was to make it efficient and to extend the education system and make it free. I did that. Ministers are lauded in this House, but I maintain there is no department of State where the efficiency of the department is more exemplified by those who have to carry out the daily duties of the department than in the case of the department of Education. It is a zealous staff of teachers in that great department whom we have to thank for the efficient education of this State. Very often it is carried on by a zealous band of teachers, in many instances at much self-sacrifice. I would like the Committee to know that a great deal of the efficiency of education of this State is due to the first Inspector General of Schools in this State, namely, Mr. Jackson, whom I was able to guide on the course which his knowledge showed me he was able to follow in regard to education. When introducing that Bill in 1897—why the present Premier was only a baby at that time—I prefaced my remarks by stating that in the Governor's speech at the opening of that session, the Government announced that they proposed to introduce legislation with the object of providing free education in State schools. I went on to say—

The Government therefore have decided to introduce free education, and whilst amending the Act for the purpose of introducing this new departure, I desire to consolidate the old Acts and at the same time to add clauses to the Bill which I feel quite certain will assist very materially in the administration of this department. At this stage of our history, I do not think there is any necessity for me to enter into heroics on the subject of education. I think it is a recognised axiom in these days that education should be extended as widely as possible and made as efficient as possible.

It is not for self-laudation that I make these remarks, but I make them in justice to the Government of which I was a member, and in justice to the people of this State at that period. I provided in that Bill for the establishment of training schools, and I went on to give my reasons for so doing. I went to Claremont and selected a site on which the present training school is built, and had it reserved by the Government for that purpose. If that was not laying the foundation of that training school, I do not know what was.

The Premier You laid a good foundation altogether. I give you credit for that.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: The Bill at that time further provided that the Governor might establish and maintain high schools in which instruction should be given in one or more languages, history, music, the elements of mathematics and physical science, together with such other subjects as were prescribed by regulation. It provided for the establishment of free education and stipulated that no fees should be paid by or for children between the ages of six and fourteen attending State or provisional schools. It might be said that because children had to pay fees after attaining the age of 14, we did not establish free education in its entirety. It was intended to provide by this measure that education should be made compulsory, and I held that if education were made compulsory, it must be made free.

It was compulsory that children should attend school until they attained the age of 14 and, therefore, we provided that no fee should be required for children up to that age. I consider that we did a great deal in those days. It was two years before I managed to get that Bill through this House, but then no reforms are brought about suddenly. In 1899, when I was Minister for Mines and the Minister for Education was in another place, I again introduced that Bill and got it passed. I felt it incumbent upon me to rise in my place to-night and let hon. members, many of whom were mere children in those days, know what was taking place in this State 20 years ago when I had the honour to occupy a position in the Parliament of this State under my chief Sir John Forrest. I wish to tell the Minister for Mines this also, because it is not generally known, that I established the nucleus of the mining school at Kalgoorlie and I had a big fight at the time to get it established. It will be understood that the people of Perth were powerful and some hon. members and many people outside the House desired that the mining school should be established in Perth, but I said—"No, it must be established in the centre of the mining district of this State and the capital of the goldfields, Kalgoorlie."

The Minister for Mines: Let me help you further and say you started the first State battery.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: A few days ago I met a man at Moora and in the course of conversation elicited that he was returning to the goldfields. He asked if I was the Mr. Lefroy who was Minister for Mines so long ago and, when I replied in the affirmative, he told me that he was at the Mulline battery when I opened it 17 or 18 years ago.

The Premier: It is most unfortunate that you were over-shadowed in those days.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: I do not want it to go forth to the people that the present Government should have the full and only credit for the establishment of these great reforms in this State. Those who went before them laid the founda-

tion for educational reform in this State and I must give credit to whom credit is due and say it is mainly due to the great zeal of the late Inspector General of Schools, Mr. Jackson, and to the able assistance of his inspectors and his officers that the schools of this State were brought from a condition of chaos into the condition in which we find them at present. The State school system of Western Australia is as efficient as that in any part of the world. I was pleased to hear the member for Bunbury laud the present Minister for Education on the great work he has done. I know that no one could throw more zeal into his work than does the honourable and learned gentleman who holds the portfolio of education to-day, but we owe a great deal to the staff generally and I, as a representative of this State, desire to offer a few words of appreciation for the great work that our teachers are carrying on throughout the length and breadth of this State. Many of them are in the far back districts, perhaps roughing it when previously they lived a life of refinement. But they have gone out into the back blocks to do the pioneering work in teaching and they are doing it cheerfully as pioneers and I admire them for it. We owe much to them and any expenditure of public money could not be better laid out than in furthering the education of the people, because I am highly of opinion that a little learning is a dangerous thing and the more highly we can educate our people, the better they will be and the better the country will be.

