

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. H. S. W. Parker—Metropolitan-Suburban): I move:—

That the House at its rising adjourn till Tuesday, the 11th November.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 6.18 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 5th November, 1947.

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

QUESTIONS.

INFANT HEALTH CENTRE, NORTHAM.

As to Staff and Re-Opening.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: (on notice) asked the Minister representing the Minister for Health:

- (1) Is she aware that the Northam Infant Health Centre has been closed for many weeks because of no nurse being available?
- (2) What steps are being taken to have the centre suitably staffed?
- (3) When is the centre likely to be reopened?

The **HONORARY MINISTER** replied:

- (1) It has been closed for nearly five weeks.

- (2) Repeated advertisements and personal solicitation.
- (3) As soon as a suitable nurse can be secured.

HOUSING.

As to Cunderdin Allocation.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: (on notice) asked the Premier:

When is a start likely to be made in the building of the four houses recently allocated to Cunderdin?

The **PREMIER** replied:

Steps are now being taken to acquire suitable land and tenders will be called when land has been secured.

TIMBER IMPORTS.

As to Western Australia's Share.

Mr. **KELLY** (on notice) asked the Minister for Forests:

- (1) Figures released by the Pacific Lumber Inspection Board disclose that 4,800,000 ft. of lumber was shipped to Australia from British Columbia during September; of this footage what quantity was received, or is due to arrive in Western Australia.
- (2) What timbers, and in what quantities, represented Western Australia's share?
- (3) Are these shipments regular?
- (4) What was the total monthly footage of all timbers received in Western Australia from overseas during January, February, March, April, May, June, 1947?

The **MINISTER** replied:

- (1) As far as is known, none of the timber shipped from British Columbia during September was for direct shipment to Western Australia. Some quantities may reach this State by purchase and re-shipment from other States.
- (2) There is no recognised quota system with regard to imports which would set a figure for Western Australia's share.

- (3) Opportunity for direct shipment from American to Western Australian ports is very rare.
- (4) Total timber imported into Western Australia of overseas origin for the months in question has been as follows, with about 50% in the form of case timber—

	Super feet.
January	3,500
February	—
March	786,800
April	14,600
May	294,800
June	237,100
	<hr/> 1,336,800 <hr/>

ASSENT TO BILLS.

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

- 1, War Relief Funds Act Amendment.
- 2, Milk Act Amendment.
- 3, Main Roads Act (Funds Appropriation).
- 4, Western Australian Bush Nursing Trust Act Amendment.
- 5, Supply (No. 2), £3,100,000.

BILL—WESTERN AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT TRAMWAYS AND FERRIES.

Message.

Message from the Lieut.-Governor received and read recommending appropriation for the purposes of the Bill.

BILLS (3)—FIRST READING.

- 1, Factories and Shops Act Amendment.
Introduced by the Minister for Labour.
- 2, University of Western Australia Act Amendment.
- 3, Constitution Acts Amendment (No. 5).
Introduced by the Attorney General.

BILL—INDUSTRY (ADVANCES).

Third Reading.

THE PREMIER (Hon. D. R. McLarty—Murray-Wellington) [4.40]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

Yesterday I promised that before the third reading stage of this measure I would obtain an opinion from the Crown Solicitor in regard to the point raised by the member for Fremantle, who desired to know whether the provisions of the Bill did not conflict with Section 91 of the Commonwealth Constitution. I propose to read the comments I have received from the Solicitor General, as follows:—

1. Section 91 of the Commonwealth Constitution does not appear ever to have received any interpretation from the High Court of Australia, and the only comments upon the section which I have found in law books are those in *Quick and Garran on the Annotated Constitution of the Australian Commonwealth* which deals with the section at pp. 840 to 843. This authority claims that section 91 is directed only against a granting by a State of bounties which may be used to create unfair and unfederal competition with the trade of another State, particularly by subsidising the production or export of goods so that such goods may be sold at a lower price than in other States.

2. The Bill for the Industry (Advances) Act provides merely for financial assistance by way of loan repayable by the borrower, and is directed purely to the development of the resources of the State, and in no way will enable the borrower to produce or export goods at a lower price than he otherwise could.

3. Section 91 commences: "Nothing in this Constitution prohibits a State," and is therefore in the nature of an exception to other provisions of the Constitution relating to interstate free trade. The history of the section shows that in all the early drafts it was expressed as a proviso to Section 90, which latter section expressly removes from the States the power "to grant bounties on the production or export of goods," and does not mention the word "aid."

4. For the above reasons, I consider that there is nothing in the Industry (Advances) Bill which is contrary to Section 91 of the Commonwealth Constitution.

5. Even if this opinion should be wrong I should point out that the Industry (Advances) Bill is no more an "aid" to the production or export of goods than the Industries Assistance Act, 1915, the validity of which has never been queried, nor has any complaint been made by the Commonwealth Attorney General. If the word "aid" in Section 91 should mean "any financial aid whatever" (and I do not think it does), the section has in the past, been honoured in the breach.

That is the opinion of the Solicitor General. I have shown it to my colleagues, the Attorney General and the Minister for Education, and they both agree with it. As pointed out by the Solicitor General, the

Commonwealth Attorney General has never taken any action in regard to the Act itself and I understand that similar legislation has been enacted in every Parliament in Australia, so I feel that the Bill is in order and I hope that the House will agree that it is.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—RURAL AND INDUSTRIES BANK ACT AMENDMENT.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—HEALTH ACT AMENDMENT.

Order Discharged.

On motion by Hon. F. J. S. Wise, Order discharged.

BILL—MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS ACT AMENDMENT (No. 1).

Council's Message.

Message from the Council notifying that it insisted on its amendments now considered.

In Committee.

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

The MINISTER FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT: I move—

That the Assembly continues to disagree to the amendments made by the Council.

On the last occasion when the matter was before the Committee, members were unanimous on the subject, and I do not propose to ask for any alteration of that point of view at this stage.

Question put and passed.

Resolution reported and the report adopted.

Assembly's Request for Conference.

The MINISTER FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT: I move—

That the Council be requested to grant a conference on the amendments insisted upon by the Council, and that the managers for the Assembly be the member for Kalgoorlie, the member for Middle Swan and the mover.

Question put and passed and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

BILL—GOVERNMENT RAILWAYS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

MR. RODOREDA (Roebourne) [4.50]: There has been quite a deal of talk, discussion and argument on this Bill, but I do not propose to delay the House long with the few observations that I have to make. I do not like the Bill or the overall picture it presents. I do not like the details of it or the manner in which it was presented. I do not like the time of its presentation and generally, from those remarks, the House will gather that I am not in favour of the Bill. When I listened to the counsel for the defence last night—who apparently thought that he had to come to the help of his fellow Minister in replying to the debate—the thought struck me that it is no wonder juries become bamboozled.

Never have I heard a worse example of a man trying to prove that black was white than when the Attorney General attempted, last night, to prove that what was a very good thing when he was in Opposition was something that could not be contemplated now, when he is on the ministerial side of the House. Certainly excuses can be made for the Attorney General. Apparently he had mislaid his brief, with which he was not too familiar, and not thinking he would have to defend himself on a subject of this nature, it seems he was quite unprepared. When he looks back on his long Parliamentary career he will certainly not regard the speech he made last night as one of its highlights.

The Attorney General: I am like the boy-scouts, always prepared.

Mr. RODOREDA: I would not like to have the Attorney General defending me—if I were indicted on a criminal charge—if that is an example of his preparation. Great play has been made, by some speakers during the debate, on the fact that the Railway Department is one of the weakest of our departments. I agree with that, but we should examine the position and find out why it is so. I would ascribe as the reason the fact that it has been practically out of the control of either the Government or the Minister. It is the only department that is in that position. Surely it cannot be a

coincidence that this department is practically outside ministerial control, while all the other departments are so controlled. Surely it cannot be a coincidence that this department is the weakest. I think the Bill is a move entirely in the wrong direction. I would far sooner have seen a Bill brought before the House along the lines of that brought down last year by the then Minister for Railways.

