

be most unwise to make a distinction between a naturalised British subject and other subjects. The hon. member is tackling a much bigger proposition than he seems to think. He is practically saying that the naturalised British subject is not a real Britisher.

Amendment put and negatived.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I move an amendment—

That in Subclause 3 after "hotel license or" the word "respectively" be added.

Amendment put and passed; the clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 10—Amendment of Section 5 of Act No. 1 of 1917:

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I move an amendment—

That in line 1 "Licensing Act Amendment Act, 1917" be struck out and the words "Sale of Liquor and Tobacco Act 1916" inserted in lieu.

The amendment is merely to correct an error. My attention was drawn to the matter by Mr. Kirwan. The Royal Commission made reference to Section 5 of the Licensing Act Amendment Act, 1917. There is no Section 5 in that Act. The reference should have been to Section 5 of the Sale of Liquor and Tobacco Act 1916. Hence the amendment.

Hon. J. CORNELL: How will the amendment conform to the Title? The Bill provides that the Licensing Act is to be amended by the Bill and now it is proposed to amend the Sale of Liquor and Tobacco Act, 1916.

Hon. J. Nicholson: It is a licensing matter.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: There are other matters dealt with in the Bill to which the same exception may be taken. I have an amendment to propose later on, to add to the Title "and certain Acts relative thereto."

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. A. BURVILL: I move an amendment—

That in lines 2 and 3 of Subclause 4 "an Australian wine" be struck out and the word "a" be inserted.

I consider that if we are to provide for the removal of partitions from Australian wine shops, the same provision should apply to any bar rooms. The clause was inserted in another place, and if such a provision is to remain in the Bill it should apply to all bar rooms and not be confined to wine shops. If it is necessary to have safeguards against people being in those places who should not be there or against people under age being supplied with liquor, the removal of partitions from all bars will assist in that direction.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The clause was intended to apply to wine shops and now it is suggested that it shall apply to all licenses where there is a bar. For my part, I cannot see any objection to partitions in bars.

Hon. A. Burvill: There should be the same objection to partitions in bars as there is to wine shops.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The objection regarding wine shops is that girls may be taken there.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: In view of the amendment already agreed to, can the Minister say whether the subclauses have any relation to the Sale of Liquor and Tobacco Act, 1916, seeing that these clauses are supposed to amend the Licensing Act?

Progress reported.

ASSENT TO BILLS.

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

1, Attorney General (Vacancy in Office).

2, Geraldton Racecourse.

3, Wyalcatchem-Mount Marshall Railway (Extension No. 2).

BILL—AGRICULTURAL SEEDS.

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

BILL—NURSES REGISTRATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Returned from the Assembly without amendment.

House adjourned at 10.54 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 14th November, 1923.

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

ASSENT TO BILLS.

Message from the Lieutenant-Governor received and read notifying assent to the following Bills:—

- 1, Attorney General (Vacancy in office).
- 2, Geraldton Racecourse.
- 3, Wyalcatchem-Mount Marshall Railway (Extension No. 2).

QUESTION—INDUSTRIES ASSISTANCE, LOANS, RETURN.

Hon. M. F. TROY (without notice) asked the Premier: When can the House expect the return of loans for the assistance of industries, for which I moved on the 5th October?

The PREMIER replied: I will endeavour to get the information for the hon. member to-morrow.

BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.

- 1, Agricultural Seeds.
Transmitted to the Council.
- 2, Nurses' Registration Act Amendment.
Passed.

BILLS (2)—REPORT STAGE.

- 1, Dog Act Amendment.
- 2, Pearling Act Amendment.
Reports of Committee adopted.

BILL—WESTERN AUSTRALIAN BANK ACT AMENDMENT (PRIVATE).

Report of Select Committee.

On motion by Hon. T. Walker, report of select committee adopted.

BILL—AGRICULTURAL BANK ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from 9th November.

[Hon. M. F. TROY (Mount Magnet) [4.40]: The Bill liberalises the bank and will be of distinct advantage to those who are struggling in their early stages of land development. Under the existing Act the borrower from the Agricultural Bank starts repayment of principal after five years. The Bill provides that repayment shall not start until after 10 years. In my opinion the 10 years represent a very liberal proposition. Those who know anything about land settlement are aware that five years after a man has started to develop his property is just when he is in greatest difficulty. In the wheat belt 10 years must elapse before a man gets anything like a return. It might take even more in the South-West. I know of settlers who have been harassed by reason of having

to make repayment of principal after the first five years. On the other hand, I must say for the bank that, although they may write for repayment, and even press for it, they have never taken action against a settler who is paying up his interest. Still, it is not fair that that should continue indefinitely, because the State must have its money back sooner or later. Sometimes a farmer in a position to repay the amount does not repay it, because he borrowed it at 5 per cent., and is not anxious to pay it back and have to borrow further money at 6 per cent. or 8 per cent. However, after 10 years the State is entitled to receive back some of its money, in order that the money might be invested in the development of other lands.

Mr. O'Loghlen: If the farmer is not on his feet after 10 years, he never will be.

Hon. M. F. TROY: Still, if he can show reason why he should not begin his repayment after 10 years, I am sure the bank would not deal harshly with him. Between 1910 and 1913 the associated banks entered upon a scheme to get the farmers to discharge their liabilities to the Agricultural Bank and place their business in the hands of the associated banks.

Mr. O'Loghlen: They made a drive.

Hon. M. F. TROY: They certainly carried on a very active canvass amongst the farmers, many of whom were induced to fall in with the proposal. Within a short time those farmers were sorry for what they had done.

Mr. A. Thomson: They were, indeed.

Hon. M. F. TROY: Some of them were distinctly ill-advised. In the lean years before and after 1914 numbers of farmers were in serious difficulties. That is just the difference between a Government Bank and a private bank. Personally I have never been foolish enough to try to get off the Agricultural Bank. This Bill will force me to pay the principal, which I suppose is a fair thing after ten years. The measure also provides that if any interest is owing to the Agricultural Bank, interest at the rate chargeable on ordinary loans shall be payable to the bank on such interest. After all, that is only a business proposition. I am surprised to learn that there are some borrowers who have not paid their interest, and that such interest accumulates without their paying any interest on the outstanding interest due. In ordinary business transactions one has to pay interest after 30 days. I do not know what would happen in the case of an ordinary bank to a man who did not pay his interest. He would certainly be charged compound interest on the accumulated interest. The fact that borrowers of the Agricultural Bank have not paid their interest, as indicated by this Bill, is an evidence that the bank has been conducted in a very liberal and generous manner indeed. I think it is only right that people who do not pay their interest to the Agricultural Bank should have their interest treated by that bank in the same way as by any private banking institution in the country, because

the Government have to pay their interest bill in order to finance the activities of the Agricultural Bank. It is not a reasonable thing that this State should have to borrow money at high rates of interest in order to pay interest at low rates which is owed by clients of the Agricultural Bank. Such clients should not be allowed to go scot free. I notice, too, that the Bill provides that terms of payment shall be made easier. Under the new system proposed by the Bill the maximum payment will be in the forty-ninth half year of the borrower's term. His maximum payment will therefore be at a time when he has had 24 years on the property, when he has had ample time in which to develop the property and pay his liabilities. If a man cannot pay his liabilities in 24 years, he has not much hope on the property. A new feature of the Bill is the provision for the increased advance to returned soldiers. At present, if the Agricultural Bank purchase a property for a returned soldier, the maximum amount which can be advanced for any such property in the case of any individual soldier settler is £2,000. However, the Bill provides that in addition to £2,000 for the purchase of the property, the Government may advance to the returned soldier £500 for the development of the property. That means, no doubt, that the additional advance may be made if the property warrants it. However, I wish to point out to the House that this provision places the returned soldier who buys through the Agricultural Bank and the returned soldier who buys through the Repatriation Department in very opposite positions. The soldier who buys from the Repatriation Department has £2,000 for his limit, and cannot get one penny more; but the soldier who buys through the Agricultural Bank has under this Bill a maximum of £2,000 plus £500.

Mr. A. Thomson: Of course you know why that is. Some men have been advanced £2,000 and find themselves unable to carry on.

Hon. M. F. TROY: I know how it occurs. I am merely pointing out the distinction made between the two settlers.

Mr. O'Loughlen: It is quite possible for both settlers to be lacking in respect of working capital.

Hon. M. F. TROY: Yes. I presume that the distinction cannot be got over under this Bill, but it ought to be got over, because all the soldier settlers should have the same conditions.

Mr. Mann: The Agricultural Bank will advance to the other soldier and transfer him from the Repatriation Department.

Hon. M. F. TROY: In the case of soldiers who purchase portions of repurchased estates the practice is to put them under the Industries Assistance Board. They draw sustenance from that board. Other soldier settlers are supported by the Agricultural Bank. I think there should be no distinction regarding the claims of the two descriptions of soldier settlers, or in respect of what the soldier settlers are entitled to under any Act. I see nothing wrong with the Bill, and I give it a general support.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Angelo in the Chair; the Premier in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1, 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Limit of advances under Act No. 9 of 1919:

Hon. P. COLLIER: This clause empowers the Government to increase the amount of assistance granted to soldier settlers from £2,000 to £2,500. Does the Premier find the increase necessary as the result of the experience gained during the two years settlement has been going on?

The Premier: It is necessary in a few cases.

Hon. P. COLLIER: If it is going to cost an amount exceeding £2,000 to settle every one of all those who propose to settle on the land, especially in the South-West—

The Premier: The increase will be necessary in only a very few cases.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I know, of course, that soldier settlement is not confined to any part of the State; but still it does seem to me that £2,000 is a very considerable sum. In respect of what class of holdings is £2,000 insufficient money to carry on with? I am aware that the capital cost of purchasing a farm for a soldier settler may run into a good deal; but having regard to the liability which the State is undertaking in the matter of land settlement generally, we should be fairly cautious as to the amount advanced in any individual case.

The PREMIER: I entirely agree with the last speaker that £2,500 would be an impossible amount, generally speaking. It will be required in only a few cases, say, where a man has a large holding and has not sufficient cleared land. The average amount owing to the Agricultural Bank to-day is under £400. In the case of soldier settlers the average amount is under £1,000. In the case of repurchased estates difficulty sometimes arises. When Crown lands are taken up, the position is of course different. The cases in which the extra advance here proposed will be granted are to be strictly limited, and by no means general. I recognise, of course, that to load a man up with a big debt is to tie a millstone round his neck.

Hon. M. F. TROY: I shall be surprised if this provision can be confined to a few cases. Numerous improved farms have been purchased for soldier settlers, and very few of them at less than £2 per acre. Where the cost has been less than £2 per acre, the improvements must have been very small. If there are 400 or 500 acres improved on a farm, and a dwelling has been erected, the cost of the farm will easily run to £2,000. I know quite a number of farms have been purchased in this country for soldier settlers at £2,000. Certainly £2,000 will not purchase a very big wheat farm, and when the sol-

dier has bought the farm he often wants stock, horses, and machinery.

Mr. A. Thomson: That is the point.

Hon. M. F. TROY: If the soldier settler is to pay interest on the £2,000, he will need plant for production. I shall be very much surprised if numerous soldier settlers do not avail themselves of this extra £500. They will need to do so in order to pay the interest on the cost of the property. Very few of the soldier settlers with whom I have come in contact will not find themselves in need of the extra advance. I am satisfied the Government will have to assist these people to a considerable extent.

Hon. P. Collier: In any case, it is an amount greatly in excess of what the farmers received from the bank when they started.

Hon. M. F. TROY: The circumstances were entirely different. The Government now buy a place that is improved, which constitutes the distinction. Originally the settler went on to his block and developed it with his own labour. My experience goes to show that most of the soldier settlers will require the benefit of the extra £500.

Mr. Teesdale: Do you think that amount will see them through?

Hon. M. F. TROY: In many cases it will not. The Agricultural Bank officials have bought farms very cheaply.

Mr. Latham: They have bought at too cheap a price.

Hon. M. F. TROY: That aspect is the concern of the sellers. In the majority of cases, however, the bank has bought very cheaply. The manager of the bank has made good bargains, but if they buy these properties, the majority of the settlers will require additional capital to get plant and so forth.

Mr. LATHAM: I am glad to see the clause in the Bill, because it is necessary. The Repatriation Department has purchased properties cheaply at £2,000 and that includes improvements, such as dams, fencing, and a small area of cleared land, as well as stock and plant. After the soldier has held his block for six months or so, he finds it is necessary to clear some additional land. In order that there shall be some statutory authority, it has been found necessary to amend either the Agricultural Bank Act or the Industries Assistance Act, so as to enable additional money to be advanced. That would not be necessary in ordinary circumstances. In some cases, the property has been purchased by the department and made freehold by the settler. The clause will enable settlers to clear a lot of forest country that cannot be attended to now.

Mr. MANN: Some properties have been purchased for £2,000, and then a second mortgage has been given for £400 or £500 to the vendor. I want to know whether the extra money provided will go towards paying off the second mortgage?

The Premier: That is not the intention.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 4—agreed to.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

BILL—LAND ACT AMENDMENT.

Second reading.

The PREMIER (Hon. Sir James Mitchell—Northam) [5.7]: There are several amendments proposed in the Bill. We are now settling men under group settlement conditions. Hon. members know that men are established in groups; they prepare the land; after it has been prepared, the blocks are allotted to them, and finally they get their leases. Under this system it is not proposed to charge any fees at all to the group settlers. As a matter of fact, the settler gets a homestead farm and, in any case, the fees would be small. It is not proposed to give a lease until the land is improved, and ready for occupation. There are obvious reasons why this should be done. Men leave the groups and it would be inconvenient to get a transfer from the man who is leaving the settlement, to the man who is joining it. In these circumstances the group settler does not get his lease as would be the case with an ordinary settler, but neither has he to shoulder the usual responsibilities.

Mr. O'Loughlen: How many men have left the group at present?

The PREMIER: I think about 64 have left the settlements. When it is considered that there are 718 men remaining in the groups, it will be seen that the number of men who have left is very small. Those people have left for many reasons.

Hon. P. Collier: Many have left because of things that have occurred in connection with their domestic life, such as deaths in the family and so on?

The PREMIER: That is so. There has been no real trouble under this system, but it is natural that some of the settlers should leave. There are about 38 groups now, and from those, only 64 men have left. Men will always leave from time to time. Probably some are sent for by employers for whom they previously worked, and they are persuaded to go back to positions carrying good wages.

Hon. P. Collier: In the case of a number, their health may have failed.