Mr. HEITMANN (Geraldton) [11.0]: I have listened to all the speeches which have been delivered here this evening. I suppose many of those members who have spoken can lay claim to having had a fair opportunity, at all events, of receiving a good education. But their remarks, directed as they were towards another member of this Chamber who made a somewhat lengthy speech, and perhaps made it hardly clear as to what he was aiming at, were anything but fair. Indeed the remarks which fell from the lips of the leader of the Opposition

and the member for Bunbury (Mr. Thomas) came with an ill-grace. The member for York (Mr. Griffiths) is only a young member and has only been in the Chamber for some 12 months. I think every member will give him credit for a desire to deal with the question and for having put in long hours in dissecting the different departments, and in endeavouring to analyse them. It was an easy matter to discuss the Education vote, particularly from the standpoint of the Minister. It is easy because of the fact that this department is popular, both inside and outside the Chamber. As a consequence, expenditure on education is likely to be less criticised than expenditure on other departments, because of the possibility of a misconception being placed on the criticisms of members. There is a danger, however, in so much popularity for any department. There is a danger in our leading ourselves to believe that we are getting full value for the money expended, and there is also a danger of slackness overtaking both the Minister of the department and his officers. That is so, not only in regard to this department, but in regard to other departments, to which Parliament and the people are always ready to find and devote large sums of money in order that progress may be made. It is not with a very keen desire to criticise that I want to utter a word of warning, both to the Minister and the members of the Ministry. Looking over the expenditure for the last few years in connection with this department, I am met with an astounding increase since the year 1910-11. Since that time in the administration of the department, that is in salaries and incidentals, we have had an increase of from £200,000 to £320,941. I think the duty of members of the Chamber and of the Ministry, and particularly of the Minister in charge of the department, is not to rest with the expenditure of the money on even a popular reform or subject, but to see that the country receives full value for the money expended. Although I may run the risk of being misunderstood, I would say that in my opinion this department is not returning

to the State the full value for the money expended. The enormous increase of over £120,000 in the expenditure on this department is worthy of a lot of consideration. In the short space of time between 1910-11 and 1915-16, there has been this enormous increase which, as I say, should be looked into. It is probably very hard to point out exactly where reductions could be made, and I am not going to protest strongly against high salaries being paid, if they are high salaries, comparatively speaking. I want to refer to the oft-repeated statement that members of this party, including myself, are taking credit for having lifted the minimum salary by the sum of £20 all round; that is to say, on the unclassified salaries we have effected an increase to £110, and on the classified to £150. I agree with the Minister in not being satisfied with the salaries paid to some members of the teaching staff. I can see no justification during the last two or three years however, for the very large increases distributed by the Minister amongst some of the highest paid officers of the department. Whilst we have men and women on low salaries being raised up to £150 for classified teachers, and to £110 for unclassified teachers, we have inspectors right at the top of the salary list receiving an increase of something like £80. Furthermore, they have also received, by way of first payment, a good lump sum, the accumulated increase which was dated back for some time. I am not contending that these officers are receiving too much salary now, but I do say that in times such as these through which we are passing, we have no right to spend the taxpayers' money in increasing the salaries of the higher paid officers. The general public and the members of this Chamber do not realise, when discussing the salaries of our teachers, that the higher paid officers, or most of them—that is excluding inspectors—receive also a very handsome addition to their salaries by way of a house allowance, running up to as high, I believe, as £72 a year. In considering the salaries of the officers of the department, one must take

into consideration the amount they receive by way of house allowance. I am inclined to think that it is high time we considered the advisability of cutting out the provision of quarters for the school teachers, at all events in the thickly populated centres.

The Premier: The difficulty is that they have to shift when called upon, and that they cannot establish a home for themselves as other people are able to do.

Mr. HEITMANN: They can establish a home. I am dealing with those within the metropolitan area.

The Premier: A teacher is not permanently established in Perth and he may be called upon to shift to a place like Kalgoorlie.

Mr. HEITMANN: Why should we pay an officer in addition to a salary of £410 a year, which is the salary received by the head master in Perth, a house allowance in addition of £71 10s.?

The Premier: Because a man is not allowed, by the conditions which prevail in the department, to provide a home for himself.

Mr. HEITMANN: He can pay his rent just the same as any other thing. Members of the railway service, for example, are in practically the same position. I am not protesting against the aggregate amounts of these salaries, but the allowances tend to mislead. It would be far better to pay the officer an inclusive salary and let him make his own arrangements for a house. In point of fact, 30s. a week would secure a very decent house in Perth. In some cases we are told that a man who has been so many years in the service is only receiving a salary of £200, but that man may have a house allowance which increases his salary by another £50. I wish again to emphasise that the expenditure of money and the building of fine schools is not necessarily followed by education, and I want to see the Minister exercise a somewhat closer supervision. A little more attention to the organisation of the department would, I believe, result in the saving of a fair amount of money. I know the Minister has two departments to control; but there is time, or there



should be time, even with two departments, to give close attention to the actual administration. An increase of £122,000 in five years calls for rigid inquiry, and I am of opinion that a substantial saving can be effected if the Minister pays a little closer attention to the organisation of the department.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. T. Walker—Kanowna—in reply) [11.13]: I shall not detain the Committee long. First of all, let me express my gratitude for the good feeling that has been displayed in the discussion of these education Estimates. Perhaps I may be allowed to correct the idea that I take either to myself or to the Government the sole credit for the great educational work that has been done in this State. Everyone recognises that education is in the spirit of the times, and I am quite delighted to acknowledge that the deputy leader of the Opposition (Hon. H. B. Lefroy) took such an active part in, and did so much towards, the first educational impetus in this State.

