

tice of printing evidence before the order of the House.

Mr. SPEAKER: That is the usual practice.

Mr. TROY: The Standing Order is clearly against it.

Mr. SPEAKER: It has been the custom, ever since I have been in the House, that select committee evidence is reported by the "Hansard" staff in the same way as the proceedings of this House, and sent to the Government Printer exactly in the same way as speeches delivered in the Chamber. The evidence is printed on foolscap sheets, on one side only; and it is thus submitted to the members of select committees and also to the witnesses. On the completion of the investigation, the chairman of the committee drafts a report to the House, which is discussed by the committee, and, when approved by them, presented to the House by the chairman, who thereupon moves that the report and evidence, as a whole, be printed. But the evidence is already printed. The expense has been incurred, because the type has been set up. Hon. members who have served on select committees are aware that this has been the practice. It is in the typesetting that the expense is occasioned; and, in order to obviate that expense, it was decided, on the appointment of the last select committee, that the evidence should be presented only in 10 type-written copies at the first stage.

Mr. Troy: That is the original copy?

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 11.28 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 21st February, 1918.

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

[For "Questions on Notice" and "Papers presented" see "Minutes of Proceedings."]

ELECTORAL—METROPOLITAN PROVINCE.

The PRESIDENT: I have received the following letter from Mr. Boan—

It is with extreme regret that I feel called upon to tender my resignation as a member of the Legislative Council. I am taking this course because two days ago my attention was drawn to the fact that we have had for several years a branch of the State Savings Bank on the business premises of my firm, and that this might possibly be held to be a contravention of Sections 32 and 34 of the

Constitution Act Amendment Act, 1899. Under these circumstances, I hereby tender my resignation as a member of the Legislative Council, and I may add that I have returned to the Treasurer to-day the whole of the remuneration I have received during the period for which I have been a member.

BILL—HEALTH ACT AMENDMENT.

Select Committee, Extension of Time.

Hon. W. KINGSMILL (Metropolitan) [4.34]: I have to ask for an extension of time for bringing up the report of this select committee. This is due, not to any inattention to duty on the part of the committee, but owing to the volume of work they have had to undertake. We have examined a large number of witnesses, and now all that remains to be done is to hear the health authorities in rebuttal or confirmation of those witnesses. This will be done on Tuesday next, when the department will be in a position to reply to the statements of the various witnesses. The committee will be able to report this day week. I move—

"That the time for bringing up the report of this committee be extended to this day week."

Question put and passed.

PAPERS—MALAY STATES AND JAVA, TRADING POSSIBILITIES.

Hon. J. DUFFELL (Metropolitan-Suburban) [4.36]: I move—

"That in the opinion of the House it is desirable, in view of its importance and interest to the producing community of the State, that the report furnished to the Government by the Hon. Walter Kingsmill on the possibilities of trade between this State and the Malay States and Java should be laid on the Table of the House, and printed as a parliamentary paper."

This motion is the outcome of numerous inquiries which I have received from people interested in fruit growing and other industries. At the same time I am reminded that various extracts from Mr. Kingsmill's report which have appeared in the Press from time to time, and which have been acknowledged by various societies, associations, and others, have been regarded as of very great importance as showing that there is a market in those islands for the produce of this State. We must also bear in mind the fact that Mr. Kingsmill, during his recent trip to the Malay States and Java must have gone to no end of trouble and inconvenience in preparing the information which he has so well compiled, and which I consider should be made available to all those desirous of securing that information. Those are the reasons I have for moving the motion, and I have occasion to believe that hon. members will agree that information of this nature should be made available to those in this State who are producing from the soil such commodities as will readily find a market in the centres referred to in Mr. Kingsmill's report.

Hon. Sir. E. H. WITTENOOM (North) [4.39]: I have pleasure in supporting the motion. I do it in my capacity as Acting

Consul for the Netherlands. I have read the report of Mr. Kingsmill with exceeding interest, and it may please Mr. Duffell to know that the same ideas he has in respect of exportation are held by the Netherlands authorities in those islands in respect of importing. When I was in Melbourne 13 months ago the Consul General asked me to visit those very parts which Mr. Kingsmill has had an opportunity of seeing. He said, "I do not want you there to write letters and receive letters. I wish you to visit those islands and try to open up trade between them and Australia. Particularly do we want flour and timber." Therefore, it is with very great pleasure that I read the report of a man like Mr. Kingsmill, a keen observer able to convey to us all that he saw. It must be pleasing to Mr. Duffell to know that the feeling of the authorities in those islands is in accordance with his own.

Hon. J. M. DREW (Central) [4.41]: I also have pleasure in supporting the motion. During my term of office as Colonial Secretary I gave this question a great deal of consideration. It will be remembered that when we endeavoured to convince the House of the necessity of approving the purchase of the steamer "Kangaroo" I said she would be required in connection with the oversea work, and the freezing works at Wyndham. That was the intention at the time, but after further investigation I was convinced that the oversea work in connection with the freezing works at Wyndham would not be profitable, and that the best course would be to load the "Kangaroo" at Fremantle with apples and other produce likely to be used in the Malay States and the islands, and send her along to those places, calling at Wyndham on the way, and letting her bring back from the Malay States produce which would be utilised in Western Australia. I think if the Government adopt that idea when the freezing works at Wyndham are completed the "Kangaroo" will prove to be a payable proposition, and in addition to that the industries of Western Australia will be materially assisted. I read Mr. Kingsmill's report in the "West Australian" with considerable attention, and I think that in the interests of the State it should be published through the medium of the House for public information. It is a very valuable document, and it supports all the results of the investigations I previously made. Mr. Stevens, of the State Steamship Service, will be able to support everything stated in Mr. Kingsmill's report.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [4.42]: The Government very highly appreciate the value of Mr. Kingsmill's report, and are in entire accord with the motion.