It astounds me to see Ministers of the Crown coming here, year after year, and deriding themselves and members by saying that we are not capable of administering a Government department. It is only belittling members in the eyes of the public when we talk about political control as if it were something to be avoided. Why on earth should we avoid political control? For the life of me I cannot fathom the trend of that argument. We have been sent here by the people to govern the country and make laws for it, and to say that political control of any Government activity is bad seems so absurd that no reasonable man would give it consideration. Why do we not apply the same argument to all the other Government departments?

If political control is bad for the Railway Department, why is it not bad for the Public Works Department, or any other department? I cannot see the force of the argument at all. It is the same as the popular cry about power politics. Are not all politics power politics? No Government can carry out its programme or do anything worth-while unless it has the power of numbers. We have heard a lot of absurdities about political control, and I think it is time that myth was exploded. The people at least have control of Parliament, but no control whatever over departments that Parliament does not control. I therefore think the Bill is a move in the wrong direction altogether. I think that is the reason why the Railway Department has proved throughout the years to be the weakest department of all. We are now told that the undertaking is so huge and complex, so beyond the range of one man's capacity to look after it, that we must have five people to manage it.

When we get down to essentials the Railway Department is merely a transport service, and I do not think we want a man with superman qualities, added to a touch

of the Archangel Gabriel—or something of that nature—to run the railway service. I do not think it is nearly as complex as we have been led to believe throughout the years in this Parliament. After all, the job of the railway service is simply to provide transport, and once the organisation is in being the same things are done week after week, month in and month out. I believe the Director of Public Works has a far more onerous and responsible job than that of any Commissioner of Railways, either here or elsewhere, yet we do not talk about a directorate for that department.

There are very few problems for a Commissioner of Railways to solve once the organisation is in being. There is no reason at all why we should have a board, and particularly such a board as is outlined in the Bill, representing conflicting interests, to run our railways. We all know of big commercial undertakings that are run by one man—the Broken Hill Pty. Ltd., Imperial Chemical Industries, and huge retail establishments such as Myers—although they present far more complex problems than are met with in our railway system. Yet we are asked to agree to a board of five men to run the railways—a little tin-pot railway system such as we have in this State. I cannot see the force of it, at all, and particularly when we are asked to put in as chairman a man who must be an engineer. I think that is where we have made a “bloomer” in the last few years, with our Commissioner of Railways.

The man who should be in charge—if he is to be a railway man at all—is a man conversant with traffic problems. That is the problem of the railways—to keep the traffic moving; not engineering problems. Anyone who knows the railways knows that an engineer in a railway system gets no experience whatever in engineering. All an engineer in the Railway Department has to do is to keep the permanent way in good order—nothing else. Until a few years ago our Railway Department did not even construct its own lines, that work being done for it by the Public Works Department. I say, without much fear of contradiction, that a reasonably efficient foreman could do all the engineering work required in a permanent railway system such as we have in this State. I think an engineer is the wrong type of man to have in charge either as

commissioner or as chairman of the board of directors.

The man we want is one familiar with traffic problems. I would instance the Chief Traffic Manager who has graduated through the service and as district superintendent. He is solely concerned with traffic problems. All other problems of the department are ancillary to the running of the traffic. An engineer has to keep the permanent way in order, just as another officer has to deal with the electrical side and keep the signalling system in order and the Chief Mechanical Engineer has to keep the workshops running so as to maintain repairs. The Chief Traffic Manager is the man who has to evolve the timetables and he must possess organising ability to meet problems as they arise in connection with the transport of goods and passengers.

If we could have a man of that type as chairman of the board, he would be able to cope with the needs associated with the problem of running the traffic. An engineer on the railways has no more to do with traffic problems than I have. The present Commissioner of Railways learnt his business since he has been in his present position, and I make bold to state that before he was appointed as Commissioner he had very little knowledge of the problems associated with traffic.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: Your Government appointed him!

Mr. RODOREDÁ: I do not care who appointed him. I say that the wrong type of man was appointed to the commissionership.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: I agree with you.

Mr. RODOREDÁ: I know that the present Commissioner has done a very good job under very difficult conditions. He has had to bear the heat and burden of the day throughout the depression and had to deal with the problems that arose during the war years. He and his staff have done a pretty fair job, from an outsider's point of view, considering all the difficulties they have to contend with. Last night the Attorney General stressed the urgency of getting the Bill through promptly. According to his statement, it is a matter of life and death to pass the legislation quickly.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Which is just nonsense.

Mr. RODOREDÁ: According to the Attorney General, it was a matter of life and death to get the Bill passed through promptly.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: And in the next breath he said that its proclamation would be delayed and that it might be months before that was done.

Mr. RODOREDÁ: If it were ever proclaimed.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Yes.

Mr. RODOREDÁ: The Attorney General failed to point out why it was so urgent.

The Attorney General: There is the wheat harvest.

Mr. RODOREDÁ: All right! We appoint a board as soon as the Bill is passed—and immediately the problem of the transport of the wheat harvest is ended! Did the Attorney General think we would believe that? Does he believe it himself?

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Of course he does not.

Mr. RODOREDÁ: Certainly not. It was the weakest argument I have ever heard the Attorney General put up in this House.

Hon. A. A. M. Coverley: It was too silly for words.

Mr. RODOREDÁ: If we appointed a board and could conjure out of thin air 100 locomotives and 3,000 or 4,000 freight wagons, the problem of transporting the harvest would certainly be solved, but that end would not be achieved merely with the appointment of a board under this measure. It would have no more effect on the transport of the harvest than if the Bill had never been brought before the House at all.

Mr. Marshall: Quite true.

Mr. RODOREDÁ: Does the Attorney General believe that the board of directors, if appointed, could reorganise the transportation of the harvest any better than the present Commissioner? Of course he does not. He knows very well that we do not take any heed of his argument on that score. As a matter of fact, there is no urgency in connection with the Bill—none whatever. The appointment of all the boards in the world, with 50 members and 50 engineers with knowledge of railway construction, would not affect the position in the slightest. The only thing that will affect the position of the railway system is the supplying of

sufficient plant to enable the department to do its job.

A superman could do very little more with the present plant than the Commissioner and his staff are doing today. It is ridiculous to suppose that with plant capable of transporting 4,000 tons a week, we can transport 6,000 tons. It just cannot be done. That is the position of the railways, and it will require the expenditure of millions and the passage of seven or eight years before we can get the system back to anything approaching the state of efficiency that is requisite to cope with the work it has to undertake. Apart from the inadequacy and scarcity of the rollingstock and its state of disrepair, the road-bed has deteriorated to such an extent that I should say quite 60 per cent. of it needs relaying and it is a miracle to me how the engine-drivers can drive their trains without serious accidents. The Bill will do nothing whatever to remedy the position of the railway system.

I was amused to hear some of the members speaking on the Government side of the House and claiming they had to bring down the Bill because they had been given a mandate by the electors. Never before have I heard so much foolishness. Here we have a Government composed of a hotch-potch of Parties and Independents. The Government has no majority and relies on two Independents to keep it in office. Then its members come here and tell us in all sincerity that they have a mandate to do this because it was mentioned in the Policy Speech! Was this matter mentioned in the Policy Speech of the member for Victoria Park?

Mr. Fox: He did not have a policy!

Mr. RODOREDA: Was it mentioned in the Policy Speech of the member for Maylands? They are the members of whom we have to take notice with regard to their policies—not members of the Country and Democratic Party or the National Party, because they have not a majority.

Mr. Fox: There is no National Party now.

Mr. RODOREDA: What does it call itself now?

Mr. Fox: I know what it called itself yesterday!

Mr. RODOREDA: However, that does not make any difference to the point I was making. It does not matter what members opposite call themselves.

Hon. A. H. Panton: It is what other people call them that matters.

Mr. RODOREDA: It is a very foolish claim when Government members say they were given a mandate, because they simply did not get one. Had the Government a majority of eight or ten members, it would be a different proposition altogether. The introduction of the Bill on the score of the mandate they claim, rests on a particularly weak basis. I hope the Minister and the Government will give serious consideration to the point I have made regarding the choice of a man experienced in running traffic for the position of chairman of the board, rather than that he should be an engineer. We have had enough of these engineers. Their training precludes them from being good organisers. Particularly does that apply to the training of an engineer in the Railway Department because he gets no experience whatever in running traffic or organising the job. These points represent the main reason why I took part in this debate.