The Premier: A good foundation is the main thing.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I am as grateful to hear the officers of the department praised as I am to hear appreciation of any little services I may have been able to render the cause of education in this State. I take pleasure in the recognition of the zeal, the disinterestedness, the whole-hearted earnestness, and the conscientiousness of those who form the administrative staff of the Education Department. I do not know that any Minister could have a better staff or one more in harmony for the single purpose of extending their sphere of usefulness and the spread of education. Each member of that staff is free. I cannot think of any who should have the whip applied or reproach administered, and that is one of the features of the Education Department which is delightful. It is delightful to find the members of the staff standing as brothers in a common cause. They confer with each other. There is none of that humility of a lower officer approaching a higher offi-

cer cap in hand, the latter standing with a stiff neck and listening in haughty silence to the requests or suggestions of his supposed inferior. That kind of thing is not seen in our Education Department. There are continual conferences of the inspectors for the good of the department; and not only conferences of the inspectors, but also, as I have said, conferences with the teachers. The teachers can come to the inspectors with suggestions. There is no pride. If any teacher can make a good suggestion for the advancement of education, that suggestion is accepted and acted upon. There is in this department more of the spirit of brotherhood and democracy than, I believe, can be found in any kindred institution in the whole of Australia. Indeed, there is nothing in the world like our Education Department in that respect; and I am as proud of it as the members of the staff are proud of it, and as any member of the other side can be proud of it. I just wish to say a word with regard to one of the inspectors. I feel sure the member for York (Mr. Griffiths), when he spoke to-night, was suffering from a sense that he had been rapped on the knuckles. The hon. member evidently wanted to get back on that in his reply. But I think he forgot his duty in that respect, for the officer he attempted to belittle is a man of whose acquaintanceship anyone might well be proud—a man of attainments, a man of quick aptitude, a man of ripe suggestiveness, and a man to whom this State owes much for the present standard of education here.

Hon. Frank Wilson: It was the reference to the breeding of pigs that hurt a bit.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: If the inspector referred to; Mr. Miles, did, in the flow of his impulsive and sensitive nature, let fall a polished little reproach of that shrinking character, surely hon. members, who can appreciate a rapid intellectual flow, or as I might say a flight of intellectual sparks, might have put the reproach down at that value. It was just simply an impulsive spark, and no

more. I wish to congratulate hon. members on their appreciation of education. That is the chief thing, and I am glad hon. members have shown a spirit of willingness that the utmost should be done for the maintenance of education and for its spread in our midst.

This concluded the general debate on the Estimates of the Minister for Education; votes and items discussed as follow:—

Vote—Salaries, £278,571:

Item—Chief Inspector of Schools, £552.

Mr. HEITMANN: In view of the concluding remarks of the Minister for Education, I almost hesitate to ask what is the feeling at the present time between the gentleman to whom this item refers and the gentleman who is in charge of the Training College at Claremont? I am told that not so very long ago these two responsible officers were fighting in public like a couple of schoolboys on a question of salary.

The Premier: No; a question of status.

The Minister for Education: That is years ago.

Mr. HEITMANN: Are they brothers now? If so, I am quite satisfied. It is stated, however, that these two officers, though holding positions which bring them continually into close contact, are not on speaking terms.

Item—Extra clerical assistance, £154.

Mr. MITCHELL: Will the Minister explain why this item has been inserted?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: There was no expenditure on this vote last year. We now propose to pay the cadets from this item.

Vote put and passed.

This completed the Estimates of the Education department.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

Progress reported.

#### ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

Hon. J. SCADDAN (Premier—Brown Hill-Ivanhoe): I move—

*That the House at its rising adjourn until 3 o'clock to-morrow.*

Question passed.

*House adjourned at 11.23.*

## Legislative Council,

*Thursday, 14th October, 1915.*

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The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 3 p.m., and read prayers.

#### PAPER PRESENTED.

By the Colonial Secretary: Public Service List, 1915.

#### JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE, HORSE-RACING CONTROL.

##### *Report presented.*

Hon. F. CONNOR (North) brought up the report of the select committee appointed to inquire into the question of horse-racing.

Report received, read, and ordered to be printed.

#### BILL—MINES REGULATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Read a third time and returned to the Assembly with amendments.