The PREMIER: In some cases that is so. In some instances the life has been unsuitable for them. It would be inconvenient to chase these people all over the place in order to get a transfer of their leases to the persons who are taking over their land. There is no question of price, or of depriving anyone else of his land. I ask the House to give the Government power to allot land to group settlers without going to the Board. We must have that power. Hon. members will readily appreciate that when land is thrown open for selection under ordinary circumstances, it is open to everyone and the board has to decide who shall have it. Under the group settlement scheme if 20 men are in-

cluded in the group, each man must have his land allotted to him. I am asking the House to give the Government power to waive the need for the board in respect to that land, and I hope the House will not hesitate to give us that power. In country towns we are erecting workers' homes. I want to give those people their title, without the property having to be submitted to auction. Under the law as it stands, we must auction the block. That means that delays are occasioned. The house has to be built. The board selects the land and erects the homes in the country townships before the man is available to occupy it. There is no consideration of business sites, because the blocks are away from the business centres in these small townships throughout the State. The price is fixed at a fair value. Even if we had to auction the properties, we would not get much more for them.

Mr. McCallum: How many of these homes have been erected?

The PREMIER: Roughly speaking, about 50.

Mr. McCallum: Are they all occupied?

The PREMIER: Yes, there is no trouble about getting them occupied. It will be obvious that men very often cannot see the land in the country towns. In many instances, the men are working on the goldfields or in the city, or at some other distant place. If they had to go to secure the blocks before we could proceed with this work, it would mean considerable expense to them.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: How will this apply to Part 3 of the Workers' Homes Act?

The PREMIER: It will not apply.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Will it not?

Mr. A. Thomson: Even if it did, why should it not?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Because the Government could do it under Part 4 if they liked.

The PREMIER: When we propose to give a man the freehold of his present leasehold—these are mostly in Perth—we will tell the House what we propose to do. If the clause gives the power suggested by the member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin), it must be amended, because it would not be fair to include under this provision the right to grant the freehold of blocks now leased. I am entirely in favour of men owning their freehold, but it has to be remembered that years ago men got very valuable blocks in localities about Perth at a low figure, and to give them the freehold on the basis of the price then fixed would be to make a present to them of a large sum of money. That would not be quite fair.

Mr. Stubbs: Could you give it at valuation?

Mr. O'Loughlen: That is parchment worship!

Mr. Willecock: The property will have increased in value in 10 years.

The PREMIER: I do not object to that, so long as there is a fair valuation. The price fixed at the time the leasehold was granted was a low one. Otherwise the rent would be too great. At that time the House was perfectly willing to give every advantage

to the workers then erecting homes, just as I am seeking to give some advantage now. The two cases are not quite parallel. If fair means can be devised to give these men the freehold, I would be agreeable to do so, but it is impossible to have the two systems working side by side. The Leader of the Opposition knows that some time ago we endeavoured to get men with families from the goldfields to settle in these country towns, where they and their boys could get work. I sent an officer up at that time, and 12 of them undertook to come down and occupy houses in country districts. I do not know how many actually came. We want population in the State, and I do not want the men from the goldfields to go East. When the time comes for men to leave the fields, we must endeavour to get them to settle in the country districts.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Are you satisfied it is not only the goldfields men who have gone?

The PREMIER: I am not at all satisfied about that, but every man is a free agent, and we cannot prevent him from going where he likes.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Is there any means of ascertaining how many of the new arrivals go on to the Eastern States?

The PREMIER: No, but I can tell the hon. member of some new arrivals in Eastern Australia who have transferred to this State.

Mr. O'Loughlen: One who was about to leave the other day was robbed of £30.

The PREMIER: The man who robbed him probably performed a good service by keeping the money in the State.

Mr. McCallum: That is not bad.

The PREMIER: These men are always valuable. I want the right to lease and freehold without submitting these blocks to public auction. No one would give the land at less than a fair value. Many of the country towns throughout the State could provide work for men, and there would be opportunities for the children to work on the farms. I think we should assist such men by putting up for them houses for which they can pay. I do not hesitate to ask the House to allow the department to set aside blocks for this purpose, and when they are set aside under this measure, the land will become freehold after the man has bought and paid for it and the house. There is another important provision in regard to the price to be paid for sand plain. Everyone knows that the price charged for land is a policy price. It is not the true price. We have heard a great deal about the price of land generally. Before my time land was sold at 10s. per acre on free selection. The free selector had the pick of the country, absolutely, and got it for 10s. an acre, and later another man would come along, and we would have to pay £1 per acre. I want all men to pay the same price, according to the classification, consideration being given to the proximity to a market, or to railway

facilities. The price put on the land, although it was a policy price then—

Mr. O'Loghlen: Parliament made a mistake in agreeing to reclassify that land.

The PREMIER: I supported the Bill to reduce the price, because at that time the value had gone, but a great deal of harm was done. More harm than good was done, because the farmer was told he had paid too much for his land, and every financial house was in effect told that the land was not worth the price put upon it. The sale price of our land is the price spread over 20 years, so that if we sell land at 10s. an acre, it is really equivalent to a cash price of 5s. an acre. We have had some of these places offered to us for repurchase, but they were never offered to us at the price fixed originally.

Mr. O'Loghlen: Those people are all prosperous to-day.

The PREMIER: There is more value in our land to-day than the price we put upon it. I do not say that it would not pay to give the whole of the country away if it could be developed and cropped, and kept cropped.

Mr. O'Loghlen: Does any other country in the world do it?

The PREMIER: No; no other country goes further than we do. We give away 160 acres to each selector.

Mr. A. Thomson: It becomes of value when it is cropped.

The PREMIER: Naturally.

Mr. O'Loghlen: Why make a man prosperous and present him with a gift? It is the only asset the State has.

The PREMIER: I propose a price of 1s. per acre for sandplain land, plus survey fees, and I do not want members to conclude that the price is other than a policy price. There might be some sandplain which is not worth more, but there is some which is worth considerably more.

Mr. A. Thomson: Some of it would be dear at a gift.

The PREMIER: Then no one will take it.

Mr. Harrison: The quicker the light land is used, the better.

The PREMIER: I ask the House to agree to the price being as low as 1s. The price to-day is 3s. 9d. per acre. We would be quite willing to give a good deal of sandplain away to a man who would fence it, and 1s. per acre amounts to practically the same thing. This year there are crops growing on the sandplain equal to the crops on better land.

Hon. M. F. Troy: That is sandplain with clay subsoil.

The PREMIER: Yes, and the time will come when the sandplain will be put to use. Of course, this light country cannot be cropped more than once in every three or four years, but it will be put to use. Where this sandplain has a clay subsoil, it is very useful. There are crops on sandplain this year which are better than many crops on

good land. One man is cutting two tons of hay to the acre from sandplain. This land is quite capable of growing crops and carrying sheep. I have seen very valuable crops on certain sandplain and there is very valuable feed on much of it; so I do not want it to be thought that because we suggest a shilling as the price, the sandplain has no value. This is merely a policy price to bring the sandplain into use. If it can be fenced and gradually brought under cultivation it will become useful. This light land can be used, and where a man has some good land he can with advantage select some of this open plain country miscalled sandplain. I want this done, because I desire to see this light land brought into use. I have been in the country around Gnowan-gurup where magnificent wool is grown. Most of the land on which the stock is run is light, and much of the sandplain will give as good results as if it is once brought under cultivation. No one will attempt to bring it under cultivation unless it can be obtained at a reasonable rate. A man might be ready to expend a good many shillings per acre on providing water and fences and might be prepared to spend on clearing more than the clearing is really worth, but when it comes to taking up the land, he will not pay more than the land is worth in comparison with good land.

Mr. Pickering: That is only natural.

The PREMIER: Yes, and that is the reason I propose to make the price 1s. instead of 3s. 9d. an acre. The member for Wagin (Mr. Stubbs) knows that we charged for some of the poison land more than it was worth. Then we provided that twice the cost of eradicating the poison should be deducted from the actual cash price. It seems to me that the change in policy there has led to the occupation of thousands and perhaps hundreds of thousands of acres of poison land. To-day those lands are being brought into use as a result of the liberal treatment and are growing sheep and other commodities required in the State. Just what has happened in connection with the poison land I hope will happen in connection with the sandplain country. It must be remembered that the cost of fencing sandplain is as great as fencing the good land, and the cost of water is on the same basis. Since we only fix the price of our land at a policy price, it would be good policy to sell this light land at 1s. per acre. I would like to see a few million acres of it improved. The full cost of the survey fees will have to be paid. I think this is reasonable, because it will be easy for men to take up this land and we do not want the State put to the cost of surveying, perhaps to the extent of £20 for a big area, and for the land then not to be taken up. If a man takes up this land he has to pay the survey fee at some time, so it is not too much to ask him to pay it at the time of application. There are about six thousand blocks surveyed which ought to have been sold or have been sold and forfeited. The people applying for these lands had to pay

the survey fees, so we have not lost very much there. Some of them are not very good blocks.

Mr. Stubbs: In some cases you are asking £40 for survey fees.

The PREMIER: That must be in respect of very big areas. The survey is paid for after a few years. That is quite reasonable where you are likely to pass the land on to another settler and where the first applicant is not the one who is going on with it. But if you give a person the right to go out 30 miles from a railway, and you pay the cost of survey, you will be landed time and again. I know of one case where £250 was paid for the survey of land, and it came back to the State. It was a sandalwood area and it looked good business for the applicant. It can readily be seen that if you allow the selection of poor land without asking for survey fees, you will be landed time and again. It is reasonable, therefore, that we should charge survey fees on all land so situated as to make it probable that any person, other than the first, who takes it up cannot afford to run away. In all cases where land is favourably situated, it is proposed to collect interest only on the survey fee and the improvements on the land, if there are any, in the first five years. The other day I read an article in a newspaper which set out that we were wrong in collecting survey fees because the bank would not advance money on land in remote places.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Which paper was that in?

The PREMIER: The "Western Mail," but the writer misunderstood the position. Or the face of it, it looked all right. My duty, however, is clear. I have to protect the State, and the law permits me to do so. It is also provided that we may charge higher rates of interest on improvements. When the rate was fixed at 5 per cent., money was cheap. Money is dearer now and we must collect sufficient to pay the higher rate. If we resumed an improved pastoral area for subdivision, we should have to borrow money and pay 6½ per cent., and we should be able to charge a settler only 5 per cent. The Bill will make it possible to prescribe the rate, whatever it may be. If the money is borrowed cheaply, so will the interest be charged.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Is six the maximum? You might start making a profit.

The PREMIER: There is no fear of that.

Hon. P. Collier: Not as the House is constituted at present.

The PREMIER: There is a weakness in the Act which makes it possible for any lessee of town or suburban lands to obtain the fee simple without going to auction. The law says that may be done, but it was never intended to apply as it may be applied. For instance, someone may have the lease of the foreshore at Broome, or a wharf site along any part of the coast, and claim the right to convert it to freehold. It is intended to limit this conversion to town and suburban lands obtained at auction. Parliament never intended to give greater power than that. It would be absurd to lease land at a rental

value of, say, £25 a year—the land being worth £500—and then to have the lessee come along and say, "Here is the £500, I want the freehold of this block." As the Act stands at present it would be quite legal to grant the freehold.

Hon. M. F. Troy: The freezing works, for instance.

The PREMIER: Yes. It is desirable that there should be no doubt about the position. Of course, except by accident, nothing could be done under the law as it stands, but it would be quite possible for some official, without quite knowing what he was doing, to arrange for freehold to take the place of leasehold. Those are the only provisions contained in the Bill. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. M. F. Troy, debate adjourned.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1922-23.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from the 7th November; Mr. Stubbs in the Chair.

Department of Education (Hon. H. P. Colebatch, Minister).

Vote—Education, £559,533:

The PREMIER (Hon. Sir James Mitchell—Northam) [5.43]: I know of no vote which provokes more interest, and sometimes I am sorry to say more discussion, than that of the Department of Education. The member for Kanowna (Hon. T. Walker) was in charge of this department for a long time and is familiar with it. Of course everybody is interested in education, and we come across people who sometimes consider that the money spent on education might well be saved. After all, I do not consider that we do spend too much on the education of the youth of the State. It was recognised a considerable time back, in the days when the late Mr. Frank Wilson was Premier, and subsequently when the member for Kanowna was Minister for Education, that the system should be improved. As a matter of fact an improvement in the system has been going on for the last 15 years. But, of course, the cost of education has to be met. The system cannot be confined to any single part of the State, but must be applied all over the State. That is why it is so costly. From Wyndham in the north to Esperance in the south, and east as far as people live, we find schools. We cannot get away from the necessity for primary education, and I believe we are doing no more for primary education than we ought to do. We have just established more than 700 selectors in group settlements, and there are living in the groups some 2,800 persons. Clearly there must be there a great number of children. It sometimes happens that one school suffices for two or three groups, but more frequently is one school required for each group.

Mr. Pickering: Even then it is a fair sized school.

The PREMIER: Undoubtedly. I only mention the group settlements because, with all the other settlement going on, one can imagine how much more money is required year by year for education. It is a natural growth. I do not think there is any extravagance there. When it comes to secondary education, perhaps some expenditure could be cut out. I do not know.

Mr. Latham: If it can be cut out, it ought to come out.

The PREMIER: We must educate our children. It is one of the best investments we can have. If all people could be sent to good schools, they would be the better, and the world would be a better place. To-day we have an election throughout the State. Nobody is taking very much interest in it.

Hon. P. Collier: Except those six policemen.

The PREMIER: I do not know why policemen should not take as much interest in elections as does anybody else. I am delighted to think that one section at least of our people is taking an interest in politics. However, the rising generation will be the better for the education they are getting.

Mr. Latham: The more you educate them, the less interest do they take in politics.

The PREMIER: I do not agree with that. We have had first-class schools in Perth for some time past. The boys of the metropolitan area have been in a very fortunate position, for the education provided is very good and very cheap. However, we are increasing expenditure, because we have determined that the children of the country, wherever possible, shall have the advantages of secondary education. At Northam we have just built a very fine school, now occupied by a very fine set of children who have come there from distant parts of the State, some of them from Cue. It is better that those children should go to a high school in a country town than come to Perth. At Geraldton, too, there is a secondary school, although the buildings have not yet been erected. At Albany they have a high school, and again the building is still wanting. At Bunbury we have erected a building that does credit to the place. The secondary schools are not merely for the towns in which they are situated, but for the whole of the surrounding country. They could not be provided were it not for the Vote we are now considering. The cost has to be met, but it is well worth while. I agree that there ought not to be any waste, that there ought to be economy in the administration of this expenditure; but it is very hard to exercise as close supervision as should be exercised. We have in addition other expenditure under the Public Works Department Vote, expenditure for school buildings.