MR. HEGNEY (Pilbara) [5.10]: I propose to offer a few comments on the Bill and shall confine myself to its main provisions. It is not my intention to make a speech that would be more appropriate on the Railway Estimates. Having studied the Bill, I find that two main principles are involved. Dealing first with the less important of the two, I am very pleased that the accounts of the Railway Department are to be subject to the jurisdiction of the Auditor General, who will be entitled to audit the books annually or whenever he considers appropriate. Personally, I think all Government instrumentalities should be subject to a similar provision. I do not believe the Minister will find any member of the Opposition in conflict with that proposal.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: It was in our Bill of last year, word for word.

Mr. HEGNEY: The other provision of a major character seeks to revolutionise the management of the State railway system. A number of members have already spoken and I must needs reiterate some of the points that have been submitted but I shall

do so in as brief a manner as possible. While the thought is paramount in my mind, what I would like the Minister to do when he replies to the debate, should he intend to do so, is to explain to the House, definitely and clearly, just what the functions of the five commissioners will be. According to the Bill one of those officials must be an engineer. What type of engineer must he be? Is he to be a civil engineer, a marine engineer, an electrical engineer or of what type? We would like to have that point cleared up.

Then, more particularly with the three commissioners who are to represent various organisations, will they carry out full time duties or will be they brought in at different periods for consultation? What will their powers be? Will their powers be equal to those of the chairman of the board? We would like some clarification of that point. The Bill also sets out with regard to some of the commissioners that when they reach 65 years of age they will be no longer eligible for appointment. Why does not that restriction apply to the other commissioners? Will the Minister give the House some information regarding that phase? I may be in opposition to some of my colleagues when I say I believe the railways of this State should be controlled by a board of management. One-man control may be all right in some instances, but I believe that the conditions obtaining in connection with our railway system warrant the setting up of a board of management in one form or another. I do not believe that five members are necessary and my own opinion is that a board of three would be ideal.

In common with the member for Roebourne, I am not wedded to the proposal that an engineer must be appointed as a member of the board; but, on the other hand, I would not say that because a man happened to be an engineer he should be precluded from any such appointment. My opinion is that if the Government could obtain the services of a person with vast experience in handling traffic and transport problems together with those of a man hand-picked from the business community, one with organising ability, and then allow the workers in the industry to select one of their number for appointment, a board so constituted would

be ideal to control the railway system. Before I deal with that aspect in detail I would say, without any equivocation whatever, that the management of the railways should in the final analysis be subject to both ministerial and parliamentary control, and this should be set out clearly in the parent Act. I shall not labour that point, as it has been stressed by other members. We should not take any notice of the argument, which is used outside Parliament, that any instrumentality should not be subject to political control, because when a State undertaking is responsible to a Minister, the Minister in turn is responsible to Parliament, the members of which are the elected representatives of the people.

As to the appointment of members to the board of management, I have indicated that in my opinion three would be the appropriate number. If there are five members, as set out in the Bill, a certain amount of partisanship will be shown, probably unconsciously, but nevertheless it will be there. I have no wish to refer in detail to another Bill the second reading of which has been moved, but I notice that in the Bill relating to the tramways and ferries provision is made for the appointment of three commissioners. The Government would be well advised to reconsider its attitude to the membership of the board proposed by the Bill now before the House. I emphasise that point because the workers should have representation on the management of the railways and for that reason there should be more than one commissioner.

From my experience in discussing railway problems—and I think members will agree with me in this; it does not matter how much the position is camouflaged—there is an absence of goodwill and co-operation between the management of the railways and the wages workers, and indeed the salary workers. I have spoken to a number of people on this subject, which was mentioned I think by the member for Brown Hill—Ivanhoe. There is a certain amount of apathy and indifference existing from the top to the bottom of the department, I make no exception whatever. I know that that apathy and indifference have been accentuated by the strenuous period through which this and the other States of the Commonwealth passed during World War II. But it has also been accen-

tuated by the lack of amenities, lack of equipment, lack of tools and lack of up-to-date locomotives. Everyone will agree with that statement.

I am sorry the Government has not seen fit to appoint a second commissioner, a third commissioner or a workers' representative on the management committee of the railways in past years. We must take the human element into account and have regard for human values if we are to make the railways pay. We must enlist the full co-operation and goodwill of the workers in the various branches of the service throughout the length and breadth of the State. I know that the enginedrivers have not stopped work in a period of about 25 years; from my knowledge of the conditions under which they work and the class of locomotives they are obliged to drive, the wonder to me is that they have not downed tools long ago. A measure of appreciation is due to the enginedrivers for the way in which they have worked under almost insurmountable difficulties.

In some instances an engine is brought in from the track which is not fit to go on the track again, but the inspectors have not been able to decide definitely whether it is fit or not. The enginedrivers therefore accepted the risk and took the engine out. These are matters needing adjustment. I stress the point that a representative of the workers should be on the management committee. If the right man were selected from the personnel of the railway organisations, then, when any industrial matter arose which needed adjustment, it could be handled without any backing and filling and thus a stoppage of work would be obviated. If an industrial dispute arose, or if the men in any branch of the railways had a grievance, the function of that commissioner would be to interview the men personally, or their elected representative, and have the whole matter ironed out. Thus the goodwill which is so essential to the smooth working of the railways would be maintained.

I have been a member of the States Disputes Committee of the Australian Labour Party for some 15 years, and in my negotiations, in conjunction with other members of the Disputes Committee, on any railway dispute that has occurred, I found the management of the railways and the representa-

tives of the railway organisations seemed to be as far apart as the poles. There was no give and take, not even reason in some cases. We cannot expect trains to run on time, nor can we expect the efficiency which is so necessary, unless there is complete goodwill and co-operation on the part of the railway workers as a whole. What I have said applies also to the traffic branch to a certain extent. It is not my intention to make a long speech. I rose to stress the fact that in my view three commissioners are necessary.

Some of my colleagues may hold the view that one-man control should be continued. In that case, I believe that, unless he is a superman, we shall still have the same lack of cohesion, lack of understanding and lack of co-operation between the men who are doing the job and those who are responsible for the administration of the railways. I hope the Minister in charge of the Bill and other members of the Government will seriously consider a reduction in the number of commissioners and give it a trial. If it is found in three years' time or five years' time that an increase in the number is warranted, the law will not be unalterable; but I believe that if we substitute three commissioners for one-man control we will be doing something that will benefit the railway system. If in later years it is found necessary to increase the number of the commissioners, no doubt steps can be taken to effect the alteration.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS
(Hon. H. S. Seward—Pingelly—in reply)
[5.23]: Before hearing the speeches of the last two members, I thought there might be something left for me to reply to, but I think an effective reply has been made by them. They have given ample evidence why this Bill should be passed. Both testified to the hopeless position the railways are in. The member for Pilbara told the House quite clearly why a workers' representative should be on the board. Had he given a little more consideration to the matter, he could, with equal force and clarity, have said why there should be the other two commissioners for whom provision has been made in the Bill. The main opposition to the Bill is that it was brought in while the Royal Commission was investigating the railway system. I think that is a just query.

I go further and say that were it not for the chaotic condition of the railways—I say, without the slightest hesitation, were it not for the hopeless condition of the railways—the Bill would not have been brought in. But matters cannot be allowed to go on as they are.

Last year large quantities of superphosphate had to be carted by road and we shall probably have to cart double the quantity this year by road. It would not surprise me if half the harvest had to be brought down by road, because the railways will be unable to transport it all. Can we allow the railway system to go on in that way, not working to a third of its capacity and knowing that it will drift into a still worse condition? If ever there was a complete and thorough denunciation of the past management of the railways, that denunciation was made by the members of the previous Government. They were in office and in charge of the railways for 20 years out of 23. They have made that denunciation during this debate.

