

Hon. L. A. Logan: Is not any of that money invested?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: Yes. The reserves are made up as follows:—

General Reserve £415,631; and Specific reserves £1,057,363 which included—	
	£
Workers' Compensation Disaster Risk: .....	140,000
Potential Third Schedule (Silicosis) Claims: .....	767,476
Local Authorities Pools: .....	2,887
Proportion of Accumulated Loss by Motor Vehicle Trust: .....	45,000
New Building .....	100,000
Bad and doubtful debts: .....	2,000

In addition, the State Insurance Office owns freehold land and a building in St. George's Terrace to the value of £30,463. In due course, the office intends to erect a suitable building of its own on this site, in lieu of the present arrangement of leasing office accommodation. As there was no provision in the principal Act for the office to acquire property, although this, no doubt, could be done under other legislation, the Bill proposes that the office shall be regarded as always having had the authority to acquire and dispose of property.

As the Bill merely seeks to give statutory authority to action that has been taken with the approval of the Treasurer and which is essential to the successful operation of the State Government Insurance Office, I trust that it will receive the favourable consideration of the House. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. E. M. Davies, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 9.27 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly

Thursday, 27th November, 1952.

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

### QUESTIONS.

#### SWAN RIVER.

(a) As to Samples, Organisms, etc.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN asked the Minister for Works:

(1) If the living organisms stated in Public Works Department Plan No. 31431 from the Fremantle Harbour to Mill Point are not all B. Colli or B. Welchi, what are they?

(2) In what salinity parts per million will the organisms stated in the plan live and multiply?

(3) Will he state the technical name, or names, of each of these living organisms?

(4) Will he supply information similar to that requested in (1) to (3) above for the section from Mill Point Perth, to Woodbridge Creek, Midland Junction?

(5) At what depth in the water were all the samples taken?

(6) Will he supply detailed information as to minimum and maximum depths in feet or inches at which they were taken from Fremantle Harbour to Woodbridge Creek, Midland Junction, from the 25th September, 1950, to the 18th August, 1952?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (for the Minister for Works) replied:

(1) Details of all organisms present other than *B. Coli* and *B. Welchii* are not recorded in the tests.

(2) The vast majority of pathogenic organisms whose normal habitat is the human body have a very limited life in water of any salinity and do not multiply.

Sea water has natural bacteriostatic functions apart from its salinity.

Non-pathogenic organisms may have their normal habitat in waters of various salinity.

(3) No. It is totally impracticable to classify them.

(4) Answered by (1), (2) and (3).

(5) At approximately 1ft. from the surface throughout.

(6) Answered by (5).

*(b) As to Effluent from Breweries.*

Mr. GRAYDEN asked the Minister for Works:

(1) Has any progress been made in the last 12 months towards diverting wastes from the Emu and Swan Breweries to the sewerage system, instead of these wastes being emptied into the Swan River?

(2) If not, when is it anticipated that this will take place?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (for the Minister for Works) replied:

(1) The Swan Brewery Company originally gave the department to understand that it would co-operate in the treatment of its effluent into the river and connection to the sewerage system, but has since expressed itself as not satisfied that its waste waters constitute injurious contamination.

It has therefore been found necessary to thoroughly investigate and establish pollution standards. This investigation is not yet complete, but is receiving prompt attention.

The matter of waste from the Emu Brewery is awaiting a decision concerning the attitude to be taken with the Swan Brewery.

(2) No date can be given at present.

*(c) As to Clearing Upper Reaches.*

Mr. BRADY asked the Minister for Works:

(1) Have the various committees functioning in connection with the Swan River made any recommendations regarding the dredging or removal of silt and snags from the upper reaches of the Swan River, particularly between Middle Swan and Bassendean?

(2) If the answer is in the affirmative, will he state if, and when, the work will be commenced?

(3) If the answer is in the negative, will he give consideration to using dredge now at Causeway to dredge a channel through the river to Middle Swan?

(4) Is he aware that weed, believed to be algae, is now growing prolifically between Guildford and West Midland swimming pool, also that any action taken by his department to reduce or eliminate this nuisance would be appreciated?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (for the Minister for Works) replied:

(1) No.

(2) To dredge a channel from the Causeway to Middle Swan will be a major work because of the necessity to dredge through the Sherwood and Sugar Banks in the vicinity of Belmont.

Funds are not available for such work, nor could the dredge be made available because of other important commitments.

(3) Yes, and the department is prepared to share with local authorities the cost of clearing this algae from the foreshores.

## PETROL.

*As to Prices at North-West Centres.*

Mr. RODOREDA asked the Attorney General:

(1) In view of the facts—

(a) that freight on petrol is the same (viz., 41s. 3d. per ton) from Fremantle to all ports from Carnarvon to Wyndham, inclusive, and

(b) that this rate has been in force for the past four years or so and has not been included in the recent freight increases, and

(c) that charges at these ports vary by only a fraction of a penny per gallon,

can he explain why the retail price of petrol increases at each port by sixpence or more per gallon as one goes northwards?

(2) Did the Prices Branch approve of these prices?

(3) If so, for what reason?

(4) If not, is it proposed to institute proceedings for overcharging?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL replied:

(1) The retail prices at each port do not vary by 6d. per gallon. Retail prices at the various ports and Roebourne at 26th November, 1952, were—Carnarvon, 4s. 5d.; Onslow, 4s. 6d.; Roebourne, 5s.; Port Hedland, 4s. 4d.; Broome, 4s. 6d. No resellers at Derby or Wyndham.

(2), (3) and (4) In the past, resellers' (retail) prices were not specifically fixed for each town. They have always been fixed at a prevailing price plus increases approved to the oil companies from time to time. There is no evidence that resellers have departed from this basis.

Following a complete investigation into resellers' prices and margins, and having regard to the increase approved in the differentials, specific prices have now been fixed as follows:—Carnarvon, 4s. 7d.; Onslow, 4s. 8d.; Roebourne, 4s. 9d.; Port Hedland, 4s. 8d.; Broome, 4s. 9d.; Derby, 4s. 9½d.; Wyndham, 4s. 10d.

### SEWERAGE.

*As to Contractors' Prices, etc.*

Mr. BRADY asked the Minister for Works:

(1) What price is allowed contractors by the Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Department for excavating trenches for sewerage?

(2) What percentage of price over and above actual cost of physical labour is allowed contractors as a margin for—

(a) overhead costs;

(b) net profit on sewerage work?

(3) What percentage of cost of materials is allowed for—

(a) overhead costs;

(b) net or gross profit?

(4) Are the percentages allowed contractors calculated on the estimated price of finished job, even if clients supply part of labour or obtain sewerage fittings at wholesale price?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (for the Minister for Works) replied:

(1) Price for excavation—

In dry sand—Excavation and refilling, including supply of pipes and laying in ground up to 4ft. deep, 7s. 6d. per lineal ft.; to 5ft. deep, 8s. 1d. per lineal ft.; to 6ft. deep, 8s. 7d. per lineal ft.; to 7ft. deep, or up to 9ft., with timbered line, 9s. 1d. per lineal ft., plus cost of timbering.

Excavation other ground—Excavation and refilling in clay, up to 9ft. deep, £1 7s. 8d. per cubic yard in addition to rate per foot for sand.

Excavation and refilling in stone, £5 6s. 4d. per cubic yard in addition to rate per foot for sand.

Excavating and refilling in made up ground or in water charged ground, or in sand, clay or stone over 9ft. deep, at day rates. (This work is carried out by skilled labour.)

(2) The schedule rates were agreed upon between the Master Plumbers' Association and the department, and include labour, materials, overhead, transport expenses, plant and profit. These were the conditions under which the master plumbers agreed to carry out the work, and considered by the department to be reasonable charges as compared with costs under the system of calling tenders. It is not the practice to segregate the percentage costs of the items mentioned above.

(3) Answered by No. (2).

(4) The department knows of no case where the property owner has desired to supply labour for the excavation work, but should such circumstances arise, due consideration would be given to the proposal.

All other work in connection with the job must be carried out by registered operatives in the employ of the licensed plumber.

Any approved piping or fittings supplied by the owner receive due allowance in assessing final payment to the plumber.

### RAILWAYS.

*(a) As to Executing Requirements at Midland Workshops.*

Mr. BRADY asked the Minister representing the Minister for Railways:

(1) Is it a fact that at least three of the sections of the Railway Workshops, i.e., boiler, machine, and car and wagon, have been affected by the letting out to private firms of work that could be performed at Midland Junction?

(2) As the private firms contracting for railway work are making substantial profits, would it not be good policy to save such profits for the railways by having all required work performed at Midland Shops?

(3) Is it a fact that certain retrenchments are contemplated at the Midland Workshops early in the new year?

(4) Will he try to have orders for locos. and rolling stock placed overseas cancelled with a view to continuing capacity employment in the workshops?

(5) Will he state if the workshops are at present working to full capacity?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied:

(1) No. The three sections mentioned are working to full capacity and there is an abundance of work programmed.

(2) It was essential to place with private firms contracts for minor items due to the lag in production brought about by the metal trades strike.

(3) No.

(4) Capacity employment can be continued in the workshops without cancelling contractual agreements.

(5) Yes.

*(b) As to Carriage of Gifts for Institute for Blind.*

Mr. OLDFIELD asked the Minister representing the Minister for Railways:

(1) Is he aware that prior to the 1939-45 war, all gifts of fruit, produce, etc., forwarded to the Maylands Institute for the Blind, were carried by the Railways freight free from sending station to Maylands?

(2) Will he re-instate this privilege?

(3) If not, why not?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied:

(1) Yes, within certain limitations.

(2) and (3) The Institute for the Blind was one of a number of organisations which enjoyed free transport of donations, but deteriorating railway finances compelled drastic curtailment of the free list. Free carriage of horse hair to the institute up to 28 lb. in weight is still permitted.

#### EDUCATION:

*As to High Schools for Mt. Lawley and Midland Junction.*

Mr. BRADY asked the Minister for Education:

As the 16th Security Loan (full page advertisement in "The West Australian" of yesterday features the Mt. Lawley High School, to cost £240,000, as one of the many new buildings planned for the State, will he give an assurance that the proposed Midland Junction High School ranks ahead of the Mt. Lawley project as a priority work?

The MINISTER replied:

I have nothing to add to the information given to the hon. member on this subject in my letter of the 30th June last. There is obvious need for another high school at Mt. Lawley, and the consideration so far given to that matter was for the erection of a number of prefabricated units.

Owing to the financial situation, no date can be stated when such a building is likely to be approved.

#### WORKERS' COMPENSATION.

*As to Hospital Charges.*

Mr. STYANTS asked the Minister for Health:

Is it correct that her department has issued instructions to Government hospitals that will mean that in all circumstances an injured worker will be compelled to pay portion of his hospital

accommodation account under the provisions of the Workers' Compensation Act?

The MINISTER replied:

No. The Commonwealth has instituted a new basis of calculation of hospital benefits which was explained to the hospitals, with examples.

In cases where workers' compensation payments do not equal the hospital charges, the new basis results in a balance being due from the patient.

This balance could be covered by membership of a hospital benefit fund.

#### HOUSING CONTRACTS.

*As to Appointment of Royal Commission.*

Mr. GRAHAM asked the Premier:

(1) Is it the intention of the Government to appoint a Royal Commission to investigate matters arising from allegations made against the firm of Snowden & Willson?

(2) Has a Royal Commissioner been appointed?

(3) If so, who?

(4) Have the terms of reference yet been drawn?

(5) If so, what are they?

(6) What is the reason for the delay in setting up the Royal Commission?

(7) Is it the desire of the Government that the findings of the Royal Commission will not be made known to the public until after the elections, in order to avoid political embarrassment to the member for Maylands?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2), (3), (4) and (5) An announcement will be made shortly.

(6) There is no undue delay.

(7) It would be highly presumptuous and improper for me, or for the hon. member, to anticipate the findings of a Royal Commission.

#### MARGARINE.

*As to Companies' Quotas.*

Mr. GRAHAM asked the Minister representing the Minister for Agriculture:

(1) What were the annual quotas for the manufacture of table margarine for the two local companies respectively prior to the recent amendment of the Margarine Act?

(2) When did the amended Margarine Act come into operation?

(3) What quantity of table margarine had then been manufactured by the respective companies?

(4) What are the amended quotas granted to the two companies respectively?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied:

(1) Kaseleys, 130 tons; Meadowlea, 234 tons.

(2) The 30th October, 1952.

(3) At the 31st October, 1952—Kaseleys, 122½ tons; Meadowlea, 265 tons.

In anticipation of the law being passed, the Minister for Agriculture authorised the companies to manufacture to capacity to meet the public demand.

One company exceeded its old quota, but has not exceeded the amount allowed under the new law.

(4) Kaseleys, 170 tons; Meadowlea, 304 tons.

### FORESTS DEPARTMENT.

#### *As to Timber Rights and Royal Commission's Recommendation.*

Mr. HOAR (without notice) asked the Minister for Forests:

(1) Has he seen in today's "The West Australian" the reported statement of the Minister for Agriculture concerning the "release of timber royalties to persons who had held land for five years and had cultivated a reasonable pasture acreage?" If so, is this report correct?

(2) If the report is correct, is it—

(a) In accordance with a recommendation of the Royal Commission on forestry matters?

(b) Will it apply to all farm lands whose timber is reserved to the Crown?

(c) What will be the extent of the royalty paid?

(d) Will the payments be made retrospective to the date on which the Royal Commissioner's report was made? If not, from what date will these payments be made available?

The MINISTER replied:

I thank the hon. member for having sent the questions to my office after lunch today.

(1) Yes. At the discretion of the Minister for Lands, the marketable timber is to be released on areas which have been under established pasture for five years, subject to the leaseholder residing on his property and actively working it, and having developed the area to at least 50 per cent. in excess of the value required under the Land Act.

(2) Answered by No. 1. Finality has not been reached on how Cabinet decision is to be implemented nor from what date.

### BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

1, Western Australian Marine Act Amendment.

Introduced by the Chief Secretary.

2, Constitution Acts Amendment (No. 2).

Received from the Council.

### STANDING ORDERS SUSPENSION.

The PREMIER: I move—

That until otherwise ordered, the Standing Orders be suspended so far as to enable Bills to be introduced without notice and to be passed through all their remaining stages on the same day, all messages from the Legislative Council to be taken into consideration on the same day they are received, and to enable resolutions from the Committees of Supply and of Ways and Means to be reported and adopted on the same day on which they shall have passed those Committees.

Mr. Speaker—

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: You must intend to close up early.

The PREMIER: I will tell the hon. member. This is the motion which generally comes down at this time of the year. It has come down a little later than usual this year, I think. I indicated to members some time ago that the session would finish on the 12th December. I cannot see, looking at the notice paper, any reason why it should not finish on that date. I think members should be prepared to sit on Friday week.

Mr. May: Tomorrow week.

The PREMIER: Yes; and it may be necessary for members to be here on Friday the 12th December.

Mr. W. Hegney: Why do you have to finish on the 12th?

The PREMIER: We have to make some finishing date, and this is the usual custom. If members would confine themselves to the matters on the notice paper, I think there is still time to give expressions to any views that might be held. There is hardly any more legislation to come down—the notice paper is just about complete.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: The motion is to expedite the business during the remaining days of the session and I have no objection to raise to it. However, I would like the Premier to give an assurance that a vote will be allowed in respect to every item which is now on the notice paper.

Mr. J. HEGNEY: I raise objection to the suspension of Standing Orders for the reason that when a motion was brought down for the purpose of allowing Government business to take precedence over private members' business, it was indicated that it was not the intention of the Government to bring down any more Bills, and that consequently an opportu-

nity would be given for private members' Bills to be properly and fairly considered. It is a month now since I introduced a Bill into the Assembly, and it has been at the bottom of the notice paper all the time. Almost every Bill high up on the notice paper today has come here within the last couple of weeks. We find on the notice paper such Bills as the Electoral Act Amendment, Factories and Shops Act Amendment etc. They must have been waiting in the various departments before this motion was introduced. I thought that by this time fair consideration would have been given to my Bill. Now the Government, it seems, is anxious to close the session, and it introduces this motion.

What is the reason for not being able to sit on Monday and Friday, and not being able to finish at a reasonable time each night? Why can we not sit in the daytime? The Commonwealth Parliament has day sessions. These matters, apparently, are so urgent that we have to suspend Standing Orders, and the Government can do as it likes. I have a vivid recollection of what happened here two years ago in respect to a motion of this kind. Standing Orders were suspended and a railway Bill was brought down. At 12.30 a.m. we got the substance of the Bill, and the next evening the Premier said to the member for Guildford-Midland and me, "I expect you to go on with the discussion of the Bill this evening." The Standing Orders were suspended then. The Bill was whisked through this Chamber in three or four days, but when it got to another place it received short shrift.

Mr. May: There were open windows there.

Mr. J. HEGNEY: Yes. It received little consideration in another place. If Standing Orders are suspended I have no doubt that some other proposition will come before Parliament. The Government having the necessary numbers, can do as it likes. The Assembly should not tolerate this kind of thing. In view of the assurance given when the motion was moved for Government business to take precedence over private members' business, I do not feel like being caught again. Bills which have been in the departments for a long time are being introduced now, in the dying hours of the session, and members are expected to sit for long hours—up till midnight—to give what is called mature consideration to them. We should consider these questions more during the daylight hours, and possibly sit another two days of the week instead of rushing things. I express my disgust at the treatment private members' business has received. Government Bills are being brought in willy-nilly, and private members' items are being pushed down to the bottom of the

notice paper. Having some experience in the Assembly I believe that many of these Bills will go overboard.

**THE PREMIER** (in reply): Some little time ago I gave an assurance to the Leader of the Opposition that all business then on the notice paper would be dealt with, and we shall endeavour to keep that promise. The member for Middle Swan referred to some items that have since been placed on the notice paper. With regard to the Rents and Tenancies Emergency Provisions Act Amendment Bill, and the Industrial Development (Kwinana Area) Act Amendment Bill, we have received Crown Law advice which has necessitated some action being taken. When these Bills have been introduced, I think the hon. member will appreciate why they are necessary.

The Coronation Holiday Bill, as its Title implies, is to enable workers to have a public holiday for that event. There should not be much discussion on any of those measures. If the hon. member looks back at what has taken place during the session, he will find that matters affecting private members have been given generous treatment, particularly when compared with other sessions. After I moved a motion that Government business take precedence over private member's business, I still brought private member's business towards the top of the notice paper in order to have it dealt with. I hope the motion will be agreed to.

Question put and passed.

#### **BILL—ELECTORAL ACT AMENDMENT.**

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

#### **BILL—FACTORIES AND SHOPS ACT AMENDMENT.**

*Second Reading.*

**THE MINISTER FOR LABOUR** (Hon. L. Thorn—Toodyay) [4.53] in moving the second reading said: The Bill is introduced to amend the parent Act as a result of numerous complaints over a long period, particularly in respect to dust being allowed to escape into the atmosphere and inconvenience residents over a wide area in some industrial centres. While this applies mainly to one or two large factories, for some time it has become a real menace as so many smaller factories are creating dust piles, and there is no remedy in any Act to prevail upon them to take reasonable care and have some consideration for nearby occupiers of shops, factories and residences. As members know, a number of spot mills have sprung up and are creating nuisances that will have to be dealt with.