Mr. Underwood: Quite a lot of them.

The PREMIER: That is so. Education here costs about 35s. per head of the population, whereas in New Zealand it is £2 13s.

Mr. Underwood: I think your figures are wrong.

The PREMIER: I do not know who put them here. I think some of them must have been left by the member for Kanowna (Hon. T. Walker), because I see here that whereas we spend on alcohol £8 15s. per head, in New Zealand the expenditure is £5 15s. Expenditure on education has to be met. We stand to reap a great benefit from all these schools, although the higher class schools have not been in existence for many years. The children are very carefully trained in those schools, and can pass from school to almost any position in life. Moreover, in whatever walk of life they find themselves, they are better workers than they would have been without their education. The Vote has grown tremendously.

Hon. T. Walker: It grows with the population.

The PREMIER: Yes, and with the distribution of the population. Again, we have immensely improved our system during the last ten or fifteen years. In America they spent a tremendous lot of money on education.

Mr. Latham: They can afford to do it.

The PREMIER: And we cannot afford not to do it.

Mr. Latham: You will have to get your finances into better shape.

Mr. Underwood: Is it better to build a school than to build a maternity ward?

Mr. A. Thomson: Does not the central Government assist education in America?

The PREMIER: Yes, and if the Commonwealth Government were to pay a pro rata amount according to population, we should still pay more than our share as a State.

Hon. P. Collier: They have only the same taxpayers to call upon. I would rather do it through the State.

The PREMIER: Yes, but in this State we have to pay more per head than is paid in the other States. The estimate this year exceeds the expenditure of last year by £3,507. Last year arrears of salaries under the appeal board amounting to £7,570 were paid. This year £526 has been provided for this item. The actual increase over last year's normal expenditure is, therefore, £10,551, the real increase in salaries being £12,189, but the "contingencies" showing a decrease of £1,638, leaving a balance of £10,551. The automatic and classification increases this year represent £2,350, and the increased expenditure this year on schools and classes open for only portion of last year amounts to £4,500. So the two last-named account for £6,850 of the total increase of salaries, the balance being for new schools and classes. Of this, £1,600 is for secondary schools, £254 for continuation classes, and £3,500 for primary schools. The average salary for teachers is now £240. This year there are 820 additional children on the rolls of primary schools, and 200 additional in the secondary schools. The number of schools has increased by 16. There

are in all 698 primary schools open. The Narrogin school of agriculture has been enlarged. Sheds and workshops have been erected by the boys under the carpentry instruction, and blacksmithing and saddlery are also taught. This agricultural education can reach only a few of our boys. Some writer has said that the boy who goes on the land requires a flexible brain, requires to have attended a good school and to be able not only to read but to absorb what he reads. In Australia we do not do for the agriculturist in this way all that we ought to do. The Hawkesbury College in New South Wales, the Dookie College in Victoria, and the Roseworthy College in South Australia are all magnificent agricultural colleges, and have been in existence for many years. Yet if one wants agricultural experts, one finds great difficulty in getting them. I do not think our agricultural colleges require to teach the youth how to plough. Rather should they aim at training his brain. In America the students have to complete their practical work before entering an agricultural college.

Hon. M. F. Troy: The ground work.

The PREMIER: Yes, the outside work. In Australia we ought to know what is best to be done in this way. If there is one thing we want more than another in connection with education, it is knowledge bearing upon the life on the land. We want to train our boys to get the best out of the land. There are, of course, people who think that any fool can become a farmer. That is quite wrong. One cannot use brains to better advantage than on the land.

Mr. Teesdale: But one must have the physique too.

Mr. Lambert: You are a great monument of physique.

The PREMIER: All our secondary schools should aim at fitting boys for the land. In America there are thousands of boys at school being trained for the land.

Mr. Lambert: If you would only reprint the United States bulletins, it would be worth a hundred thousand a year to Western Australia.

The PREMIER: I should like to see the secondary schools devote considerable time to preparing boys for the land at an age when they are most likely to adopt life on the land. That would be a magnificent investment, because the State would get the direct benefit. Correspondence classes are growing too, and are proving most useful. It is wonderful how successful they have been.

Mr. Latham: They are the cheapest educational branch you have.

The PREMIER: They have proved most useful. Recently I received a letter from a lady outside Leonora, whose child was being educated through the correspondence classes. I believe the child has won a scholarship. The system is most useful.

Hon. T. Walker: Yes, right away in the far North-West.

The PREMIER: Yes, and generally where people live away from schools.

Mr. Teesdale: We have not heard of the system yet in the North-West.

Hon. T. Walker: It is going on there.

The PREMIER: Yes; and the member for Roelourne had something to say about it a year ago. He spoke to the mothers up there well and pleasantly regarding the correspondence classes. Of course those classes are not carried on without cost. I think the cost amounts to about £5 per child.

Hon. T. Walker: It is cheaper than it used to be.

The PREMIER: Yes; and the system is much cheaper than establishing a school for half a dozen pupils. The system makes it possible for every child, no matter where situated, to obtain an education. Again, where children have been at school for a few years, they are carried on by this system, which is wonderfully good for keeping them in touch with a holistic life. I do not know that I can say much more on this vote. I am not in control of the Education Department, but I entirely approve of secondary education for the children of this State. Parliament has decided that education shall be free, and that secondary schools shall be established; and the cost has to be met. Parliament has also decided to establish a University, and has directed that the University shall be free. We cannot have that without cost. I regret that the University is being carried on in buildings which are very unsuitable. Altogether the sum spent on education is very considerable for a small community.

Mr. O'Loughlen: The House has approved of education going forward, but the Education Department may be going forward too fast.

The PREMIER: If Parliament said to the Education Department, "Go back," how could we go back?

Mr. O'Loughlen: But the Minister for Education took the instruction of this House to go forward as an instruction to gallop forward.

The PREMIER: The system cannot go back. All we can do with the system is to make it more useful.

Mr. Teesdale: How would it do to mark time for a while?

The PREMIER: As I have explained, the increased expenditure is necessary to carry on the system. The additional amount this year is really only equal to the increase in salaries. The other work to be done represents savings. An amount of £7,500 paid last year will not have to be paid this year, and a further £1,500 is being saved. The £12,000 represents the increase in salaries and the opening of new schools. I do not say for a moment that the Education Department is perfectly controlled: no department is; and I daresay the administration of the Education Department might be improved, just as the administration of any department can be improved. We could not shut up the secondary schools, simply because the people would not stand it.

Hon. T. Walker: We could not do it without causing serious injury.

The PREMIER: I do not think it could be done at all. I do not know what the public would say if Parliament decided on such a course. We do not want to go back, but we want as much economy as possible.

Mr. PICKERING (Sussex) [6.10]: I was glad to hear the Premier's remarks on education, and I was especially glad to hear him emphasise that phase of the subject which is really most important for this State, namely, primary education. The standard of primary education here should be high, and taking the State as a whole the standard of primary education is one upon which we can congratulate ourselves. In the metropolitan area the primary schools are undoubtedly of a very high order, and that can also be said of the schools in the larger country centres. But there is an aspect of our primary education which is not all it might be, and now I am referring to schools in the back country districts. On page 8 of the report of the Education Department for the year 1921 I find the following:—

The percentage of unclassified teachers has fallen from 24.4 to 20.8. This represents a distinct improvement in the attainments of the teachers who are now taking charge of the small country schools. The unclassified teachers are those who have passed an entrance examination, and, after a period of observation and practice, have satisfied an inspector of their practical skill. They have not, however, passed the further examination which will render them eligible for appointment as certificated and classified teachers.

It will be noted that this applies to the country districts only. Education in the small country schools is frequently the only form of education which the students attending them are ever likely to obtain. Therefore, it is desirable that the small country schools should have at least certificated teachers. By far the better course would be to have uncertificated teachers in the larger centres, where the senior masters could impart the extra knowledge required.

Mr. Lambert: But there has been an improvement.

Mr. PICKERING: There is not that necessity for improvement in the teaching in schools in the metropolis and large towns that there is for improvement in the teaching in country districts.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Some of your party do not want any schools in the metropolitan area at all.

Mr. PICKERING: The member for North-East Fremantle has very peculiar views on education, views with which I have no sympathy.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: But you are a resident of the metropolitan area.

Mr. PICKERING: I am speaking for the district I represent, and which I visit as frequently as it is possible for me to do so, consistently with my duties to my constituents, which occupy a great deal of my time in Perth. As regards primary education, I wish

now to deal with that phase of it which applies to group settlements. Here is an opportunity for a certain measure of economy. As the Premier said, it is possible that one school can cater for three group settlements, or even more. That is the system which, as hon. members will recollect, was adopted in connection with the consolidated school at Tood-yay, of which, by the way, I do not see much in the Education Department's report. Similar schools might be brought into existence in connection with group settlements. It is evident that by establishing one large central school for three or even two groups, we shall be able to give the children of those groups a much higher class of education than they could possibly obtain in what I may term the pupil teacher schools.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. PICKERING: Before the tea adjournment I was referring to group settlement in connection with education matters. I anticipate as a result of that policy that, in a measure, the question of affording better education facilities for the country children will be solved. It must be remembered that that policy has now been in existence for over 12 months. One of the most important phases in connection with it is that we must get schools for the children at the group settlements at the earliest possible moment. It is also necessary that the schools should be habitable. I know that the department is doing its best to meet the existing exceptional circumstances, but I have had several complaints from groups as to their inability to get educational facilities for their children. So great has been the difficulty in some instances that groups have volunteered to take in hand the erection of school buildings if the department will make the timber and material available for that purpose. We are placing so much importance on agricultural education at the present juncture that I will read a short paragraph from the report of the Director of Education which will be found on page 11. The Director says—

The need for further facilities for agricultural education is very pressing. Many boys who wish to enter the Narrogin school have to be refused admission, there being no room. The committee that deals with the education of the children of deceased or incapacitated soldiers would be glad to send many boys to such a school if room could be found for them. There is no doubt that, with the increasing importance of agriculture to the State, and the projected rapid increase in our agricultural population, there is room for many schools of this kind in different districts, as well as for an agricultural college to provide instruction of a more advanced type.

It is interesting to read in the report the advance that has been made in connection with the Narrogin School of Agriculture

since it has been handed over to the control of the Education Department. It would appear that the improvements regarding accommodation, curriculum and other matters pertaining to the school are considerable. I understand that it is the aim of the Education Department to provide sufficient accommodation as early as possible for 80 students. In view of the large prospective increase in our agricultural population it seems to be necessary that schools of a similar type shall be established, as the director stated in his report, in different districts. This is necessary because different conditions obtain in various districts, which need special attention. I, therefore, commend for consideration of the Government as time goes on, the suggestion that agricultural schools should be the main factor in the development of education in the rural districts, for it is by that means we are more likely to retain on the land those people most eminently suited for it. I can conceive of no better prospective farmer than the son of a farmer, and it should be the aim of the State, by every means, to make life in the country as attractive as possible and as sufficient for those people as can be accomplished. That phase is further dealt with by the Director of Education in his report where he draws attention to the necessity of making country life attractive to city dwellers. I am in accord with that view because it should be the aim of the Education Department to offer opportunities for town children, having a predilection for country life, so that they can acquire the necessary qualifications to fit them for that occupation. If steps were taken in that direction it would be a wise move. There are two or three other matters to which I desire to refer before dealing with the economic phase. I wish to draw attention to the case of mental deficient, and medical inspection in schools. We are only tackling the question of mental deficient in a very crude and imperfect manner. We have not made that advance which is so essential. There is one element which is a great factor in connection with this phase of development and that is the cost. From what I can learn from the report, we are not dealing with the mental cases in the way we should be handling them because of the cost involved. This is a serious phase and I trust that everything possible will be done to meet the position. Then again the medical inspection of the children attending the schools is a vital matter. I regret to say that from a perusal of the report I cannot gather much hope of an improvement in that direction. Of all the country schools, only four were inspected last year. It is suggested by the director that the services of the resident medical officers in the various districts should be made use of in the country schools. While it is possible in the metropolitan and other more thickly populated centres to give greater attention to this aspect than in the country areas, steps should be taken to give the country children at least as much attention as is given to city residents. Another phase that

appeals to me is in connection with technical education. I am pleased to find from the report that there is a slight balance now in favour of the trading aspect of technical education, as opposed to the commercial and domestic. It is a result essentially to be hoped for and we should encourage our youth to take an interest in the arts and trades in preference to commercial aspects. If there is one thing more than another that we require in Australia, and particularly in our State, it is to give attention to this phase of the question. We must take steps to train artisans, and in order to get over the difficulty which confronts us in connection with the apprenticeship problem in Western Australia, the only solution lies in the direction of technical education. On other occasions when I have spoken to this Vote, I have endeavoured to stress the importance of this phase. If we are to have skilled mechanics in future, we will have to depend upon the training youths get at the technical schools. Some special provision should be made in this direction. There is no better life than that of the skilled artisan, particularly if he is a man well trained in his calling. We should endeavour to induce boys to take up training in connection with some trade as early as possible so that they may become efficient artisans, otherwise the outlook for Australia and Western Australia will be serious indeed. When we look at the financial aspect of education we find from the returns that the increase in the cost is considerable. When we compare the cost per head in 1919-20 with the cost per head in 1920-21, we find that in 1919-20 the cost per head on the average attendance was £7 15s. 4½d., while the cost per head on the average enrolments was £6 12s. 3¼d. In 1920-21 the cost per head on the average attendance was £9 9s. 3¼d., and the cost per head on the average enrolments £8 2s. Hon. members will see that the increase is indeed considerable. We talk about economy in connection with our Education Vote but I do not think we are altogether honest in that respect, because we should realise that there are only two ways in which economy can be effected in connection with this vote. One is in connection with administration. I am convinced that, although there may be a reasonable saving effected in the cost of administration, it will not go to that length which hon. members who talk about economy and education would wish to see. There is only one other way and that is a change in our policy. The Premier, in outlining the policy when speaking to the vote, stressed the point that it would be impossible to go back in our scheme of education. I remember well that when dealing with the question of fees at the University the Premier was one of those who led the vote which negated the proposal to impose fees.

The Premier: What did I say that time?

Mr. PICKERING: The Premier said that he would not vote for fees at the University. In fact, it was mainly in consequence of the

Premier's action that the vote in favour of fees was lost.

Mr. McCallum: It was a very wise action to take.