Hon. A. H. Panton: We did not have charge of them.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Didn't you? You cannot get away with that!

Mr. Rodoreda: How is a board going to affect that position?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The circumstances of the railways demand a change of control as rapidly as possible.

Hon. A. H. Panton: A change in the Administration.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I am not going to say, as was claimed, that if we pass this Bill and appoint a board we will wake up the next morning and find everything all right. That would be too great a stretch of the imagination. No-one would be so foolish as to imagine that any great change could be brought about in the organisation of the railways under a period of years. We know perfectly well that we have to overcome the cumulative effect of 20 years' neglect, and that it will take some considerable time to make improvements.

If members will study the Royal Commissioner's interim report on the Midland Junction workshops they will find that he recommends a five-year programme to bring the Midland Junction Workshops up to a

state of efficiency as a going concern. Goodness knows what the Royal Commissioner may recommend in his final report! Members need not have the slightest concern about the Government giving consideration to his report. It will be given earnest and careful consideration. I repeat what the Attorney General said last night, that this Bill will come into force by proclamation and it certainly will not be proclaimed until we have received that report.

Mr. Hoar: Why do you not wait for it?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Because we cannot afford to. The board is not the only thing wrong with the railways. I can assure the hon. member that if we miss this opportunity of passing the Bill then nothing can be done in the matter for another 12 months. I know that members have suggested we could have a summer session. Yes, we could, but a summer session is not easily arranged. After all, we would have to justify calling Parliament together and arranging for the attendance of the necessary staff during summer merely to pass one Bill. I think it was said, "Why pass the Wheat Bill when we already have a Federal Act?" It was pointed out that we may not ever have to use the measure, but we passed it as a precaution so that if the necessity arose it could be used. That is exactly what we are doing in connection with this Bill.

We want to have the necessary power when the House is not sitting to give effect to the Royal Commissioner's report if it should favour the kind of management set out in the Bill. I have not the faintest idea what the Royal Commission will recommend: it is perfectly free to make any recommendation it thinks fit, but if it does favour this form of management we shall not have to wait for 12 months to start putting the railways in the condition in which they should be. The position at present with respect to the harvest is that there is a continuous rush of trucks from one part to another.

I have just spoken to a member in the corridor who asked me why trucks could not be provided for timber. Trucks will have to be rushed out for that timber. As soon as that is done there will be a demand for trucks for superphosphate. That is the present position. There is no possible hope of carrying the freight that is offering.

Opposition members say that the Treasurer would take serious note of any attempt to take away the control of railway expenditure and that he would hold us responsible for the inefficient management of the railway system. As I say, we are not in a state to take advantage of the freight that is offering and have to pass it over to road transport. An amount of £6,000 was spent in getting super out to the country last year. I do not know how much will be spent this year. We are fortunate that wheat will not be a burden on the growers; but it will be lost revenue to the department. We have to take cognisance of these things in view of the alarming condition of our railway finances.

Mr. Styants: Did you not lift the road restrictions on wool when the Commissioner said he could shift the wool?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: No, I did not. I received an urgent telegram from Katanning saying there were 600 bales of wool awaiting shipment. The Railway Department advised that it could shift them. The particular gentleman who sent the telegram came here, and I had his assurance that there were 600 bales, and they could not be shifted. Consequently, the embargo was lifted until the wool was moved. I am too keen to get traffic for the railways to lift any embargo on road transport unless it is well justified.

Mr. Styants: The railway officials said, two days after you lifted it, that they were able to shift the wool.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I am not surprised at that.

Mr. Styants: It was in "The West Australian."

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I can give it to the hon. member in black and white over the signature of an officer of the department. I am not saying that the officers did not say so, but what they said was absolutely false. I investigated the matter. I got in touch with the broker concerned, and other brokers, and they assured me that the wool was there. In addition, I got a wire to the same effect from the Kojonup branch of the Farmers' Union, and another from Nyabing. As I have mentioned, had the Bill not been introduced, we would have been in the hopeless position of having to wait until the House met

in 12 months' time before we could do anything to alter the set-up of the railways.

It was stated that it is proposed to perpetuate some of the present personnel in control of the railways. All I can say is that it is one of the usual figments of imagination of the hon. member who made the statement. I admit that he read from a paper, a report that I had made some statement to that effect.

Mr. Marshall: It was in "The West Australian" of the 11th June last.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I thought it was in "The Daily News." I corrected the report at the time. The reporter must have gained a wrong impression from what I said.

Mr. Marshall: I will give it to you again in Committee. You denied the statement.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Yes, and I do now. I give the member for Murchison the assurance, if he wants it, that there are no preconceived persons for these particular positions. Again, it was stated that I was wrong to place a technical man in charge. I disagree. Some people may think it is wrong. I am of the contrary opinion. Whether an engineer, a transport or a traffic man is to be in charge is something to be decided in the future. The main qualification is business or administrative ability. If it is found that an engineer possesses this qualification more than does a transport or a traffic man, then he would probably be the better man to be in charge because he has so much engineering work to supervise. We have our mechanical engineer, and our civil engineer, and if we had an engineer in charge he would be able to supervise their work.

Mr. Styants: I do not think he would have much time to do that if he were looking after the rest of the job.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: He would have the general supervision of the engineering projects. They would all have to go before him. If the officer in charge is to be a railway man, he must come from either the engineering, transport or traffic branch. We have provided that any one of these men may be appointed, so that whoever has the best administrative ability can be chosen for the position. If an engineer is chairman, it is necessary that the traffic

or transport branch should be represented. On the other hand, if a transport man is chairman, he should have an engineer working with him.

Mr. Rodoreda: All the work the engineers will have to do will be pulling up the railway lines.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: There may be some which could well be pulled up, but there is much more than that to be done. Then there are the other appointments, to which the member for Pilbara did not refer. He said that in his opinion there should be an employee on the management. I thoroughly agree. One of the first things I found, when I went to the office was the gulf he mentions which exists between the management and the employees. There is not the slightest doubt that the sooner that gulf between the two sections is overcome, the sooner we will get better working. The employees' representative on the board will be able to represent their difficulties more prominently to the management because he will be sitting on equal terms with the others. That must tend to the benefit of the railways generally. I come now to the other two representatives, those of the primary producers and the commercial interests. The primary producers have, for years, been complaining about the railways.

Only the other day a case was brought to my notice. A man took some lambs to the railways to be sent to Perth, but the trucks were so disgustingly filthy that he refused to load them. He brought them down by road transport. That is not an isolated case. A primary producer's representative on the board of management would see that the proper type of truck was built. In the past the railways have many times provided vehicles to convey traffic, and they have been totally unsuited for the work. I had a lot of trouble in connection with butter at Bunbury, simply because the trucks sent down were quite unsuitable. A truck was at a temperature of 90 degrees when it was sent to bring butter to Perth. By the time the butter reached Perth it was running out of the boxes. Is that fair treatment to give to the primary producers and those in the butter factory who produced a first grade article?

Mr. Hoar: Cannot you alter that without appointing a directorate?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: It has not all been altered yet.

Mr. Hoar: You must take more control yourself.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: In addition, there is the question of the fruit industry. I do not know much about fruit, but I was invited to a fruitgrowers' conference and the same complaint was made. Apples were railed in open trucks, with tarpaulins to cover them. They got burnt owing to the heat under the tarpaulins, and they were covered in dust. The apples were seriously injured so far as export was concerned. We have some louvred trucks in which to transport apples in a proper way—I do not say we have enough—and if there were a producers' representative on the board he would see that those vehicles were made available in order to handle the traffic efficiently.

Take the matter of the commercial interests. One has only to look through the "Weekly Notice" to see the position relating to damaged goods. Farm machinery arrives at its destination with a wheel or a front carriage broken, or maybe some other part. Do members mean to tell me that a representative of the commercial interests would not take measures to prevent that sort of thing? Of course he would. That is one reason why they should be represented on the board. It has been said that we do not provide for a representative of the Chamber of Manufactures. I am not fussy whether it is the Chamber of Manufactures or the Chamber of Commerce that is represented. I had a hurried glance at some of the amendments on the notice paper, and I will be perfectly agreeable to include the Chamber of Manufactures so that there will be a representative from one or other of the organisations.