Many members have asked the Factories and Shops Department to investigate nuisances of this kind, and some progress

has been made as a result of a mutual understanding between the parties. However, it is not possible for constant supervision to be exercised at these places, so far as the smoke and dust nuisance is concerned, and the Bill attempts to make some progress towards giving power to make regulations so that unhealthy and irritating conditions can be relieved or remedied. There are many industrial areas in the vicinity of Perth and complaints have been frequent over the last two or three years.

This Bill seeks to give the Minister power to provide protection for persons outside factories, including residents in close proximity and other living in areas distant from factories. The present position is that safeguards are provided only for persons employed in factories. Members will recollect that at different times we have had a number of complaints regarding the cement works, and various nuisances that other industries have created. Under the Act at present, the Minister can appoint only one person to conduct an inquiry or investigation under certain conditions. The proposed amendment widens the choice of the Minister to more than one person. At the moment, the regulations are applicable only to matters certified as dangerous to safety and health. The proposed amendment will widen the scope of the regulations and enable them to deal with nuisances such as smoke, inconvenience excessive noise and other matters detrimental to persons in factories.

The parent Act enables the Minister, by regulation, to deal with matters certified as dangerous to people, and the proposed amendment will give him similar powers to deal with a nuisance. The Bill will also enable the Minister to specify the time for compliance with an order to abolish or abate a danger or a nuisance. It will be realised that at present this State is making great progress in industrial development, and I think the time is now opportune for the Government to have further power and authority to deal with these nuisances. In several of the big overseas cities, such as London and other places, they have similar nuisances, and they are compelled to burn their smoke. So it is obvious that, with all these new industries springing up, the Government should have power to take action and protect the public from inconvenience. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. J. Hegney, debate adjourned.

## **BILL—CORONATION HOLIDAY.**

### *Second Reading.*

**THE MINISTER FOR LABOUR** (Hon. L. Thorn—Toodyay) [4.58] in moving the second reading said: This is a very small

measure and, as members will recall, a somewhat similar Bill was introduced into this House in regard to the Royal visit that was to have taken place this year. This Bill is to provide for the observance of a set holiday throughout the State on the occasion of the Coronation of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. The Commonwealth Government has expressed a desire that the date proposed, namely, Tuesday, the 2nd June, 1953, shall be observed as a holiday throughout the Commonwealth. The Government is in accord with that suggestion, and now submits this Bill to enable a public holiday to be declared for this important day. The Bill is based almost entirely on the Act passed by Parliament in 1951 to provide for a holiday for the proposed Royal visit. It seeks to make provision not only for workers covered by awards and agreements of the Arbitration Court, but also ensures that those workers not covered by awards and agreements shall have the day treated as a public holiday.

**Mr. May:** With pay?

**The MINISTER FOR LABOUR:** Yes, it will be a legal public holiday. In passing I would like to say that the State has been most generous in this matter because I know that other States have endeavoured to make this special holiday conform to some other holidays. I think I am correct in saying that Monday, the 1st June, is Foundation Day in Western Australia. So the Government decided it would not interfere with Foundation Day by making any changes and that it would give to the people of the State an extra holiday.

**Hon. A. R. G. Hawke:** What if the 2nd June falls on a Sunday?

**The MINISTER FOR LABOUR:** I think the 2nd June, 1953, will fall on a Tuesday.

**Hon. A. R. G. Hawke:** But this Bill is for only one year.

**The MINISTER FOR LABOUR:** Yes, that is so. I feel it will give the people of this State a long weekend; they will have from Friday till Tuesday. The State is being most generous.

**Mr. W. Hegney:** Do you apply that to shearers and other pieceworkers?

**The MINISTER FOR LABOUR:** It is a public holiday and the pieceworker can take a holiday whenever he likes. I cannot commit myself on that point.

**Mr. Brady:** Will the people who are not working be given a day's pay?

**The MINISTER FOR LABOUR:** Do not be funny; where will the money come from?

**Mr. Brady:** I thought the Government was trying to be generous.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: It is, but not that generous; besides that is the responsibility of the Commonwealth Government. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. W. Hegney, debate adjourned.

### MOTION—HEALTH ACT.

*To Disallow Argentine Ant Regulation.*

MR. NEEDHAM (North Perth) [5.51]: I move—

That new Regulation 3A dealing with argentine ants, made under the Health Act, 1911-1950, published in the "Government Gazette" on the 31st October, 1952, and laid upon the Table of the House on the 5th November, 1952, be and is hereby disallowed.

In moving the disallowance of this regulation I have no intention of attempting to interfere with or obstruct the Health Department in its campaign against the ant invasion and the good work it is doing to try to eradicate that pest. I want to emphasise that, for I realise the department is doing its best to try to combat the ant menace. The disallowance of this regulation will not in any way interfere with or handicap the department in its work. I have always realised the necessity for a vigorous campaign against the ant menace and I referred to this matter in the House some years ago. I have followed it up consistently until a week or two ago when I inquired of the Minister for Health whether or not there was any possibility of the Commonwealth Government assisting the State financially in an endeavour to combat the menace.

I make these introductory remarks to emphasise the point that the object I have in view is not to obstruct, but rather to assist. I would go further and say that if it were possible under the Standing Orders to amend the regulation to which I have referred I would have moved in that direction rather than seek its disallowance. As the Standing Orders will not permit of amendment I am moving for the disallowance of the regulation. The only part of the regulation to which I object is paragraphs (a) and (b) of Sub-section (2). In order that members may have an idea what the regulation is about I will read it. It is as follows:—

3A. (1) Notwithstanding the provisions of regulation 3—

(a) The Minister or the local authority may at any time and from time to time give notice in writing to the owner or occupier of any premises of intention to enter upon the premises for the purpose of eradicating and destroying ants thereon. The notice may be given either by ser-

vice in accordance with Section 354 of the Act on the owner or occupier or by publication of the notice in the "Government Gazette" and a newspaper circulating in the district.

(b) Where an area including a number of premises is to be sprayed for the purpose of eradicating and destroying ants the notice shall be published in the "Government Gazette" and a newspaper circulating in the district and the notice may be addressed to all owners or occupiers in the area defined collectively and need not state the names and addresses of the persons to whom the notice applies.

(2) The notice may require the owner or occupier within a time to be specified in the notice, to—

(a) remove from ground level any accumulations of refuse, timber or other material or thing whatsoever which harbours or may provide harbourage for ants; and

(b) remove from ground level and from fences to a distance of three feet from the boundary line of the premises any vegetation, material or thing whatsoever, but not including any building, structure, or portion thereof, which may hinder the application of insecticide or the eradication of ants.

It is the last paragraph to which I object. I have had several complaints that if the regulation is made operative the State health authority or the local authority can come on to the premises and order the occupier to remove the hedge at the boundary line. I think that is going too far. We must remember that the department is now experimenting with Chlordane. It is not in a position yet to say whether Chlordane will be effective in eradicating the ants. On my own premises I am using a mixture of 80 per cent. of Chlordane and a few pints of water. I have been using that for some weeks, but I cannot see any improvement.

I do not know whether the campaign now going on and being conducted by the department in South Perth and other places will be effective; I hope it will. But I do not see any reason why the owner or occupier of a dwelling should be compelled to remove his hedge altogether. We should bear in mind that this regulation deals with the hedge on the boundary; it does not refer to hedges on the dividing fences between properties. If ants can accumulate in the hedge at the fence on the boundary line they can ac-



cumulate in the hedges of the dividing lines. The hedge is not the only place in which the ants have their nests. One of the worst places for ants to have their nests is on the lawn. I find that in my own place, and other members have had the same experience.

If we are to follow what is suggested in this regulation the lawns will have to be taken up because the pulling up of the hedge will merely drive the ants on to the lawn. I do not think that our State health authority or the local authority would pull up the hedges around Parliament House. We have hedges around our lawns and I do not think the member for West Perth in his capacity of Lord Mayor would like to see the hedges pulled up on properties controlled by the City Council, nor do I blame him. When I gave notice of this motion it was suggested to me that the regulation did not mean what I thought it did.

I have had legal advice on the matter and the legal interpretation of the portion to which I object is that the authority can order the owner or occupier to pull up the hedge and remove it three feet from the boundary line. To my way of thinking that will cause a lot of trouble and expense to the owner or occupier without in any way helping to eradicate the ants. We know that the average owners or occupiers of a property take a delight in their hedges; they have them as fences. They will certainly not welcome a regulation of this nature which, if allowed to remain in force, would leave them in a state of uncertainty.

Mr. Totterdell: The hedges would have to be very heavily infested before they were removed.

Mr. NEEDHAM: They would. I suggest to the Minister that she agree to the disallowance of the regulation and formulate an amended one in which the paragraph I have referred to will not find a place. I have no objection at all to the major part of the regulation, which will be very helpful in dealing with the ant problem. I realise that the object is to endeavour to secure the co-operation of householders in the department's attempt to eradicate this menace. I believe that if every householder were to do his part, the eradication of the Argentine ant would be much easier.

Possibly the experience of other members has been similar to mine. We try to get rid of the ants on our properties while neighbours may not bother to do anything about the pest at all. While I realise the necessity of compelling householders to co-operate in this movement, the regulation, in my opinion, goes rather too far. I trust that the Minister will give attention to what I have said and

after consultation with her advisers, will agree to the disallowance of the regulation.

On motion by the Minister for Health, debate adjourned.

## **BILL—RENTS AND TENANCIES EMERGENCY PROVISIONS ACT AMENDMENT.**

### *Second Reading.*

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY** (Hon. V. Doney—Narrogin) [5.17] in moving the second reading said: Members will, I am sure, very readily agree that there is probably no class of person more deserving of the concern and assistance of this House than that which includes soldiers' wives and widows of deceased soldiers. In particular that would be so with those who lose their homes by means of eviction. The Bill proposes to make it possible to render such assistance within the law. It will be done by rectifying an unintentional omission from the Rents and tenancies Emergency Provisions Act of 1951-52, which contains provision for protection against eviction in respect of protected persons.

The protection so provided is that such persons shall not be evicted by the court until such time as alternative accommodation is made available by the State Housing Commission. A "protected person" is defined in Section 22 of the principal Act as a totally and permanently incapacitated soldier, widow of an ex-serviceman, a person engaged on war service outside the Commonwealth and certain other classes of enlisted persons. When the original Act was passed, it was thought that the wife of a serviceman, as well as the serviceman himself, was protected, although the wife was not specifically mentioned in the section.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Does this deal with the matter about which there was a court case recently and certain action was found to be ultra vires?

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY:** Yes, there was a case dealing with the matter about a fortnight ago. As can be well understood, there are some instances where wives of servicemen and not the servicemen themselves are the actual tenants of premises. In these circumstances, it was decided to provide protection for wives by way of regulation, and the regulation was approved and gazetted early this year. Since then some doubt has arisen regarding the validity of the regulation. So that there shall be no such doubt in the future, it is proposed to amend the relevant section of the Act. The Bill therefore provides that on and after the 1st December, 1952, the wife of a person engaged on war service or a person who has enlisted in the Armed Forces for

service outside the Commonwealth who is dependent upon such person, shall be protected.

It further provides that protection shall be given to a person wholly dependent upon such serviceman. This would cover, say, an aged mother or father, a brother or sister or others in indigent circumstances who are dependent upon the serviceman. It will be observed by the sub-clause that the Bill will permit regulations to be gazetted to cover persons who are wholly dependent on a serviceman, without specifically mentioning any particular class of dependant in the Act. This is a brief explanation of the Bill, and I hope it will secure the ready approval of the House. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. J. T. Tonkin, debate adjourned.

### **BILL—NURSES REGISTRATION ACT AMENDMENT (No. 1).**

#### *Council's Amendments.*

Schedule of three amendments made by the Council now considered.

#### *In Committee.*

Mr. Perkins in the Chair; the Minister for Health in charge of the Bill.

No. 1. Clause 2, page 2—Delete the words "Trained Nursing Aide" in line 7 and substitute the words "Assistant Nurse."

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I move—

That the amendment be amended by striking out the words "assistant nurse" and inserting the words "nursing aide" in lieu.

Since the Bill was in another place, I have given the subject matter of the Council's amendments very careful consideration and so has the Nurses Registration Board, the chairman of which is the Commissioner of Public Health, as well as the A.T.N.A., the Health Department and the nurses' union. All are agreed that the title of "trained nursing aide" will be confused with that of "trained nurse" and furthermore, that the title of "assistant nurse" will be confused with that of "nursing assistant." In these circumstances, it is considered that the best title to adopt would be that of "nursing aide"; hence the amendment I have just moved.

As will be noted by a perusal of the Bill, a nursing aide will be required to undergo a period of 12 months' training to qualify herself to work in that category, which is similar to the situation existing in Victoria and New Zealand, where the experience has been satisfactory. I do not think we should agree to anything that would adversely affect the status of a trained nurse, nor should we do anything that would allow

a person who has qualified for the position of nursing aide to be confused with a nursing assistant.

At present where untrained nursing assistants are employed, it is common to hear them referred to as assistant nurses. The term "nursing aide" is distinct and there will be no possibility of confusing those in the lower grade with the professional nurse. I hope I have made myself perfectly clear. Many people who have not been connected with the profession may not realise the importance of this matter. The nurses' union, the A.T.N.A., and the board of management of the Royal Perth Hospital are in entire agreement with the amendment I have submitted. Only yesterday I received a communication from the board of management of the Royal Perth Hospital which reads as follows:—

At a meeting of the Hospital Board of Management which had just taken place, reference was made to the passage through Parliament of the Nurses Registration Act Amendment Bill. In particular the board is somewhat concerned with the proposal to substitute the title "State Enrolled Assistant Nurse" in lieu of "Nursing Aide."

It is understood that a certain amount of criticism has been levelled at the title "Trained Nursing Aide" but this hospital has never contemplated the use of the word "trained" as part of the title. The board considers that "nursing aide" is the best designation for this hospital's purposes, and it was chosen only after a considerable amount of careful thought as far as this hospital is concerned.

The board respectfully suggests that every effort should be made to secure recognition of the title "nursing aide" in which connection it is unnecessary to associate the designation "trained." The board has reason to believe that much of the criticism that has been directed against the original wording of the Bill would be withdrawn if assurance was given that the word "trained" was not essential to the use of the title "nursing aide."

There is a considerable difference between the phrases "nursing aide," "nursing assistant," and "trained nursing aide."

Hon. E. NULSEN: I agree with the Minister. It would be a real shame if the title were changed. I know that the trained sisters, and all those connected with the hospital, desire to have "nursing aide" as the title. If it were changed to "assistant nurse" there would be less reciprocity with the Eastern States. It would be better to lose the Bill than to change the designation.

Mr. READ: I cannot agree with the Minister. A nurse is a qualified nurse and not an assistant nurse. I do not like the words "nursing aide." A bedpan might be called a nursing aide!

Hon. E. Nulsen: They have the title in the Eastern States.

Mr. READ: I consider it quite wrong, and object to the term "nursing aide" being applied to hospital nurses.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment, as amended, agreed to.

The CHAIRMAN: The following additional amendments were made by the Council as part of its amendment No. 1:—

In Clause 2, page 2—Delete the words "a trained nursing aide" in lines 8 and 9 and substitute the words "an assistant nurse."

In Clause 4, page 2—

- (i) Delete the words "trained nursing aides" in line 22 and substitute the words "assistant nurses".
- (ii) Delete the words "trained nursing aides" in lines 32 and 33 and substitute the words "assistant nurses".
- (iii) Delete the words "a trained nursing aide" in lines 36 and 37 and substitute the words "an assistant nurse".

In Clause 5, page 3—Delete the words "a trained nursing aide" in lines 3 and 4 and substitute the words "an assistant nurse".

In Clause 6, page 3—

- (i) Delete the words "trained nursing aide" in line 8 and substitute the words "assistant nurse".
- (ii) Delete the words "trained nursing aide" in lines 10 and 11 and substitute the words "assistant nurse".
- (iii) Delete the words "a trained nursing aide" in line 14 and substitute the words "an assistant nurse".

In Clause 7, page 4—

- (i) Delete the words "a trained nursing aide" in lines 19 and 20 and substitute the words "an assistant nurse".
- (ii) Delete the words "trained nursing aides" in lines 21 and 22 and substitute the words "assistant nurses".
- (iii) Delete the words "trained nursing aides" in lines 39 and 40 and substitute the words "assistant nurses".

In Clause 8, page 5—Delete the words "trained nursing aides" in lines 3 and 4 and substitute the words "assistant nurses".

In Clause 9, page 5—Delete the words "a trained nursing aide" in lines 14 and 15 and substitute the words "an assistant nurse".

In Clause 10, page 5—Delete the words "a trained nursing aide" in line 19 and substitute the words "an assistant nurse".

In Clause 11, page 5—Delete the words "trained nursing aide" in line 22 and substitute the words "assistant nurse".

In Clause 12, page 5—

- (i) Delete the words "trained nursing aide" in line 26 and substitute the words "assistant nurse".
- (ii) Delete the words "trained nursing aide" in line 28 and substitute the words "assistant nurse".
- (iii) Delete the words "trained nursing aide" in line 31 and substitute the words "assistant nurse".
- (iv) Delete the words "a trained nursing aide" in line 34 and substitute the words "an assistant nurse".

In Clause 13, page 6—

- (i) Delete the words "trained nursing aide" in line 7 and substitute the words "assistant nurse".
- (ii) Delete the words "a trained nursing aide" in line 17 and substitute the words "an assistant nurse".

In Clause 14, page 6—

- (i) Delete the words "a trained nursing aide" in line 26 and substitute the words "an assistant nurse".
- (ii) Delete the words "trained nursing aide" in lines 28 and 29 and substitute the words "assistant nurse".

In Clause 17, page 7—

- (i) Delete the words "trained nursing aides" in line 9 and substitute the words "assistant nurses".
- (ii) Delete the words "trained nursing aides" in line 11 and substitute the words "assistant nurses".

On motion by the Minister for Health the foregoing amendments were agreed to as consequentially amended.

No. 2.

Clause 18, page 7—Delete the word "twenty" in line 35 and substitute the word "ten".

No. 3.

Clause 18, page 7—Delete all words after the word "pounds" in line 36 down to and including the word "offender" in line 41.

On motion by the Minister for Health, the foregoing amendments were agreed to.

Resolutions reported, the report adopted and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

### ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1952-53.

#### *In Committee of Supply.*

Resumed from the 20th November; Mr. Perkins in the Chair.

*Vote—Education, £4,102,300:*

**THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION** (Hon. A. F. Watts—Stirling) [5.37]: It gives me a good deal of pleasure to introduce the Estimates for the Department of Education for the financial year ending the 30th June next. I would say at the outset that the department, in common with all others throughout Australia has, in the last financial year and the one now current, been passing through a period of extreme difficulty. In June last, I attended the biennial conference of the Education Council of Australia, at which all the States were represented by their Ministers for Education, with the exception of Victoria on whose behalf the acting Minister was present.

While the problems of the States known as the standard States are of greater magnitude because of their greater population, I had no hesitation, after two days discussion at that gathering, in coming to the conclusion that in proportion to population, and because of the rather greater degree to which the population of this State has increased in recent years, the problems associated with Western Australia are proportionately greater. The conference was held at a time when the financial situation was rapidly getting into the somewhat clouded condition it subsequently reached and a great part of the discussion centred in that particular question. Before I conclude, I shall try to say something more in relation to it, as affecting Western Australia. To proceed along more normal lines, I would mention that the expenditure for 1951-52 totalled £3,630,893.

Hon. E. Nulsen: It is getting enormous, is it not?

**THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION:** That is very nearly £1,000,000 greater than the expenditure for 1950-51. I think that the exact figure would be £996,000. During the year 1951-52 school buildings occasioned a total expenditure, inclusive of maintenance, of £910,943. A considerable number of those buildings were of the pre-fabricated Bristol type. I would not like the impression to get abroad that the pre-fabricated Bristol building is a cheap contribution to the provision of accommodation for scholars in Western Australia. There have been quite a number of discussions with the Principal Architect

of the Public Works Department and, quite apart from the prime cost of the pre-fabricated units that are obtained from England, the cost of erection by the Public Works Department's own teams has gone as high as £3,000 per unit or £1,500 per classroom. That would be in cases where there has been some transporting to do, admittedly in the country districts; but the average figure ranges between £2,400 and £2,700. The prime cost of the units is in the vicinity of £5,500. So it can be noted that the total cost of the two-unit building, the two-classroom unit, is approximately £8,000.

However, both with the aid of the pre-fabricated building and the orthodox classroom which was erected to the utmost degree possible during the last calendar year, a total of 106 classrooms was erected. It is anticipated—again with a very substantial contribution from the pre-fab buildings, of which, during this year, something in the vicinity of 100 two-classroom units are expected to arrive—that there will be a total accretion in classrooms of 150 to 200 and, if the finance can be arranged, nearer to the latter figure than to the former. Wherever possible, they are being used to remedy the situation that existed on account of the sudden increase in population and where extraneous and unsatisfactory buildings of one kind and another were in use.

These units do not all arrive at once; they come from time to time in batches and, as each batch arrives, it is necessary not only to provide the funds for their erection at the figure to which I have referred, but also to find the manpower necessary to erect them. There have been as many as three Public Works teams engaged, and one contractor. Notwithstanding that, it will be easy, I think, to understand that they might arrive faster than they can be erected, because the average time of erection, including, of course, the painting and odd jobs that have to be done, without any ancillary buildings such as lavatories and the like, is three weeks or more. If there are ancillary buildings to be erected, as must be the case where entirely new provision is being made for school accommodation—as was the case at Welshpool, one of the first of the pre-fabs to be erected—the time that is taken up is very much longer.

Mr. Brady: Are any of these buildings to be provided for slow-learning children?

**THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION:** I might say something about that later on. The ancillary buildings which have to be erected at a number of places such as Allandale and Bentley Park, in the vicinity of Cannington, necessarily slow down the progress that can be made and, what is more, considerably enhance the cost, because they have to be provided in

addition to the pre-fab units. In consequence it is possible, without the slightest difficulty, to have a pre-fab school of some four classrooms, with ancillaries, costing a great deal more than an orthodox school building would. The main gain that is achieved is that one can erect the pre-fab part of the premises in a very short time and that it does not impinge upon local resources, material and labour—which particularly at the time they were ordered was a most pressing matter.

Approximately 77,000 children are now enrolled in Government primary and secondary schools. This represents an increase of about 5,000 in the past year and about 20,000 since 1947. A further increase of 36,000 is expected by 1960 as the result of research that has been done. If that estimate proves correct the school enrolments will have roughly doubled in a period of 14 years, which shows a considerable change from the pre-war situation. Approximately 2,700 teachers are at present employed in Government primary, secondary and technical schools. There are a number on supply, the great majority of them being women who left the service of the department on marriage and have returned to assist in relieving the present staffing shortage.

At the same time, active measures have been taken in an endeavour to provide sufficient teachers for this rapidly-increasing population and here, from my discussions that I referred to a moment ago, at the Education Council of Australia, I would say, without fear of contradiction, that we are proportionately better placed than are some of the standard States, because our attempts at recruitment and the interest that has been engendered in the profession have, I am satisfied, been proportionately greater in Western Australia than in some of the other States. A personnel officer was appointed last year and—as I think I informed the House during the debate on last session's Estimates—the publicity campaign that was launched with the object of attracting people to the profession has achieved that object. I have already mentioned the number of married women that came forward to assist, in response to the department's request, and it has been found that the abolition of the monitorial system—to which I think I have also referred—has removed what was in the case of many potential young teachers a deterrent to their entering the service.

The award of 250 bursaries annually to assist parents to keep children at school until leaving certificate age—the bursary is for a period of two years—and thus qualify for entry to the Teachers' College, has been fully taken up. The bursary is of a value of £80 per annum for each of the two years, and in the net result there are now some 650 students undergoing

training at the Teachers' Training College. There is no doubt, on the figures given to me by the Director, that that number will be maintained and probably exceeded during the coming year. At least two units of the Bristol pre-fabricated buildings have been erected at the Teachers' College in order to provide additional accommodation for the increased number of students there, and a good deal of renovation has been done on the college itself. It is expected that we shall have to provide another pre-fabricated unit, which would be included, of course, in the number to which I have referred as likely to be erected, in order to cope with the increasing number of students at the Teachers' College.

The Principal, Mr. Sten, has been absent for the greater part of the year in England on long service and study leave and the Acting Principal, Mr. Neil Traylen, has done a most excellent job during that period. In the early part of the year a publications division was set up within the department to undertake the production of such publications as were considered necessary for the successful conduct of education. The first venture of the division was the production of school papers, which have been issued to schools monthly since February last and which, to a large extent, have replaced the class readers. I do not know whether members have been afforded opportunity of looking at any of them but, if not, I will be glad to obtain a few copies and make them available. I take no credit whatever in this matter, because it is entirely due to the departmental officers, and those who have been associated with them in this regard, with the idea of improving the standard of our class reading facilities. Having seen every issue since it has been turned out—there are three of them on each occasion for three grades in the schools—I can say that these papers reflect great credit upon the people concerned, and are making a much better contribution to the educational opportunities of the children than did the stereotyped class readers hitherto in use.

A professional journal has also been turned out, purely inside the department, by the publications division. The object is to keep teachers in touch with modern trends in educational method; and to endeavour to assist in interpreting to them the curriculum and give them opportunity of discussing experiments undertaken in the course of their work. As I think I mentioned last year, the curriculum was obviously due for some revision, and the research officer was appointed in 1951 to make that research and suggest the compilation of a new curriculum for primary schools.

The old curriculum had been in use since 1936 and was regarded as urgently in need of revision in the light of modern

developments. Not only did the department think that that was so, but also such bodies as the Parents and Citizens' Federation expressed a somewhat similar opinion. The new curriculum is now nearing completion and it aims more directly at meeting the needs of the present day, being more closely related to the environment of the children in this country. It has, I understand, taken into account the most recent findings of educational research regarding curriculum trends, and the general aim is to develop the children's powers of independent judgment, to inculcate an appreciation of the Australian way of life and of the Christian outlook.

During the year the number of bus services which were in operation rose comparatively slightly to 420 in all. During 1951-52 they cost £502,700 and the number of children carried by them was approximately 12,000. During the year now current there will be a considerable increase on that figure and the estimated cost is £560,600. Some of that increase, of course, is reflected in the additional number of services, but the bulk of it is accounted for by the increased rates that have had to be granted in order that the operators might maintain a reasonable standard of living, particularly in those cases where the services are run by persons in their own right. The expenditure for the year 1952-53 is estimated to reach a total of £4,102,300, which will be an increase of approximately £471,000 over the expenditure for 1951-52. I understand that the expenditure in Western Australia compares more than favourably today, per head, with that of the standard States.

I am informed that our social services benefit, which I think under the Grants Commission we used to obtain, would have now been lost were it not for the fact that we are still granted an allowance for the sparsity of population and the substantial area of our country and that, I believe, still succeeds in maintaining us, in that particular matter, on an even keel. One or two happenings have enabled some ideas of branching out in agricultural education to be contemplated without the erection of buildings or very great expenditure. For example, there were the rural training centres at Harvey which the Commonwealth, having no further use for, was prepared to allow the State to use and in respect of which a long term arrangement for purchase has been made at a very reasonable figure. If these buildings had not been there—they were used first of all for Army purposes, and latterly for the rural training centre—then, of course, the decision to create an agricultural wing at the Harvey school by the use of that centre could not have been made.

At first it is expected that this place will accommodate about 20 boys but that later on provision will be made for girls as well.

Considerable economies will be effected both for the reasons that I mentioned and because the facilities for academic instructions, science, mathematics and social studies, will be provided at the Harvey school and instruction in farm work at the wing which we now call the rural training centre. Doubtless it will be beneficial to the students, too, in that they will enjoy a greater social or corporate life in a larger scholastic institution.

It is anticipated that the same arrangement may be made with the Board of Governors of the Fairbridge Farm School in respect to that place. The intention is that the agricultural course will be open not only to Fairbridge students, but also to scholars from the neighbouring towns. The aim was, of course, to establish agricultural wings at schools which might be created as junior high schools in another place.

Last year I mentioned a decision in regard to Wyalkatchem. That decision still stands, only hampered by inability to provide the necessary buildings. Had the position been as it was at Harvey as a result of the rural training centre there, that problem would have been very much simpler, but as it is the matter must stand still for the time being. There have been, of course, demands from other places—quite naturally, I would say—for some consideration, but to date none of them have been acceded to and, with the immediate possibilities, I should think it will be unlikely that there will be any further opportunities of this nature.

Great difficulty has been experienced in endeavouring to carry out desirable work on school grounds. Some places were fortunate because the work had been approved and commenced before the clamping down on the Loan Funds side and they, of course, being under the heading of contractual obligations, had to be included in the so-called commitments. If the hon. member concerned would like to discuss with me the matter I have heard raised with regard to the North Fremantle school—I say the hon. member without naming him because my geography may be at fault—I would like to discuss it with him because there is an unfortunate situation there that I want to remedy if possible.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: I would be very pleased to discuss it with you.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The hon. member is the one, is he?

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Last year they said they could not get a contractor, but I can get them one.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The hon. member may be pleased with the information I have to give him if he raises the matter. I thought it was the member for Melville.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: It was.

**The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION:** Yes, at the time it was the hon. member who raised it. The appointment, experimentally, of a small number of part-time youth organisers at selected centres has indicated that this field of education is well worthwhile taking some further interest in, and perhaps I should say doing quite a lot without a great deal of cost. The function of the organiser is to bring youth into touch with various facilities of formal and informal education which exist in the community. He may be introduced to technical classes that might be available or the various voluntary bodies that look after youth education. It is felt that a gradual expansion of this type of work will have very beneficial effects. There is no doubt, I think, that not only in the large centres of population but also in the provincial centres there is a growing need for education of "left school" youth.

There is not very much it would appear, without guidance, with which he or she can profitably employ himself or herself and I think it is highly desirable that, within its means, the Education Department, should take more and more interest in this matter because I think it will be agreed that education does not stop at 14 or 18 years of age or even when one reaches adult years. It keeps on going, if one understands the position properly. One can always learn, but at the particular age I have in mind from, say, 16 to 22, the problem today is a greater one than many of us are inclined to believe. I have encouraged—and I am sure every member of the committee would encourage—anything that can be done to bring the right sort of education, social contact and opportunity to those young people.

The increased birthrate of the early 1940's is just beginning to be felt in our high schools and 1953 will see quite a considerable increase there, particularly in the metropolitan area. As the Mt. Lawley high school could not be built, additional rooms are being provided at Kent Street and also four at Armadale, all of the prefabricated type.

**Hon. J. B. Sleeman:** How about the Fremantle one which has been promised since 1927?

**The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION:** It is like the others: stationary. Kent Street will be regarded as a full high school by 1953, and the one at Armadale will be classed as a junior high school. It appears that, in addition to the considerable number, including Merredin, Harvey, Katanning and other centres which were classed as junior high schools on their obtaining the requisite number to warrant the declaration, Norseman has now reached that happy stage and will accordingly be declared a junior high school as from the beginning of 1953. It also appears that

similar remarks will also be applied to Bridgetown. I would now like to refer to handicapped children.

**Hon. J. T. Tonkin:** Before you leave the matter of high schools, will it be necessary to stagger the hours of attendance for high school children?

**The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION:** We are of the opinion that it will not be necessary. The hon. member will recollect that he asked a question about that and I think the same opinion that was expressed in answer to that question still stands, provided that the work I have been referring to has been completed, and, as far as I know, it will be. A steady expansion has taken place for the provision of additional classes for the various types of handicapped children, including the partially deaf and the slow-learning group. Some schools of instruction for teachers engaged in these fields have also been held with beneficial results.

The department's advisory teacher for physically handicapped children had a six months period of study and observation in England. The result of her investigations were presented in the form of a report which, while I do not profess by any means to be an expert in this matter, was obviously a very thoughtful and informative document which I read with great interest and with the best understanding of it I could muster. I am satisfied that the six months spent by that lady in England was well worth the time and money involved. It is expected, slowly, to implement the results of her observations and report in these special classes.

There is a considerable demand for all sorts of special classes to be established. We did endeavour to meet the position in regard to the cerebrally palsied children by establishing a centre at Thomas-st. and transporting those that were considered to be educable by buses to that centre. They are, of course, children whom some people might still wish to class as slow-learners, but those who are in daily contact with these problems are of the opinion that these blessed mites are below that standard and the greater problem of dealing with these children is one that is exercising the minds of officers of the department and many other people besides.

The solution of their problem, if there be a solution—I think at the best it can only be a partial one—is extremely difficult to arrive at and, while we must sympathise with the legitimate aims and objectives of the parents of these children and while I believe that some of them can be assisted to a far better stage than they might otherwise have reached, I am satisfied—and I think everyone else is, too—that there is a proportion upon whom the utmost goodwill and the best activities of even the specialist teachers could confer very little benefit.

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

**THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION:** I was concluding on the point that the department will continue to do all it can to assist in the various difficult cases. During the year, a further 55 schools covering 5,000 children have been brought into the free milk scheme. More than 50,000 children are now receiving free milk daily. The provision of bottled pasteurised milk for schools in the lower South-West and on the Eastern Goldfields is the subject of present negotiations.

Since December, 1951, the Education Department, at the request of the Commonwealth Government, has administered in this State the Commonwealth Scholarship Scheme. There are at present 572 scholarship-holders in this State, of whom 531 are attending courses at the University and the remainder at the Perth Technical College and the School of Mines. All compulsory fees are paid to scholarship-holders and, in certain cases depending on family income, a living allowance up to £240 10s. per year is paid. The total expenditure on the scheme is approximately £35,000 a year, the cost being met by the Commonwealth.

A few weeks ago, Mr. Gordon Warner who, for the past two years, has been Superintendent of Primary Education, retired, having reached the retiring age. Mr. Warner probably had an unparalleled record in the history of service to the State having served in the Education Department for a total of 50 years. It is interesting to note that when he entered the service of the department as a pupil teacher, as the classification was then, he was under 15 years of age. Mr. Warner has been a most diligent and faithful officer, and I have referred to him mainly for the reason that I believe his length of service has been unparalleled in the history of the department. His place has been taken by Mr. Dettman.

Since December, 1951, the Education Department has conducted, on behalf of the Commonwealth, classes in English for newcomers to Australia or New Australians, as they are sometimes called. At present there are 150 evening classes in operation and, in addition, 725 of such students are taking correspondence lessons.

**Hon. E. Nulsen:** Most of those students are doing pretty well, are they not?

**THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION:** I understand they are doing quite well. We owe a considerable debt to many teachers, particularly those in country areas, who devote their time to these evening classes. True, they are paid some remuneration, but that does not lessen the fact that we should be very grateful to them for their interest in this work, because I consider it very essential that every encouragement should be given to these newcomers to obtain a satisfactory acquaint-

ance with the English language, and the sooner they do so the better. Anything we could do to encourage them has been done and will be done in future. The expenditure on this form of education, during the year was £15,000, this cost again having been met by the Commonwealth.

Much has been said in recent days about the commitments which were the foundation, as it were, of the Loan Estimates. The Premier, in the course of his remarks on the Loan Estimates, referred to a number of places where obligations for the completion of school buildings, contracts for which had been arranged last year, or possibly in the year before, were included. He gave the names of some of those places, but it might be of interest if I gave a few more, although these will be only the more substantial ones out of the remainder of the list, which is extremely lengthy, and excludes buildings of prefabricated units. They are—

Pingaring, contract for new school costing £6,000.

Bindi Bindi, substantial school additions occasioned by the large growth of population due to War Service Land Settlement on Tootra Estate, £4,000.

Midvale, where work, I understand, is now proceeding with greater expedition, £20,000.

Wagin, additions to school £5,000.

Nungarin, additions to school which, on June 30, were not completed but I understand are now completed.

Bolgart, £2,350 set aside.

Hyden school, £2,500. I am told the work there is complete except for one or two minor items. Also quarters at Hyden which, I am told, are under construction.

Kellerberrin school, £4,500 set aside. I understand that this work is complete except for one or two minor items.

Norseman, £1,500.

Kookynie, £3,000 for new school, which I am told is now completed.

Boulder school, £2,400 for latrines.

Hamersley, £2,500 for additions to school.

Cadoux school, £4,750 for additions. Some difficulty was experienced in getting a start with the work on account of the contractor's having other work in hand.

Salmon Gums, £2,300 for new quarters.

Watheroo, £3,000 for new quarters which are under construction.

Yuna, £2,500 for new quarters.

Southern Cross, £3,000 allowed for septic system.

Ongerup, £3,000 allowed.

Middle Swan school, completion, £13,000 allowed.



Those represent only a fraction of the large number of works of one sort and another partly completed that were included in the list of commitments, but the total commitments for the department reached some hundreds of thousands of pounds.

Hon. E. Nulsen: The Norseman people are very grateful for what was done in regard to the school there.

**THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION:** I understand that is so.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: I did not hear you mention Willagee or Attadale.

**THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION:** They are on the list but, as I said, I have given only a few examples of the type of work to be done, excluding pre-fabrications of which Willagee will be one. I mentioned that I was excluding them. Thus I think it safe to say that every reasonable effort has been made to cope with the ever-increasing demand which, in times that we used to consider normal, would have been met by the provision of 10 or 12 additional classrooms in the year to cope with 400 or 500 children, whereas today we find that no fewer than 120 to 140 are necessary to cope with the numbers coming forward from year to year. This, of course, has not simplified but has rather accentuated various other aspects of the department's difficulties which, however, have been reasonably well surmounted.

I feel that great credit is due to the Director and departmental officers and to the Chief Administrative officer and his clerical staff for the careful and painstaking manner in which they have tackled these difficulties and the breadth of vision with which they have viewed some of the problems confronting them. Lastly, and by no means least, I should like to say how grateful the department and I am to the members of the teaching profession—as well as to all of those who have served in the interests of the education of our children during the last 12 months, and are continuing to serve—for their assiduous and devoted work on behalf of the department and the children.

We were pleased to accept without any equivocation or complaint the alterations made by the appeal board in the reclassification undertaken something over a ago. That the reclassification was a satisfactory document is evidenced by the fact that the alterations made by the appeal board after a fairly lengthy and careful hearing were not very substantial. Whatever they were, they were accepted with good grace, because we realised that they had been arrived at only after the closest consideration of the service rendered by the people concerned, which service the department, the Government and, I am sure, the people fully appreciate.

**HON. J. T. TONKIN (Melville) [7.45]:** The Minister has given quite a full explanation of the Education Department, has described to the Committee certain things with regard to school population, and the steps that have been taken to provide necessary accommodation, and has made reference to some of the officers of the department. I feel, however, that he should have informed that Committee of the true state of education today so that we would know exactly where we stand with regard to the numbers of children, the size of the classes, the possibility of reducing classes and of dispensing with the need for using the numerous halls, sheds and so on. The Minister did not do that, and I venture to say that nobody in the Committee could gather from what he said what the true state of education is.