Question put and passed.

PAPERS—GOVERNMENT BOTANIST AND PLANT PATHOLOGIST.

Hon. J. STEWART (South-East) [4.43]: I move—

"That all papers, including the Public Service Commissioner's file in connection with the positions of botanist and vegetable

pathologist and assistant, and relating to the retirement of the Botanist and Vegetable Pathologist and the reorganisation of the laboratory arrangements, be laid on the Table of the House."

I have no desire to take up the time of the House in making any remarks on the subject, because I have an understanding from the leader of the House that there is no opposition to the motion.

Question put and passed.

BILL—RABBIT ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER (Honorary Minister) [4.44] in moving the second reading said: The object of the Bill is to give increased powers to the Government to deal with the pest that has invaded our State. The urgent necessity for an amendment was recognised as far back as 1909, and in 1910 the Bill was drafted, and was to have been introduced by the then Minister for Agriculture (Hon. J. Mitchell). However, it was held back on account of more important measures to be immediately dealt with, and each succeeding Minister has held it back for the same reason, right down to the present time. In connection with this Bill it has been urged from time to time by a section of the Press and also by a section of the public that the rabbit industry should be established here, and that trapping ought to be permitted, which means that poisoning could not be allowed in an area set apart for trapping for food supplies. It has been suggested that the pest could be eradicated in that way. But it has been proved very conclusively in all the Eastern States that trapping does not minimise the rabbits at all; that, in fact, trapping has a tendency to increase the rabbits to the detriment of the land owners. All inquiry by Royal Commissions and by select committees has invariably resulted in a finding against trapping and against any trend in the direction of trapping rabbits for food supply. As far back as 1903 the New Zealand Government had a strong objection to the rabbit industry, and that feeling has gained ground to the present day. Within the next few months I expect, trapping will be altogether prohibited, notwithstanding the talk about its being a payable industry. As a fact, it is a payable industry only to a very small section of the community; namely, the middleman who handles the rabbits. That has been proved conclusively in every other Australasian State and New Zealand. The benefit of the middleman is derived from the sacrifice of the land owner and from the reduction of the wheat growing and stock carrying capacity of the land. To these remarks there is only one exception, New South Wales. In that State an area 10 miles wide on each side of certain railways was made a reserve in which poisoning was not permitted. Trapping alone, for commercial purposes, was permitted in that area. Some few weeks back a strong and influential deputation waited upon the New South Wales Minister for Agriculture, and asked that either the reservation be cancelled and they be allowed to poison the rabbits, or,

if the Government could not agree to this, that the Government should take over the holdings of the land owners, to whom the rabbit industry meant destruction. The deputation also said that if the Government were desirous of establishing a rabbit industry at the sacrifice of the wheat growing and sheep raising industries, it was preferable for the land holders to get out, even at a loss. It may be interesting to hon. members who have not gone into the question to know that eight rabbits eat the same amount of food as one sheep. Now let the returns be contrasted. The average return from a rabbit, I suppose, would be about five-pence, or a total of 3s. 4d. for eight rabbits. Against that, the normal return from anything like a middle class sheep or decent ewe is 10s. per annum. There can be no gainsaying that as an industry we should not encourage or foster the rabbit. If we permit extensive trapping, we shall be fostering the rabbit. Another point about the rabbit question is that in some instances small colonies of rabbits have broken out here. Such an outbreak has been immediately followed by the local residents hunting the rabbits with dogs, trapping them with the ordinary spring trap, and shooting them. Each of these three methods can only have the one result of searing the rabbits and spreading them all over the adjoining country, with the further result that their eradication becomes almost a matter of impossibility. On the other hand, if the rabbits are left alone in the small warren they have established, they can be poisoned and killed right out. This has been done in a number of cases. The most successful method of destroying the pest is poisoning. I do not, however, go so far as to say that we should follow the example of other States in permitting the use of liquid poison. Liquid poison, to my mind, is highly dangerous—dangerous not only to the bird life which is so beneficial in counteracting other pests, and dangerous not only to the smaller animals but dangerous also to stock. There are occasions when stock break down the fences surrounding enclosures of liquid poison, and the result means a calamity to the stock owner. The ordinary method of trapping is with the small pipe traps, such as those used on our rabbit proof fences at the present time, and with earth traps, where the cover is balanced. Both methods are beneficial and sound, inasmuch as they do not scare the rabbits caught. On the other hand, a rabbit caught in a spring trap makes a noise and scares other rabbits. At water enclosures where the rabbit has been accustomed to drink it is quite easy, in summer time, to put in several traps with netting, so that the rabbit can get in but not get out. That method of trapping is assisted by the running out of an angle fence. This method of destruction does not involve the use of poison, and consequently there is no danger to other animals connected with it. I have heard it said that toxo is too strong a poison. The results I have seen from the use of that poison show it to be one of the best on the market. In saying this I am simply combating a statement adverse to toxo, because people in need of rabbit poison may otherwise turn down toxo when they are