Mr. PICKERING: That may be so, but I am dealing with the position as we find it to-day. If we are determined to continue the policy on the lines we have established to-day, namely, free high schools, free secondary schools and a free university, then this State must be prepared to face the position, and cease advocating a reduction in the education vote. On the other hand, if we really are in earnest about the position and desire to bring about a change, we must face the payment of fees for secondary education and for education at the University. It is idle to declaim against the excessive cost of education, and at the same time advocate free education at the University. To do so, is to act inconsistently. If any member desires to reduce the vote, he must be prepared to change the policy. Only by these means can we reduce to any appreciable extent the expenditure on education. We must in any case insist upon the fullest possible primary education and upon the education in the country being of the highest possible standard. Residents in the city can get a much higher class of education for their children than can country residents, and it should be the aim of members representing the country electorates to see that they have at least qualified teachers for their schools. There are at least 300 or 400 teachers who are uncertificated, and these uncertificated teachers are in the country schools.

Mr. Underwood: They might be as good as the others.

Mr. PICKERING: The Director of Education in his report says—

One important step towards giving the scattered country districts better educational facilities is the provision of better-trained and better-educated teachers. Numbers of those who now enter the service for employment in these small schools hold the leaving certificate, which denotes that they have completed a satisfactory course of secondary education. Those who enter the Training College for the purpose of taking charge of these small schools are now given a full year's special training. . . . But there are large numbers of teachers already in these schools who had not the good fortune, in their time of training to find such opportunities as are now provided for their successors.

All I have quoted from the report is indicative of the necessity for an improved standard for the country school teacher. If our children are to compete with those of other countries, they must have the advantage of an improved education. They must have a smattering of the sciences, which will assist them to carry on the proper development of the country. The greater the interest we can create in the children in the scientific, physical, and other phases of country life, the better chance we shall have of getting a

higher development and a bigger return from our lands. In every line of business, it is the most proficient man who has the advantage.

Mr. Underwood: Quite wrong.

Mr. PICKERING: It is the men with the widest knowledge of their profession who do the best.

Mr. Underwood: Where do they get it?

Mr. PICKERING: From the universities, technical schools, and the offices through which they pass. It is not intuition, and it is useless to say that it is. Our children will not be able to acquire the necessary knowledge from intuition; they must be taught. So long as the State is pledged to a policy of free education, I cannot see how it is possible for us to do anything tangible towards reducing the vote.

Mr. UNDERWOOD (Pilbara) [7.48]: I do not wish to cover the whole ground, but I still protest against the vote we are passing, and also against the system of education we have in this State. The Premier, in introducing the Estimates, spoke of the expenditure appearing on the Estimates. That amount is only about three-quarters of the actual cost. To that has to be added all the cost which appears under the Public Works Department, and under Loans, the cost of the University, the Deaf and Dumb School, and various other schools. When we compare our system with other systems of education, particularly that of New Zealand, we should remember that those things are included in their costs, and are not included in ours. The member for Sussex (Mr. Pickering said we must have competent teachers, and that we had many uncertificated teachers in the country schools. What certificate does a man or woman require to teach children up to the age of 14? Does he want a University education to teach children? A person with some gift for teaching, and without any certificate at all, can teach them to read, write, and reckon, just as well as a certificated teacher, possibly better, because he will not have been spoilt by the drilling at the colleges. The Premier spoke of the North-West, and said we must have schools in the country and in this wide-flung State of ours. There are seven schools and seven teachers in the North-West. That is all we have in the territory representing one-half of this great State. Western Australia is spending nearly three-quarters of a million per annum on education, and in half the area there are seven schools and seven teachers. We have three or four private schools where the residents pay to send their children in preference to the State schools. So much for the schools in this far-flung State. There is nothing in that far-flung argument. The great expenditure is in the centres. The biggest and most wasteful expenditure is at the Modern School, Subiaco. There is another at Claremont, another at Fremantle, one at Bunbury, and one at Northam.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: There is no modern school at Fremantle.

Mr. J. Thomson: There is none at Claremont.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The Training College is at Claremont. The Premier spoke of the expenditure on education in America. I am afraid he has not read the latest information. There is a book entitled "Comparative Education," to which educationists representing almost all civilised countries have contributed. It gives particulars of education in the United States, Great Britain, Germany, France, Denmark, and other countries, but our system is not mentioned. The American system is almost as lackadaisical as the British, but not quite so lackadaisical as the Australian. The best system of education I have been able to learn of is in Denmark, and possibly the second is in Germany. In those two countries, the boy is taken from the school and put into a trade, on the farm, or in an engineering or blacksmith's shop. He is taught sufficient at school, and is then put to his trade, and turned out a tradesman. We have never attempted or thought of anything of that description. The American system is very uneven. Some of the States many years ago set aside as much as one-ninth of their areas for education endowment. The country, having become rapidly populated, gave the Education Department enormous sums of money, which are being spent more or less wisely; but in some of the States they have money to burn, and they are burning it to such an extent that they have not so good a system as has Denmark. I wish to deal with the idea put forward by the Minister, the Lieut.-Governor, and the Mayor of Perth, that boys should be kept at school until they are 18 or 19 years of age. The Lieut.-Governor in a speech recently, said, from his experience as a judge, he knew that the dangerous age for boys was between 14 and 19. I am prepared to say the judge was not giving true evidence when he said that. If there is any meaning in his statement, it is that the boys who left school at 14 or 15 are more liable to become criminals than those who are kept at school till a later age. The judge cannot substantiate that statement, and being a judge, he should not make such a statement.

Hon. P. Collier: How do you know that he cannot substantiate it?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I am certain he cannot.

Hon. P. Collier: You have no figures.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The number of embezzlement cases by working people are few as compared with those committed by educated people. Sir William Lathlain said—

In Australia we spend millions of pounds in educating our children to a high point, and then, by a protective duty, we endeavour to start them in such industries

as the manufacture of matches, when they should be employed in higher callings. If all Australians are to be employed in higher callings, who are going to make the matches and the boots? Would the mayor say it is a higher calling to be an engineer, than the manager of a draper's shop? Which is the higher?

Mr. J. Thomson: The engineer, of course.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: A man who can make matches is a much more useful citizen than a counter jumper.

Hon. P. Collier: Than a man who can sell "nightsies."

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Yes. The Minister is continually advising the people to endeavour to send their boys to school until they are 18 or 19 years of age. I have in the past dealt with the girls, and the waste of money in teaching them to wash, clean clothes, or to dress celluloid dolls, under the instruction of an old maid, or to cook with the assistance of slaves to wash up the pots and pans for them. I do not wish to refer further to them.

Hon. P. Collier: You exaggerated it a bit.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The girls will turn out all right. They will marry, and become mothers, and will soon unlearn all this rubbish on which we are wasting money to teach them. If we keep the boys at school until they are 18 or 19, or even until they are 17, we shall be wasting valuable years of their lives—years which can never be retrieved.

Hon. P. Collier: What would you do with them?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Teach them a trade.

Mr. J. Thomson: There are no trades.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: A most pathetic case came under my notice recently, and I have no doubt similar cases have come under the notice of other members of Parliament. There are children whose parents may be suffering from miner's phthisis, or who may be crippled, and for these children we are asked to find employment. The most pathetic cases that ever came under my notice are those of boys turned out of school at 18 or 19 years of age. I am asked to find jobs for them.

Mr. Chesson: And they are useless.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: They are neither men nor boys, neither flesh nor fowl, nor even good red herring. They are certainly not tradesmen. A Minister or anybody else who, without other considerations, advises parents to send their boys to school until they are 18 or 19 years of age, then to be turned out on to the world, should be in a lunatic asylum or in gaol. That kind of thing is absolutely injurious to boys. Never mind about wasting money—I am not worrying about that. We have money to burn and we will duly burn it, but we should not burn the valuable years of a boy's life. Take a position such as that of a master mariner, or that of a marine engineer. If we keep our boys at school until they are 18 or 19 years of age we will never

be able to make either master mariners or marine engineers of them. Those are good and useful professions and they are well paid also. There is a belief that you can learn everything at school. That is the opinion of school teachers, but it is utterly impossible to do that. As a matter of fact the only thing one can completely learn at school is to be a school teacher. If you want to know anything else in this world you have to learn it by practical experience. Take a lawyer or a judge. Either will learn a considerable amount in the lawyer's office, and he acquires a great deal more knowledge there than he does at school or at the University. Talking about trades, I would refer to the British system which is better than ours. In many of the Universities in Scotland and in Ireland—and I believe in England—the lads who are endeavouring to get a diploma for civil engineering must spend two or three months in each year in a workshop in one of the big factories in which mechanical engineering is being done. There is sense in that, but there is no sense in our system of simply keeping the youths at school.

Hon. P. Collier: You cannot become an apprentice to an engineer until you have an "A" certificate, and you cannot get that at 14.

The Premier: The compulsory leaving age is 14.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: And I would not mind advancing that age one year. I would make it compulsory for any boy who did not get his leaving certificate at 14 to remain until he was 15. Of course if he cannot get his leaving certificate at 15 it is just as well to try to teach him something else. A boy is not a failure on that account.

Hon. P. Collier: That is the standard we should aim at.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The Minister says we should follow them up by putting them in a High School and teaching them shorthand and typewriting. I say that we should follow them up by putting them to trades.

Hon. P. Collier: Then where will you get your superior people unless you have that higher education?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: They might, like the Leader of the Opposition and myself, just grow.

Hon. P. Collier: Like Topsy.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: A boy in Western Australia has only two chances in front of him, and they are to be either a clerk or a labourer. In our system of Arbitration Court awards—I am speaking of the engineering trade—they allow one apprentice to five men and the apprenticeship must be for five years.

Mr. Davies: It is three now.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: When you consider the question as it is, and the many engineers who are working on small jobs where there may be only one or two employed, there are no apprentices. There are hundreds of jobs of that description. Then take other instances, and you will find that at least half of the engineers cannot teach apprentices.

Even with three years' apprenticeship, a boy starting to learn a trade would have to remain in that trade for 35 years before he would be able to teach it. That applies to the trades of brick-laying, stonemasons, and many others. When we spend such an enormous sum of money, surely we should endeavour to get some system that will work out better than the one we have now. Then we come to another branch on which we are spending a big sum of money, and a branch which the Director of Education is pleased to term the commercial course in our State schools. I do not know that I am doing much good in mentioning this, but I would like so far as I can to advise the people of Western Australia to avoid that commercial course. I would say to parents, "If you want your boys to follow a commercial life put them into a commercial house as soon as you can. If you want to brighten your boys send them to one of the commercial schools—the schools which are actually in touch with the existing commercial methods adopted in commercial houses, but to send them to the State schools is a delusion and a snare." I would advise parents to avoid doing that as they would avoid a snake. They are not only assisting to waste our money, but wasting the most valuable years of a boy's life. Let me quote an instance that I know of—the case of a young fellow whose father kept him at school until he was over 16 years of age. Then the father endeavoured to get the boy into the establishment of a big trading firm in this city, the manager of which he knew very well. He asked the manager whether he could place the boy and teach him the business. The manager replied that he would be pleased to take the lad. Everything was fixed up and then the manager said, "By the way, what is the age of the boy?" The father replied that the boy had just turned 16. The manager then said, "I am very sorry but we cannot employ him. We would have to pay him the higher wages all the time, and a boy of 15 would be just as good, and, he added, "this boy who has obtained his leaving certificate from the school would be no good to us because he would have to unlearn everything he had been taught." Anyhow, the firm would not have him, and I know this also, that many of the commercial firms do not want these old boys. They want smart youngsters whom they can teach, and who will not be required to unlearn what they were taught at school. The only possible chance a boy can have on going through the commercial schools is to become a teacher of State school commercialism. That is the only use such education can be to him. I have very little else to say except to point out that we spent just on three-quarters of a million on education, and we require a special tax to maintain a few hospitals. Let me give an instance of what is being done. We are spending £1,000 or £2,000 in putting up a gymnasium at the High School at Bunbury, a High School which will be used almost exclusively by the children of the business people and the well to do farmers in the vicinity of Bunbury. It

will be used for the children of the Bunbury bourgeois, while down at Busselton we cannot afford £100 for a maternity ward at the hospital. There is something wrong, and I think the Committee should look into it.

Hon. P. Collier: It is the difference of administration between the two departments.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I suppose £10,000 has been spent on gymnasiums and cookery rooms at the Modern School.

Hon. P. Collier: Surely not!

Mr. UNDERWOOD: It is so, yet we cannot get £100 for a maternity ward at Busselton.

Mr. Teesdale: Why Busselton? What about a few places in the North?

Hon. P. Collier: A maternity ward is not required at Busselton. The people down there are all very old.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Well, take some other place where they are not quite so far gone. However, when we are trying to provide for new communities, the first thing we should see to is a maternity ward.

Mr. DAVIES (Guildford) [8.17]: I commend the Government on the system they have introduced at Midland Junction for the education of apprentices. There are at Midland Junction workshops large numbers of apprentices who are attending a technical school during working hours, instead of, as in the past, attending such schools after their day's work. There is throughout Australia an agitation for the 44-hour week. Yet in private workshops we are working boys of from 14 to 19 years of age 48 hours a week, and then inducing them to attend technical schools after they have finished their day's work. It is asking too much of the youths. I know lads who are nervous wrecks through starting work at 7.30 a.m. on five days a week, carrying on till 5 p.m., and then on four nights a week having to attend technical school.

Mr. Gibson: It will do them no harm.

Lieut.-Colonel Denton: Our fathers worked ten hours a day.

Mr. DAVIES: And our grandfathers 16 hours a day, but that is no reason why our boys should do the same. The Committee should see whether it is not possible to insist upon private employers permitting the boys to complete their technical education during working hours. I cannot follow the member for Pilbara (Mr. Underwood) in his contention that technical education is of no use. From experience I know that technical education is of the utmost assistance to the apprentice, and to the trade also. Many a workman knows how to do a job when he is told, and yet cannot tell you the reason why he has to do a certain thing in a certain way. It is exactly that which boys are taught in technical schools.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: There were no technical schools where I was brought up.

Mr. DAVIES: I can remember when the foreman used to look up the side of a building to see if it was vertical.

Hon. P. Collier: They were tradesmen in those days.

Mr. DAVIES: Certainly their work stood, but we cannot afford that sort of thing these days. They built walls six feet thick.

Hon. P. Collier: And so a foot out of plumb was neither here nor there.

Mr. DAVIES: It is impossible for an apprentice to get along on rule of thumb in an engineering workshop. He has to go to a technical school. I appeal for those apprentices who, having worked all day in the shop, are expected to go to a technical school at night. If it is good in a Government workshop to allow them time off for education, it should be good in a private shop. When the Defence Act was first brought in, the youth of Australia had to give up their Saturday afternoons to their military training. To-day they are allowed time off from their work for military training.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Some of the time off.