A page of each issue of the "Weekly Notice" is used to advertise the goods that are lost. The other day a widow, with a child, went into the country to teach at one of our schools. A fortnight later her mother sent her bicycle up with a bag of parts. The parts arrived, but the bicycle has not been seen from that day to this. No-one takes responsibility. If we had a commercial representative he would see that re-

sponsibility in such matters was taken by someone. It has been stated, during the debate, that it is all very well for Ministers of the present Government to criticise the lack of expenditure and the past methods of maintaining in first-class condition the railway system of Western Australia. It would be easy to improve our plant, which the previous Government had planned to do by spending £4,750,000.

It is nice to know that the late Government planned to spend that sum, but it would be nicer to know that it planned to do so about 10 or 12 years ago. We might then have been able to prevent some of the shocking deterioration which has taken place, and which is gradually getting worse. I thought I had some idea of the lack of efficiency in the department, but I did not know the state the railways were in until I came into office. The previous Administration must take the responsibility. During the time I have been in the House—about 15 years—I have, on four separate occasions, moved for a Royal Commission to inquire into the railways, but each time the then Government opposed and defeated my motion. I also moved a motion when the present Commissioner was appointed, and that again was defeated. The Party sitting opposite has to take full responsibility. It has been in office for 20 years out of the last 23. It is no use saying, as one member said, that we should not blame any Government, but that all past Governments must take the responsibility. Well, we will take responsibility for three years and the Party opposite must be responsible for the remaining 20.

Mr. May: Do you not think the war and the depression had something to do with it?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Forget about the war.

Mr. Marshall: We will remind you of the war and some of its after-effects, before very long.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The war did not prevent the Government of which the hon. member was a member, from providing proper habitation for the employees of this department, as was mentioned, I think, by the member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe. The shocking conditions under which the railway employees live beggar description. I visited a few of their dwellings the other day and when I wrote to the

Commissioner I said that I could only describe them as hovels. Did the war prevent any improvements being made in that direction between the years 1930 and 1938?

Mr. Marshall: There was not a solitary penny to spend.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: In that time there were surpluses. We were told of the great achievements that had been made. There were surpluses in five years while the unfortunate employees were living in the condition that I have mentioned.

Mr. Marshall: The sympathy they will get from you will be very little.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: They will get more sympathy from us during the next three years than they got from the hon. member's Government.

Mr. Marshall: You opposed every goddam thing we brought in!

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: When the member for Murchison was speaking, I did not interrupt, and I ask him to give me a chance to reply.

Mr. Marshall: I will reply to you later.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: That will be the hon. member's right and I will not interrupt. It has been suggested that many millions of money are to be written off the debt of the railways. There is no suggestion in the Bill. There is provision to give the directorate power to write off where it considers that, because of obsolescence, it is justified. Is not that an ordinary business precaution? What business would go on year after year without making provision for depreciation? That is only common business procedure, and will be found incorporated in the Bill. If the board considers there should be a writing-off of assets, such assets should be written off. The member for Murchison said we were travelling all over the country to see what the people required when, he declared, the Minister knew it could not be given effect to. If that was his experience when he was Minister, it has not been my experience. For his own benefit, I mentioned the matter of butter. A request was made to me for road transport of that particular butter. I said I would not grant that permission unless it was proved that the railways could not cater for the traffic.

I went to Boyanup and took a railway official with me. After looking at the butter

in question, we inspected the insulated truck. On opening the door, we found it was very damp and sour inside and that there were bits of bone and meat lying about. I stated that that truck was not fit for the carriage of butter, and on my return to Perth reported the matter to the Commissioner of Railways. Later, I saw a minute going through that instructions had been given for the use of disinfectant and that the trucks were to be cleaned out. Some five weeks later I paid a surprise visit to the three towns and inspected the trucks as well as the butter factories. The managers of all the factories were well satisfied with the condition in which the trucks then were. They had been cleaned and disinfected, and were in every way suitable for the carriage of butter. The power is there if those concerned care to exercise it, but it has not been exercised. The same may be said with regard to fruit. I took that matter up with the Commissioner and asked that proper trucks be supplied. The power is there if those concerned are sufficiently interested to take the necessary action.

Mr. Hour: If there is so much power, I cannot see why you want a directorate.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I have not really done anything myself as yet. There is nothing I hate more than to say, "I have done this or that." I merely wanted to convince the member for Murchison.

Mr. Marshall: Why do you say the Minister had no control at all?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I am referring to a few things in which I have been able to exercise some control.

Mr. Marshall: Why not stick to your word?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I have not been in office very long.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Fancy a Commissioner drawing about £2,000 a year having to be prodded by the Minister! He should have been sacked on the spot.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: It is not possible to sack people on the spot in that way. The railway system has to be carried on. It will shortly be called upon to handle a harvest of 27,000,000 bushels. It is all very well to talk of sacking people, which would mean disorganising the whole of the railway system.

Mr. Kelly: How did you get on when the Commissioner was in the Eastern States?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: As the hon. member knows, his place was taken by the Deputy Commissioner, Mr. Tomlinson. I point out that four senior men of the railways will retire this year, namely, the Secretary, the Chief Traffic Manager, the Auditor and the Chief of Stores.

Mr. Graham: Four cheers!

Mr. Hegney: Surely young men are coming on.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I did not hear the hon. member. I think the member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe suggested that younger members of the staff should be sent abroad in order to prepare themselves for the higher positions. I agree but I do not know whether any have been sent abroad. We cannot sack people on the spot; we have to carry on the organisation. Much has been said about political control. I ask members who brought up that question what they mean by "political control"? If they mean that the Minister should have the right to make every railway appointment, that is something I would not favour.

That was the system visualised by the Bill that was brought down by the member for Murchison last year. He referred to a case where he objected to a certain appointment. I interjected that that matter had not come before me. Had it come before me with a recommendation from the Commissioner of Railways, I would have agreed to it. I could not be expected to tell the Commissioner what man he should put into this position and what man into that position. I would have nothing to do with such political control as that. As to confirming the position of assistant to the Commissioner, I say without any equivocation that we did agree to the confirmation. That officer had spent a long life in the service and worked up from the lowest position to one of the very highest. Mr. Tomlinson had retired, and the office was not one in which the occupant should be merely acting. What right would the Minister have to say that this man should not become a permanent official in that position?

Hon. A. H. Panton: Only that some of them have made a mess of the railways.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I do not know about that. The Commissioner himself is the responsible officer. He is the only man who can determine whether an officer is fit for promotion or not. If he recommends promotion, no Minister who knew his job would dream of saying anything to the contrary, unless he had information not in the possession of the Commissioner that might affect the position. In such a case, he would pass the information on to the Commissioner. It would not appeal to me that I should interfere with the Commissioner in any appointment he might think it necessary to make. There should not be political control of that nature.

Mr. Styants: The Minister would make a rod for his own back if he did interfere.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: That is so. It is the duty of the Commissioner to attend to such matters. If by political control is meant control of the financial side of the department or of the general policy affecting that department, then I venture to say that the power to exercise such control is in the hands of the Government today. There is nothing in the Bill that would alter that position. If the power was there before, it will be there now. Before the Commissioner can incur any expenditure in the way of works, he has to get Ministerial approval; that is to say, if the works are above a certain amount. If the sum in question is below a certain amount, only Ministerial approval is necessary. If above that sum, then Treasury approval is required. I have two applications before me concerning which I have not granted approval, and will not do so unless I receive further information. It is no use saying there is no control, though probably there is not as much control as some members would like to see.

The question of the delegation of authority has been raised, and it is stated that a clause has been taken out of the Bill stipulating that the Commissioner can make appointments in the case of positions having a salary of less than £400 a year. Instead of the legislation taking away the delegation of power, it is tightening it up in that all appointments will be subject to the directorate. The directorate will have to give authority for any remuneration that

may be allowed in particular positions or permit of any limitation.