As a matter of fact one would get the impression, just following the Minister's statement, that everything was all right, when, as a matter of fact, the contrary is the case. The Minister has given very close attention to his department. I cannot imagine that anyone could give closer attention. I think his officers have been most assiduous, too, but giving all that in, there is no doubt that the position regarding education today is far worse, in respect to accommodation and the size of classes than it was when the Minister took office.

I know he will immediately say, "We have had a large influx of children". That is very true, but I do not think it has been as large as the Minister thinks, or has affected the position to the extent he believes, and I will endeavour to show that that is so. Nevertheless it has been a worrying factor. In the report for the year 1951 there is mention of an increase in the school population of 5,000 children a year. I do not know how that figure is arrived at.

The Minister for Education: I said that there were 20,000 since 1947, and 5,000 last year.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I have the figures here. Page 6 of the report states—

To cater for the additional 5,000 children a year, 110 more rooms are needed annually.

That gives the impression that there are 5,000 children a year, on the average. Let us have a look at the figures that can be obtained from the reports of the department from 1944 to 1952. The figures from the reports show that in 1944 there were 55,624 children on the roll on the last day of the year in the primary and secondary schools. In 1945 there were 56,009; in 1946 there were 57,066; in 1947 there were 59,239; in 1948 there were 61,166; in 1949 there were 64,362; in 1950 there were 71,000; in 1951 there were 72,646, and according to the Minister, for 1952 the figure was 77,000.

If we take the years 1947 to 1952 we find the figure rises from 59,239 to 77,000, or an increase of 18,000. In five years, 18,000 represents 3,600 a year. I want to know how the Minister, or anyone else, can say, on these figures, that we have to provide for an increase of 5,000 children a year.

The Minister for Education: What about next year?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The Minister has not had to provide for the children next year. I am dealing with what he has had to do since he has been in office. He has had to provide for only an additional 18,000 children since 1947. This number is vastly different from 25,000. Of the 18,000, we can anticipate an average natural increase of 1,000 a year. That is on all the time. Apart from any influx of population we have to expect that in this country the natural increase will involve us in making provision for an additional 1,000 a year. So, let us subtract that 5,000 from the 18,000. This means that the Minister has had an abnormal burden of about 13,000 in five years. Let us see what he has been called upon to do about it. According to the report he had a net gain in teachers of 24 to the 30th June, 1951, over the previous year.

A net gain of 24 teachers in one year, with an increasing school population of 3,000 a year shows that the Minister is slipping every year with the size of his classes. It cannot be anything else. So it is correct to say that every year the Minister has been in office, the average size of his classes has grown instead of diminishing. This Government came into office with the definite pronouncement that it was going to reduce the size of the classes, increase the school-leaving age to 15, put the children in classrooms, take them out of sheds and hat-rooms, and so on.

The Premier: Did you visualise an increase of 100,000 people when we took office?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: How many extra children a year does the Minister think he has to provide for?

The Premier: He told you.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Yes, but he was wrong.

The Minister for Education: Precious little wrong.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: No, the Minister said 5,000, and I have shown it could not possibly be more than 3,600 a year. He is out only 1,400 a year. It is no use trying to tell me that 5,000 is the same as 3,600.

The Minister for Education: I am afraid I shall have to get "Hansard" and read to you what I did say.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Let us read what the report says.

The Minister for Education: You are talking of what I said tonight. Do not get on another trail.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I am not getting on another trail; do not worry about that. I am hot on this trail. The Minister talked about having to provide for an additional 5,000 children a year. He did not limit it to last year. The report states—

To cater for the additional 5,000 children a year, 110 more rooms are needed annually.

Does not that convey the impression that it is an average of 5,000 each year? Of course, it has been nothing like that—it has been 3,600 a year at the absolute maximum. As the migrants are not now coming in at the same rate as formerly, we can expect that the Minister's figures will fall somewhat.

The Minister for Education: I hope your statement is correct, but I am told it is not.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I can only deal with the authentic figures in front of me.

The Minister for Education: I am sure you have not made the research that the department's research officer has.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: It is not necessary to make any more research than to take the figures from the department's reports.

The Minister for Education: Then you say they are incorrect.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: No, I do not. I am accepting them as correct, and I am using them to prove that the Minister's remarks and the Education Department's statement in this report, are not correct, because there has not been the necessity to provide for an additional 5,000 children a year. If we take the 1944 figure we find there were 55,600 children on the roll. By 1952—a period of eight years—the increase is 22,000. The increase from 1947 to 1952 is 18,000 over five years. The Minister can stretch the figures whichever way he likes, but he cannot get 5,000 a year out of them.

These are not my figures, but those included in the Education Department's reports which are to be found in the copies of the Votes and Proceedings that are available to every member. I was proceeding to say that according to this report the Minister had a net gain of 24 teachers to the 30th June, 1951, over the previous year. Of course a net gain of 24 teachers to provide for an additional 3,600 children shows that the Minister's staffing is slipping. Nothing is to be gained by denying it, because it is a fact. There are more children per teacher today

than there were in 1947 when the Government took office, which means that on the average the classes are larger.

The Minister can put forward what explanations and reasons he likes. They might be sound reasons and explanations, but they do not alter the undeniable fact that the average size of the classes today is larger than it was when the Government took office. But it came into office with a definite promise to reduce the size of classes. Now let us have a look at the accommodation position. It has been said that hundreds of thousands of pounds have been spent, but of course the amount of money does not prove a great deal because it costs three or four times as much these days to build a classroom as it did in 1945-46. So we cannot take the volume of money as being an indication of the number of schoolrooms that have been provided. This Government was very critical of the previous Administration because it had put children in hat-rooms, on verandahs, and in sheds and public halls.

Mr. Ackland: That was the position, was it not?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Yes.

Mr. Brady: And it still is.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Today there are more children in hat-rooms, public halls, verandahs and sheds than there were in 1947, and the Minister cannot deny it because it is a fact. Despite the additional buildings that have gone on, and despite the attempts to catch up with the situation, we have not caught up; we have slipped behind. This is the real situation. No matter what the explanations are, if there should be a change of Government the new Minister for Education, following the present one, will take over under conditions which are worse than when this Government took office. That is the undeniable fact with regard to the size of classes—that is the number of children to be taught per teacher—and the accommodation for those children. We cannot escape from that situation; if there is a change of Government the new Minister will be confronted with a position which will be worse than when this Government took office.

Mr. Ackland: Has any Government ever done as much for education in this State as this Government?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The hon. member can make up his own mind about that after he has heard what I have to say about the various aspects of the position. This Government was going to build area schools; it said that the Labour Government had only the idea. So at least we passed on the idea, but what has this

Government done about using it? Where are these area schools that were going to be built? It is no good saying that the Government has not had sufficient time. That was the cry in 1950—"We have been here for only three years. Give us a chance."

The Minister for Health: We could not get materials or labour.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Does that make a difference?

The Minister for Health: Yes.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: It did not make any difference in 1946! The fact that there was a war on and we could not get materials and artisans did not make any difference to the situation then, when the present Ministers were criticising the previous Administration; they made no allowance to the Wise Labour Government for that. The cry in 1950 was, "We have been here for only three years. Wait until we have been here for six years." The Government has been in office for that length of time.

The Minister for Education: Who said that?

The Minister for Health: And a lot has been done.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I think the Minister for Education said it. As a matter of fact I will look it up.

The Minister for Education: I do not think you will find that I ever said that.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I am certain of it.

The Minister for Education: I think you will find that I said, "We will continue on the same lines as we have been working."

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I am almost certain of it. However, I will look it up and inform the Minister. He said that at the end of three years he had not had sufficient time to put his policy into operation; he said that he had a six-year policy.

The Minister for Education: I did not say that.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I am certain the Minister did. It will be recorded and I will find it.

Mr. May: Let us hope it was not for a longer term than six years.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The school-leaving age has not been raised to 15; we have not had the size of classes reduced and we have not had these children taken out of the hat-rooms and public halls, because the situation has become worse. I have made it my business to make an interesting collection of newspaper cuttings on this subject and I have them here. From time to time the Minister emphasised the fantastic growth of the school population when he

referred to the use of halls. Let us see what the report has to state on this subject. It says—

Because of the spectacular increase in school numbers, many classes were occupying temporary accommodation. In 1951, 90 halls were rented for use as class-rooms. Sixty classes were grouped in offices, staff-rooms and hat rooms and a further 17 were grouped in verandahs, shelter-sheds and corridors.

That is a statement from the report of the Education Department for the year 1951. The children are grouped in hat-rooms, corridors, sheds and public halls to a greater extent than they were in 1947. I now quote from "The West Australian" of the 13th June, 1951. The heading is "Shortage of Teachers a National Disaster" and the report reads—

It was expected that the present number of 73,000 schoolchildren in the State would be increased to 115,000 by 1960, the Director of Education (Dr. T. L. Robertson) said yesterday. Dr. Robertson was addressing the annual conference of the W.A. Federation of Parents and Citizens' Associations. He said that to accommodate the additional number of children, many more buildings would be necessary, but the greatest shortage was of teachers. If this shortage were not solved, it would be a national disaster.

I listened carefully to see whether the Minister would tell us the net gain of teachers each year. That is an important thing for us to know—how many teachers the State gains each year over the wastage which must take place because of marriage and other causes. The Minister supplied no information on that point. It is most important for us, if we are to be in a position to assess how we stand educationally, to know what our recruiting system is getting for us and how many extra teachers are becoming available to Western Australia every year, because obviously if our school population is growing at the rate of 3,600 a year, or more, we must have a substantial net gain of teachers to keep pace with the increased school population, to say nothing of giving us an opportunity of reducing the already over-sized classes.

We did not get any information from the Minister about that. That is what led me to say that the information I thought the Minister should have supplied was not forthcoming. It is all very well to talk about the schools that were built here and the schools that were built there; that can convey an entirely wrong impression. We want to know how many extra class-rooms are needed each year to cope with the increase in school population, how many we are building, and whether we are getting

a net gain or a net loss. Unless we are in possession of that information we cannot judge as to whether any progress is being made.

The truth of the matter is that even with the building which the Minister was able to maintain when Loan money was more plentiful than it is now, he was not catching up. So with the falling-off in Loan funds there will be a serious retrogression from now on. It will be a most substantial falling away so that the situation next year will be even worse than it is now. In some of the districts, because children are being taught in public halls and the like—most unsuitable places—a lot of inconvenience and worry are being caused to parents. I now wish to quote from "The West Australian" of the 23rd May, 1951, and the heading is "School Hall Too Cold. Children Kept Away." The report reads—

Kukerin: Almost all the children who belong to the junior section of the Kukerin State school, which occupies the local hall, failed to attend today. Many parents who bring their children to school by car each day decided that conditions in the hall were too draughty and cold to permit the children to remain. The temperature at 9 a.m. was 39 degrees—noted in the presence of the local Justice of the Peace.

Here is another one, dated the 24th May, 1951, "School Classes Held in Courthouse and Shed." It states —

Classes of the Pinjarra Junior High School were accommodated in the Pinjarra courthouse and in a play shed considered detrimental to the children's health in winter time, members of the Murray Road Board were told at their last meeting.

That was four years after the Government took office. So members can see that despite complaints about the previous Government, and the wild promises of this Government, four years after it took office those conditions still obtained. I repeat, now that the second term of this Government's life is almost concluded, we find a situation which is far worse than it was in 1947 when the Government took office. So if it was justified in blaming the Wise Labour Government, how justified are we in complaining to the people that, despite these promises which were made to improve things, the situation is actually worse?

I propose also to complain about the way this Government has lengthened the bus routes upon which children who are taken to consolidated schools have to travel. It is my view that some of the routes are far too long, and the travelling results in serious fatigue to the children and is actually detrimental to their health.

The Minister for Education: I thought we had that out last year.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: No, we did not. We discussed it but we did not have it out. I have the latest departmental report, 1951, and it states—

The following information and figures concerning school bus services in 1951 are of interest, and indicate the degree to which the policy of centralisation has been pursued:—

There were 388 school bus services in operation. 11,000 children were carried daily. The buses covered 26,300 miles daily.

That is an average of 68 miles per bus daily. So if there is an average of 68 miles per bus daily, one can be certain, as night follows day, that there are some routes which entail a greater distance of travelling than 68 miles per day. Without any hesitation, I say that is too far. When I was in Albany recently, and had a discussion with the people at Many Peaks, I was informed of a bus route there which in my view is easily 20 miles too long per day.

Mr. Hill: Which bus route was that?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Why the Minister does not put a school in the Many Peaks area, I do not know.

The Minister for Education: It is approved; it will be there in due course.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: And if it is put there the children from Cheyne Beach will be able to get schooling.

The Minister for Education: Until a short time ago all the settlers were at the one camp.

Mr. Hill: How many children are there at Cheyne Beach?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Five.

Mr. May: The member for Albany should know.

Mr. Hill: I know the district; do not worry about that.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Does the hon. member think they should have a school?

Mr. Hill: Later on, yes.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: They should have it now.

Mr. Hill: The Many Peaks people were definitely all for the bus.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Because they are not getting the attention that they ought to get. They could get it if a school were established at Many Peaks. I say that bus routes generally, in my view—it may not be so in the Minister's view—are too long. They average 68 miles a day, and some of these children are only five years of age and for them it is too far. It means they are leaving home in a number of cases at about 6.30 in the morning and getting back at the same time at night. I

have been informed by a parent here and a parent there, with whom I have come in contact, that the children return home so tired at night that in some cases it is difficult to get them to have their meal before they go off to bed.

The average bus length of 68 miles a day, of course, means two trips. That is morning and evening. But if the average is 68 miles a day, then some of the bus routes must be much longer than that. In my view that has been taken much too far. I know why it has occurred and how it has occurred. Representations have been made to the Minister or to the local member to get the bus to go down this road to pick up an extra child here, or to go down that track and pick up an extra child down there. In that way the bus routes have been built up until we get this inordinate length. In Tasmania, where they went in for area schools, it was much easier and they aimed to keep their bus routes down to a maximum of 20 miles, whereas we have some of 40 miles and over.

The Minister for Education: I think most of those I gave you last year have been broken up.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I am glad to hear that because these figures worry me. The routes are much too long having regard to the ages of the children who are obliged to do that travelling day after day; they would be in no fit state to get their education in the ordinary way. When it appeared to me that the Government would be in difficulty about its Loan funds and I raised the matter here, the Premier would not have it. The Minister, although I believe he agreed with me, in the answers he gave to questions, endeavoured to convey an entirely different impression. I asked a question many months ago as to whether it was a fact that the department had had to stop letting contracts for building schools. The Minister did not give a direct answer but supplied some figures to show that building was going on.

At that time I had information that contracts which were normally made available to contractors were not then being made available and subsequent events proved, of course, that the Loan funds which the Premier expected to get, and the Minister for Works said he felt certain they would get, did not come along at all. So we are up against the stark fact that it is not possible for the Minister for Education—no matter how determined he might be—to catch up with his accommodation position; he will not be able to meet current needs either.

The Minister for Education: I think you might be some distance out there.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Oh no, I would not, because the Minister is building fewer classrooms.

The Minister for Education: No, We will build more, but they will be of the pre-fab type.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: No, the Minister will build fewer classrooms for children who are already in huts and halls than he was building last year.

The Minister for Education: No.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I think the Minister anticipated a big increase in school population this coming year.

The Minister for Education: Yes.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: He anticipates 5,000. That will involve him in at least 100 classrooms for those children alone.

The Minister for Education: I anticipated to be able to erect nearly 200; which will take 8,000 children and this will relieve us to some degree.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Yes, provided the Minister builds them.

The Minister for Education: They are here and paid for; it is only a question of getting them up in time.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I know all about that, and I am very fearful. I have been promised a school at Attadale. It is nearly the end of November and school is to start in February, and there is no sign of it yet. The Education Department will have to perform a miracle for that school to be available for the children from Appecross at the beginning of next year. That is an example which is right under my nose, and I would not be at all surprised if I could find some others if I looked further afield. I am very much afraid. I do not blame the Minister for being optimistic because that is the best way; if he were pessimistic he would soon be sunk. I do not think his anticipations will be realised; I hope they will.

I have been having a look at the rate of building round about, and have noted that the Government is committed for real money in connection with Kwinana. It cannot escape that and money will have to be found for it. If the sum total is not available, it will have to be taken from somewhere else. I am very much afraid that is going to happen. I have had a glance through the Loan Estimates; there is a lot of money there which is just figures. I do not think it will be real money ever. However, I will deal with that at another time. But I am afraid that will affect the Minister's programme for education as it will affect some other departments. How can we deal with this? Are there ways and means by which we might have improved the number of teachers or the accommodation?

The CHAIRMAN: Order! There is too much talking in the Chamber.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The Minister will recall that it is years ago that I told him he should do something about recruiting teachers. He turned a deaf ear.

The Minister for Education: I did not.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The utterances the Minister made suggested that; the fact remains he did not do anything.

The Minister for Education: I think I gave you some sound reasons, but not in here.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I suggested the Minister ought to do the very thing that he subsequently did, namely, put in a special recruiting officer or officers; and I also suggested years ago that he should offer bursaries.

The Minister for Education: I do not recollect that.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: If the Minister reads "Hansard" he will find it there. It was some time before I could get any recognition for the idea. I will let the Minister into a secret. I was so concerned about the lag in teachers and the increase in the size of the classes—I could get no action taken—that I paid a special visit to the offices of "The West Australian." I said, "Now this is a national matter; it is not a political matter. If you have the interests of the State at heart you must publicise this position and get some action." I suggested to a certain gentleman in "The West Australian" office that he should forget all about party politics and give this question some publicity in order that action could be taken before it was too late. I will say this to his credit that he agreed to play ball and as a result we were able to get some publicity on the question.

It was not long after that that things started moving. I went to some pains to show how many teachers were being trained every year, what the wastage of teachers was, what the requirement was for an ordinary natural increase in population and how many teachers we were falling behind on every year. It is a matter of simple arithmetic to bring it to a position where, in about 1955, we would have been in such a state that it would have been impossible to extricate ourselves from it. Fortunately, action has been taken and there is a large number of teachers in training at present; somewhat over 600.

The Minister for Education: Something like 700.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: That is very satisfactory indeed. But that of course will mean that some of those are two-year courses and some three-year courses, and we will perhaps not get many more than an output of 250 to 300 in one year. Does the Minister know what the wastage was last year?

The Minister for Education: I think I know the figures, but I would not like to say what they were without first verifying them.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: That is important, because we could subtract that from the number of teachers we expect each year to see what this stepping up in the recruiting campaign has given us in the final analysis. I believe we have to deal with an extraordinary situation in an extraordinary manner. If we wait for the ordinary type of school building—these brick or stone or aluminium pre-fabs—then we will not pick up this lag. We will be overwhelmed with children to such an extent that I believe we will be obliged to stagger the hours and have some of them coming in the morning and some in the afternoon.

Some months ago I asked the Minister a series of questions regarding the possibility of the department being obliged to stagger the hours at Perth Boys and Perth Girls' Schools. That was not an idea that came to me out of the blue. I had reason to believe that officers of the Education Department had been giving serious consideration to such a possibility and I could well understand why, having regard to schools like Fremantle Boys and Princess May, where it is necessary to have itinerant classes—that is classes that every now and again pick up their books and walk into a vacant room, stay there for an hour and when the class that normally occupies that room returns, pick up their books again and go somewhere else.