Mr. DAVIES: All of it.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The employer provides certain days, and the youth have to provide other days. It is fifty-fifty.

Mr. DAVIES: I know that a lot of the training is carried out in the employer's time. If that can be done for defence purposes, it ought to be done for educational purposes. In many cases it is not compulsory on the boys to attend technical schools, notwithstanding which they do it for their own good. They are to be commended on the many hours they give up to technical education.

Hon. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [8.25]: I quite agree with the views expressed by the member who has just sat down in regard to the wisdom of providing opportunities for boys to acquire technical education during working hours or at all events without imposing undue strain on them such as must occur when they work 48 hours a week and study for two or three hours a night, three or four nights a week. In fact the principle of night education is wrong. It would be much better if provision were made for boys and girls to continue their education, or supplement it, in the day time. Without reflecting in any way on the youth of Australia, I think there is a danger to our boys and girls during those years, from 14 to 17, when they ought to be well under parental control, of the night school taking them away from parental control and allowing them to acquire habits which in after life may not be good for them.

Mr. Durack: It is not as bad as attending picture shows.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I suppose they do visit picture shows.

Mr. Teesdale: And pool rooms.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I do not think boys of 14, 15 and 16 frequent pool rooms, at all events not in Perth. It is somewhat difficult for a layman to pass judgment on the work of the Education Department. We had a

Royal Commission last year inquiring into the working of the whole system. The report of that Commission was favourable to the system and to those in control of it, but I am not so sure that we are not indulging in what might be described as an excess of frill, in other words if we are not spending considerable money in teaching subjects which, as the member for Pilbara has said, may be of very little use to the boys and girls in after life. It is worth while noting the manner in which expenditure on education has increased. In 1912, ten years ago, the total expenditure, apart from buildings, etc., was £238,000. Last year it was £556,000 and this year it is estimated to be £559,000, or an increase in ten years of £317,000. Running through the annual figures beginning with 1916, we find that the increases over the preceding year have been as follows:—1916, £16,000; 1917, £19,000; 1918, £12,000; 1919, £48,000; 1920, £75,000; and, last year £65,000. Each year the amount was in excess of the previous year. So we have in 10 years a total expenditure jumping from £238,000 to £556,000. That is to say, to-day we are spending on education £5 for every £2 we spent 10 years ago. It is interesting to note that during that period the population of the State has increased by only 33,000, from 305,000 in 1912 to 338,000 at the present day. Necessarily, the per capita expenditure on education has increased enormously. I am aware, of course, that the salaries of teachers and other expenses incidental to education have increased very much during that decade; but even allowing for all those items I am doubtful whether we are getting full results as compared with 10 years ago for the money we are now spending on education. True, various secondary schools have been established during that period—at Northam, Bunbury, Geraldton, and possibly at one or two other places. However, it does seem that since the present Minister has been in charge of the Education Department the expenditure there has run loose. I am not one to question the expenditure of public funds on education at all, even if the amount were double the present figure, so long as one could be sure that the money was being spent to the best advantage. But notwithstanding the investigations and report of the Royal Commission of last year, I think, having regard to what has been done in the expansion of the system and for the establishment of large numbers of new schools in districts recently opened up—an experience which is always going on—the increase in cost has been too much. I do not know that of recent years we have been opening new schools in greater proportion than formerly. There seems to be no firm hold on the expenditure in our Education Department. The amount we spend, £559,000, is a very large sum. The State would be well repaid if the result were reflected in the education being received by our boys and girls. Notwithstanding the fact that the member for Pilbara is considered an outlander in the matter of education, I always listen to him with interest; he invariably

gives expression to points well worthy of consideration. It is a fact that a great obstacle faces the parents of Western Australia at the present day, in the paucity of openings available for their children. If one goes to a technical school in the evening, one sees scores and scores of boys from 14 to 16 years of age, bright boys from the seventh and eighth standards of our State schools, obtaining technical instruction. In the course of conversation with the teacher in charge of such a school, I learned that 95 per cent. of the boys attending evening classes are desirous of becoming electrical or mechanical engineers. But there is no opportunity whatever for them in this State, and it is very sad that parents should make sacrifices in keeping their boys at school to the age of 16 or 17, and then should find that there is nothing left for their sons except to go out and become hewers of wood and drawers of water. There are hundreds and hundreds, I believe thousands of boys, from 15 to 17 years of age here—as bright, I believe, as are to be found in any part of the world, and certainly as bright as any to be found in Australia—whose careers are largely being marred, owing to the fact of there being no opening for the boys in any trade, profession, or calling other than that of labouring. No doubt a percentage of them, as has been said, will make good in after life. But, notwithstanding the view of the member for Pilbara that boys need not receive anything more than a very ordinary education, need not learn more than the three R's, still it is a fact that a good solid grounding in education is of immense advantage to the average man. We know, of course, that there are some men whom no handicap imposed in youth will prevent coming to the top. But those men are an infinitesimal percentage of the total number. What we have to bear in mind is, not the boy of exceptional intellect, but the average boy, who is the makings of the average man. Both myself and the member for Pilbara know from experience in life that it is a very great disadvantage not to have had the opportunities which the average boy gets now. It is a great pity indeed that boys of to-day on the goldfields and in the city and elsewhere are forced out into the world to become labourers. They have to go into the country districts and become farm labourers. There is nothing wrong with that in itself, if eventually a fair proportion of them were sure to become farmers. I believe that with such an end in view it is much better for a boy to become a farm labourer than to become an engineer or a tradesman. But I am afraid that when these boys now going out reach manhood, the opportunities of acquiring land in this State will not be too plentiful. What I fear is that an undue proportion of them will for the rest of their lives have to continue as farm labourers, or as labourers on the land for others; and I think everybody will agree that that is not a very desirable thing. I disagree entirely with the member for Pilbara in regard to the school age. Without commenting at all upon what the Lieuten-

ant Governor has said, I entirely endorse his Excellency's view that the compulsory school age should extend to at least 16 years. Unquestionably we are doing an absolute wrong to our children, and particularly to our boys, in taking them away from school at the age of 14. It is only at that age the intellect begins to open.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Under present conditions one does wrong to keep a boy at school to the age of 16.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It is unfortunate that that should be so, but I think the remedy lies, not in taking the boy away at 14, but in altering the conditions of employment so that a boy would not be penalised by reason of having been kept at school to the age of 16. Up to 14 years the child is merely learning by rule of thumb; he knows how to do certain things, but without having grasped the why and wherefore. I venture to say that the average child will acquire more genuine information and knowledge of service to him in after life during the two years between 14 and 16, than in all the years prior to 14. If, because of the expense involved, or for other reasons, we are not able to extend the school age as suggested, it would be infinitely better that something should be cut off at the beginning rather than at the end. If it were a question of a certain number of years of schooling, no parent would be so mad as to say that one of the earlier years should be taken in preference to one of the later years. The Government ought seriously to take in hand the matter of extending the school age by at least one year. Let us go by steps, let us begin by making the compulsory leaving age 15 years, even if in so doing we should be compelled, either by the lack of accommodation in our schools or by financial reasons, to raise the starting age by 12 months. The regulations now provide for consent being given, in deserving cases, to a child leaving school earlier than 14; and that provision would still obtain if the leaving age were raised by one year. We know that parents make sacrifices to continue their children at school beyond the age of 14. There is, however, always a percentage of parents who will take away the child from school, regardless of necessity, when the child reaches the leaving age. Again, many parents have great trouble in inducing their children to continue at school once the leaving age has been reached. If the leaving age is fixed at 14, the average boy immediately upon reaching his 14th birthday says, "I will not go to school any more." He has a quarrel with the old folks at home, and refuses to continue at school any longer. If the leaving age were 15, the boy would doubtless consent to continue his attendance. I think the Government should at once find the necessary money and provide the needful accommodation to extend the compulsory age to 15, even if it should mean preventing any children under the age of seven from commencing school. For my part—whatever education authorities may hold—I consider that six years, or, in some cases, even eight years,

is not too late an age to commence school. Notwithstanding the authorities, I have it firmly rooted in my mind that there would be no disadvantage, but on the contrary an advantage, to most children if they were not sent to school until they reached the age at least of seven years. I consider it nothing short of cruel when I see little toddlers hardly bigger than the bags they are dragging along to school, going off to be educated when they should be in the nursery, knowing nothing about the serious side of the world, but rather being concerned with the playing of games.

Mr. Davies: You would not raise that objection to the kindergarten?

Hon. P. COLLIER: I do not think it is necessary that any child under seven years of age should be taught anything about the world. I have seen many instances where a child has gone to school at the age of five years while others have started two years later, yet by the time those children were eight years, the one who had only started at seven years, had caught up to the one who had been to school so much earlier. I believe that such will be found to be the position in most instances.

Mr. Willecock: They will not push them on though.

Hon. P. COLLIER: On the other hand, it is worth while letting the child have the extra years without tuition.

Mr. Underwood: I would not let a child of mine go under eight years of age.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The only year I learnt anything at school was the last year I attended. I left school at 14, and that was my experience. I do not know whether I had a better teacher during that period or what it was, but I am judging others by my own experience. I ask the Premier to keep this aspect in mind. I know the question of finance is involved, but it is a point that should be kept in mind. Let us keep constantly in view the necessity for increasing the school age. The member for Pilbara spoke about boys between 18 and 19 years of age going to school. I agree with many of the views he expressed. It is a fact that we can see boys who have passed from the colleges and secondary schools at 18 or 19 years of age, after having had what must be considered a first-class education, absolutely hopeless and it is almost impossible to find employment for them. They have not been brought up to any trade or calling.

Mr. Teesdale: Whose fault is that?

Hon. P. COLLIER: The only thing they can do is a bit of clerical work.

Mr. Teesdale: It is the parents' fault.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Not always.

Mr. Teesdale: They want something nice for them, where their children can wear white collars and not soil their hands.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I do not know that it is not a legitimate ambition on the part of a parent to give his boy or girl the best education that is open to him.

Mr. Teesdale interjected.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The hon. member knows it is all very well to talk in that way but there are not the opportunities available here in connection with shops, factories and foundries, as can be found in Melbourne and Sydney. If he were in Melbourne or Sydney he could see the boys pouring out in their tens of thousands from these places, whereas in Western Australia we have not such advantages. I know there are hundreds of boys about Perth whose parents are almost distracted. They want to know where there are opportunities for teaching their lads some trade. Take the case of electrical engineering. Electricity in the future will play a more important part than anything else one can imagine. It will provide the motive power for most things in the days to come. Yet there are no opportunities available for a boy to learn electrical engineering in Western Australia. The South Perth Council advertised for a boy to be apprenticed to electrical engineering and 102 boys applied for the position. I made inquiries at the Railway Department to ascertain the number of boys they take in each year. I found that at most two or three boys are taken in. In one year, not one was taken in, while two were taken in the year before, and so on. There are hundreds of boys desirous of learning a trade but, apart from the Railway Department and one or two municipalities, there is no opening for them at all. Boys who have gone through the secondary schools until they are 18 or 19 years of age have no opportunity to get positions and we find them applying for positions as tram conductors or porters in the Railway Department and they are only too pleased to get those jobs.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They cannot get even those now.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That is so, and this is what happens after hundreds of pounds have been spent on their education. I have had boys of 18 or 19 years of age come to me, after having had a first-class education at the colleges, absolutely begging me to get them jobs as tramway conductors. In many cases they cannot get those positions and they take jobs as farm labourers and so on. It is a sorry state of affairs, but it is a fact that in Western Australia the parents are greatly handicapped. This aspect has been responsible for such a large number of people leaving Western Australia and going to the Eastern States during recent years. I have known not less than 50 or 60 families who have left the goldfields and gone to the Eastern States mainly because the boys are growing up and no opportunities are available for them to learn a trade in Western Australia. I do not know that it is within the province of the Government or of the Education Department to alter that position. I hope the Premier will keep in mind, however, the necessity for increasing the age and bringing the Western Australian system into conformity with other parts of the world. It may be said by some that it is useless to educate our youth up to a higher standard, if there are no openings

in the trades and professions. But even so, we owe a duty to our children so that they can receive an education which will fit them to go elsewhere to apply that knowledge. The obligation is on us to see that they get that education and it should not be neglected.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [8.53]: I agree to a large extent with some of the remarks made by the member for Pilbara (Mr. Underwood). My reason for interjecting when the Leader of the Opposition was speaking, regarding the injury likely to be done to boys by keeping them at school was because of cases which have come under my notice. My boy, for instance, was anxious to follow a certain trade. I went to several places to see if there was an opening but I was unsuccessful. One morning I noticed an advertisement in the newspaper indicating that a firm I knew intimately required a boy. I went to the manager of the department and told him what I wanted. He said he would be pleased to have the boy. I arranged to send him along next morning. When I was about to leave, he called me back and asked me what was the age of the boy. I said he had turned 16. He replied, "Oh, a boy 14 would do me." That is the position we have to face, and it is because of this that we are likely to do boys an injury. It would not be so bad if this was only one case but we know there are hundreds of them.

Mr. Teesdale: Is the trouble from the wages point of view?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Arbitration Court fixed the wages on the basis of age in some cases.

Mr. Harrison: Yes, that is the trouble.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The court did that without being asked to do so.

Mr. Davies: The court was asked to do it in a number of cases.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: But not in this particular instance. It was the first case in which it was done. The wages are fixed at so much per year starting from 14. The consequence is that not the same opportunity is available for lads who are over 14 years of age to learn a trade. It is indeed an awkward position. A child may be weak in health when very young, with the result that he has to stay at school longer in order to pass through his various standards. As a consequence his future is affected under the system that now obtains. I wish to draw attention to an action taken by the Government in regard to the technical schools. I am pleased to see reference to the matter in the report of the Education Department. If there has been one injustice regarding our education system it has been to the women who are endeavouring as far as possible to conduct their homes economically. On this point, the report has the following reference arising out of a recommendation made by the Royal Commission on Education. The report states—

The Commissioners recommended that free instruction should be confined to those

learning for industrial purposes, and that free classes should not be provided in dressmaking and millinery except for those engaged in the trades. The question is one on which there may well be a difference of opinion. The University provides free instruction, not only in subjects directly bearing upon the present or future professions and callings of the students, but also in culture subjects, taught with the object of widening the minds of the students and giving them a broader outlook. Further, even if it were admitted that the State intended to give free instruction only in those subjects which directly contribute towards securing skill in the industry which forms the student's life work, it must be remembered that the largest single industry in the world is that of home-making. It cannot be said that classes which render the women of the community more efficient in their life-work are to be considered of no value to the State.