Mr. Marshall: Why do that if you agree that the Commissioner should make the appointments?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The only revenue the Railway Department gets is through freights on goods and fares on passengers. Such freights and fares cannot be imposed unless with the approval of Executive Council. The Commissioner has no power to do otherwise. That can be proved by the files which indicate that he has made application to impose increases in charges and he has also referred to that fact in his annual reports. He may not have been able to impose those charges because permission has been withheld. The Government, therefore, has command over that aspect. The Commissioner has applied for approval of certain expenditure over and above a certain amount, and the Government has had the right to agree or refuse. In the case of ordinary routine expenditure by the department, no Government authority would be required. The powers to which I have referred would not be likely to be surrendered by the present Government.

The statement that the member for Murchison knew where the Bill was drafted and who were to fill the positions on the directorate is without foundation. The first time the Commissioner received a copy of the Bill was when it was distributed in the House and I took the opportunity to send him one. No other section of the railways saw a copy of the Bill at that time, except Mr. Bromfield, who was consulted with regard to four of the financial clauses. The Bill was drafted by a sub-committee of Cabinet and was brought forward without any knowledge on the part of the railway service. Last night the member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe spoilt one of his good speeches by trying to saddle the responsibility for the present engine-power position upon the Liberal-Country Party Government. I have been through the interim report of the Royal Commissioner. This shows that from 1917 to 1922 there was no increase in engine-power; indeed a reduction took place between 1919 and 1922. From 1923 to 1927, the reductions exceeded the increases in engine-power, but

between 1927 and 1932 there was an increase. Between 1932 and 1937, there was no increase, but rather a slight decrease in 1937. Between 1937 and 1940 there was a slight increase, and during the war years there was a decrease, although the increases exceeded the decreases between 1943 and 1947. Since 1916, the engine-power has been almost static, and the decreases have more than counterbalanced the increases.

The Minister for Education: Does that include the A.S.G.'s?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Yes. The history of the railways is indeed a history of starvation, and some responsibility must be taken by members opposite. Had a reasonable amount of money been made available to the railways during the past 15 years, 50 per cent. of the deficiencies would probably have been avoided and remedies made available. The whole thing needs drastic alteration. The member for Kalgoorlie said he hoped we would not put down any more 45-lb. rails. That is a matter the Government has not yet had before it. I have, however, taken up the question whether it is not possible to put down 80-lb. rails on the main lines, in order that we may secure a faster service and a much better one, as well as a decent track. It is no use establishing a board or altering the control of the railways unless we give a service to the people. It is not possible to refuse to allow road transport unless we give a railway service such as the people have a right to expect in 1947. One of the first things we intend to take up is that of increasing the weight of the rails. We have to be guided by the Royal Commission, but that is one of the first things we will take up so that we may give a better service to the people. With a better service we shall get better patronage. I think I have dealt with all the matters that have been raised during the debate, but if there are others they can be brought up during the Committee stage.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1947-1948.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from the 30th October; Mr. Perkins in the Chair.

Vote—Education, £1,411,910 (partly considered):

MR. FOX (South Fremantle) [6.0]: On Thursday last we listened to a long dissertation from the member for Middle Swan on the genesis of the Coolgardie Water Scheme. In the course of his speech he made very serious charges against the Historical Society and against the accuracy of the history books used in the schools. At the conclusion of his remarks, he expressed the hope that an inquiry would be held into the history of the Coolgardie Water Scheme in order that credit might be given to the person responsible for suggesting it.

The principal statement made by the hon. member was that, at a banquet at Kanowna on the 25th November, 1895, Mr. Nat Harper first suggested the pumping of water from the coast to supply the Goldfields. At that time one of the greatest needs of the Goldfields was for a pumping scheme, because the people were being supplied with condensed water from the lakes and the necessity for a good water supply was agitating the minds of many people living in Kalgoorlie and passing through. When speaking on the Address-in-reply, I made a statement that I wish to correct slightly. I said that Mr. Burgoyne wrote a letter to "The West Australian" and spoke of some honour being given to Mr. Harper, who had done something by way of suggesting the construction of a pipe-line from Mundaring to Coolgardie. This was incorrect. Mr. Burgoyne claimed that Mr. Harper was the first to persuade Sir John Forrest that the scheme was practicable. I make that correction, though I hope I shall be able to show that this statement is not altogether correct, either.

The first recorded mention of a water scheme was contained in a letter to "The West Australian" written on the 8th March, 1894, and published on the 17th of the same month. It was written by J. S. Talbot, and as this matter is of considerable interest, particularly in view of the charges made by the member for Middle Swan, I propose to read Mr. Talbot's letter. It stated—

It does not require a vast amount of intelligence to perceive that the chief cause of apprehension in considering the future of the Coolgardie Goldfields lies in the danger of the water supply completely giving out. It is within the bounds of possibility that the autumn and winter seasons may pass without the miners' hearts being gladdened by the

eagerly looked for rains, and the cessation of the fields of salt or brackish water may compel the condensers to discontinue production.

The means of finding the fluid by boring or well-sinking or of conserving it by the use of catchments or tanks have been frequently and freely discussed; but the possibility of constructing an aqueduct to Coolgardie from some place where there is a plentiful and permanent supply of water has not—at least to my knowledge—been considered.

Being a stranger in the land, I cannot give an opinion as to the supply in the upper waters of the Swan; but from what I saw of the river near York four months ago, it struck me that there would be at all seasons a supply of water for such an undertaking that I am about to suggest.

A pumping station at some suitable locality near Northam, a water tower to furnish the necessary water elevation, and a pipe-line along the railway would be all that would be required unless the altitude at Kalgoorlie necessitated a second pumping station.

Looking at the plan with an unprofessional eye, there does not appear to be any physical difficulty that could not be overcome; and if a competent authority (our Engineer-in-Chief for instance) were to pronounce the undertaking practicable, there ought to be no difficulty in carrying it out without appealing to the Government for aid.

If the inhabitants of Coolgardie can afford to pay one shilling a gallon for water, a pipe-line would supply water at a rate that would pay a handsome dividend. Of course, Southern Cross could be supplied and it would enhance the value of property all along the line.

There are pros and cons to every proposition and my ideas may be scouted by many; still, they are worth consideration, and by publishing them in the columns of "The West Australian" you would much oblige.

There is a suggestion that was offered by a man who claimed to have no knowledge of engineering difficulties. Perhaps he did not even know the altitude of Coolgardie. However, he made that suggestion in the columns of "The West Australian" many months before Mr. Harper spoke at the banquet at Kanowna.

Mr. Styants: Coolgardie is not the highest point, either.

Mr. FOX: No. So that suggestion was thrown out long before Mr. Harper thought of it.

Mr. Grayden: That is not correct.

Mr. FOX: That is not all. Another suggestion was made before that. On the 8th November, 1910, when Mr. Frank Wilson was Premier, he received a letter from Mr.

Hugh McKernon, at that time a member of the Legislative Council for Central Province, requesting that a grant of £3,000 be made to Mr. J. Maher for his work in connection with the Coolgardie Water Scheme. Mr. McKernon set out all the details in his letter to this effect. At the end of 1893, the possibility of such a scheme was discussed in his office, Swan Chambers, Barrack-street, Perth. There were present—John Maher, contractor; Henry Wright, engineer; and himself. A scheme was evolved at that meeting to convey water in metal pipes and for the construction of several reservoirs. It was decided that Mr. Wright should go over the ground of the proposed pipe-line and report to a later meeting. He returned to Perth in May, 1894, and reported that the scheme was perfectly feasible.

Several sites were mentioned, but it was thought that the chief difficulty would be to come to terms with private owners for the land on which the reservoirs were to be constructed. This part of the plan was left to Mr. Maher to negotiate. Mr. Wright was to go to England to raise capital to finance the project, while Mr. McKernon would attend to executive matters here. It was estimated that £2,500,000 would be necessary to finance this scheme.