able to secure it. My advice to them is to use it. I consider toxo equal to, if not better than, any other poison on the market. Another phase of the rabbit question is that during the dry season the rodents are more destructive than in the wet, inasmuch as during the summer they scratch down to the roots of the edible fodder and so eradicate many of the best grasses. In New South Wales there are large tracts, formerly bearing excellent feed, which have been cleared right out by the rabbits. When the rabbits get very thick, they burrow down to get the green sap from the roots. Tremendous losses arise in that connection. The powers of the Chief Inspector of Rabbits under the existing Act are unenforceable because the measure requires that officer himself to inspect every holding affected. Now it is plain that the Chief Inspector could not visit every holding on which there are rabbits if he went on inspecting, without cessation, from now to the end of his days. It is necessary that the powers in this direction should be extended to the inspectors under him. In fact, under the Vermin Bill and this Bill that power will be extended to inspectors under vermin boards which have been or are being formed. In the case of persons refusing to destroy rabbits on their holdings, the original Act provides for their being summoned to appear before the Minister. Only one Minister exercised this power, and with very harsh results. In one instance a settler was put to the expense of £8 in railway fares and expenses, apart from loss of the time that was spent in going to Perth. The Bill proposes to alter that. We do not desire to put settlers to heavy expense on that score if it can be obviated. We desire simply to get a workable Act, one which will effect the eradication of the rabbit. No doubt there will be some landholders who have dams which they wish to fence in, but have not the netting to do it. In such cases the provision will not be enforced until netting is available for them to carry out the work. I do not think I need take up much of the time of the House in introducing this Bill. The Vermin Bill, of which I moved the second reading last night, deals largely with the same question; and many of my remarks on that measure apply to this Rabbit Bill. The amendments here proposed are not so voluminous as those which we desire to make in the Vermin Act, but they are all very necessary. The first matter I have to draw attention to is amendment of Section 21 of the original Act. That section specifies the rate of interest on loans for wire netting at 4 per cent. In view of the present state of the money market, it is necessary to increase this rate. At the present time 4 per cent. is too low.

Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: There is no wire netting to be obtained just now.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER (Honorary Minister): But we are looking forward to the time when we shall have some wire netting. I am now sending out five miles of netting for fencing dams. That netting has been sold on long terms, and it will be necessary to charge more than 4 per cent. interest on the

cost. The rate now proposed is 7 per cent. Then an amendment is proposed in Section 26 of the original Act, which requires the Chief Inspector to make personal inspection before any proceedings can be taken against an owner or occupier for failing to destroy rabbits. Next there is an amendment in Section 31. The summoning of a person from distant parts of the country to see the Minister in Perth represents a waste of time and is particularly expensive to the person summoned. All that can be done away with and the same end attained in another way. The Bill also proposes some new sections. Under Part V. of the principal Act it was necessary that provision should be made for the fencing of dams and open water supplies. Under the Vermin Act the obligation to fence water supplies will be placed upon the vermin boards, and private owners should also be forced to do this. Action can be only taken in this matter by proclamation. Then the Bill proposes certain necessary machinery clauses for apportioning the liability between owner and occupier and also provides machinery clauses for charging rent where portion of the rabbit fence is made use of by any land owner. In certain cases land owners are at present escaping this charge. For instance, the owner of a block situated between two other holdings which join on to the fence does not have to pay rent, for he makes no application to use the fence, although he is certainly obtaining the benefit of the fence. Then there is half a chain reserved between an ordinary holding and the fence. This amendment gives the Minister certain discretionary powers, the need of which has been felt. As regards the proposed new Sections 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11, under the original Act no provision was made for granting rabbit proof netting to groups of holdings and apportioning to each holding so benefited the amount to be paid for the protection so afforded. The amendment is necessary to overcome this defect. It provides that agreements may be made with all the persons interested to the satisfaction of the Minister, and also for the proper maintenance of the fence by the settlers interested. Again in the past it has been the custom for persons to make use of the road along the rabbit proof fence without obtaining permission, although this was an offence under the Act. The fence has in consequence suffered considerable damage. It has also been the custom of drovers to travel their stock along the road, or even to make use of the fence as a wing fence for mustering. The result has been that the netting, instead of being under the surface of the ground, has, owing to the cattle tearing the ground up, been left on top of the ground; and consequently it has been an easy matter for the rabbits to get in. If that kind of thing continues it simply means that the Government will need a whole army of inspectors, which of course is unreasonable. For that reason I urge the insertion of this provision. Clause 13 refers to water supplies for boundary riders. In some places these water supplies become very scarce and on two occasions men have

almost lost their lives through travellers going in and taking every drop of water to be found. One case particularly has come under my notice where a boundary rider met with an accident. He fell from his bicycle but managed to get as far as the camp, but found no water there. Fortunately, almost by a miracle, a traveller came along the next day and he had a little water with him. It is necessary that there should be provision to prevent cases of this kind from occurring. Some of the water is kept in tanks and in one case a hole had been made in the tank so as to get water and the whole of the water not required was allowed to run to waste. We must have some provision so that boundary riders can be sure of getting water at the different camps. Clauses 14, 15, and 16 are purely machinery clauses inserted by the Crown Law Department for the expeditious working of the measure. Clause 17 deals with Section 47A and it is to simplify the ownership of the land. At present it is very expensive and difficult. I have now given the whole of the amendments which are proposed by the Bill. Yesterday I dealt at great length with the Vermin Bill which really runs hand in hand with this measure. Therefore it is not necessary for me to discuss the Bill further. I move—

“That the Bill be now read a second time.”