I waited upon the Premier regarding this aspect before he left for England and I also saw the Minister for Education. I was under the impression that women who were attending the schools in order to learn to make their own clothes and that of their children, would not be charged fees. Unfortunately, the Government are so hard up that they have found it necessary to charge fees to these women.

Mr. Davies: There is another object in that. It is to keep frivolous students away.

Hon. P. Collier: There are very few of those.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: In the Technical Schools at Fremantle there were 149 females over 21 years of age attending the domestic course. The only domestic courses taken are in millinery and dressmaking.

Mr. Teesdale: Not cooking.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No, that is taught in the other schools but not at technical schools. There are 233 under 21 years of age. There are many women in Fremantle who are not in a position to pay fees. Their income is so small that they find difficulty in providing the ordinary requirements for their children. They have not the money to pay dressmakers to provide for their children's requirements. They attend these classes to assist in enabling them to look after their home requirements in this direction. In 1922, after fees were charged, instead of having 149 students, the number was only 64 and many of those scraped the money together for the first quarter only.

Mr. Teesdale: How much were the fees?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Twelve shillings and sixpence a quarter. If students took millinery and dressmaking, they had to pay 25s. a quarter.

The Colonial Secretary: For the printing industry it is only 5s.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: These people are endeavouring to keep down the expenses of their homes. I do not know the present number in attendance, but I do know that

numbers who attended the school and enrolled to complete the two years' course did not have the money to continue. The Government have started at the wrong end. If it is right that any person can attend the University free up to any age, to be taught subjects to broaden his mind, the least the Government could do would be to allow these women to attend the domestic classes without fees. I was surprised a few weeks ago when the Premier turned down my proposal to abolish the fees. This is one of the most important subjects that the Government can have taught—the way to look after the children properly and see that they are well dressed. But numbers of women have been turned away from these classes.

The Premier: Most women in Western Australia keep their children very well indeed.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Quite so. The Minister for Education said free classes could not be continued. Is it fair that women learning dressmaking and millinery should be barred, while young people attending the University are admitted free?

Hon. P. Collier: Even to learn those things which are not essential. But those things which are essential are not free if the person is over 21.

Mr. Teesdale: A bit more essential than painting.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: For painting they have to pay if they are over 21. Some of the fees charged are higher than 12s. 6d. If an accountant over the age of 21 years wants to pass further examinations, he is earning something and can afford to pay, but these people taking the domestic course cannot pay the fees. The Government should abolish these fees. Fancy asking young women to get married and go on the land and yet refuse to teach them to make their dresses and trim their hats! The Government are going backward instead of forward. These are the only fees being charged in the whole of the education system. The vote for the technical schools of the State is £19,872, and yet the Government refuse to allow women to take on this practical and useful work which will assist them greatly in their home life. The Director of Education was right when he said the largest single industry in the world is that of home making. These women are making their homes, and these are classes which the Government should assist.

The Premier: Do not they learn this before they get married?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: They do not realise before they are married that they should learn cutting and so on, but the Premier knows that when there are a dozen children, it is necessary to do something. These classes have been of material benefit. In Fremantle alone 149 women attended, and yet that number has dwindled to 64 on account of the imposition of fees. I hope the Premier will allow these women to continue this work, because the only cost involved is the salary of the teachers. If the Premier will consent to abolish the fees, he will confer a boon on

these people by enabling them to economise in their home life.

Mr. HARRISON (Avon) [9.8]: I quite agree with the member for Pilbara (Mr. Underwood) and other speakers that a great deal of the money spent on education is wasted and involves also a waste of time for the student. The young people are not being absorbed in the particular lines for which they are receiving technical education. There are various reasons why they have not been absorbed, but something should be done on the lines suggested by the member for Sussex (Mr. Pickering) to alter the policy. I am convinced that this State cannot afford to vote this amount of money year after year for education. We have a vote of £559,000 this year. Last year it was £529,000 and was exceeded to the extent of £26,000. We do not know by how much this year's vote will be exceeded before June next. It has been stated that young people who have received technical education in special classes have not been absorbed, and the same applies to some who have taken University honours. Some have even had to leave the State. The Premier mentioned that if we received any vote from the Federal Government, the people of this State would be taxed to meet it. I do not agree with the Premier in this. It is the duty of the Commonwealth Government, equally with the State Government, to attend to the education of the people. Western Australia is carrying on under conditions totally different from the other States. Take the amount of gold which the Commonwealth commandeered under the War Precautions Act and took advantage of. Take the number of secondary industries maintained in the Eastern States by the consumers of Western Australia. Every parent and child of this State is subject to the enormous tariff on wearing apparel and food products, while the Eastern States are reaping the advantage of the enormous tariff on importations. The other States, too, have reaped the advantage of our gold yield, which represents two-thirds of the gold production of the Commonwealth. It is up to the Commonwealth Government to assist us in the matter of education. We cannot afford to let our children go without proper education. We must keep in line with other countries. We must have technical skill equal to that imparted in other countries. The great object should be to concentrate our efforts on education which will be of advantage to the children of this State, particularly electricity, chemistry, and kindred subjects. In future there might be a great need for men skilled in these subjects. While the State cannot absorb those who are receiving education, other parts of the Commonwealth are doing so, and are gaining the benefit of education imparted at the cost of this State. It is time, therefore, that the policy was reconsidered and altered. In our rural schools we are not giving that technical education which should be given. The matter of manual classes should be considered. We have applied for manual class courses for various country centres and the reply has been that

there is no money to provide buildings. We could put up bough sheds and provide receptacles for the tools, and country boys should not be prevented from deriving the benefits of manual training on the plea that there is no money to provide buildings. The boys in the agricultural districts should be given a knowledge of bush carpentering and blacksmithing. Many of them go on to farms and have to handle costly machinery. There are teachers capable of imparting the necessary instruction and we should take advantage of their ability. Suitable opportunities could be afforded through the parents and citizens' associations, by working bees if necessary, under which the necessary manual training could be given. I hope the Premier will take a note of what I am saying. The matter has been emphasised during this debate and also on various other occasions, and it must not be forgotten that the cities are dependent upon the primary industries. We know too, and have known for years that it is impossible for cities to progress without the development of the hinterland. Four years ago the member for Roebourne and I, when discussing this Vote, mentioned what should have been done, and we advocated what is now taking place in connection with the visit of Mr. Jones, the Queensland cotton expert. We urged at that time that the children at the schools should be educated on the subject of the growing of cotton. I suggested that every school throughout our rural districts should be supplied with seeds, not only of cotton but of flax and tobacco, and I also advocated experimenting with the growth of sugar beet. If notice had been taken of what I then suggested, we should be in the position of knowing a great deal about what we are only endeavouring to learn at the present time—mainly in regard to pests and climatic conditions—and we would have had all the necessary data to place before the Queensland expert. It is not too late even now to distribute seeds amongst the schools. We know that Germany forged ahead very rapidly when she began the growth of sugar beet for her own consumption. I am satisfied that even with the competition of Queensland sugar cane it would be a good proposition for Western Australia to embark on the production of sugar beet. Certainly no time should be lost in carrying out tests in this and other directions. I trust that the manual training classes will be taken throughout our country districts to a greater extent than has been done in the past.

Mr. PIESSE (Toodyay) [9.20]: I cannot allow the debate to conclude without offering a word of praise to the Education Department for that excellent exhibition now to be seen in Barrack-street. In that display there is to be seen what was referred to by the member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin), and there is shown as well the work of the children who are taught at the different schools. Not only is there to be seen an excellent display of clothing made by the child-

ren, but many splendid exhibits of preserves. The scope of educational training is almost unlimited. There are also on view some excellent devices for farm use, and I am sure, when the children responsible for the products go on the land—as many of them will undoubtedly do—the training which they have gained in the rural schools will stand them in good stead. The Leader of the Opposition referred to the large number of youths who have gained some knowledge and training at the technical schools. We know that these schools teach engineering, metal work, and blacksmithing, all of which will be beneficial to the students who may afterwards take up land. Unfortunately we have practically neglected the scientific side of agricultural training. I wish to say a few words about the future which, in my opinion, exists in this State for the small landholder. Only to-day I noticed that the dried fruit industry—and particularly the Australian product—is receiving attention in Canada. The Australian article is welcomed there, and, acting I have no doubt from patriotic motives, the desire of the Canadians seems to be to accord preferential treatment to Empire products. From my knowledge of the dried fruit industry I consider there is an immense future for Western Australia in that direction, and it is here that I feel there is a great prospect for the youth of the State and at a very small outlay. It will cost anything up to £1,000 to equip the average farm with stock, farming implements and buildings, to say nothing of clearing and fencing, and for much less than that, it is possible to establish a vineyard proposition of 100 acres, which, in a few years gives a better return than does the average farm. In that way it is possible to get a greater profit from a smaller outlay. On the question of the opportunities for the lad of to-day who desires to go on the land, I do not share the fears of the Leader of the Opposition who declared that the opportunities are becoming restricted to a serious degree. There is an immense area of land available for settlers, and I hope that when we reach the vote dealing with agricultural development we shall be able to impress upon the Government the need for special attention being given to group settlements with the view of placing our own people on them as well as those who come from overseas. I repeat that the field is wide and the prospects were never brighter.

Mr. LAMBERT (Coolgardie) [9.25]: Like other members I feel that the vote of the Education Department, increasing annually as it is, is justified, but we have the right to question whether we get value for the money which is being spent. In many respects I do not think we are getting value. It is all very well for members to try to build a bridge between the time when a boy or girl leaves school until the time at which the children arrive at their capacity to earn a livelihood. We know that in this State the opportunities for boys or girls are few. That

is regrettable, but at the same time there is required in this State a big overhauling of our system of technical education. In the Perth Technical School probably the amount expended there alone—however useful the institution may be—could be cut down considerably. Only a little time ago one of the leading officials of the State, in receipt of a salary of £800 a year, told me that he spent his spare time at this technical school learning joinery and making furniture for his home. That kind of thing is going on to a greater or lesser degree at the present time, and the amount charged for technical education in many of the classes is so small that it is eagerly paid by those who desire to follow their own particular fads or fancies. It is no good spending a considerable sum of money on engineering or chemistry for instance, when the opportunities in this State are so few and far between. Parents to-day are at their wits end to know in which direction to employ their boys. This is largely due to the fact that the Government lack a sound policy in the direction of opening up avenues for employable lads in Western Australia. If the Government were to spend less in making spectacular displays by way of technically educating the boys, it might be possible to arrange a better balance of the system which, as it is to-day, is operating detrimentally.

Mr. Teesdale: Why not include private employers; why should the Government provide everything?

Mr. LAMBERT: It is for the Government to adopt a policy by which these openings can be provided. It is because private enterprise, which the hon. member stands behind, fails to carry out its share, that the Government are obliged to step in. I believe in giving all boys the fullest opportunity for education. But I would stop short of exploiting boys and making of them slaves under the pretext that they are learning trades and professions. That is where I part company with my honourable friend. There are many opportunities for widening our scope in practical education, particularly in the rural districts. If there be one problem in rural Western Australia, which is important to-day, it is practical, scientific cultivation. That can only be supplied by proper technical knowledge, which in turn can only be given by an appreciation of the benefit chemistry has bestowed in assisting the agriculturist. To-day many men on the land have no technical knowledge of chemistry. It is all very well to teach the youth to stand behind the plough or the harvester.

The Colonial Secretary: He rides on both nowadays.

The Premier: He never did stand behind the plough.

Mr. Teesdale: Even boys know that the ploughman does not walk behind the plough.

Mr. LAMBERT: When I was serving my apprenticeship I walked behind the plough.

Mr. Teesdale: You have never seen a plough.

Mr. LAMBERT: I have seen men fitted for nothing better than holding a plough.

Mr. Money: Better than that nothing.

Mr. LAMBERT: If the Government had realised the good that even an elementary knowledge of chemistry would do for the farmers' sons, it would be much better for the State. We ought to have agricultural chemists lecturing in every rural district.

The Premier: That does not come under this vote. That is under the Agricultural Estimates.

Mr. LAMBERT: No, we have the Narrogin Agricultural School under this vote. It is regrettable to see how few subjects are taught in such a school. It may be a very worthy institution, but considerable good would be done if its scope were enlarged. We ought to have agricultural chemists travelling around the rural districts.

Mr. Mann: There is such an officer.

Mr. LAMBERT: If there is, I have never heard of him. I suppose he is some officer dwelling in the imagination of the hon. member.

Mr. Mann: What about Mr. Newman?

Mr. LAMBERT: Mr. Newman is not an agricultural chemist. He is an economic entomologist. Of course it is all the same to the member for Perth. The technical ignorance of the average farmer to-day is appalling. He has no knowledge of analyses of soils, of what should operate under normal climatic conditions in his district, of the scientific cultivation and working of the soil, or of other things of the sort. Farmers' sons have no opportunity for acquiring practical knowledge. Hundreds of boys and girls are attending technical schools on subjects which the member for Pilbara describes as "frills." Many of those things could be cut out. It should not be necessary to send a girl to a technical school in order to learn ordinary domestic cooking. There is on the Estimates a big item for that. It ought to be cut right out. If £5,000 or £10,000 per annum were spent on practical agricultural chemists touring the districts, much good would result. Even the Premier recognises the great benefit which the application of agricultural chemistry has been to the productivity of the soil. Only a little time ago I showed the House that Germany, while at war, had learned to produce fixed nitrogen from the atmosphere. That is an enterprise in which the Federal Government should take a hand. They talk in their flamboyant way about the protection of this continent. As a matter of fact this continent is as helpless as a band of aborigines, because we have no substance from which to make explosives. Yet Germany, for her own protection against the world, and with a view to increasing the productivity of her soil, learned to extract fixed nitrogen from the atmosphere, and managed to sell it at a price never previously dreamt of. In Australia if one wants a pound of nitrogen, one has to buy it from overseas. The State

Government should point out the remissness of the Federal Government in this direction. It is a serious thing, not only for the defence of Australia, but also for the development of the agricultural industry. I believe that in many of these directions, for instance in the amount spent on comparative frill in our technical schools, great reductions could be effected. In other ways also the Vote could be lessened without impairing the usefulness of our educational institutions.

Item, Director of Education and Under Secretary, £960:

Mr. PICKERING: It seems to me it should be possible for the director to reorganise the department. We find there are two secretaries and two large bodies of clerks employed. It should be possible for the whole of the clerical administration to be under one head.

Hon. P. Collier: Where are the two secretaries?

Mr. PICKERING: One is the secretary of the technical schools.

Hon. P. Collier: But he is under quite another head.