In August, 1894, a cable was received from Mr. Wright to prepare a Bill for the Assembly and stating that the requisite money was available for the work. Although the Bill was prepared, no member could be found to introduce it. Members regarded the project as silly and nobody would associate himself with it. Later on, Mr. Alex Forrest was approached with a view to his introducing a Bill. He wanted to know the full details, but the syndicate was naturally reluctant to disclose the plans to anyone, for reasons that are obvious. Mr. Forrest was told that it did not matter to the Government how they got the water to Kalgoorlie. All they wanted was the right to put the water there and charge for it. That was a plain statement of the position. Later they met Alex Forrest and gave him the whole of the details of the scheme, including the number of reservoirs and the piping required. According to Mr. McKernon, Mr. Alex Forrest gave the details to Sir John Forrest who in turn showed them to the then Engineer-in-Chief, Mr. C. Y. O'Connor, who pronounced the scheme to be perfectly practicable and feasible.

At the Newcastle Show of that year, Sir John Forrest told Mr. McKernon that he was going to put something before Parliament that would stagger the old settlers, and later he found out that it was the scheme referred to. Mr. McKernon said that from his knowledge, Sir John Forrest never revealed where he got his conception of the scheme. Mr. McKernon was not looking for anything for himself, but he was appealing for a grant to Mr. Maher, who had fallen on evil days and richly deserved consideration for his work.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Where are the originals of those letters?

Mr. FOX: In the Public Works Department. Nothing was done about the appeal on behalf of Mr. Maher because that gentleman stated that he did not want any consideration at all. Consequently, Mr. McKernon did not proceed further with the matter. I want to substantiate those statements by referring to official documents on the file. On the 4th September, 1894, Mr. Maher wrote to the then Minister for Mines, Mr. Marmion, for a water right, the source whence the water was to be obtained being mentioned as the Avon River near Northam. Mr. Venn, the then Director of Public Works, wrote to Mr. Maher and told him a private Bill would have to be passed to give him authority for the work, and that if the Bill were on terms approved by the Government, the Government would help him to get it passed.

Of course, to get a private Bill through Parliament would cost a fair amount of money, and apparently not much further was done, but not long afterwards Sir John Forrest brought down his Bill which Mr. McKernon said contained the terms set out in the agreement drawn up in his office at the end of 1893. In October, 1895, a memorandum was sent by Mr. Venn to the Engineer-in-Chief instructing him to get an estimate of the cost of pumping engines of large magnitude. That was over a month before Mr. Harper made his speech at Kanowna. The Engineer-in-Chief suggested cabling to the Agent-General in London, asking him to approach an English firm for a quote. Here is a copy of the actual cable—

In connection with the proposed water scheme for Coolgardie by pumping from Guildford 10 million gallons every 24 hours, please advise as soon as possible weight and cost at Fremantle of pumping engines with

boilers complete capable of developing 12,000 h.p. to be located at six different places, about 2,000 in each place.

That was sent on the 30th October, 1895.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. FOX: The reply to the cablegram that I read before tea has no bearing on the question of who initiated the water scheme. The next day, on the 31st October, 1895, Sir John Forrest stated at the Northam Show, among other things—

No doubt during the last few months you have heard a great deal about carrying water from the coast to the 'fields. He intended visiting the 'fields in a few days to see not only what had been done but what could be done.

There we have a definite statement in October, 1895, by Sir John Forrest before he went to the Goldfields, to the effect that it was common talk that water was to be pumped from the coast to Coolgardie.

Mr. Grayden: On the 9th October, 1895, Sir John Forrest said that the small schemes had been tested and they could not take any of them on.

Mr. FOX: Nothing of the sort!

Mr. Grayden: That is in "Hansard." You cannot deny it.

Mr. FOX: Nothing of the sort. I have read what Sir John Forrest said at Northam in 1895, that there had been much talk about pumping water to the Goldfields. The member for Middle Swan said that in November, 1895, Mr. Harper, at a luncheon at Kanowna, suggested the scheme to Sir John Forrest, and that it was his scheme.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: I think this is something which should be verified.

Mr. FOX: Plans had been prepared months before October, 1895, for a scheme. If the magnitude of the scheme is taken into consideration, the amount of material that would be required to build the reservoirs and the large contracts to be let for the piping, one can readily understand that the scheme must have been in preparation long before October, 1895.

Hon. A. H. Panton: For whom are you battling?

Mr. FOX: I am not battling for anyone, but I am having a word to say for the Historical Society, which has always been active in matters affecting the history of the

State. I am just as anxious as are the Ministers for Education in this and past Governments to get at the truth of the matter.

Mr. Grayden: Are you trying to make out that Sir John Forrest was a liar at that banquet?

Mr. FOX: Not at all.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: In justice to the living and the dead, I think the Premier should agree to hold an inquiry.

Mr. FOX: Sir Hal Colebatch wrote a rehash of the speech of the member for Middle Swan in "The West Australian." If the member for Middle Swan will move for the appointment of a Royal Commission or a select committee to inquire into this matter, I suggest that the Historical Society might make the investigation; but in view of the aspersions which he cast on the society, I presume he would not like that body to make the inquiry. The members of the society are honourable men.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: The Premier should agree to an inquiry.

The Premier: Most of the people concerned are dead.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. FOX: I have one more letter to read. It is written by John K. Ewers who, I understand, is a member of the Historical Society. He is one of the gentlemen who made an investigation some time ago into the claims of Mr. Harper. I think it worthwhile to have the letter in "Hansard." It reads—

Mr. N. W. Harper seems to be a determined believer that he was the originator of the goldfields water scheme. But his belief, so far as I can ascertain, does not accord with the facts.

On August 23, 1941, a detailed report was published in the "Kalgoorlie Miner" of an investigation made by Mr. H. M. Wilson, an officer of the Goldfields Water Supply, into the beginnings of the scheme.

Mr. Wilson is a man who would not be biased in favour of anybody. Continuing—

As this has not, as far as I know, been published in the metropolitan Press, it seems pertinent to point out two of its salient features. They are:

(1) O'Connor's preliminary figures for three alternative schemes—delivering 1,000,000, 5,000,000 and 10,000,000 gallons daily were in hand in September and October, 1895, and were completed by November 13, 1895.

Mr. Grayden: I can prove that that is a deliberate lie.

Mr. FOX: The hon. member has listened too much to Nat Harper.

Mr. Grayden: What I said is in the Royal Commission's report.

Mr. FOX: The letter continues—

(2) On November 23, 1895, at Coolgardie, Lord (then Sir John) Forrest said, according to a report in the "Kalgoorlie Miner" the following day, that "If it were found that they could not get a sufficient supply of water by boring, he would favour a much larger and more costly scheme—viz, bringing water from the seaboard. He had an estimate prepared which showed that to obtain a supply of 10,000,000 gallons a day from the seaboard to be reticulated from Mt. Burgess over all the goldfields would cost £6,000,000, and though that would mean twice the national debt of the colony, it would not deter the Government from doing the work if it would pay."

It was three days after Forrest said this that Mr. Harper made his speech at Kanowna—November 25, 1895. That is his own date, recently confirmed by a Press reference discovered by the archivist, Miss M. Lukis. But that does not alter the fact that O'Connor's estimates and Forrest's statement both preceded Mr. Harper's outline of a pumping scheme.

Forrest was interested. Of course he was! As head of the Government, he no doubt knew that the public would resent heavy expenditure on a water supply to the goldfields—and it did. Therefore, he would not fail to be interested and overjoyed to find an hydraulic engineer of Mr. Harper's ability—a man engaged in private enterprise—not a departmental man—suggesting such a scheme as Forrest's Engineer-in-Chief had already communicated to him.

Mr. Harper supported a pumping scheme and Sir John made use of his support to defy the critics, as any good politician would. But there is no gainsaying the facts of Mr. Wilson's report, compiled from records to which Mr. Harper could not possibly have had access.

I might also add that a couple of years ago, at Mr. Harper's invitation, I discussed this matter with him for over two hours. Nothing he said then, nothing he has stated publicly before or since then, has altered my opinion that, whatever his share in sponsoring the scheme, he was not its originator.