On motion by Hon. V. Hanersley debate adjourned.

BILL—PUBLIC EDUCATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

Hon. R. G. ARDAGH (North-East) [5.3]: I desire to briefly refer to this Bill. May I say in the first place that I believe in the principle of the measure. I think proper provision should be made to educate those unfortunates referred to in the measure. Reference was made last evening to the Maylands Blind Institution and I know that a great deal of good is accomplished by that institution. Numbers of children have been educated there and have been able after finishing their education to earn a good living in various ways. It seems to me the present Bill bristles with penalties against the parents and it may work hardship on poorer people. We are according to the measure, as far as my reading of it goes, forcing people to send their children to these schools, or the children may be taken from their parents and sent to boarding schools and that is where the hardship may be worked. Supposing a mother is a widow without any means, or a father is a cripple, a returned soldier, or the father may be a working man with a large family. He may be summoned and expected to pay the State for the upkeep of his child who has been unfortunate enough to be placed in such an institution. As far as I can see this portion of the Bill is not too clear. The Colonial Secretary in introducing the measure said that children had

to be sent to these institutions to be educated, but the Bill does not make it clear enough to me as to how it is proposed to carry out these provisions, and in replying I hope the Minister will be able to make clear that portion of the measure. Some of the clauses make it compulsory for parents and guardians to appear before a court, and I think that is hardly fair. The officer charged with the administration of the Act should be vested with sufficient power to say whether or not after making inquiries the parents are in a position to pay without having to be brought before a local court. I think the officer should be competent enough to do that work and his decision should be final. I do not wish to say more. The only reason I rose was to ask the Colonial Secretary to make certain portions of the Bill more clear to me.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN (South) [5.10]: There are one or two features of the Bill worthy of the attention of the Colonial Secretary and the House if members have not already thought of them. To my mind the Bill is one that if passed deserves sympathetic administration. As far as legislation goes it is an old saying that what is best administered is best. If the Bill is properly administered it will undoubtedly be of value, but there is a danger of the Bill being administered in a way that may inflict a good deal of hardship on parents and it may after all not do so much good to the children. It is a simple matter where the defective children live close to institutes, where defective children are educated, children who are not living far away from blind, deaf and dumb institutions. It is no hardship to have those children compulsorily educated but the Bill contemplates, I take it, that the defective children of the State generally shall be educated in institutions set apart for that purpose. If it means that children in the country districts, in Carnarvon, and Albany and Leonora and other remote parts of the State, are required to be taken to an institution, from the parents, I think it must bring about a great deal of pain to the parents and the children. The age referred to in the Bill is between six years and 16 years. I think we are all agreed that however good an institution may be, it will be a hardship if a child has to be taken away from its home and placed in an institute in order to be educated as it should be. The difficulty must be met in some way and it could be partially met by providing facilities for the education of defective children in various centres throughout the State. But if facilities are to be provided in the various centres throughout the State, it cannot be done without a large expenditure of money and without expenditure the details of which at any rate I think the House ought to be aware of before we agree to a Bill of this nature. After all, even in matters of this kind there is a limit to what we can spend. There is another feature of the Bill that is worthy of consideration and it is this: whilst it is contemplated that defective children should under all circumstances be educated, whilst the Bill makes it compulsory for the parents to have defective children educated, whilst if it be passed the parents of children may be sum-

moned for not giving defective children education, we cannot forget that there is a number of children in the State unfortunately running wild without education; not very many, but there are in isolated places children where the number is not sufficiently large to justify the Government in establishing a school. While we have practically normal children running wild without the advantages of education, it seems somewhat anomalous that a considerable expense should be incurred in order to educate defective children. From the point of view of value to the State as a national asset, the normal child is more valuable than the defective child, and that is an aspect of this Bill—I dare say it has already received the attention of the Colonial Secretary—upon which I think the House would probably like to hear more. I should like to know what the Colonial Secretary proposes to do regarding these children who are defective, and living at a considerable distance from the institutes that are at present in existence. In the course of his introductory remarks I think he implied that provision would be made for the education of these children at various centres.

The Colonial Secretary: No; at existing institutions.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: Only at existing institutions then. This would mean that all the children to whom this Bill would apply would be brought to the institute at present in Perth.

The Colonial Secretary: Unless their parents could make other arrangements.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: I would like to point out that in the case of poor parents that means complete separation of the child from the parents. Take parents at Carnarvon in poor circumstances who have a blind child. Is that child going to be taken compulsorily from its mother at Carnarvon and taken to Maylands? It would mean that the parents could not afford to come to Perth to see the child, and there would be difficulties about the child travelling to Carnarvon to see its parents. It might, therefore, mean a separation of 10 years, from the time when the child was six to the time it had reached 16. That would be a very great hardship both to the parents and to the child. We all know that parents sometimes hold a greater regard for defective children than for children who are perfectly normal. The helplessness of the child seems to make the parental feeling stronger. If this is to be applied to children all over the State, and all the defective children are to be brought to Cottesloe, there will be many heart burnings, and I am sure some of the parents will be very indignant and will do their utmost to resist. I am not quite certain, either, that it will always be to the advantage of the child to be taken to an institution of that sort. There ought to be some safeguard in the Bill to prevent anything of the sort being done without the parents' consent. The compulsory clauses of this measure ought to be administered, as I say, with special regard to particular

cases. Where the parents are willing, and desire that the child should be educated in institutes, it is quite right that the child should be taken there; but where the parents strongly object, I think the Bill would not, perhaps, be so humanitarian as the Colonial Secretary intends it to be if it drags that child from the home of its parents and puts it into an institution at Cottesloe.