Mr. PICKERING: They should all be under one department instead of there being two staffs. It should be an instruction to the director from this Committee to reduce the administrative cost of the department. This year the Vote is increased by £3,507. Apparently the director has no intention of reducing the staff under his control. If we do not express our strong convictions in this connection, we shall never have economy brought about. If economy is possible, it is so in the directions I have indicated.

The PREMIER: The hon. member does not indicate where the expenditure is to be reduced.

Mr. Pickering: In the cost of administration.

The PREMIER. That is a very general statement.

Mr. Pickering: And by amalgamation of offices. I am not the Minister in charge. You should be able to put up a scheme. You cannot expect private members to do it.

The PREMIER: What is the use of merely telling the Minister for Education that he must reduce his expenditure? I, too, want to reduce the cost. The secretary to the department is a very busy man, attending to the work of opening country schools, especially in connection with group settlements. The expenditure amounts to £550,000 per annum, and the director and the secretary are both doing excellent work.

Vote put and passed.

Department of Public Health (Hon. R. S. Sampson, Minister.)

Vote—Medical and Public Health, £49,585:

The COLONIAL SECRETARY AND MINISTER FOR PUBLIC HEALTH (Hon. R. S. Sampson—Swan) [9.43]: For the whole of the activities shown under the heading of

"Minister for Public Health" the expenditure for the year has totalled £180,093.

Hon. P. Collier: What have you done with the money?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: There is no difficulty in spending the money. The great difficulty is to find money for necessary works. I must admit that in some instances it has been found impossible to provide all the money required for efficient service. The revenue for the past year amounted to £46,452. The activities of the department are naturally increasing year by year. The State is growing, hospital accommodation and health activities are increasing, and hence the need for further hospitals, and the justification for the Hospitals Bill recently brought down. During the past year a new policy has been inaugurated in certain districts. On the 1st January of this year the position of district medical officer was abolished in those districts where there were two or more medical men. The right to send cases into Government hospitals has been arranged, and those medical gentlemen treat indigent cases. Since doctors are able to follow their patients into the hospitals, the system of intermediate hospitals has been introduced into Western Australia. As explained recently, when the Hospitals Bill was before the House, those patients who are unable to pay the full charges of private hospitals, are admitted into Government institutions, and are there charged an amount somewhat lower, and not necessarily representing the full extent of the cost to the State for their accommodation. However, something is paid, and thus the principle of intermediate hospitals has been brought into operation. It is considered that the new arrangement will place the hospitals on a much better footing.

Mr. Mann: How do you propose to save £51,000 odd?

Hon. P. Collier: By the Hospitals Bill.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The amount shown on the Estimates is for a six months' period. Summarised, the activities of the medical section include the direct management of 21 general hospitals, the Wooroloo Sanatorium, the King Edward Memorial Hospital for women, and 31 public and committee hospitals throughout the State. In these institutions there are approximately, 1,800 beds, which fact gives some slight idea of the extent of the department's work, and also of the extent of the State's beneficial activities with respect to public health. As hon. members are perhaps aware, the three large metropolitan hospitals, namely, the Perth Hospital, the Children's Hospital, and the Fremantle Hospital are all in financial difficulties. In order to give some relief to those institutions, the Estimates have been correspondingly increased. As regards the Perth Hospital, it has been proved that the accommodation for women's surgical cases is inadequate—utterly inadequate, I may say. Additional money is provided on the Estimates to meet that need. Further, representations have been made regarding

the urgent need for the provision at a large hospital such as the Perth Hospital of a pathological department. No other hospital of similar size in the Commonwealth is without pathologists, and undoubtedly the proper work of the hospital is restricted, because of the want of a pathological department. Money is provided in order to meet this need. It will be noted, on reference to the Estimates, that in regard to items dealing with Government hospitals, public hospitals, assisted hospitals, the Wooroloo Sanatorium, and district medical officers, amounts have been provided for six months only. The long awaited Hospitals Bill, which will provide for the other six months, has been introduced, the main object of the measure being to systematise and co-ordinate the medical and hospital services of the State, and to place the finances of the service and of the institutions on a much sounder footing than at present.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Sounder! It will prove to be the other way about.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I assure the hon. member that the passing of the Hospitals Bill will prove of great advantage to hospitals generally, not only in the metropolitan area, but throughout the State.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It will put them in a worse position than they have ever been in yet.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: There is no doubt that for some time past the hospital service has in various directions been strayed, owing to the inability of the Consolidated Revenue to meet the demands made upon it.

Mr. Pickering: Which hospitals are those?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I have already mentioned three.

Mr. Teesdale: At Roebourne the walls of the Government hospital are falling down and the floors are falling in and the windows are falling out.

Hon. P. Collier: That is owing to the neglect of the local people.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The immigration policy will involve added demands upon the hospital service of the State. It is only reasonable to presume that a certain number of cases will reach the hospitals from those districts which are receiving the benefit of the immigration policy. Districts in which group settlements are located, for instance, must receive consideration. The passing of the Hospitals Bill will place more money at the disposal of the hospital authorities for their humanitarian work. However, I do not know that the Hospitals Bill requires any further commendation at my hands. The measure speaks for itself. Under the heading of "Homes for the Aged" we have the Old Men's Home at Claremont and the Women's Home at Fremantle. In connection with both institutions a most necessary work is being carried on very sympathetically. Comparing this year's expenditure with last year's in the matter of public health, there is an increase of only £219. This small increase is more than accounted for by the appointment of a pro-

posed second school health inspector. That appointment has been authorised for several years past, but the Government have not so far seen their way clear to make the necessary financial provision. Consequently, the medical inspection of school children has by no means kept pace with the increasing number of scholars. The work of the second officer, when appointed, will be carried out on the goldfields, and in the country districts, the work there having remained untouched for years. It is recognised that the services of this second officer are badly needed. I commend the Estimates of the Department of Public Health to hon. members. The work being done is continually expanding. It is work which calls for increasing amounts of money, as well as for much consideration and much sympathy. Last year's expenditure was not quite as high as the previous year's. Nevertheless, the services rendered were in no way diminished. Every case, so far as I am aware, has been given due consideration, and without exception the department has endeavoured to carry into effect those principles which should be found in every civilised country where the care and attention of the sick poor is uppermost in their minds.

Mr. PICKERING (Sussex) [10.1]: I am glad I gave the Minister the opportunity to place his interesting statement before the Committee. I am also pleased that the attention of the Committee has been drawn to the fact that a saving of £51,000 is to be effected.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That is not a saving.

Mr. PICKERING: It means that so much less will be spent.

Hon. P. Collier: The Government will take it out of the left, instead of out of the right hand pocket.

Mr. PICKERING: I understand the Minister is counting on the passage of the Hospitals Bill through the Assembly.

The Colonial Secretary: I am counting on your support, too.

Mr. PICKERING: I will give the Bill the support it merits. I desire to lodge a protest against the amount of subsidy given to assisted hospitals, in comparison with other institutions. In my own electorate we have an assisted hospital, which has been carried on and maintained in the district for years past. We have considerable difficulty in maintaining that hospital in a state of efficiency, and in providing for all necessary requirements. The row hooed by those assisted hospitals is very hard indeed. The people of Busselton contribute a large amount to maintain the hospital, but at the present time it is in debt for three months' stores, and adequate provision for linen supplies and other requisites cannot be made.

Hon. P. Collier: What about organising a linen tea?

Mr. PICKERING: If it is the intention of the Committee to endorse the policy advocated by the Royal Commission on Hospitals, then the necessary assistance should be rendered to the Busselton Hospital as quickly as possible, because the need is urgent. I have approached the Minister with a view to getting a reasonable advance for the hospital. If the difficulty is not overcome shortly, it will be impossible for the committee to continue their services. A serious position will confront the department if they cannot comply with requests for reasonable assistance. I regret having to place this matter before the Committee, but in view of the attitude which is being adopted, it is necessary to ventilate the position. I hope the Minister will be able to find reasonable assistance for the Busselton hospital. I am sure that the subscriptions will be increased during the year if possible.

The Colonial Secretary: Busselton has many special advantages.

Mr. PICKERING: I would like to know what they are.

The Colonial Secretary: It is in the South-West, on the coast, and has a live member.

Mr. PICKERING: I do not know that that assists very much in these circumstances. I want to impress upon the Minister the urgent necessity for aiding assisted hospitals throughout the State. I trust he will recognise that the urgency of the matter is immediate and cannot be postponed indefinitely till such time as the Hospitals Bill is passed by Parliament. I hope the Minister will reconsider his decision and furnish the assistance that is required.

Mr. WILLCOCK (Geraldton) [10.7]: I do not wish to take up much time in discussing health matters generally, but I wish to refer to the employment of nurses and the conditions under which they are worked. If there is any one feature that is a scandal and disgrace to us it is the conditions under which the nurses are employed.

The Colonial Secretary: The conditions are no worse here than elsewhere.

Mr. WILLCOCK: They are as bad here as they are in any other part of the world. The Minister on behalf of the Health Department in answering a question in the Legislative Council, said that the nurses had to work 12 hours and had to work hard too. The Minister knows what nurses have to do to-day. There is a certain amount of work that they have to get through before they can knock off and when the time comes for their shift to conclude, if that work is not finished, they have to continue until it is done.

The Colonial Secretary: Nurses are wonderful workers.

Mr. WILLCOCK: All that is best in human nature in those women is exploited for a miserable pittance.

The Colonial Secretary: I say, in all sincerity, that they are wonderful workers.

Mr. WILLCOCK: But their humanitarianism is exploited. If there is anything to make us rise in revolt it should be the way

these nurses are treated. Some women who are nurses have left good positions in order to take up that profession, because they believe that they will be able to do something to relieve suffering in these institutions.

Mr. Teesdale: They are well fed and housed well.

Mr. WILLCOCK: They are not fed well.

Mr. Teesdale: Do you say that in these big public institutions they are not treated well?

Mr. WILLCOCK: They are treated well in some respects but they have no recreation. They never know when they are on or off. They cannot make arrangements to go anywhere because they do not know if they can be released. The autocracy of the matrons in charge is such that they are not told when they will be free.

The Colonial Secretary: That is not always the case.

Mr. WILLCOCK: It is very often so. The result is that nurses cannot say that they will be able to fulfil any engagement of a social nature.

The Colonial Secretary: Equally with the nurses, the matrons are fine women.

Mr. WILLCOCK: They are imbued with a high idealism and they take these positions for miserable pittance. It is shameful, and it is time something was done to see that women who take positions of this description should be more fittingly recompensed for their services. Dr. Saw, when discussing this matter last year, said that many women broke down in the course of their training and many others broke down after their training had been completed. That is a strong indictment upon the present system of training nurses. It seems shocking that the training of nurses should be such that they break down under it.

Mr. Teesdale: When the Hospitals Bill is passed, it will make the position better.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: No, it will make it worse.

Mr. Teesdale: It cannot be much worse than is suggested now.

Mr. WILLCOCK: When the Minister in another place was asked if he knew of any other section of the community who worked as hard as the nurses, he replied "Yes, the medical profession."

The Colonial Secretary: Who answered that question?

Mr. WILLCOCK: The Minister for Education in another place. His reply was a sarcastic one. No one would say that doctors have to toil long hours for such a miserable pittance as 15s. a week.

The Colonial Secretary: Many doctors get very little.

Mr. WILLCOCK: Nurses have a lot of hard work to do in a certain time, and they have to do it before they can get any rest. I do not think the Minister in another place should have replied in that sarcastic vein when he was asked a question regarding the employment of nurses. There is no comparison between the doctors' work and that of the nurses.

The Colonial Secretary: Both professions are strenuous. The doctor never has any time to himself and he may be called up at all hours.

Mr. WILLCOCK: A doctor has a lot of recreation and can arrange his social affairs to suit himself. It is ridiculous to compare the conditions under which doctors and nurses work.

The Colonial Secretary: I do not know that either profession is very attractive from that point of view.

Mr. WILLCOCK: As to the attractiveness of the professions, I do not know that any of us would refuse to be a doctor if that course were open to us. The trouble is that the ordinary individual cannot afford to train his children for that profession. If it were possible I think a lot of our boys would be given that training and then there would not be so much trouble as to what should be done with them in future life. There would not be so many youths going in for agricultural labouring and so forth.

The Colonial Secretary: A farmer is more independent.

Mr. WILLCOCK: I do not see too many farmers running around the place in motor cars. I do not disparage what doctors do and I do not deny that the medical profession is one we all look up to. At the same time, when we consider the conditions under which nurses are working, it is a scandal and disgrace. Members of this Chamber are responsible for not seeing that the position is altered.

Mr. Teesdale: If things are so bad, how do you account for the fact that there is always a surplus waiting to commence training?

Mr. WILLCOCK: The hon. member knows that women have their ideals. There are good women and bad women, but there are many good women who have ideals. They want to do something to relieve suffering and it is they who seek to take up the profession of nursing. Because of their ideals they are flagrantly exploited. Fifteen shillings a week for 12 hours' hard work a day on seven days in the week!

Mr. Teesdale: In the first year?

Mr. WILLCOCK: In the first, second and third years. In the first year they are put on to the most disagreeable part of the work. If there is anything calculated to drive them out of the profession, it is the disgraceful and dirty work they are put on to during the first 12 months—washing dirty Chinamen.

Hon. P. Collier: And Nor-Westers.

Mr. WILLCOCK: Young girls are put on to wash the dirtiest diseased people who are taken to the hospital. Fancy a girl with an idealistic turn of mind being put on to wash a dirty Chow from William-street or James-street and clean his toe nails, etc. Cleaning toe nails is one of the things insisted on.

The Colonial Secretary: Who told you that?

Mr. WILLCOCK: The Minister can ascertain that from any of the girls.

The Colonial Secretary: I have had many periods in hospital, but have not had that experience.

Mr. Teesdale: Are you right in saying that the girls do that? Do not the wardsmen do it?

Mr. WILLCOCK: No, the girls do it. Members do not understand what these girls have to do. The sooner we realise how they are exploited, the sooner will their conditions be improved. If we knew exactly what went on, it would not be tolerated for another day.

The Colonial Secretary: I know they have other unpleasant work, but the idea is to sift out those most qualified, and those who remain are wonderfully good.

Mr. WILLCOCK: And they are wonderfully underpaid too. Dr. Saw's evidence is quite sufficient for me. He says many of these girls break down through over-work during training. Now that the matter has been brought under the notice of the Minister, he should endeavour to effect improvements. The consensus of opinion would be that these intolerable conditions should not continue.

Mr. Teesdale: Everybody deplores it but, if you will not give the Minister the vote, what can be done?