The Minister for Education: That has been used in some of the best schools in the world.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: It is a very bad system.

The Minister for Education: Maybe it is in your view.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: That is not the first time that the Minister has followed that course either, because he has not sufficient rooms to prevent its being done. It is no good telling members that it is an excellent idea and lauding it because of that. It has been done as a matter of expediency, for the Minister has had no option in the matter.

The Minister for Education: I know that in some schools it had to be done deliberately.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: In high schools.

The Minister for Education: Precisely.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: But in those instances, the children are provided with lockers, and they can lock their books away. They carry from room to room only the particular books required for the particular lesson. On the other hand, the itinerant classes meant that the children had to pick up all their books and carry them to wherever they had to go. On occasions they have had to travel for a mile or so to wherever the next class was to be held.

The Minister for Education: That would be the exception that proves my rule.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Then the Minister admits that it goes on!

The Minister for Education: I have never heard of it, but it may be so.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: It does go on. Perhaps the Minister may even inquire into this matter: I have been informed that it is necessary occasionally to take the children on to the beach sand because no room is available for them in the school. Perhaps that is another exception that might prove the Minister's rule! That emphasises the serious position regarding school accommodation. We have heard the member for Guildford-Midland and others stressing the need for the provision of high schools in their areas. Of course, there is need for those high schools, but there is no likelihood of obtaining them for some time to come. In the meantime, children who ought to be accommodated in schools of that description are provided for in makeshift rooms.

I was going to suggest to the Minister that he might adopt some extraordinary methods, something that would be unusual. I know there would be some objection raised by parents who naturally would want an up-to-date school housed in a modern building, and in ordinary circumstances they would be entitled to get it. In connection with the erection of buildings needed today, we require not only speed but economy. In the circumstances, we must look about for some method by which we can obtain more buildings with the money available and have them constructed at a cheaper rate. Much progress has been made in recent years in the erection of pre-cut homes, and the speed with which these homes are erected is simply remarkable. I believe the same principle could be applied to the erection of school buildings. Some people might at first thought hold up their hands in horror at the mere suggestion of that. I would not worry about that. For many years I have seen school children—during my time as Minister for Education was no exception—obtain their education in makeshift rooms that would not be half as good as some of the pre-cut buildings that are being put up comparatively cheaply.

I remember some of the terrible buildings on the Goldfields. There were dingy rooms, but they had to be used because nothing else was available, and the children had to be educated. They had the utmost difficulty in reading the writing on the blackboard because of the poor light. The rooms were unlined, and as a result were draughty. Those were conditions that would be a worry to any Minister, as they were to me. Under the existing circumstances those condi-

tions had to occur. It was during the war-time period when no building operations could be undertaken. The artisans were in the Armed Forces and the brick kilns were closed down. Nothing could be done about it. Some of those buildings could be replaced today comparatively cheaply by means of the pre-cut type of school-rooms, which would be far better than what has been in existence in many centres.

I am quite aware that parents would be disappointed, because they feel they are entitled to the same type of elaborate buildings as have been erected elsewhere. As it is, it would be more advantageous to adopt the course I suggest than have nothing better at all. We are getting to that position in this State today, and of that there can be no question. The Minister might pursue a policy something along the lines I have suggested. He would make the money available go further and it would enable him to obtain school buildings far more quickly. I think there is a very definite future in being able to streamline building operations under the pre-cut system. It is cheaper in both construction and erection, and it would go a long way towards meeting the situation confronting us now when we have children receiving their education in corridors and hatrooms.

I am just wondering what the position will be in February of next year when the new school population comes along. We may be forced to adopt the course followed before 1945 when the children who turned six before a certain period were allowed to commence their education in February, but those who turned six in the later part of the year were only permitted to start in the second half of that year. Then we had to turn round and tell those children who were not allowed to commence their school life until July, that they would have to work twice as fast during their half-year to catch up with those who had commenced their schooling in February or they would be retarded for six months and would have to be kept in the infant class. I am afraid the situation is getting worse and worse and that this year we may be obliged to follow the same practice. I would prefer to see a child commence his education in the year that he turned six. On the other hand, the situation is becoming more and more difficult, and so we have to get away from the beaten track and do something that will enable us to obtain more school buildings at a faster rate.

It means that we will have to be content with a less pretentious class of building, just as the Minister for Housing has decided that if he is to house the people he must provide a less pretentious class of home. I think he has gone too far in that direction, but still he has the right idea. That is what we shall have to do with respect to our school require-

ments. We must adopt some method of erection that will enable us to put up a lot of school buildings at a much quicker rate than is possible now. I am given to understand that the cost of erection has now gone up to £4,000 per classroom. The Minister will know whether that is correct. I understand that is the cost today. Ten years ago we were able to do that work for £1,000. We need only apply arithmetic to the subject to appreciate what it means.

We require 110 classrooms each year to cope with the increasing population. Thus we have to provide 110 classrooms at £4,000 a time, plus the money involved in the provision of ancillary buildings. Members can see where we stand in the matter of providing adequate accommodation for school children. There is nothing to be complacent about in the situation. If it was true that in 1947 the situation regarding education was deplorable—I heard the Minister use that word in describing it—what is the adjective we should use in dealing with the situation today?

Mr. Johnson: Unparliamentary.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Today the situation is much worse. It is something from which we cannot escape. It is no good saying that we have built so many rooms, that we have so many trainees in the Training College and so forth. The undeniable fact is that the records show the position regarding the size of classes and the requisite accommodation for school children is worse now than it was in 1947. If the Minister was justified in saying that in 1947 the situation was deplorable, what is the adjective to use now?

Mr. Needham: Indescribable!

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Public men and members of Parliament, whether sitting on the Government or Opposition side of the House, cannot but be worried about the situation. Earlier the Premier said something about what had been accomplished and the extra school population that had to be provided for. We must face the situation as we find it. It is our task to make the best possible provision. We must face up to a realisation that no matter how one attempts to deal with the figures and talk about schools in course of erection and so forth, one is forced back to the conclusion, which cannot be refuted, that the situation today is worse than it was in 1947.

We are certainly further away from implementing the adoption of a school-leaving age of 15, and we are further away from securing a reduction in the size of classes. As a matter of fact, some of the classes today are far larger than I ever thought they could be. I suggest to the Minister that he have a look at the figures for the Bicton school. He will discover an astonishing position regarding the size



of classes there. The whole situation must cause us to think very seriously or, as the Frenchman would say, cause us furiously to think. There is one other matter to which I shall refer.

Teachers were successful in a number of instances, as a result of appeals, in securing increases in their salaries. I think the Minister's comments in that respect were appropriate, fair and reasonable. But there were some teachers who could not appeal because of the salary bar, and I think that is unfair. The fact that some who did appeal were successful shows that mistakes can be made, and they can be made with those on the lower salaries as well as with those on the higher. I believe that if a teacher feels that he has a grievance because he has been allotted the wrong salary, the salary he receives should be no bar to his appealing for a higher one. That does not give him the right to get a higher one; he still has to prove his claim before the board.

*[Mr. Hill took the Chair]*

The Minister for Education: That was in the Act, and I think it has been in operation for many years.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I think the Minister is right, but that does not alter my idea about it.

The Minister for Education: And I think the Minister for Labour's Bill is going to alter it, if I understand the position aright.

The Minister for Lands: That is so.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: If that is so, it is all to the good.

The Minister for Lands: That is so and I think you know.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: How would I know?

The Minister for Lands: You find out things.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I suppose I am in danger of another censure motion, am I?

The Minister for Lands: No, you are too great a friend of mine. I would never censure you.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I suppose it depends on what one finds out. I can assure the Minister I did not know that this was his intention; but what I did know was that the teachers were feeling this barrier a little irksome and were desirous of having it removed, and I thought they were entitled to have it removed. I am pleased to hear that it is the Government's intention, through the Minister, to take some action in this matter.

This will be the last opportunity I will have to talk to the Minister for Education on these Estimates in this Parliament, and I think I have been perfectly justified in pointing out to him that he was not able to do what he set out to do, and that

glorious programme which he spread before the people in 1947, that wonderful vista—"Let us have a new broom and sweep away the cobwebs! Put us in and we will build area schools and reduce the size of classes and provide additional accommodation!"—all these things were pipe dreams. Not one has come true, not one of them. We are in this happy position, that the Minister will not be able to go to the people on this occasion and say, "We have not had long enough" because, after all, six years is a pretty long time.

The Minister for Education: I am pretty safe in saying that I did not say it last time.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Yes the Minister did.

The Minister for Education: Not the Minister for Education.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Not as Minister.

The Minister for Education: Not the Minister.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The Minister said it as leader of the Country and Democratic League.

The Minister for Education: Not at all! Not so far as I am personally concerned.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I think the Minister did.

The Minister for Education: My mind is pretty clear on these points.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: No, I know what the Minister said all right.

The Minister for Education: Do you?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Yes, I read it so often.

The Minister for Education: I am glad it is your family bible.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: It is my business to watch what is promised to the people and to see to what extent those promises are carried out, because I am one of those who believe that a promise should not be made unless the person making it has ground for believing he can carry it out. The Minister has heard me being critical in this strain before and stating that it was my view that members of the incoming Government promised things they had not a hope of carrying out. He will find that we will not be making promises we cannot carry out, so I am entitled to remind this Government of its promises—and there were plenty of them—which were definitely made. The Minister knows that he promised to build area schools. He said that Labour had only the idea.

The Minister for Education: There will be a proper time to deal with that and I will take advantage of it.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I do not doubt that! I think the Minister had better check his speech before he denies that he said these things.

The Minister for Education: I have done all the denying I wish to do about that. There was only one thing I wished to deny and you declared that I said it. Very well, I will not argue about it any more.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The Minister can reply later.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: That is what he said, Mr. Deputy Chairman. But I do not want to see him get up and deny having said things which I know he said, so I thought I had better warn him beforehand.

The Minister for Lands: You would love him to do it!

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: What do you think of that! See how our good intentions are misunderstood!

The Minister for Education: The road to hell is paved with them, too.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I will remind the Deputy Premier that the files are fairly close to hand and it is easy to check up.

The Minister for Education: I am not going to deny it. I have another way of getting at it.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: That being so, we are really getting somewhere. I am entitled, in the discussion of these Estimates, to remind the Government, and especially the Minister, of those undertakings that he failed to fulfil. There they are, and one can take them one after the other and discover that he has not been able to carry out any of them.

The Minister for Lands: He has a wonderful record of work as far as education is concerned.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I would not deny that. He has worked very hard, but he still has not been able to fulfil one promise that he said he was going to carry out. And he did not make them in a sort of inferential way. He made them most definitely, after complaining of the shortcomings of the previous Government. Take the position with regard to the shortage of teachers, for example. He went so far as to say that while the war might have had some effect, the Government was not entitled to claim that as an excuse because in the other States of Australia they had been able to do what we could not do. He mentioned South Australia particularly. Yet a few weeks after the election the South Australian Government asked the British Government to let it have 200 teachers from its schools to meet the serious shortage in South Australia. Either the Minister did not know what he was talking about when he said they had been able to do in other States what we did not do, or he deliberately misre-

presented the position. It was one or the other. I choose to think that he did not know what he was talking about.

The Minister for Education: That would be unusual, would it not?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Yes, I think it would, but I suppose that as it suited a political purpose, the Minister did not go to any pains to make sure that he did know.

The Minister for Education: It can happen, I admit.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: It did happen.

The Minister for Education: I do not think it did.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Yes it did; it happened all right. I may have it here. Yes, I have. The Minister for Education, who was then leader of the Country and Democratic League, said on the hustings:—

While we do not deny that the war was responsible for some of the difficulties it must be noted that in some of the other States, those war difficulties have been speedily overcome.

And the Minister was referring to the shortage of teachers. That statement was not true, because in South Australia the situation had not been overcome and the South Australian Government sought permission from the British Government to get 200 of its teachers; and I said at the time that I hoped the British Government would not agree, because that would be getting the South Australian children out of their difficulty at the expense of the children in Great Britain.

There is an instance of the type of speech that was made by the Minister on the hustings when he was blaming the previous Government and spreading this very beautiful picture before the electors. Not one of those promises has been carried out; and it is as well that the people should know that, so that when they get their opportunity and have to judge between the various parties who are making promises in the future, they will be able to decide what they will do.

It was Patrick Henry who said—and though I do not like misquoting, I am afraid I will have to do so, as I cannot remember correctly and I wish to get the sense—that he had but one light to guide him and that was the lamp of experience. He knew of no way of judging the future but by the past. So I say to the people of Western Australia that they have no way of judging the future other than by the past, and I refer them to the fact that the present Minister for Education made a large number of promises with regard to education, not one of which he has been able to carry out.

**MR. BRADY** (Guildford-Midland) [8.57]: I want to discuss two matters of importance to the people I represent. I understand that the department was about to take under its wing the slow-learning children and contemplated creating classes for them. With the growth of financial stringency, however, that plan went overboard. In my electorate a number of parents got together and established a class. In addition to paying 6s. per child in attendance at the class, the parents have to take their children long distances, one woman making a journey of 30 miles a day for that purpose. The slow-learning group in Perth is paying for the cost of petrol for transport.

I hope that the Minister will give consideration to reimbursing these slow-learning groups. The parents argue that they have the right to send their children to an ordinary school with normal classes, and that if they do not elect to do that they should receive some compensation by way of a reimbursement of transport charges incurred in taking the children to a slow-learning school. I trust that the Minister will give sympathetic consideration to those parents. I understand that he will be approached by representatives of the slow-learning group.

The other matter I wish to discuss is the Technical School at Midland Junction. In 1951 I asked the Minister—

In view of the shortage of accommodation at the Midland Junction Technical School and the considerable increase in the enrolment in the past 10 years, will he state whether it is proposed to build a new technical school in the near future?

The Minister replied—

It is not proposed to erect a new building for technical school purposes at Midland Junction but the existing high school building will be converted for technical education when a new high school at Midland Junction is erected.

My observation is that the classes at the Technical School are still large. The population of the district is growing considerably as a result of the activities of the State Housing Commission, and there are still five public halls in the Midland-Guildford area in which children are attending school. It is true that a primary school is being built at Midvale but I think it is safe to say that it will nowhere nearly absorb the children from the halls. I hope the Minister will have regard to the claims of Midland Junction for a high school, which has been promised for the last 20 years. The Minister for Education in the Labour Government, Hon. J. T. Tonkin, asserts that before he left office he memoed the file that the next high school was to be built at Midland Junction. I hope the Minister will have

regard to the position, and that in the near future we will hear of something being done to get the building of that school under way.

**MR. O'BRIEN** (Murchison) [9.11]: I desire to bring to the notice of the Minister the position at Wiluna, where the school is held in the old Church of England building, which is very shaky and might collapse at any time, and in the Country Women's Association rooms. I know that the Education Department could purchase the Masonic Hall at Wiluna, a building that is air-conditioned and would be most suitable as a school for the children of the area. I would like the Minister seriously to consider its purchase. Over the last six years, many requests have been made to the Education Department to have an extra room attached to the present State school at Big Bell, but without result. In the end, the people of the area got together and the Bishop of Geraldton was approached. He built an up-to-date convent school at Big Bell, and today it is a credit to the district. It is not fair, however, that we should have to approach outside people in that way when it is the responsibility of the Government to do the job. I have visited Mt. Ida, and commend the Minister on the up-to-date school there. The children of the Murchison are entitled to the very best in education, and I would stress to the Minister that the best available teachers should be sent to that district.

**MR. JOHNSON** (Leederville) [9.51]: In relation to this subject, I will speak as a parent as well as the member for the district. I am interested in education, particularly in the role of parent, as I have a lad attending school in the district I represent. He is one of a class of 55. I would remind the Minister that the unfortunate teacher, who has to handle a class of 55 children rising eight years of age, has to do a job that no single person should be asked to do, and apart from that, it is certainly unfair to the children. I have spoken to this teacher, who is an ex-Service rehabilitation teacher and qualified after war service. He told me that his day's work at the school takes more out of him than did his pre-war work in the building trade when, at times, he was running up and down ladders with hods full of bricks. He says his present job is far harder, and I believe him.

I am only one of many parents in this State who feel that for many reasons the children are not receiving the education to which they are entitled. One of the main factors is the number of children in the classes. The optimum standard of teaching is a class of from 15 to 20 children, but I repeat that my son is one of a class of 55. The Army instruction authorities claimed that for competent instruction a squad of adults should not

number more than 12, yet our teachers are being asked to handle classes of between 50 and 60 children. Of course, not all teachers have classes of that size, and there I refer particularly to the special classes, of which there are a number at the Leederville school. Apart from them, I think every class in every school in Leederville is far larger than the standard at which more can be done than just to expose the children to the opportunity of learning.

No teacher can possibly teach at the standard desired under such circumstances. All that is possible in such cases is to put the information before the children and hope that they will absorb it, and if a child is not happy with the teacher in a particular year, he or she may learn practically nothing. Another factor is that many of the playgrounds are below standard. It is unhygienic that a child such as my small boy should attend school two days running—at least in the summer-time—wearing the same clothes, because, unless they wore black clothes in the first place, they would, by the end of the day, have changed colour. The playgrounds of all those schools are of a lower standard than is desirable. I do not doubt that the Minister and the department are aware of the fact, as I believe the Parents and Citizens' Association have told them about it regularly for the last 50 years, but nevertheless I do not think the point can be stressed too often.

The condition of the playgrounds and the standard of the schools react on the character of the children, and there is an interesting comment to be made on that. Until recently, the teachers at the Leederville school had trouble with the children drawing and writing on the walls, but since the school has been painted the standard of child behaviour has improved enormously in that and many other directions. Previously, the children were attending a school that was dingy. It had a bad colour scheme and had not been painted for many years. It has now been repainted in more attractive colours, and the result has been most gratifying. If the standard of the playgrounds could be improved, the children would be proud of them and that would result in further benefit. Parent groups and the teachers themselves spend a great deal of money on class furniture, such as pictures for the walls, and so on, and that has a direct effect on the standard of child behaviour.

It would be of advantage if the department could do more than it is at present doing to encourage parent-participation in school activities. It is my experience that children react exceptionally well to the knowledge that their parents are taking an interest in the school to which they belong. Not every school has a parent group, and that is partly

due to the personalities of the headmasters, some of whom like these groups, while others do not. The difficulty lies in the fact that the teachers are already heavily overworked and, where there is parent participation, a good deal of extra work and organisation must fall on the teacher. On present standards, it is not fair to ask teachers, in a voluntary capacity, to take on the extra work involved. I therefore commend to the Minister the idea of attaching to the larger schools—if not to all of them—some person with clerical ability to take over the organisational work.

The Minister for Education: That is already being done in a number of instances.

Mr. JOHNSON: I have not come into contact with it.

The Minister for Education: It has not yet been possible to do it in a great number of cases, but it is being done.

Mr. JOHNSON: I am glad to hear that, because the headmasters of the schools in my district have to spend a considerable portion of their time in their offices doing clerical work when they should be in the classrooms. It is naturally the duty of the head teacher to maintain the standard of teaching, but in actual practice many of them have to spend a considerable part of their time doing clerical work that could well be done by someone lacking their specialised training, and on a lower salary. As to salaries I know that there is a great deal of dissatisfaction among senior teachers in the schools apart from those in my own district, because the value of the margin between the salaries has dropped to such an extent that there is no real incentive for them to qualify for higher positions. They consider it is not worth the strain of attending the University after school hours or spending many hours of study at home to reach those standards which give only a limited return. Over a period of many years the alteration in cash allowance is very slight, but the purchasing power of the margins has, as we all know, greatly decreased.