Hon. A. SANDERSON (Metropolitan-Suburban) [5.17]: I hope the Council will not pass this measure without giving it the fullest consideration. It is not urgent. We have not got the figures and the details before us, and I would suggest to the Minister for Education that it is hardly a proper method of dealing with this difficulty. First of all, how many of these unfortunate children are there in the State?

The Colonial Secretary: Say, less than 20 not receiving education.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I am astonished to hear that there are not more than 20 children. I have been looking through the last report of the Education Department. I should have thought that in measures of this kind the public and the parents would have had the fullest warning given to them as to what it was proposed to do, so that the very different interests that are at stake might be fully discussed. The interests of the children themselves and their parents, and the opinions of educational experts, should be considered in this matter. I was expecting, when I asked for this report of the Education Department, that some reference would be made in it to this problem, and some indication given that the department was preparing notes on the subject in order that it might be dealt with as soon as convenient. There are different institutions and societies and a number of individuals in this country, who take a very keen interest in educational problems and whose opinions, no doubt, would be of considerable value in discussing this Bill. One looks at these things, perhaps, from a personal point of view. At any rate, it is somewhat of a test of the matter. Mr. Kirwan has taken the individual case of parents at Carnarvon. Let me take the individual case of the parents of a blind child at Albany. I should have thought it would be pretty well recognised that there are no facilities there at present for blind children of parents in somewhat poor circumstances for giving such child that proper technical and up to date education that is provided for the blind in the metropolitan area. But would it be a reasonable proposition, I would ask any parent interested inside or outside the House, that such children, against the wishes of their parents, should be taken away from Albany and brought up to the institution in Perth? I know my own feelings in the matter, though I do not say they are necessarily the right ones, and that they would be strongly in opposition to any such procedure, so strong that if I was pushed, I would prefer to go to another State.

The Colonial Secretary: You would have to go to Queensland.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: That is what would happen. We go on passing these dif-

ferent Acts of Parliament, whether on education or in connection with taxation. People outside do not talk as we do here, they simply act and leave the country. Parents in Albany with a blind child should not be compelled to send that child up to an institution in Perth and would get out of the place if they could rather than do so. This is not an attack on the Bill. My own views upon education are somewhat nebulous, but I hope the Minister will give the fullest opportunity to the different parties interested to compare notes and discuss the matter. To run this Bill through the Council and then through Parliament and have it printed on the statute book seems to me to be a most improper way of dealing with even 20 afflicted children. The fullest opportunity for discussion should be given. I have discussed these matters with educational experts and I believe that taking an institution against a home for children—and I know there are two strong schools on the subject, one being very much in favour of the institution and the other very much in favour of the home—the home system is the one most strongly favoured. I think that the leader of the House is strongly in favour of the home system.

The Colonial Secretary: Yes.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: The Colonial Secretary nods assent. I thought he would agree. Personally, I have not made up my mind on the subject. We all know what a keen interest the leader of the House has taken in these matters, and I am sure the country ought to be indebted to him for having taken so much interest. But the mere fact that he holds the views that he does leads me to ask how he came to advocate here what is an institution Bill, as against a home teaching Bill. If there are only 20 children concerned, I should have thought that a travelling inspector, or a teacher, to go round the various districts, or a grant to the parents to come up for a month to Perth from outlying places, or some other system that would give equally good results, would meet the case a great deal better than the measure now before us. I suppose we will get into Committee on this Bill, but I hope the leader of the House will not force it through quickly. If one might make a suggestion, and a bold suggestion, it would be that this Bill, having been introduced, should be practically dropped, not in the sense of being dropped in that we would not go on with it again, but dropped in the sense that it would be circulated all over the country, and the people who are interested in the matter, and who are up north or down south, afforded an opportunity of considering it. I should imagine from the climatic conditions of these outlying places, especially in the north, that there would be even more afflicted children there than in the south, and the parents of these, too, should have an opportunity of looking into the matter and of obtaining the opinions of, say, some educational authority in Broome, on the subject, or the opinion of an expert, say, at Mt. Magnet or Eucla, so that these people might see what they have to do in these outlying loca-

lities. I should also like to have the opinions of our own educational experts. I have only just glanced at this report for 1916, but I have been unable to find any mention in it of the problem we are now called upon to decide. Without any hostility to the Bill, in fact, supporting the principle of looking after these children, I hope the Minister will consider the advisability of leaving the measure alone for six months; in order that when we do attack the problem again we shall be able to do so fortified by the opinions and representations of those best qualified to help us.

On motion by Hon. J. F. Allen, debate adjourned.

BILL—APPRENTICES.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 7th February.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM (North-East) [5.30]: I agree with the leader of the House that a Bill of this nature is necessary to protect the interests of the apprentices who are enrolled for naval or military purposes. At the same time this Bill, to my mind, does not protect the interests of these particular apprentices. Since the adjournment of the debate upon this measure, I have had brought under my notice the fact that we have apprentices in Western Australia who are not registered under the Arbitration Act. Clause 1 of the Bill states—

This Act may be cited as the Apprentices Act, 1918, and shall be construed with the Industrial Arbitration Act, 1912.