Mr. WILLCOCK: We have not refused it. If the Minister explained these things and said it would cost £5,000 to effect an improvement, there would not be a dissentient. The Minister would be on safe ground if he caused a thorough inquiry to be made into the conditions under which these girls work, which I can only describe as intolerable.

Mr. MULLANY (Menzies) [10.20]: The present conditions of probationers in the various hospitals should not be longer tolerated. They are not getting due recompense for their work while they are learning their profession; neither are they adequately recompensed when they become professionals. Evidence was taken by the Royal Commission on hospitals from Mr. Eagleton, Secretary of the Perth Hospital. He was asked what remuneration the nurses received, and he replied—

First-year nurses receive £18 per annum with uniforms, keep, quarters and washing. Their duties are confined to nursing. The second-year nurse receives £24 per annum, and the third year nurse £36 per annum. After the third year they become staff nurses; that is, if there be any vacancies. They then jump to £75 per annum.

Mr. Willcock: And a typist gets £204!

Mr. MULLANY: That is so.

The Colonial Secretary: Those are special ones.

Mr. MULLANY: Mr. Eagleton continued—

The sisters are paid from £85 to £95. Those are sisters competent to take charge of a ward.

The matron, who is in charge of all the nurses, is paid £150.

That is the highest remuneration one of these noble women can receive in the service of the State.

Day nurses are 10½ hours on actual duty, night nurses 10 hours; both work six days per week. The condition of

nurses might be materially improved if a tax were levied for hospital maintenance.

That does not bear out the remarks of the member for Geraldton. I believe at the Perth hospital the nurses have a regular day and evenings off.

Mr. Willcock: They do not.

Mr. MULLANY: The Commission were informed so.

Mr. Willcock: That is wrong.

Mr. MULLANY: In times of stress they cannot be sure of getting their time off.

Hon. P. Collier: They work 12 hours in some cases.

Mr. MULLANY: That evidence was published in the Press and the figures have not been questioned by the nurses. I have no desire to anticipate discussion on the Hospitals Bill, but whether or not more money is made available for the upkeep of the hospitals, it is a disgrace to ask these women to work for such small remuneration. The Minister should make an effort to improve the position. When we consider the remuneration paid to other women of equal age, we must admit that the amount paid to nurses is not sufficient. There is no class of worker so poorly paid as hospital nurses, and there is no class who should be treated with greater consideration than the noble women who devote their lives to ministering to the sick.

Mr. Teesdale: Did you have any complaints about the food?

Mr. MULLANY: No.

Mr. Willcock: Did you go to the Kalgoorlie hospital?

Mr. MULLANY: Yes. Wherever we went we made inquiries regarding the food, but received no complaints. The Minister should see that the nurses are paid on a better scale.

Mr. J. H. SMITH (Nelson) [10.27]: I notice with regret that the Government propose to decrease the expenditure by £51,567.

Hon. P. Collier: They are going to shut up all the hospitals.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: If there is one thing the Government should attend to, surely it is the care of the sick and needy. The hospitals system is a crying disgrace to the Government. The Hospitals Bill has not been passed and, if the Government are anticipating revenue they have not received, they may be making a grave blunder, because there is no guarantee that the Bill will be passed by Parliament. The hospitals in my district are practically run on charity, due to the goodwill and large heartedness of the people. The people in the country areas do not receive the same attention as is given in the Perth hospital. Since the hospitals have been run by committees of management, they have proved to be a farce. No doubt the committees have done their best, but the present state of affairs should not be allowed to continue. The present Minister and his predecessor know of the struggle at the Jarnadup hospital. There has been a large increase

in the population of that district and the hospital is run principally on the collections made from timber and other workers. Since the group settlers went there, they have provided no funds. It is due to the humanitarian instincts of the doctor, and to the assistance of the hospital committee, that the group settlers and their wives and families have received medical attention. The doctor has over £400 on his books which he will never collect. Yet, on the Estimates, we find this decrease of over £50,000. We could well do with £10,000 in that part of the country. If the Government intend to place further settlers there, it is their duty to attend to the health of the people and of the children brought into the world. It is impossible to get a nurse there, or even a room for a nurse. Yet we are asked to agree to this decreased vote. It is a pity the Government do not wipe out a few of the heads of the Lands and other departments and give something to the country hospitals. The Bridgetown Hospital, and that at Greenbushes, are continually cadging from the people. Yet the Government have the cheek to come here and ask us to reduce the vote by over £50,000. It is all very well for those who can afford to pay doctors, but I know of instances where doctors have refused to go to places in country districts unless they have been guaranteed their fees beforehand. I hope someone who is more familiar with procedure than I am will move for a reduction of the vote in order to bring about this increase. That, I understand, is the only way in which an increase can be brought about. Another thing that should be considered by the Government is the question of the nationalisation of medicine, for we know there are no greater robbers than the chemists. Chemists and doctors seem to be able to charge whatever they like. If you have money with which to pay, a doctor will always be in the house to attend to you, but if you have not, a doctor will call once, and perhaps before he calls again you may be dead. The Government do not appear to be sincere in the matter. What I want to know, too, is whether it is proposed to make the tax retrospective. At any rate I hope the Estimates of this particular department, as they appear before us, will be kicked out as they deserve to be.

Mr. CHESSON (Cue) [10.35]: My complaint on this matter deals more with the methods adopted by the Health Department in regard to country health boards. In the Cue district, the hospital is controlled by the secretary of the road board, and numerous letters have been received from the Health Department on the subject of the finances of the institution. I have an extract from the "Murchison Times" on this subject, which I would like to read. It is as follows:—

Members of the local Health Board were somewhat chagrined at the quantity and some of the letters received at the meeting

of the Board last week, from Mr. Huelin, secretary of the Department of Public Health, Perth. The letters referred to, one dated 5th September, asked for a reply to a letter of the 19th ult., regarding certain questions raised by him (Mr. Huelin) in connection with the annual financial statement of the Board.

This referred to the debit balance (£100) of the Health Board, and which members have been trying to devise ways and means of reducing without incurring additional hardships on the already heavily taxed ratepayers. Eventually the Board decided to carry out the sanitary work by contract, the Board's officer still to carry on the charging up and collection of accounts. By this means a considerable saving in costs will be effected.

On September 18, the Department's secretary again wrote, acknowledging the receipt of a letter from the Board (12th inst.) regarding the financial position of the Board of Health, and stated: "It is noted that one of the reasons for the apparently high charge for secretarial duties was due to the collection of sanitary charges, but as the services will in future be carried out by the contractor, who no doubt will collect his own fees, the duties referred to should be considerably reduced. It is also noted that a portion of the amount received from the Hospital is to be placed to the credit of the Health account, but this is surely not a legitimate way of bringing about a reduction referred to in my previous correspondence, and in view of the fact that the Health administration work will be largely reduced, it is considered that a similar reduction should be made in the item: "Secretary £192 5s."

The chairman said the Board had given much consideration to the question of Health finances, which were £100 behind last year. It was absolutely necessary their sanitary service should be maintained at its present efficiency, and after due thought it had been decided to let one man carry out the work on contract, under the Board's supervision. They hoped to right matters in this way. He thought the Board was capable to run its own affairs, and took strong exception to the letters from the Department's secretary. It was harassing to men who put their time freely to the work of carrying out local Government duties. It would be quite different if the Board was not trying to improve the position. In any case Mr. Huelin should know the Board meets only once a month. The question seemed to be now who was running the Board? and how far Mr. Huelin's authority extended?

Other members also strongly resented the attitude of Mr. Huelin, contending they were doing their best in the interest of the Board and ratepayers, and now had the finances in a better position.

It was resolved to send the letters on to the Road Board Association, asking that body how far the Department could interfere with the work of the local authorities.

The day after the meeting, yet another letter was received referring to the same matter.

The board are doing their best in the existing circumstances. The Health Department, however, have nothing to do with the matters the board have taken in hand. Those questions concern the local board, and the local board should be allowed to run their own business in their own way. I know of other instances which prove that the Health Department are harassing other people as well. I have been told of cases where they have adopted extraordinary measures in order to secure payments which they claimed were due for medical services rendered. In one case the secretary of the Health Department sent the police to some people in order to compel them to pay. The Health Department should give every consideration to people who are in indigent circumstances, and not adopt the drastic method of forcing the police to compel people to pay, especially when the people in question have no means whatever of paying. Reference has been made to the inadequate payment of nurses. I endorse everything that has been said in that respect. I visit the Wooroloo Sanatorium frequently, and know how the probationers there are worked, and the miserable pittance they receive. Some of these girls in the first 12 months received 7s. 6d. per week. At the present time the amount has been increased to 10s. Of course we all know that the profession is a noble one, but at the same time the girls who are engaged in it should receive something approaching a living wage. I trust the Minister will take heed of my remarks in respect of the department sending out letters to those boards that are doing good work in an honorary capacity.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [10.40]: I realise the difficulty existing in discussing these Estimates on account of the Hospital Bill which is before the House.

The Colonial Secretary: The amount which will be raised under the Hospitals Bill will be that which will be required this year for the upkeep of the hospitals in the State for six months only.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: There are very few hon. members who have given this matter consideration, but they will realise that we will have to pay for the 12 months, and not for the six months, and if the whole period had been provided for, the Estimates would show, not a decrease of £51,000, but an increase of over £14,000. The Hospitals Bill provides for the collection of revenue for a period of six months, but the Government should have made provision for the hospitals for the whole year. When the Bill comes on for discussion I expect to be able to point

out that the hospitals will be in a far worse position under that legislation than they have ever been in before.

The Colonial Secretary: It is estimated that the Consolidated Revenue will be relieved to the extent of £100,000.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I will argue that when the Bill comes before us. There is in the department a system which I have endeavoured to remedy. It is that the Health Department becomes the board for a number of districts. Instead of throwing the responsibility on local boards or creating other local boards when the area is too large for one, the department takes control of the health of country districts and calls for tenders for the sanitary work in those districts. It is said the sanitary work pays for itself, because the contractor collects the fees. However, it means that we have health inspectors travelling about the State to see that the work is carried out, and the cost of their salaries and travelling expenses falls on the State. There is no necessity for that, because under the Health Act no secretary can be appointed to a road board district unless he holds the Royal Sanitary Institute's certificate. Thus he has all the qualifications of the departmental inspectors, and so the supervision could be done locally, which would result in considerable saving. I do not think the Government have acted fairly this year in respect of the Wooroloo Sanatorium. Wooroloo was brought into existence principally to assist those broken down by miners' complaint. During last year, for economy's sake, the Government have taken men from the sanatorium and sent them to the Old Men's Home. Dr. Mitchell, in charge at Wooroloo, is one of the best specialists in Australia. Yet instead of taking his advice, the department accepts the advice of another officer employed centrally, who is sent up to examine the patients and decide who are to go to the Old Men's Home. Dr. Mitchell is sympathetic towards his patients, and perhaps because of that has lost a good deal of his control over the institution. I had a letter of complaint from a patient in regard to the bread supplied. Mr. Broun, who was then Colonial Secretary, investigated it and promised an alteration. They have a first-class bakehouse which was giving every satisfaction, but the department thought it was costing too much and, in consequence, bread was sent from Perth. According to the complaint I received, those patients who had no money had to go without bread, because the bread sent up was not fit to eat.

[Mr. Angelo took the Chair.]

The Colonial Secretary: I was there a few days ago, when they were baking bread.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I expect that was because of my complaint.

Mr. Broun: A change was made.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: When certain patients were removed from Wooroloo, some of them said they preferred to take their

swags and go into the bush rather than go to the Old Men's Home.

Mr. Chesson: That is quite true.

Mr. Broun: Some of them should not have been there.

The Colonial Secretary: If they are not suffering from T.B., they should not be there.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: They must have been suffering from it when admitted. Patients suffering from any incurable disease should be made as comfortable as possible. One or two of those put out have since died. I hope the Committee will see to it that Dr. Mitchell is allowed a free hand in running the institution in the best interests of the patients.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. R. S. Sampson—Swan—in reply) [10.55]: The published statements that patients are not admitted unless able to pay is entirely false. Wooroloo is for the reception of all suffering from T.B. or other wasting diseases, irrespective of their ability to pay. Consideration and treatment are exactly the same for all. Dr. Mitchell and his staff, including the matron and nurses, are all of very high order.

Mr. Mann: The complaint is that Dr. Mitchell is interfered with by administration from Perth.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: That is quite wrong. There is no interference whatever.

Mr. Mann: Is it left to him to say what patients shall go out of Wooroloo?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: All questions of medical treatment at Wooroloo are left to Dr. Mitchell. Of course, some business arrangements are carried out in the Perth office. Dr. Mitchell determines whether or not a patient shall be received.

Mr. Chesson: Did not a Perth doctor go up to Wooroloo and order out a lot of patients?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I am advised that they were not suffering from T.B.

Mr. Chesson: They were not shifted by the direction of Dr. Mitchell.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: They were not suffering from T.B., and consequently were not qualified to remain there. It has been said that unless a patient pays he is not welcome. That is not correct. Patients are not harassed for payment for treatment. The utmost consideration is extended to them.

Item, Commissioner for Public Health and Principal Medical Officer, £1,080:

Mr. WILLCOCK: There is a new regulation regarding the payment of fees. Matrons having been instructed that no set fees shall be charged, make an inquisitorial examination of the financial position of patients and are entitled to impose such payments as they think fit.

Mr. A. Thomson: Do not the doctors decide?

Mr. WILLCOCK: No. It is left to the matron. The doctors are not very pleased about being pushed out.

Mr. Broun: Do you mean fixing the doctor's fee?

Mr. WILLCOCK: Yes. This has occurred since the hon. member left office.

The Colonial Secretary: If a person can pay, he should pay.

Mr. WILLCOCK: Quite so, but there should be a scale of fees. If anyone can pay well and good, but if not, other arrangements should be made to recompense the doctor. The matrons at Kalgoorlie, Collie, Geraldton and Bunbury might fix different fees for similar cases. This is not a businesslike method.

Hon. P. Collier: It might depend on friendship with the doctor.

Mr. WILLCOCK: The doctor gets his fees from the department in respect of indigent cases. There should not be a dozen different scales of fees for operations or medical services.

The Colonial Secretary: I shall look into that matter.

Mr. WILLCOCK: The responsibility should not be on the matron.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Agriculture generally, £58,449:

Progress reported.

BILL—AGRICULTURAL LANDS PURCHASE ACT AMENDMENT.

Message from the Lieut.-Governor received and read recommending appropriation in connection with the Bill.

House adjourned at 11.6 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 15th November, 1922.

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

QUESTION—CLOSER SETTLEMENT BILL 1921.

Hon. J. DUFFELL asked the Minister for Education: Will he cause to be laid on the