I ask the Minister for Education to examine the Premier's statement relating to the margin over the basic salary, which is paid as an allowance to the Governor and which varies as a percentage of the "C" series index. The teachers claim that it is only just that the value of a margin should be maintained because that value is not so many shillings in the pay envelope, but the value of the goods that can be brought or the services that can be obtained by the difference in salary. To explain it in simple language, if the margin to which a teacher is entitled was sufficient to buy one clean shirt a week 10 years ago its value should be maintained to allow the purchase of one clean shirt a week now.

However, as we know, the purchasing power of money has decreased to such an extent that the value of the margin does not buy one collar today; it might buy a stud. I know that many senior teachers are dissatisfied on that point. The number of teachers on supply at the moment is, I believe, fairly satisfactory, but I would not guarantee that that state of affairs will continue because, as the Minister and other members know, many of them are married women who returned to the teaching profession because they are fond of the work, but it is unlikely that many of them will be able to remain with the department indefinitely. Also, nature will eventually take its course with the younger women and they will be adding to the school population in the future. With the older ones it is a question of their finding it impossible to continue with their teaching and run a home at the same time.

I would like to refer to the installation of the new type of desk that is being placed in the schools now. In company with a headmaster I went to the trouble of visiting the school outside my area which is being equipped with these desks in order that I may gain some knowledge of them. They are of the tubular type and have a good appearance, but I doubt whether it would improve the posture of the children, especially the younger ones. I think that medical experts who specialise in body posture might class these desks as being unsuitable for children. The department could make further inquiries about this desk before it becomes standardised throughout the schools. I am certain that oversea experience would show that there are other types that would prove to be more suitable and less expensive than the one at present being installed.

I point out to the Minister that there is a very interesting publication on the posture of children which resulted from a scientific survey and which is now in the reading room of this House, and he may find it worth looking at. In passing, I would like to compliment him and his officers on the publication of the school magazine. The standard of printing, however, is by no means ideal. The subject-matter is excellent and the presentation is fair, but the printing, either as a result of too much speed or because of the bad class of paper, is by no means as clear as the printing of the publications that are presented to this Parliament.

I believe the magazine is printed by the Government Printer. The printing presented to this House is by no means damaging to the eyes, but I am certain that the printing in the school magazines is not fit for the eyes of young children. I regret to hear from the Minister that the Harvey centre is only to accommodate 20 boys and apparently, later on, 20 girls.

I completed a course there at one stage, and there were about 200 students receiving instruction at that time although, admittedly, they were not very comfortable. However, it may be possible in the future to increase the amount that is to be provided for the Harvey School.

With regard to handicapped children, the Education Department is doing a first class job in this difficult field, and I know it is being constantly pressed to do more. The officer-in-charge of that section of education is particularly keen and I do not doubt that some of his superiors wish he were not so pressing with his demands. These handicapped children have been selected from the vast majority who require such specialised education, but are not now being taught because the existing classes are far too large. I cannot offer any easy solution to encourage the recruitment of teachers other than the expensive one of making the reward commensurate with the job. It is an important duty, and I believe that if it were not for the fact that the majority of the teachers are devoted to their work and prefer it to any other profession there would be an even greater shortage. The fact that teachers leave their profession and enter other fields such as politics is something that they should be dissuaded from doing.

**HON. E. NULSEN (Eyre)** [9.26]: I wish to make only a small contribution to the debate by referring to a few matters in my own electorate. From an educational point of view Norseman has indeed been fortunate, and the following article appeared in this morning's issue of "The West Australian."

#### New High School

As from the beginning of the first term next year, the State School at Norseman will be designated the Norseman Junior High School. The new prefabricated classroom building, which is just north of the present school, was completed some months ago and the brick work in the lavatory block has only a fitting to be installed. A bitumanised square is to be constructed.

That information is extremely pleasing and, on behalf of the people of Norseman, I thank the Minister for granting this new high school. There are approximately 600 children in Norseman and this will prove of great benefit to them. The School of Mines at that centre is also making a great contribution to the education of the people. The domestic science centre and the Convent are also carrying out very excellent work. The Norseman Parents and Citizens Association is a very live organisation and it has provided many amenities for the school children, including a film projector.

Although Norseman has been rather fortunate, Salmon Gums has not fared so well. Although the school teacher, at that centre will be well housed in the future by the provision of a new school house which will cost £2,300, the present building is inadequate to accommodate all the children and the district hall is being used and is very cold in the winter. Therefore, I am pleased that a new school will be built at Salmon Gums on the block that has been reserved for it. The school buses that are operating in the district are performing an excellent service, but it is not fair to cram a large number of children into one room and divide them into several classes under the supervision of one teacher. The great difficulty experienced by the teacher in charge can well be realised.

The people at Grass Patch are also badly in need of a schoolroom because, although the bus service picks up those children and takes them to school, at Salmon Gums the distances travelled by them are too great. They are forced to rise not later than 6 a.m. and do not arrive back until about 6.30 p.m. which is far too long for small children to be away from home. The mallee country is fairly settled now and the people at Grass Patch are entitled to have better educational facilities. Mr. Bragshaw, who runs the hotel at that centre, is an ex-school teacher. He approached me on behalf of a number of parents and expressed the opinion that to travel the long distances they now do by bus is far too much for the young children. The children have to travel from a distance to Grass Patch and then another 18 miles to Salmon Gums. I hope the Minister will give consideration to this matter, especially in the interests of the younger children. At Esperance a fine school has been provided and has been renovated and there are no complaints on that score, but I have a serious complaint about the playground.

The Minister for Education: I wrote to you about that.

Hon. E. NULSEN: Yes, but nothing has been done.

The Minister for Education: Nothing will be done for a while, either.

Hon. E. NULSEN: It is not conducive to the health of the children that the playground should be left in its present condition.

The Minister for Education: The same applies to 50 other playgrounds.

Hon. E. NULSEN: The school was built about 1896 and still it has not a suitable playground. Surely its record should entitle it to some priority! When the buildings are good, it is a pity that the ground should not be given attention. Although the Minister has favoured the building up of the school-yard, the work has not been done.

The Minister for Education: I looked at it last year. You will remember having met me there.

Hon. E. NULSEN: That is so. Did the Minister see the playground when it was flooded?

The Minister for Education: Yes.

Hon. E. NULSEN: It is pathetic to see the children trying to find a dry place where they can play. Something should be done there urgently. I commend the Minister on the work done at Norseman and on the teachers' quarters provided at Salmon Gums and I hope steps will be taken to provide facilities for the increased number of children. In those places, parents and citizens' associations have been active in providing facilities such as projectors as well as amenities and have helped to decorate the schools and make life worth living. A Christmas tree has been provided. The parents try to provide such amenities as are available to children in the metropolitan area, and in view of their efforts, I hope the Minister will concede the few requests I have made, which will not cost much but will be a boon to the children.

MR. W. HEGNEY (Mt. Hawthorn) [9.34]: I realise that the Minister cannot possibly comply with all the requests made by members for school extensions. The State is a vast one and we are suffering growing-pains on account of the increased population, which raises difficulties for the Education Department as well as for various other services. I do not wish to appear parochial, but there is a matter affecting my district to which the attention of the Minister should be drawn.

The people of Tuart Hill are concerned at the non-fulfilment of what I may term a promise that brick extensions would be made to the school. On the 30th April, 1951, Treasury approval was given for the extensions, consisting of three class-rooms, a cloak-room and additional shelter accommodation. In answer to a question as to when construction was likely to be started, I was told within two or three months, and it was indicated that the buildings would be finished within 12 months of commencement. No bricks have been delivered on the site, and although pre-fabricated accommodation has been provided to serve for the time being, that is not sufficient.

Next year the school population will show a big increase on the present attendance, which, I am given to understand, is in the vicinity of 630 children. The headmaster has informed me that he will be able to carry on for the present with the pre-fabricated accommodation, but I am concerned that approval should have been given for extensions the better part of a couple of years ago, and nothing has been done to give effect to the promise.

I hope that the Minister will inform us what is proposed to be done because the parents in the district were somewhat alarmed a few months ago at reading a report that, on account of Commonwealth financial policy, the provision of school buildings and many other public buildings would be curtailed. I understand that the Minister has refuted that statement, but the residents of Tuart Hill would like to have the position clarified. They would like to know whether building is to be curtailed all over the State or only in certain parts of the metropolitan area.

I have already said that I appreciate the Minister's inability to comply with all the requests, but there appear to be quite a lot of extensions being put in hand in some districts. I may refer to Pinjarra, though I am not doing so because the Premier represents that town. However, substantial extensions are being made there.

The Minister for Education: The member for Melville spoke about children there attending school in the courthouse and in a shed.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: While I realise that Pinjarra is the centre of a large district, I consider that a rapidly growing area like Tuart Hill should receive special attention. Other extensions will have to be made to the existing school, or another school will have to be built to the north of the present one to cope with the increased population. In the district of South Osborne Park, adjacent to North Wembley, between Lake Monger and Herdsman's Lake and south of Herdsman's Lake, there is also a large population. Behind the Glendalough institution, the State Housing Commission is erecting a number of houses and an area of 10 acres has been reserved on the corner of Dodd and Harbourne-sts. for a school site.

It is essential that school buildings be erected there in the very near future. I would also like the Minister to tell us whether he has any information as to the possibility of a high school for the Joon-danna district. I understand that a property has been purchased for this purpose, but whether he envisages the early commencement of a high school in that area I do not know. The people of the Osborne Park district would like to have some indication of what is proposed.

We, as human beings, are apt to criticise when we think things are going wrong. But on this occasion I would like to express my appreciation of the Parents and Citizens' Associations attached to the schools in my district. At the Tuart Hill school, the Oslo lunch principle is in operation and the leadership is in the capable hands of the daughter of the member for Albany, Mrs. Ottaway. The association is doing a wonderful job in co-operating with the school staff. That is all to the good and reflects upon the children in more ways than one.

At Mt. Hawthorn there are slightly over 600 in the infant school and it is a revelation to go there and see the team work of Miss Harbeck and her staff. There is wonderful organisation and a splendid spirit between the infants and the school. If the co-operation which exists there prevails in other parts of the State, it must be a great help to the Education Department and to the parents of the children. I hope the Minister will give any information he can as to what is proposed for the Mt. Hawthorn district in the localities I have mentioned. I and the people of that district will appreciate his doing so.

#### THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION

(Hon. A. F. Watts—Stirling—in reply) [9.44]: Perhaps I might start with the remarks just made by the member for Mt. Hawthorn and remind myself and the Committee that five years ago there was virtually a small country school at Tuart Hill. There might have been accommodation for 60 or 70 children; today, I think there are, in addition to the existing original building, ten or eleven classrooms which have all been erected in the last five years. Therefore there is every indication that at least a reasonable attempt has been made to cope with the growth of that district.

As the hon. member said, an arrangement was contemplated for the erection of further brick classrooms to the main building of six or seven classrooms which exists at present. However, the population increase was such that if we had waited for those buildings to be erected, some of the children would have been outside the school. Therefore it was necessary to meet the position as quickly as possible and that was done with Bristol prefabricated units. The hon. member will realise that to go on immediately in the face of demands at many other places where circumstances are by no means as they were at Tuart Hill after the erection of the pre-fab. buildings, would have been to deprive somebody else of facilities. So the work at Tuart Hill was postponed. It is no more than postponed, and as soon as it can be proceeded with the work will be done. If in the meantime the situation from the point of view of numbers becomes completely out of hand—as to which I know inquiries are being made in that part of the metropolitan area—we will try to meet it.

To hear the member for Leederville, one would imagine that in 1947 all the playgrounds in all the schools in Western Australia were in a perfectly sound and suitable condition. Of course, the member for Leederville knows nothing about it. I say quite flatly that more effort has been made to improve playgrounds in the last four or five years than at any previous time in the history of education in this State. Quite apart from what sums of

money may have been spent, which does not matter, the number of places given attention, in as near as possible a permanent manner, is considerable. I wish I had the numbers here, but I think that in the 500 schools in Western Australia, at least 100 odd playgrounds have been made over in that period at considerable cost. But once again, it is desirable to put first things first and the objective is to provide classroom accommodation at the moment. Playgrounds, unless in such a condition as to be unsafe, or bordering upon it, have a very low position in the scheme of affairs.

Reference was made also by the member for Leederville to his idea of the size of classes as being from 15 to 22. I do not know that even the idealist wants to reduce the number as far as that. I have always thought that generally the idealist was satisfied with, shall we say, 30 and that practical people like the member for Melville, and perhaps myself, would go quiet for a number between 30 and 40.

Mr. Hutchinson: The number should be lower for post-primary schools.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Advanced post-primary schools are another matter. The hon. member did not limit himself to that. If he had I would not have said anything about it. I think I can let it go at that. If we reduced the ratio very much lower than he suggests we would get to the position of requiring nearly as many teachers and trainees as scholars. Let us be reasonable and not put up such impossible proposals as emanated from the member for Leederville in that regard.

Now I shall have a word to say to the member for Melville, first of all on the question of bus services. The average parent who asks for a bus service to be extended beyond the desirable limit referred to by the hon. member does so because he is definitely dissatisfied with his children doing correspondence lessons. He realises the lack of social contact, shall I call it, which his children experience. It is only the child who is at the end of the run—and who is brought in, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred at the request of the parents—who travels these distances. The child who lives 10 miles from the school travels 10 miles, and the child who is 20 miles from the school travels 20 miles.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Not always.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: In a bus load of 25 there might be two or three who would travel more than the 40 miles in the limited number of cases, particulars of which I tabled last year, and which, I believe, have been reduced. So if we are going to say to the parents, "Your child shall be on correspondence; he shall not be given the opportunity of

having something which most of us regard as being better," then I think we shall be doing the wrong thing.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: But you have to stop somewhere.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Admittedly, and we do.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: And you must leave some children who would like to come in, but who cannot.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Of course; but continual examination is going on in these outer places in an effort to bring as many as possible into the fold. A rigid system of so many miles would leave out dozens more. They do not want to be left out, and they are the only ones in the great majority of cases—in ninety-nine out of a hundred—who, if there is any detriment, suffer it, because they are the only ones who travel the maximum journey.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: But there are instances where parents have complained because they have been forced to take advantage of such extended services.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: They are rare instances, and there are one or two cases where children have been exempted. That has been a case of course, where an extension to point A has passed the premises of two people, only one of whom desired the service. There are occasional difficulties in that regard, but the greatest good for the greatest number is what we have to seek, and we must administer the situation so that any real difficulty is smoothed away. That has been done to the best of our ability.

The hon. member made great play, as he usually does, particularly in the year immediately preceding a general election, on what was stated in the political campaign of March, 1947. I told him that with one exception—which I take it had reference to some statement I made in 1950, because it refers to not having had time and therefore could not have been made in 1947—I do not intend to deny the statement which he claimed I made in a policy speech in 1947, because I say without fear of contradiction that had the circumstances, as they were in 1947, continued even during the next three years—and certainly had they continued during the next 5½ years—then every one of those promises would have been carried out to the letter.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: I do not think so.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Yes, they would have. As I and the Government understood the position, dealing with the building programme particularly, the number of children who were likely to be added to the school population in any year was about 5,000. In fact, the pre-war year showed a reduction, according



to information supplied to me in the department, of some 600 children below the year before.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Yes, that occurred more than once, too.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Yes. Had there been only an average of 1,000 new children coming to school, then not only would the halls, hat-rooms, and other places which were in use in 1947 have been replaced by desirable buildings, but the children who would have been received, under that set of figures, since that time would have been effectively coped with as well because I have taken the trouble to get the figures relating to the number of classes built during 1951—I refer to the calendar year—and they total 106 which, at 40 children to the room—I think that is a reasonable basis of calculation—would have accommodated 4,240 children. In 1952—again the calendar year—up to the 30th September, 128 classrooms had been put into use and they, in turn, would have accommodated approximately 5,000 more.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Did not a number of these replace existing classrooms? I thought you had replaced outmoded schools.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Not in the last 18 months. Allow me to finish. It is anticipated as I have said—and I now have the accurate figure, which unfortunately I did not have before, supplied by the Director—that for this financial year—that is to the end of June next—an additional 72 classrooms will be erected. These figures are in addition to the classrooms which were built, as follows:—

1947	....	....	46
1948	....	....	44
1949	....	....	46
1950	....	....	33

These rooms did replace, in the instance I gave to the hon. member in answer to his question, and subject to the qualifications that I made regarding two places, outmoded buildings.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: What is your grand total of classrooms from 1947 up to now?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I have not added them up, but I will do so later and let the hon. member know the figure if he so desires. So it is reasonably clear that if a man promises today, having inspected the locus in quo, that on Monday next he will jump a 6 ft. fence, he has some justification for claiming that his promise is impossible of performance if, when he comes to jump it, he finds that someone has raised it to 15 ft. That is just what happened so far as I was concerned.

The statements were carefully made upon an examination of the existing position and what it was likely to be, as far as one could ascertain, within the next three or four years. At that time there had been no published policy of migration, and there was no indication whatever that instead of receiving in five years an additional, say 3,000 to 5,000 children, it would be something between 17,000 and 20,000 at the least. So I think we can leave the matter at that.

Vote put and passed.

Votes: *Child Welfare and Outdoor Relief*, £233,330; *Department of Industrial Development*, £155,568—agreed to.

Progress reported.

## MOTION—GOLDMINING INDUSTRY.

*To Inquire by Select Committee.*

Debate resumed from the previous day on the following motion by Mr. Moir:—

"That a Select Committee be appointed to investigate and report upon the difficulties facing those engaged in producing gold, with particular reference to the effect of freights, water and other charges upon such operations, and to make recommendations by the use of which the Commonwealth and State Governments could assist and encourage the greater production of gold, including production by prospectors"

to which Mr. Butcher had moved an amendment as follows:—

That after the word "gold" in line 4 the words "and other minerals" be inserted.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin called attention to the state of House.

Bells rung and quorum formed.

MR. O'BRIEN (Murchison—on amendment) [10.4]: I support the amendment as I believe the goldmining industry is worthy of assistance. As I said in my maiden speech, there should be co-operation between the employees, the employers and the Government. The appointment of a Select Committee would be a step in the right direction, as the industry is in a critical state and a thorough inquiry would help to solve its problems. There are a great many people dependent upon the production of gold for their livelihood, and it is my belief, as I have already said, that only gold will get the State out of its difficulties. No doubt the present Government is doing its utmost for the southern portion of the State, but the Murchison and Goldfields must be looked to to get us out of our difficulties and balance the budget. I believe that a Select Committee, having conducted a thorough investigation of the present state of the industry, could in-

form the House of what must be done if the goldmining industry is again to flourish. I have unbounded confidence in the future of the Goldfields and desire to see the industry prosper.

**MR. STYANTS** (Kalgoorlie—on amendment) [10.7]: I will not speak at length on the question or go into details, because they have been supplied by the member for Boulder, but I believe that anyone with a knowledge of the back country of this State must realise that the goldmining industry has been on the wane for a number of years. Outside of the Golden Mile, and even on the Golden Mile, there has been a tremendous falling off in the industry over the last ten or 15 years. One has only to look at the statistics of the number of men employed in the industry to realise what a parlous condition it is now in. It is a matter of history that goldmining has twice saved this State from the financial rocks, and if it were allowed to decline by 50 per cent., that would constitute a major disaster for Western Australia. The effect would probably not be very great in the Eastern States, but it would be severe in this State.