We have at the State Implement Works at North Fremantle apprentices who are indentured, and yet who are not registered under the Arbitration Act of 1912. Then again, we have apprentices who are indentured in the railway service of the State. And those apprentices are not registered under the provisions of the Arbitration Act of 1912. To make the Bill apply, it would be necessary to have some slight alteration for the purpose of bringing those indentured apprentices within the scope of the measure. I do not know whether the leader of the House would offer any opposition to that proposal, seeing that the Bill has been introduced, as stated by him in his second reading speech, for the purpose of protecting the interests of apprentices who have enrolled in our naval and military forces. The leader of the House pointed out that the object of the Bill was to protect the interests of apprentices, and a provision is made to suspend the contract of apprentices during the period that apprentices are away on active service, and for six months after. On returning to the State they may revive the contract. In the meantime the Bill provides that the employer may take on apprentices in the place of those men who have enlisted. Whilst I agree that the apprentices should be protected, I also think that some consideration should be given to the tradesmen. Shortly after the adjournment of the debate in this Chamber a few days ago, it was stated in the columns of the "West Australian" that the Minister for Repatriation, Senator Millen, had agreed to make up the difference between the appren-

ticeship rate of wage and the journeymen rate of wage to those men who had enlisted, and who had agreed on their return to revive the contract of apprenticeship. I agree that this should be done, but at the same time I can see a hardship we are going to inflict on the tradesmen, who also have enlisted for the purpose of doing their share in defending the Empire. If we are going to create an army of apprentices, and on their return allow them to link up again, with their wages brought up to the minimum rate, there will be no danger, but there is a danger of the additional apprentices who have been appointed ousting the tradesmen on their return to the country. The Bill provides that apprentices shall be taken on in accordance with the number of men employed in the trade. There is a depression in trade, and we do not know how long it is going to last, and on the return of the apprentices, we will find that the tradesmen will not secure the employment which was promised would be theirs when they were enlisting. This is an aspect which should be considered by the leader of the House, and also by the House before the measure is passed into law. Another point I desire to draw attention to is that if this Bill becomes law an employer will be entitled to enrol further apprentices after those in his employment have enlisted who come in perforce of this Bill. We shall thus create an army of apprentices, to the detriment of the tradesmen who have also enlisted. I think that something can be done in connection with that matter, in the direction of restricting the number of apprentices to be taken on. The Bill provides that one apprentice may be taken on for every apprentice who has enlisted, but I think we might say that one apprentice should be taken on where two have enlisted. That would restrict the number coming in and would, I believe, achieve the object which, to my way of thinking, would bring about a more satisfactory result, and would do justice to the tradesmen who have enlisted. Then again, in connection with the promise of the Minister for Repatriation to make up the difference between the apprentices rate and the journeymen's rate of wage, some provision should be made so that the employer shall pay the full rate of wages and collect the amount proposed to be paid by the Minister for Repatriation, otherwise we will have the apprentices on their return, while receiving their rate of pay in accordance with their apprenticeship contract from their employers, waiting, or having to go to some Federal office or military office to collect the amount provided by Senator Millen from the repatriation vote. Something should be done in that direction. Otherwise we will have these men waiting, and there will be a certain amount of confusion and, perhaps, difficulty in getting what is believed to be the correct thing as to the rate of pay they are entitled to receive. When the Committee stage of the Bill is reached I propose to submit an amendment to make that necessary provision. It is not my intention to vote against the second reading, but I certainly

hope that the Minister will consider the points I have raised in connection with the Bill, so that they may receive attention when the Bill is in Committee.

On motion by Hon. R. G. Ardagh, debate adjourned.

BILL—INDUSTRIES ASSISTANCE ACT CONTINUATION.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 7th February.

Hon. E. M. CLARKE (South-West) [5.38]: It is my intention to say only a very few words on this measure. The people for whom this measure is being introduced, the farmers in the wheat belt, have my sincere sympathy. I have always held it to be a mistake to send people out to farm in places where the rainfall is doubtful, and to attempt to grow wheat alone has been to court failure. Of course one swallow does not make a summer. I have no doubt there are some men with families who thoroughly understand the business and who manage to knock out a living, but there are also those who were never cut out by nature to be farmers, and my sympathies go out to them and also to those who in the past were encouraged to go on the dry areas and face all the difficulties and disadvantages associated with farming, such as clearing, absence of water, long distance from a railway, and in short all the difficulties that can be imagined. Things of this kind require to be carefully handled, and the point I want to make is that such matters should receive the special attention of the Government. The report of the trustees of the Agricultural Bank is by no means an encouraging document, but the difficulties have to be faced because there are men on the land under the conditions I have described.

Hon. C. F. Baxter (Honorary Minister): Which particular area are you referring to?

Hon. E. M. CLARKE: I am referring to the dry areas.

Hon. C. F. Baxter (Honorary Minister): Which do you term the dry areas?

Hon. E. M. CLARKE: The areas where the rainfall is uncertain.

Hon. C. F. Baxter (Honorary Minister): Mention them.

Hon. E. M. CLARKE: The Honorary Minister is trying to puzzle me; everyone knows of the dry areas of the State, the areas in the Eastern district where there is a doubtful rainfall, and which areas a number of men were induced to take up, and from which they might make a fortune or a living from growing wheat. I am referring to all those places which have received assistance from the Agricultural Bank. I cannot state the exact geographical position. It is in no hostile spirit that I am speaking in this way; my sole object is to try and improve the condition of things. We know of cases of course, where men favourably situated are doing well from wheat growing alone, but what about the man who is nine or ten miles from a railway. He has gone out too far, and I would rather see him, and others simi-

larly situated, bought right out rather than they should remain there. When we hear of women going about with a piece of bran bag for a dress, and that kind of thing—

Hon. C. F. Baxter (Honorary Minister): It is only talk.

Hon. E. M. CLARKE: Is it not correct?

Hon. C. F. Baxter (Honorary Minister): No.

Hon. E. M. CLARKE: Well, this report says so.

Hon. H. Millington: It would be so if they did not have the Board behind them.

Hon. E. M. CLARKE: I am not opposed to the Bill; my only desire is to call attention to what actually exists, and if I can succeed in doing any good I shall have attained the object I set out to achieve. A great many of the men who are on the land were never intended to be farmers, and bearing in mind the difficulties besetting the people I have referred to, the Government should consider the position those men find themselves in. Of course I admit that our financial position is anything but flourishing, and as an old West Australian I say that the sooner we realise we are drifting the sooner we shall be able to rectify things. I do not make these remarks in a carping spirit, but we should certainly see whether something can be done. I refer again to the report of the Agricultural bank. Can the Minister say for a moment that it is encouraging? One can see all through that the trustees are not quite satisfied. It almost amounts to a recommendation. Bearing in mind the financial position of the State, I think it is up to me to sound a note of warning and see if something cannot be done to rectify the position. Let us know if we are going to make anything of it; but if we are to go on losing money, I think we should take some decided stand in the matter. I hope for the sake of the State at large that some other members will take the matter up. If they are satisfied to go on in this way, I have nothing more to say. I shall have done my duty if I sound a note of warning, and I hope it will be echoed by others. I would have it remembered that everything I have said has been said for the betterment of the State at large.

On motion by Hon. H. Stewart debate adjourned.

BILL—ELECTORAL ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [5.47] in moving the second reading said: This short Bill aims at two different objects. The first is an amendment for the purpose of enabling economy to be exercised wherever possible in connection with the printing and issue of the rolls, while the second is an amendment for the purpose of making the penal sections of the Electoral Act more effective. With reference to the first object, the introduction of provisions tending to economy, I would remind hon. members that the Act of 1912 altered the provisions of the original Act of 1907 in two or three different

directions. Both those Acts provided that the rolls should be printed and issued under the hand of the Chief Electoral Officer whenever he thought fit. The amalgamation of each roll with its supplement, provided for in the original Act to be made compulsory in each year, was amended so as to read: "Once at least in every three years," while Section 26 of the original Act, by which supplements were to be printed as often as instructed by the Chief Electoral Officer was amended so as to make the printing and issue of those supplements compulsory once a quarter. In addition to those two provisions it was also prescribed by the Act of 1912 that new rolls for the Legislative Council should be printed and issued during the month of February in each year in which an ordinary bi-annual election for the Legislative Council was to be held. Speaking generally the result of the 1912 amendment has been that the department, on account of the compulsory section for the printing of the quarterly rolls, has been saddled with what, even in ordinary conditions, could only be regarded as unnecessary expenditure, and in the present extraordinary condition of the finances of the country is an expense that certainly ought to be put a stop to. In practice it has been found that electoral activity is almost exclusively confined to those periods immediately preceding a general election, either for the Assembly or for the Council. In the original Act the printing of both the main and the supplementary rolls was left to the discretion of the Chief Electoral Officer, and the Bill, as originally presented in another place, made provision to revert to that system, leaving the matter entirely in the discretion of the Chief Electoral Officer. In the form in which it appears before hon. members the Bill has been altered, and this complete discretion is not left to the Chief Electoral Officer. The supplementary rolls, instead of being printed entirely at the discretion of the Chief Electoral Officer, as provided in the Act of 1907, or instead of being printed quarterly as provided in the Act of 1912, are to be printed once every half year. I think it will be agreed that that is quite frequently enough. The supplementary rolls are to be printed during January and July of each year. It is also provided that the amalgamation of each roll with its supplement shall be made and printed immediately after the issue of the writs for a general election. Under the existing Act of 1912 the provision is that the amalgamated roll shall be printed at the discretion of the Chief Electoral Officer but not less frequently than at least every three years. So the amendment, it will be seen, makes no practical difference except that it sets out that the once in every three years shall be immediately after the issue of the writs for a general election. The Act of 1912 made provision for the issue of the Legislative Council rolls in February of the year in which the biennial elections are held. Such elections almost invariably take place in the month of May. In fact, whilst the time for holding elections for the Assembly may and has varied considerably, the time for holding the Council elections is practically fixed by the Constitution, which provides that the period

of membership shall expire on the 21st May. So we may take it that the elections for the Council are invariably held in May; and the experience of the department has been that the rolls published in February are of no use for May, and fresh rolls have to be prepared. Consequently it has been the custom to prepare two new rolls, one closely following on the other. The proposed amendment aims at obviating the necessity for this double expense by providing for the printing of the rolls in the same manner as in the case of the Assembly; this is to say, the Council rolls will be printed after the issue of the writs for the general election. The amendments in regard to the penal sections affect Section 110 of the principal Act. It has been found desirable to amend the present procedure so that offenders may be dealt with summarily, instead of, as at present, having to go before a judge and jury of the Supreme Court. The amendment brings our Electoral Act in this particular into conformity with the Commonwealth Act. Opportunity has been taken to provide additional penal clauses for the making of untrue statements, and in this particular also it brings our Act into conformity with the Commonwealth Act. The only point I can conceive it as at all likely hon. members may wish to give exhaustive consideration to, is the proposal to abolish the printing of new rolls for the Council in February of the year in which the biennial elections are held. I have pleasure in moving—

"That the Bill be now read a second time."