The present Government is inclined to pass the buck to the Commonwealth on the question of the revival—I might almost say the survival—of the goldmining industry. Should disaster overtake goldmining here, it would probably not create a ripple on the financial surface of Melbourne or Sydney, but it would have almost the effect of a volcanic eruption on the economy of this State. Even on the Golden Mile there is a policy of what is known as selective mining taking place. With the constant increases in the cost of mining commodities, such as stores, machinery and the like, companies have been able to retain the greater portion of their staffs, but there is this system of selective mining which means that they are not taking on the face ore bodies that are of a low grade. They are bypassing those lower grade ores and mining only those that have a sufficiently high gold content to show a profit. Of course that has shortened the life of the mines and once those lower grade ore bodies are by-passed they cannot be worked again because it is unprofitable to do so. Consequently a number of men have lost their employment and less gold is won, thereby shortening the life of the industry.

Our goldmining territory is entirely different from the gold territory in the Eastern States. In Bendigo, Ballarat, Bathurst and such places, which were the prosperous goldmining centres years ago, they have a different climate from our goldfields and as the industry in the Eastern States areas declined the land was taken up by farmers and pastoralists. But once our industry declines or disappears the country will simply go back

to the bush. One has only to look at places like Menzies, Kookynie, Niagara, Morgans and others to realise that there is only one industry that keeps the townships in existence—that is the goldmining industry. Once that disappears the people leave the area because there is no other means of employment. The houses are pulled down, and in a few years all that is left are the gaunt walls of what was once a prosperous townsite.

It is true that some four or five years ago the mining industry was reasonably prosperous, but most people do not realise that it was only by juggling our currency that we were able to keep the mines going. Had it not been for the depreciation of sterling to dollar the goldmining industry, some three years ago, would have been unable to carry on except for the richer mines in this State. That would have resulted in at least 50 per cent. of the employees having to leave the industry and the townships of Kalgoorlie and Boulder would have suffered.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The amendment is to insert the words "and other minerals." Does the hon. member intend to allude to them in his remarks?

**MR. STYANTS:** I see no objection to the amendment because I realise that, in areas where gold is found, many other valuable minerals are found also. While the mining of gold will find employment for the greatest number of men the mining of other minerals will have an effect, too. If the Government agrees to the appointment of this Select Committee that aspect can be taken into consideration.

Most people in Western Australia, including many of our mining officials, had no idea of the valuable minerals that are to be found in certain areas either in or adjacent to our goldmines. But during the war when the Americans became short of certain minerals used for the purpose of hardening steel people began to realise the prospects of finding those minerals in Western Australia. Because of the demand for those steel hardening minerals considerable activity took place and if the scope of this inquiry is enlarged to include other minerals much benefit could result. I would be pleased to see a Committee appointed to inquire into the goldmining industry and the possibility of the economical production of other minerals.

**MR. MOIR** (Boulder—on amendment) [10.17]: I have no objection to the amendment because to a great extent the mining of other minerals is closely connected with the mining of gold. Valuable minerals are to be found in many of our goldfields and over past years many of those minerals have been overlooked. For instance, recently I met a friend of mine. This man had been engaged in the gold mining industry for a number of years and he had shifted to a new area where he became interested in a mineral known as

columbite. The market price for this mineral, at that time, was in the vicinity of £80 a ton and on this field, which had been more or less abandoned, he found a large quantity of the mineral. In the process of mining for gold the columbite had been tipped out on the dump and this man told me that in a short time he had gathered eight tons of it. That meant a handsome return with very little labour. I believe that another prospector in that area has discovered a well defined lode of this mineral, and there is a good chance of a substantial mine being opened up.

The mining of this mineral will return a very handsome profit, which would be far greater than that obtained from gold. There are many minerals which can give better returns than gold. I would cite scheelite which exists in many of our goldfields. At Laverton more than one party has become interested in the mining of this mineral and very successful returns are being obtained. Good prices are also offering today for wolfram, and miners are obtaining a fair return from its production. It is a pity that more people do not take an interest in the mining of what we call base metals. In the early days this State used to ring with the news of gold finds here, there and everywhere, but a great many were only seeking gold, and many other minerals were overlooked and discarded because of the quick return obtained from goldmining.

Many prospectors, however, over the years have again gone over these old-established fields and also newer ones in search of minerals other than gold. I would have thought that, although the motion confined itself to gold only, any investigation made into the problems of goldmining would also reveal others associated with the mining of base metals. For that reason I did not include those metals in the motion although I had that in mind at the time. There can be no valid objection to the widening of the scope of the inquiry—if it is a widening—because an investigation into gold production would include base metals. For a long time we have not done enough to exploit the natural mineral resources we have. These resources extend from the far North of the State to the far South and within that area various minerals have been discovered.

Recently some companies have become interested in their production, especially of lead, but it would appear that we do not have large lead deposits. Although the ones we do have may be rich, in the main they are only suitable for operation by small syndicates and not by large companies. No doubt, if geological surveys and deep drilling were carried out, larger deposits would be discovered and would encourage large companies to become interested in working them. I have no objection to the inclusion of base metals in the motion.

**HON. E. NULSEN** (Eyre—on amendment) [10.24]: The mineral resources of our State have a great potential value. The area of Western Australia is 975,920 square miles and about 600,000 miles of country contain very valuable minerals and metals. Those resources have not been exploited to the extent they should have been. I am sure that if other countries, such as Europe, had such great mineral wealth within their borders they would have made much better use of it than we have done. However, Western Australia has been developed only for a comparatively short time, although a wonderful service has been rendered to the State by early prospectors. They ventured into places far removed from civilisation, without water, often meeting with opposition from the natives, and they suffered great hardship. Nevertheless they made wonderful discoveries. No new goldfields have been opened up since about 1902 or 1903, although conditions in those days were 50 times worse than they are today.

The motion moved by the member for Boulder referred to gold only, but the amendment moved by the member for Gascoyne has made it more comprehensive and allows members greater scope in debate. The motion has been debated extremely well. The members for Boulder, Gascoyne and Kalgoorlie ably dealt with the subject. The discovery of minerals in this State deserves more investigation than it has received in past years. We often forget that over £330,500,000 has been obtained from the production of gold, which has amounted to over 54,500,000 fine ounces. The prospectors laid the foundation of that industry because, had it not been for them, those large returns would not have been obtained. Today, unfortunately, approximately only 31 prospectors are operating in the goldfields of this State. On the Eastern Goldfields there are 25, approximately two on the Murchison and about four elsewhere. That is a very small number considering the huge area waiting to be prospected. Unfortunately those in power today are not gold-minded, mineral-minded or metal-minded to the extent they should be, and consequently they are not giving the encouragement to men to go out and discover new fields as prospectors did in the early days. I feel that an investigation might help in that direction. I do not intend to say a great deal on this subject because so much has been said already. We ought to understand that minerals are of great economic importance to the State. I have a list of minerals supplied by the Mines Department which are of economic importance.

The first of these is arsenic. This is in demand for the manufacture of weed killers, etc. It is usually associated with gold. Ores containing copper are not suitable and there is no production in

Western Australia at the present time. Arsenic is a mineral that should be exploited. It is something we want and something to which we have not given the consideration it demands, having regard to its importance. The next on the list is asbestos. This is produced in the northern areas of the State. I think Wittenoom Gorge is one of the greatest producers and, though we have helped and encouraged this venture, I feel that it would not have been given the encouragement and help it has had it not been for the sugar-refining company. The next mineral on the list is beryl, which is found usually in pegmatite dykes. This is associated with felspar, etc. It is worth £15 per unit with a minimum of 9.5 per cent. There is also copper to be considered and the carbonate ores are acceptable to fertiliser companies.

Any inquiries about tariffs should apparently be sent to the fertiliser companies or to the milling companies. The only reason why I am giving this information is that there may be some people who feel inclined to go out prospecting to locate these various metals and minerals. From the list supplied by the Mines Department I see that sulphide ores are sent to the Electrolytic Refining and Smelting Company at Port Kembla, and the value is £350 per ton. So far as felspar is concerned, only certain types are useful in industry and a large tonnage should apparently be available at a place like Coolgardie. Most of the large deposits of iron-ore are, of course, known and these I dare say would be out at Yampi and similar districts.

Iron-ore is one of our most important minerals, although it is not necessary for prospectors to go out to discover it. Yet I think we should make sure that the iron-ore we have is fabricated in this State and not sent abroad. Anybody interested in the price of lead would be able to obtain it from the metal buyers. So far as magnesite is concerned, this is required by B.H.P. but most of our deposits are known to the company. Any new discovery, however, is worth investigation. Manganese is also wanted by steel manufacturers because supplies in Australia are limited. We find that mica commands a good price but the only known deposits capable of exploitation are at Yinnie-tharra—wherever that may be. We all know, of course, that pyrites is required for the manufacture of sulphuric acid for use in the super industry. The only large deposits that are of interest are those at Norseman. We have a very fine deposit there and, though it has been investigated and exploited to a great extent, we must not lose sight of the fact that it is an important mineral.

Insofar as talc is concerned, there is a small demand for the high-grade article. Tin, on the other hand, is in strong demand and a ton of metal content would

fetch £1,000. Tungsten is another mineral in strong demand and the price is £21 5s. per unit. The last mineral I have on the list is vermiculite and, as the deposit at Young River is a long way from Perth, I am informed that Perth Modelling Works will be interested in any new discovery. Vermiculite is used rather extensively in the Eastern States. I do not know whether it has been exploited to a great extent here, but I think it is well to let the people know that we have a large deposit of it and that it is only a matter of exploitation. It should be a matter of interest to those people who are working these minerals to know the principal buyers and agents operating in Western Australia. The list of ore-buyers is as follows:—

Derby and Company (Australia) Pty. Ltd., Cowra Chambers, Grenfell-st., Adelaide.

British Metals Corporation, 135 St. George's Terrace, Perth.

O. T. Lempriere and Company, 218 St. George's Terrace, Perth.

I now give a further list of millers and buyers of industrial minerals, which is as follows:—

Minerals Pty. Ltd., 115 St. George's Terrace, Perth.

Building Industries, 9 Howard-st., Perth.

Universal Milling, 44 St. George's Terrace, Perth.

West Australian Minerals Pty. Ltd., South Fremantle.

The reason for my mentioning the principal buyers and agents is to show that these are the most useful and most important minerals and metals, and to give the people who are working in them an indication as to whom they should write to obtain information for the sale or treatment of the minerals. I hope the Government will agree to the amendment moved by the member for Gascoyne. We should have a thorough investigation of our minerals and metals. A lot has been done, I admit, but there is still a lot to be done.

The Premier: Although the report of the Mines Department I have here is dated 1949, it gives a tremendous amount of information of the work that has been going on, both from the point of view of the State and the Commonwealth.

Hon. E. NULSEN: I agree, but the Premier must appreciate that we have a huge area in the State. I think if we made a point of having the matter specifically investigated by departmental officers or an investigational committee interested in the development of the State, it would be a good thing. I have heard the Premier say on a number of occasions that we must foster our primary industries. Metals and minerals are primary and they are

very important; and the same, of course, applies to what we eat, drink and wear. I do not think too much can be done to keep the matter before the eyes of the public and the eyes of the world; we should constantly point out the huge area we have containing all these valuable minerals. There may be a number of minerals that have never been discovered, and I do not think any great investigation has been made other than by prospectors up to date. There has not been any prospecting done of any note since 1903, when Kalgoorlie was located. Very little has been done.

The Attorney General: I would not say that.

Hon. E. NULSEN: There is a lot of country that has not been seen or investigated.

The Attorney General: There is little country that has not been covered by prospectors.

The Premier: Investigation is being carried out all the time.

Hon. E. NULSEN: I would sooner have something more specific with a view to enhancing the potential wealth of our wonderful State. I consider that something should be done to assist the development of these minerals and to aid in the discovery of metals not previously known. New metals are being discovered in other parts of the world. Those countries are old compared with Australia and probably have not the huge areas to investigate that we have.

I commend the member for Boulder on having moved the motion, which I think was a wise step on his part. If we are mineral, metal and gold-minded, we should do our utmost to exploit all those things which will enhance the real wealth of the State.

The Premier: I understand that aerial photography is playing an important part in the search for minerals.

Hon. E. NULSEN: That is being undertaken mostly by private enterprise and no doubt much is being achieved in that way, but the Premier must agree that the Government should do all in its power to foster the exploitation of the minerals we have. Without our primary production, we cannot increase our secondary production and, in my opinion, the sooner we get on with more primary production and pay less attention to secondary production, the better it will be for the State.

I hope that encouragement will be given to prospectors to the end that the number in the field may be increased. It seems absurd that in this State there should be only 31 prospectors in the field, not taking into account those people who are flying over the country in the effort to locate minerals. Admittedly they are prospectors, too, and I give them credit for their

work, but we cannot hope to locate these minerals unless we get down to pick and shovel work.

Mr. Perkins: I represent a very important mining area.

Hon. E. NULSEN: That has applied only in recent years. When the hon. member understands as much about the mining industry as he does about wheat, I shall feel that we have in him a friend to help us in speaking for this industry.

**THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING (Hon. G. P. Wild—Dale—on amendment [10.44]:** There is not a great deal for me to add to what I said when speaking to the motion of the member for Boulder a few weeks ago. I stated that the Government was opposed to the appointment of a Select Committee because it considered that the officials of the Mines Department and the people engaged in the gold-mining industry know what is wrong. I am speaking of gold before passing on to the amendment under which the member for Gascoyne seeks to have the inquiry extended to embrace other minerals. There is only one answer to the troubles that beset the goldmining industry and that is a higher price for gold.

Mr. Moir: The amendment proposes to include other minerals.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I am aware of that and I said that I intended to refer to gold before dealing with the amendment. When I was interrupted, I was about to add that I have no desire to pose as a prophet, but it seems to me that since the change of Government in the United States of America, there is something in the wind. According to newspaper reports, Great Boulder shares have made a fairly decent rise, which seems to indicate that the people in the industry are hopeful of securing an increased price for gold.

The amendment of the member for Gascoyne proposes to include in the motion the words "and other minerals." That is commendable and there is probably a lot that could be done in the way of inquiring into other minerals, but when we cast our minds over recent years, we must admit that the Government and the department have done a great job. The member for Eyre spoke of asbestos, in which industry the capital was largely invested by the Sugar Refining Company, and a lot of aid was received from both Commonwealth and State Governments. That field has been opened up and until recently the product has been exported to Canada.

Then we have the pyrites mine at Norseman. As the member for Eyre is aware, the State Government has done much to assist the production of pyrites so that it may be available for use in the manu-

facture of super. Then we have tantalite; nobody can deny the fact that a great amount of assistance has been given to that industry. During the war years the production of tantalite was an absolute necessity, and I should say that it actually played a much more important part than the goldmining industry.

Then we have the production of tin at Greenbushes, where Amalgamated Tin introduced a large amount of new capital. At Northampton, we have lead and copper. Felspar, hematite and other minerals are found in the State, but I cannot see how an inquiry as suggested could be helpful in any way. Those metals are very different from gold, and separate arguments should be advanced in their case. As I stated when speaking to the motion, the view of the Government is that goldmining is one of the great industries of the State, but I repeat that there is only one answer to the troubles besetting the industry and that is a higher price for gold. Other minerals, however, come into an entirely different category and cannot be allied to the motion moved by the member for Boulder. Therefore I oppose the amendment.

Amendment put and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	....	....	18
Noes	....	....	21
Majority against			3

#### Ayes.

Mr. Brady	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Graham	Mr. O'Brien
Mr. J. Hegney	Mr. Read
Mr. Hoar	Mr. Rodoreda
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Sewell
Mr. Lawrence	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. May	Mr. Styants
Mr. McCulloch	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Moir	Mr. Kelly

(Teller.)

#### Noes.

Mr. Abbott	Mr. Nimmo
Mr. Ackland	Mr. Oldfield
Dame F. Cardell-Oliver	Mr. Owen
Mr. Cornell	Mr. Perkins
Mr. Doney	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Grayden	Mr. Totterdell
Mr. Griffith	Mr. Watts
Mr. Hill	Mr. Wild
Mr. Hutchinson	Mr. Yates
Mr. Mann	Mr. Boveil
Mr. McLarty	

(Teller.)

#### Pairs.

Ayes.	Noes.
Mr. Coverley	Mr. Brand
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Nalder
Mr. Guthrie	Mr. Hearman
Mr. Needham	Mr. Manning

Amendment thus negatived.

**MR. McCULLOCH** (Hannans) [10.51]: I am surprised at the opposition of the Government to the appointment of a Select Committee. Strangely enough, the Commonwealth Government set up a committee a couple of months ago consisting of several Liberal and Country Party

members to inquire into the goldmining industry, though, so far as I am aware, no results of the inquiry have been passed on to this Government. Here in this State a Government which should be vitally concerned about this industry refuses to allow any inquiry to be made. The Commonwealth Government appointed a committee, but I am doubtful whether any member of that committee ever worked underground. In Western Australia, however, we have practical men who would be willing to conduct an inquiry in an honorary capacity with a view to ascertaining what improvements can be made, but they are refused the opportunity.

Over the years, the Government of this State has passed the buck to the Commonwealth with regard to goldmining industry matters. Now the acid test has been put on it, by its being asked to agree to an inquiry, but it refuses. We are all aware that many goldmining towns have become ghost towns, most of them since the present Government came into power. They include Agnew, Mt. Sir Samuel, Wiluna, Reedys and Yalgoo. Those places have gone out of existence because rising costs have prevented the companies carrying on with the extraction of low-grade ore. We have never disputed the fact that the big mines on the Golden Mile have found a way of making sufficient profit. But it is not only the Golden Mile with which we are concerned, but outback shows which cannot keep going because of rising costs. A certain amount of money has been set aside in the Estimates for the goldmining industry, but it is an infinitesimal sum. In yesterday's issue of "The West Australian" there appeared a cable under the heading of "Expert Predicts Rise in the Price of Gold". The article began as follows:—

Mr. Franz Pick, of New York, publisher of "Pick's World Currency Report," predicted yesterday that the official price of gold, under American leadership, would be increased soon from 35 dollars a fine oz. (about £A 15 12s.) to 52.50 dollars (about £A24 9s.).

Addressing the Prospectors and Developers' Association, he said that this step was planned for 1953.

In the same paper was a cable headed "Canada Aids Gold Mines." In Canada there is a Government that is willing to encourage goldmining. The cable read as follows:—

The Canadian Government had decided to provide an additional 4,000,000 dollars (about £1,785,000) a year to increase subsidies to Canadian goldmines in 1953, the Minister for Finance (Mr. Douglas Abbott) announced in Parliament yesterday.

Mr. Abbott said it was hoped that this would halt a procession of mine closings caused by rising production costs and low returns.

I wish the Mr. Abbott in this Parliament would say the same things. Exactly the same position applies in Western Australia as in Canada and yet we find that this State boasts of putting £250,000 into the industry, whereas in Canada there is a Government which definitely says it is not going to have any ghost towns. We have places on their last legs, such as Marvel Loch and other shows around the Golden Mile that definitely cannot continue in operation under present conditions. We all know that a rise in the price of gold is the principal means of salvation, but there are other things which can be done. Let the Government subsidise shows that are not paying, and provide cheaper freights. There are many directions in which the industry could be assisted. It could be given relief with regard to water supplies and the Government could help in other ways, as it has been asked to do on several occasions. But instead of reducing freights, it has increased them.

Then there are the prospectors who find the gold; but the Government is not concerned about keeping the batteries going on their behalf. Not long ago I asked a question as to when the batteries had been attended to, and I ascertained that the last repairs to any battery were effected during the war. These batteries are more or less out of condition and prospectors have to wait months before they can have crushings done. That disheartens them and they will not stand for that sort of thing much longer because they can get better conditions elsewhere. If we lose the prospectors, we will lose the gold-mining industry. The way to find gold is not by aerial photography but by pick and shovel work.

We hear rumours that the Government is suggesting taking up the railway lines from Meekatharra to Wiluna, from Menzies to Laverton and from Malcolm to Laverton in order to get rails. Yet it is prepared to spend £200,000 putting in a line from Coogee to Kwinana for the benefit of secondary industry. While doing that, the Government wants to remove railways that are vital links with goldmining centres. Base metals can be got at these places. Various other things could happen in future years. The price of gold could rise, but if the Government lifts the rails it will break the link between the main centre and the outback areas. The Government is not concerned about this. That was shown last night. The member for Gascoyne moved an amendment, and the Minister for Lands moved the adjournment of the debate. He was not concerned.

The Premier: Why was he not concerned?

Mr. McCULLOCH: Why did he adjourn the debate?

The Premier: That is usual Parliamentary procedure.

Mr. McCULLOCH: Not necessarily.

The Premier: Yes.

Mr. McCULLOCH: The motion has been on the notice paper for months, but now the Premier will say there is not time to investigate the industry. He has brought the motion on tonight when there is practically no-one in the Chamber.

The Premier: Whose fault is that?

Mr. McCULLOCH: I take it, it is the Premier's fault.

The Premier: Am I supposed to go out and whip up members?

Mr. McCULLOCH: The Premier could have told the mover of the motion—

The Premier: This is the place for the mover of the motion.

Mr. McCULLOCH:—that he was going to bring the motion on tonight.

The Premier: He is not here now.

Mr. McCULLOCH: He did not expect it to come on. He said, "It does not seem possible that my motion will come on tonight," and neither it did. This is the first time, to my knowledge, that the Estimates have been broken so as to jump on to some other question.

The Premier: It has happened on many occasions.

Mr. McCULLOCH: I have never seen them jumped over and another question discussed.

The Premier: It has happened many times.

Mr. McCULLOCH: Tell me when.

The Premier: I could give you many instances.

Mr. McCULLOCH: Was it done last year?

Mr. May: No.

The Premier: The Minister for Works is not here to introduce his Estimates.

Mr. McCULLOCH: The Minister for Lands is here; why could not he go on? This is all "hokey".

The Premier: If I cannot convince you with facts, it is of no use my trying.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member will please address the Chair.

Mr. McCULLOCH: To disallow this motion is a shabby business. What harm will it do? What is wrong with it? If the Commonwealth Government can in-

quire into the goldmining industry, the State Government could do it far cheaper. It would not cost the State Government half or a quarter as much. There were three Liberal and three Country Party members of the Commonwealth Government who came to investigate the position. I do not think the State Government has ever been advised of their findings. I have not seen any report in the paper. I do know, however, that these six individuals toured the State in connection with an inquiry into the goldmining industry. I hope that members will support the motion.

**MR. STYANTS (Kalgoorlie)** [11.41: I was able to incorporate many of my remarks in connection with the industry when speaking to the amendment. I was dealing with the fact that the continuity of existence of the goldmining industry in this State was brought about only by the decision to depreciate sterling to the dollar, which raised the price of gold in Western Australia from £10 15s. 8d. to £15 9s. 6d. an ounce. Had that not taken place, then the industry would have been almost extinct here. People will realise, therefore, if they give any consideration to the industry, that if it is decided next year to revert to the position we were in some three or four years ago, by appreciating sterling to the dollar, then there will be a panic in the industry in this State, because it is a certainty that if that occurs the industry will not be able to carry on. The survival of the industry will continue only by considerable assistance being given to it.

The president of the Chamber of Mines, in his last report some few months ago, said that in his opinion the real salvation of the industry in this State was an increase in the dollar price for its product. I think perhaps the problem of the survival of the industry can be found in the stabilisation of its costs. Even if we could stabilise costs at the present high level, I think the industry would be able to carry on for a considerable time on the present basis. There does not, however, seem to be any foreseeable end to the increasing prices and, with them, increasing wages and inflation. It still appears that from the increase in the cost of commodities there will be an increase in the next quarterly review of the basic wage, and then there will be another increase in the cost of commodities. Up to date, there is no foreseeable end to the constant inflation that has been the curse of this country for the last three or four years.

**Mr. Ackland:** It will end when people work decently.

**Mr. STYANTS:** I know the member for Moore has just come back from a world tour, and he has not got the idea out of his head that people do not work. I go to works that are being carried out—both Government and private projects—and I do not see men sitting down or loafing. There are gangers, foremen or overseers to see that they do their job, and if they do not they are quickly dispensed with and someone else is put in their place.

**Mr. Ackland:** No-one is working; I do not mean only the labourers.

**Mr. STYANTS:** If that assertion by the hon. member includes himself, I agree with him. He has been on a Cook's tour for the last three or four months, and in that time he has received a good deal of remuneration in the shape of his salary.

**Mr. Hutchinson:** He was sent as a representative of this House.

**Mr. STYANTS:** I do not know that a Select Committee would find a solution of this problem. The whole thing bristles with difficulties. To give overall or blanket assistance to the goldmining industry would perhaps not be necessary. I believe there are some mines on the Golden Mile which are able to carry on, even with the present high cost, and show a reasonable return by way of dividends to their shareholders. There are others on the Golden Mile that are in a different position. One, the Paringa, closed down a few months ago, and was taken over by other interests. This mine was unable to carry on, either because of bad or inefficient management, or because the ores did not contain the gold necessary to show a profit.

It is not so much the Golden Mile that we have to concern ourselves with but other parts of the State, because the goldmining industry outside of the Golden Mile employed many thousands of men and kept many other thousands in employment in supplying them with the necessary commodities of life. They are the people who are badly hit now and the outback districts of the goldfields are feeling the result of high costs far worse than is the Golden Mile. There is a local committee operating in Kalgoorlie to discover ways and means by which the goldmining industry can be helped to survive. I do not think its findings have been made public.

While a Select Committee would perhaps not find a solution of the difficulties of the industry I believe it would afford a means by which those interested in the industry and those dependent upon it for their livelihood could place before it—and in that way before the Government—any suggestion of a practical nature that might be possible of adoption in an endeavour to keep it going at a reasonably high level. A Select Committee would cost little and would be of considerable



value in the way to which I have just referred. I hope the Government will agree to the motion.

**HON. E. NULSEN (Eyre)** [11.12]: The goldmining industry has done so much for the State that it should be fostered to a far greater extent than has been the case of late. But for this industry the advancement of the State would have been retarded. It was responsible for the rapid increase in our population in the early days when the people of the Goldfields lived under hard conditions and became used to life in the outback. One of the troubles is that the prospectors are not receiving sufficient incentive. On the Eastern Goldfields the allowance for a prospector is £2 10s. per week, which in view of present costs would hardly keep him for a day, and in the north country it is only £3 10s. per week. The Government should assist the prospectors to the extent that, as was mentioned by the member for Hannans, the Government of Canada assists prospectors in that Dominion. I believe we should do everything possible to keep the industry going until an increase in the price of gold takes place.

**MR. MOIR (Boulder—in reply)** [11.15]: Before replying to the debate I wish to say that I am disturbed by the tactics adopted by the Government this evening in bringing this item forward. In the circumstances I would have thought it would have the courtesy to inform me of its intention to jump over certain other items in order to deal with this one. When I spoke to the Premier after the House rose last night, and expressed my concern at the action of the Minister for Lands in securing the adjournment, the Premier gave me no indication that this item would be dealt with at an early hour tonight. I realise that the Standing Orders have been set aside and that the Government can now deal with any item it likes, but it is well aware that members do not remain constantly in their seats from 4.30 p.m. until midnight or even 1 a.m. or later the following morning. To say the least of it the Government was most discourteous in bringing this item forward as it did.

The Premier: No discourtesy was intended.

**MR. MOIR:** Then it savours of sharp practice. Perhaps the Government hoped to snap through the motion while many members were not in their seats.

The Premier: That was not the intention.

**MR. MOIR:** I have always been led to believe that a certain standard of decency and courtesy would be shown by the Government to members of the Opposition and by members of the Opposition to the Government in this House.

The Premier: That is the practice.

**MR. MOIR:** When the political situation is not favourable, however, we are apparently apt to forget our manners. I wish now to mention an interjection by the member for Moore when the member for Kalgoorlie was speaking. As we were discussing the goldmining industry I take it that the reflection he made on the workers must have referred to the workers in this industry. I take strong exception to what he said because, if there is any section of the workers in this country that gives of its utmost while engaged in a hazardous occupation which involves considerable danger to their health, it is the workers in the mining industry. I assure the member for Moore that no employer in the industry would agree with what he said, because it is a fact that workers in this industry have a record second to none in the matter of the work they do. Their production per man is higher today than it has ever been in the history of the industry. I can only conclude that the member for Moore does not know what he is talking about when he makes the interjections he does. I desire to correct the impression that the Minister evidently had when he said that when moving the motion I indicated I was in no way critical of what had been done by the Government for the industry. That is not correct. What I did say was, "It is not my intention to indulge in any criticism of what may have been done and what should not have been done for the industry." I could be very critical of the Government for what it has not done.

**MR. MAY:** And also for what it has done.

**MR. MOIR:** That is so. I will refer later in my reply to what the Government has done. Like other speakers, I see no reason why the Government should not agree to the motion. A Select Committee would not cost the taxpayers much and would do far more good than many things on which the Government spends a good deal of the taxpayer's money. I suggest that if members are willing to conduct an inquiry, and give their time to it, a committee should be appointed. I can assure members that as far as I am concerned I could do with a little time to myself. I have not had the luxury of a holiday for many years but I am perfectly willing to devote my time to a Select Committee in the hope that certain facts might be ascertained which can be placed before members for their information. Therefore I cannot see what objection the Government has to holding an inquiry unless it thinks that some evidence may be produced which will reflect upon it.

Mention was made of the Commonwealth Government appointing a committee to inquire into the mining industry but, as has already been stated, none of those gentlemen knows anything about the mining industry. Without reflecting

on them, I say that not one of them would know a goldmine if he fell down it. But as the member for Hannans said, there are members in this House who can claim to know a great deal about the industry and have a real concern for it. The trouble is that the Government has no mining man in its ranks; it has no interest in the goldmining industry. It has been suggested to me that the Government is not concerned about the mining industry because it is of no political moment to it.

The Premier: That is far from correct.

Hon. E. Nulsen: The Minister for Housing was a mining man.

Mr. MOIR: When speaking for the Minister for Mines the Minister for Housing took the stand that it was useless to hold an inquiry and the only way the goldmining industry could be assisted was by increasing the price of gold. That would certainly solve a lot of problems, but to my mind it is simply passing the buck. The Minister, in his speech, said—

The Government did all it could to press the Commonwealth, which in turn pressed the International Monetary Fund in America for a higher price for gold. After some time those efforts were successful and in 1949 gold was raised from £10 15s. 3d. an ounce to £15 9s. 10d.

Mr. Kelly: That had nothing to do with it.

Mr. MOIR: Of course it did not. That increase came about simply because Great Britain decided to revalue sterling.

Mr. Kelly: And for no other reason.

Mr. MOIR: To say that pressure was brought to bear on the Commonwealth Government and that that Government in turn brought pressure to bear upon the International Monetary Fund for an increase in the price from £10 15s. 3d. to £15 9s. 10d. an ounce is quite wrong. As I have heard expressed here, it was simply "hocey."

Mr. May: He had to say something.

Mr. MOIR: I admit that, but surely the Minister could have said something that was a little more intelligent. It is quite true that a higher price for gold would get the industry out of a lot of its troubles. That would help any industry but there are quite a lot of things the Government could do to assist the mining industry. One of the principal features is the high cost of fracture. About three-and-a-quarter years ago a case of 60 per cent. gellignite cost £3 17s. 6d. but today it costs £7 6s. I am not suggesting that the Government should make cheaper fracture available to companies who are getting along all right by themselves, but

the Government could assist prospectors and the smaller mine owners by reducing the cost of explosives. That could be done by the Government bearing a portion of the cost and there are many other ways of assisting these people, such as by reducing railway freights, making water supplies available and so on.

I now want to deal with some statements made by the Minister for Housing on behalf of the Minister for Mines. He said that certain assistance had been given to the goldmining industry and his statement read—

I am advised that last year the Government assisted various goldmining companies to the tune of approximately £180,000. I notice that two or three of them received £20,000, others £7,500 and so on.

The Leader of the Opposition interjected and asked "Are these new advances or advances still outstanding?" The Minister replied—

They were advances made last year. I was with the Under Secretary for Mines yesterday morning and he showed me the volume which discloses the loans made to these mines.

That is entirely wrong. The amount of assistance given to the goldmining industry last year is shown in the Auditor General's report and it totals £9,976 9s. 3d. That is far short of £180,000 and it proves that the assistance given has been very meagre. I do not know how that mistake was made because I cannot believe that the Minister would come here and deliberately try to put such a statement over the House. But I suggest that he make sure of his facts and his figures before he quotes them in this House. The figure I just quoted is in sharp contrast to the assistance given to the coalmining industry. For the year 1951-52 advances to that industry totalled £238,248 3s. That advance was made to one company, namely, Amalgamated Collieries.

The Premier: The expenditure on mining last year was £281,905.

Mr. MOIR: Yes.

Mr. Styants: On goldmining?

The Premier: And the estimate this year is £316,000.

Mr. MOIR: I will have something to say about those figures shortly if the Premier will permit me to do so. Within the last three years Amalgamated Collieries Limited has received, in advances, £365,149 9s. 2d.

Mr. May: The Minister told you that the company was nearly broke.

Mr. MOIR: That may be all very well. I know little about coalmining, but I have heard the member for Collie complain bitterly, as recently as last night, about the way that money has been wasted. Apparently the goldmines are just not in the picture. For some reason or other, money can be lavished on the coalmines, as the member for Collie has told us, and an investigation is warranted into the way that money has been spent at Collie. A further amount of £29,934 1s. 3d. has been provided for drilling plant and drilling. I have not heard of any Government drilling being done on the Goldfields so I presume that that money was also spent on the coalfields. The Premier has just made reference to the Loan Estimates.

The Premier: The Revenue Estimates.

Mr. MOIR: There is an estimated expenditure on mining for the year ending the 30th June, 1953, of £249,850. Is that the amount the Premier quoted?

The Premier: No, I said that the estimate for 1952-53 was £316,000.

Mr. MOIR: And how much of that does the Government propose to spend in the coalmining industry? I see in the Loan Estimates, under the heading, "Progress anticipated to be made during the year ending 30th June, 1952" the following:—

Further loans to Amalgamated Collieries Ltd. Purchase of drilling machines. Deep and shallow drilling at Collie. Pyrites exploration at Koolyanobbing. Assistance to prospectors. Loan to Western Mining Corporation for siding at Bullfinch.

It appears that the sum total of the assistance to be made to the goldmining industry from that anticipated amount will be that given to the Western Mining Corporation at Bullfinch and some slight assistance to prospectors. Therefore, the treatment received by the goldmining industry is in sharp contrast to that meted out to other industries, particularly coalmining. The Minister, during his speech, said—

While I agree with the sentiment expressed by the member for Boulder and the member for Merredin-Yilgarn, the hard cold facts remain that it is much too big a job for the State.

So evidently, when it is thought that a job is too big for the State, we should just run away from the problem and forget all about it. It appears that the Government is not even concerned about holding an inquiry to discover how this industry can be assisted. It appears that no one wants to know.

The Premier: I think we know.

Mr. MOIR: Then why does not the Premier do something about it if he knows? That makes the position even worse. I thought it was because the Government did not know. I am quite sure that, to a large extent, the remedy lies in its hands because a great deal could be done for the goldmining industry by this Government or any other that was prepared to assist it. It is no good sitting down, as the Government is doing, waiting for something to turn up. It merely says, "We cannot do anything about it until the price of gold increases." Therefore, we must wait until that happens. We must look to some other country and await the results of an election there and say, "That is going to make a difference and everything is going to be hunky-dory again with the goldmining industry!"

That is not a proper attitude for a Government to adopt. If it is going to carry out its duties it should try to discover what can be done. Other Governments in the past have not been content to sit down and wait for something to happen when the goldmining industry was in trouble, or even when any other industry was in difficulties. They were anxious to know what could be done to effect a remedy. What would the position have been if the people who manage the goldmines merely wrung their hands and said, "We will have to wait until the price of gold increases and if it does not increase we will have to close the mines down." The mines would have been closed down years ago if they had adopted that attitude.

However, these men have some sound commonsense and are practical in their outlook and they approach the problem in an endeavour to see what can be done to lighten their costs, and find more efficient means of working the gold deposits and so relieve their troubles to that extent. It is the duty of this Government and of Parliament to concern itself with the problems of this industry and endeavour to ascertain what can be done to assist it. The only way that can be achieved is to hold an inquiry to find out what is the trouble. Despite the interjections by the Premier that he knows what is wrong, if the reply given by the Minister for Housing, stating that all that was wrong was that the price of gold was too low, is the extent of their knowledge, it amounts to nothing.

I could tell the Government a great many things that could be done to assist the industry which the Government is capable of doing. I only hope that members will realise their sense of responsibility towards this industry, which has done so much for the State and the people employed in it, and that they will agree to the motion for the appointment of a Select Committee to inquire into the problems associated with it.

Question put and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	18
Noes	19
Majority against	1

**Ayes.**

Mr. Brady	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Graham	Mr. O'Brien
Mr. J. Hegney	Mr. Read
Mr. Hoar	Mr. Rodoreda
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Sewell
Mr. Lawrence	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. May	Mr. Styante
Mr. McCulloch	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Moir	Mr. Kelly

(Teller.)

**Noes.**

Mr. Abbott	Mr. McLarty
Mr. Ackland	Mr. Oldfield
Dame F. Cardell-Oliver	Mr. Owen
Mr. Cornell	Mr. Perkins
Mr. Doney	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Grayden	Mr. Totterdell
Mr. Griffith	Mr. Watts
Mr. Hill	Mr. Wild
Mr. Hutchinson	Mr. Bovell
Mr. Mann	

(Teller.)

**Pairs.**

Ayes.	Noes.
Mr. Coverley	Mr. Brand
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Nalder
Mr. Guthrie	Mr. Hearman
Mr. Needham	Mr. Manning
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. Nimmo

Question thus negatived.

Motion defeated.

House adjourned at 11.43 p.m.

# Legislative Council

Tuesday, 2nd December, 1952.

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

**ASSENT TO BILLS.**

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

- 1, Warehousemen's Liens.
- 2, Criminal Code Amendment.
- 3, Health Act Amendment (No. 2).

**QUESTION.****WUNDOWIE INDUSTRIES.**

*As to Profit or Loss.*

Hon. C. H. HENNING (for Hon. H. Hearn) asked the Minister for Transport: Will he give the House the profit or loss annually of the Wundowie project since its inception?

The MINISTER replied:

The Auditor General's reports for the years ended the 30th June 1949, the 30th June 1950 and the 30th June 1951, disclose the following losses respectively—

£98,269.

£117,611.

£101,185.

For the year ended the 30th June 1952, the audited report is not yet available.