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

BILL—SEWERAGE WORKS VALIDATION.

Second Reading.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [5.55] in moving the second reading said: This Bill is considered necessary by the legal advisers of the Government for the purpose of putting right an irregularity which arose through the neglect of an officer in the Water Supply Department a few years ago. The Act lays it down that any sewerage or water supply scheme must be advertised in the "Government Gazette" and also in the local newspapers, and that notices of intention to proceed with the work have to be sent round to the various property owners. All this was attended to. But in addition it is required by the Act that the approval of the Governor-in-Council be obtained and advertised. This was not done. This was the only omission. The notification duly appeared in the newspapers and in the "Government Gazette" and was served upon property owners, but the provision for the approval of the Governor-in-Council to be obtained and advertised was not carried out. In one case this led to litigation in which the claimant received damages and costs. The officers of the department say that they are not aware of any other claims in this direction, and that there are no claims pending. So this validating Bill is not introduced with the idea of doing anybody out of his or her

rights. It may also be pointed out that, under the Act, claims for compensation for damage have to be rendered within 12 months of the work being undertaken, and that considerably more than that time has elapsed since the work was undertaken in respect of which this validation is proposed. On the face of it it appeared to me that because this 12-months period had elapsed the need for this Bill no longer existed, but the Crown Law officers have advised that it is necessary, and the Government are guided by that advice. Since the Bill was introduced in this House I have received a letter, and I understand one or two other members have received letters, from a person complaining that if the Bill is passed it will take away a certain rights of action which that person has in this matter. But I have gone into this question, and I find that this person is the person who took action against the Government. The course that should have been taken and was not taken did not, as a matter of fact, prejudice this individual in any way, because he had the notice in the Press and the personally served notice, and the fact that the Order in Council was not secured was probably not known to him at the time. Had that Order in Council been obtained and advertised this person would have had no cause of action. He brought this action in the police court and was successful, and has been paid, so I fail to see how his position can be prejudiced by the passing of the Bill. However, if any member who has received a letter from this person desires time in which to consider the matter and make sure on the point, I have no desire to hurry the Bill through.

On motion by Hon. A. Sanderson debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 6 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 21st February, 1918.

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

[For "Questions on Notice" and "Papers Presented" see "Votes and Proceedings."]

QUESTION—RABBIT PEST, POISONING APPARATUS.

Mr. THOMSON (without notice) asked the Minister for Works: Seeing that the funds at the command of farmers in the wheat areas are not unlimited, have the State Implement Works any apparatus for poison distribution which would be less costly than the poison carts now being sold at £20? If so, will he supply this House with particulars?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: The answer should be a plain yes. The State Implement Works exhibited at the Claremont Show an attachment which may be put upon any ordinary sulky or cart, and the price for this attachment runs from £3 15s. up to £8. It is a singular thing that just before I came to the House the manager of the State Implement Works, Mr. Shaw, sent me a letter about one of these £3 15s. poison attachments, and with the permission of the House I should like to read it. It is written to the manager of the State Implement Works by Mr. Alex. Rankin of Kenmuir Farm, Kondinin, and is dated 13th February, 1918. The letter is as follows:—

Dear Sir,—I am pleased to report to you that I have received your rabbit poisoning attachment and we have fixed it to our sulky. We have already given it a good trial. We poisoned 10 miles around our clearings in about six hours and laid in that time about 5,000 baits. The apparatus worked splendidly and gave us every satisfaction. The whole affair reflects great credit on you and your staff. It is simple, effective, and very cheap. To anyone with a sulky it will save a large sum against the purchase of a cart distributor, and will effect its purpose equally as well. There is only one little drawback to the apparatus, and it is difficult to see how you could overcome same, and that is your cross bar rests on top of sulky springs and on driving over rough country the occupants get badly bumped. However, we must be willing to put up with some inconvenience while we have got such an inexpensive and effective method of dealing with this dreaded pest. (Sgd.) Alex. Rankin.

I am pleased to have received this letter from Mr. Shaw, and to find that our efforts to give a cheap apparatus have been successful. What Mr. Shaw has brought forward at £3 15s. is the cheapest poisoning arrangement in Australia, and it has proved effective and reliable.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Mr. HARDWICK leave of absence granted to the member for Leonora (Mr. Foley) for two weeks on the ground of urgent private business.

RETURN—GOVERNMENT OFFICES IN PRIVATE BUILDINGS, RENTS.

On motion by Mr. H. ROBINSON (Albany) ordered: "That a return be laid upon the Table of the House showing the amount of rent which the Government are paying annually to private individuals, syndicates, or companies etc., for the use of various premises, lands, and offices in the metropolitan area."

The Minister for Works laid the return on the Table.

RETURN—FREEZING WORKS, WYNDHAM.

Mr. H. ROBINSON (Albany) [4.40]: I formally move—

"That a return be laid upon the Table of the House showing—(a) The cost of the