To sum up, Mr. Harper claims to have suggested the scheme on the 25th November, 1895. Mr. Talbot's letter appeared in "The West Australian" on the 17th March, 1894, more than a year and eight months prior to the 25th November, 1895. Mr. McKernan's statement of his syndicate's proposal was drawn up at the end of 1893,

two years prior to the date mentioned by Mr. Harper. Mr. J. Maher wrote to Mr. Venn, Director of Public Works, for a water right on the 4th September, 1894, nearly 15 months before Mr. Harper's date.

Mr. Grayden: I will answer those statements later.

Mr. FOX: On the 30th October, 1895, Mr. Venn sent a memo to C. Y. O'Connor as follows:—"Get cost of pumping plant 12,000 h.p. to be located six different places 2,000 h.p." That was nearly a month before Mr. Harper spoke at Kanowna. On the 31st October, 1895, Sir John Forrest spoke at Northam about carrying water from the coast and that was nearly one month before Mr. Harper's claim. At the opening of the water scheme at Kalgoorlie in 1903 Sir John Forrest paid a glowing tribute to the work of Mr. O'Connor but not one word was said about Mr. Harper. If he had had any share in the matter is it not to be thought that Sir John would have had him on the platform? Of course he would! I do not think he was at the opening of the scheme. If the member for Nedlands had been here tonight, no doubt he would have been able to tell us, because I understand he was chairman on that occasion.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: It does not matter whether the man was present or not.

Mr. FOX: No, but if he had any say or interest in the scheme and he was the man who initiated it, do members not think that he would have been there to claim his share of the limelight? I am prepared to support a move for a public inquiry by some competent body into the origin of the scheme, for more than one reason. In the first place, the member for Middle Swan said that the Historical Society in this State had lent itself to a distortion of the truth. That is a very serious statement to make about a responsible body. The Historical Society is not interested in who initiated the scheme. All it is interested in is the acquiring of historical facts and setting them out as they are found in documents.

Mr. Grayden: Even to the extent of pre-dating documents.

Mr. FOX: All that the Historical Society is interested in is to see that the facts concerning the establishment of the colony and all outstanding incidents are recorded in an

historically accurate manner. I think the member for Middle Swan should either withdraw his statement or ask for a public inquiry into the origin of this scheme. There is no middle course. If he asks for an inquiry, I am sure every member on this side would support him.

Mr. Grayden: I have already done so.

Mr. FOX: He should either do that or apologise to the Historical Society. He said the Society had made no effort to contact people who were present at Kanowna. What a job it would be to trace them! The chances are that there may have been a few businessmen present, and the others would have been miners working there for a day or two and then going away somewhere else a little later. Is it not remarkable that the manager of a small mine at Kanowna, near which the water scheme did not go, should be more interested in the bringing of water to Kalgoorlie than the managers of the big mines, in the richest mile of country in the world?

Mr. Grayden: Did not Sir John say that he relied on him?

Mr. FOX: No! Nothing of the sort! The Engineer-in-Chief said it was not his scheme. Of course he would say that! He was there to carry out the directions of Sir John and he did that remarkably well and his name will be always remembered in Western Australia by a grateful public. I have one other thing to say about the water scheme.

Mr. Mann: What about talking about education for a change?

Mr. FOX: I did not start this.

Mr. Mann: Why keep it going?

Mr. FOX: I did not start it. I do not suppose the hon. member likes to see one of his fellows getting licked! It has been freely rumoured—and this is one of my reasons for speaking on the subject—that some honour may be given to Mr. Harper on the occasion of the King's birthday. There was a dearth of new knights during the regime of the Labour Government. The numbers have been falling off and it is only reasonable to suppose that a few may be created in the near future.

The CHAIRMAN: I do not think the hon. member is speaking to the Education Vote now. He is permitted to refer only to what is in the textbooks.

Mr. FOX: I think you should give me the same latitude as was given to the member for Middle Swan. I am going to connect my remarks with the water scheme.

The CHAIRMAN: The question before the Chair at the moment is what appears in the textbooks.

Mr. FOX: Very well. I may have an opportunity to say something more on the subject later on. It does not matter very much.

Mr. Leahy: Go ahead!

Mr. FOX: No. I have been prevented from doing so. As a matter of fact, I do not know why the Chairman allowed the debate on this at all! Seeing that he gave so much latitude to the member for Middle Swan he had to give me a little, too. Now we will get back to the Education Estimates. When the Minister was speaking, he paid a tribute to the parents and citizens' associations and also spoke about the good service rendered to the department by Mr. Uren who is in charge of projectors in the State schools. I also would like to pay a tribute to Mr. Uren, who has done considerable work outside the scope of his duty. He went to the Beaconsfield school on a couple of nights and showed parents and citizens and children who happened to turn up a number of pictures, and it was really an education. It will be a good thing when the department is able to put projectors in all the schools. I know it will be a difficult job, but some parents and citizens' associations are doing very good work in that direction. At the Beaconsfield school the organisation has installed a projector at a cost of £180 and has a man able to operate it. That is a decided advantage to the children attending the school and it is possible to use the projector for all classes.

When the previous Minister was in office I wrote to him asking whether he would pay a subsidy on a pound for pound basis in accordance with the amount raised by the parents and citizens' association for school requisites that are not being supplied by the Government but which are an essential aid to education, such as projectors, libraries, etc. The Minister wrote back and said he had put the matter up to the Treasurer. I spoke to the Treasurer who said he would be prepared to grant a subsidy in such cases. I hope he will

take into consideration the question of making a grant of £80 or £90 to the parents and citizens' association at Beaconsfield for the good work it has done in the last two or three years by providing projectors and other things not made available by the department.

Our school grounds are all getting into bad shape. I have not discussed this with anyone else, but some of our local authorities are helpful at times, and if the department has not the men to do the work of straightening out the grounds the local authorities should be given an opportunity to do it, and be paid for what they do. When we ask for something to be done to the grounds we are usually told that the grounds of all the schools are in a bad state. I can believe that, because it was difficult to do anything during the war owing to shortage of materials and labour. I hope the Minister will give attention to that point.

The member for Irwin-Moore criticised the establishment of bus services introduced by the previous Minister. The present Minister has not only continued those services, but has put on additional ones. There were previously 190 bus services in operation, and the Minister has established another 11. So, although the Government has not built one school, it has increased the bus services. It is carrying out the policy of consolidation introduced by the previous Minister. If the policy of the last Government was wrong, why has it not been discontinued? The member for Irwin-Moore said he did not know much about it. When the member for North-East Fremantle asked if he knew whether any bus services had been discontinued, he replied that none had in his electorate. Evidently he made his remarks to have a kick at the previous Administration rather than to level serious criticism.

One of the chief reasons for the bus services was to relieve the acute shortage of teachers. It was much better to inconvenience a few school children by overcrowding, than deny them schooling altogether. The bus services have been established in many places at the request of the parents' associations. I know, however, of some places where the parents do not favour the buses. From at least one place in my district, where the previous Minister spoke of consolidating several schools, I received an appeal to interview him to pre-

vent a consolidation. It was held over for a time, but the Minister told me that the policy was the consolidation of schools wherever possible, because it gave the children attending small schools a chance, by going to a bigger school, to learn some subjects that would not be taught in the small schools.

MR. SMITH (Brown Hill-Ivanhoe) [7.54]: When the Minister addressed the House on the subject of education, he naturally told us of the Government's concern. He indicated the difficulties confronting the Government in connection with the policy of advancement. That was not news to members. I think it was adequately dealt with by the previous Minister for Education who drew attention to the difficulties facing the present Government which, apparently, according to the election speeches, it was not aware of, but now has some knowledge of. Education is a subject that makes a good talking point at all times, and particularly at elections. It seems to me that many people who have not had the advantage of a good education or have neglected the advantages they did receive, possibly through lack of application, try to make up for their lack by a pretence of exaggerated admiration for it. All political parties are anxious that educational opportunities should be diffused throughout the community so that those who have the necessary attributes may take advantage of them.

Personally I think it is a great shame that there is so much illiteracy throughout the Continent of Australia, seeing that elementary education, at least, is widespread throughout the country. It seems to me, notwithstanding all that Governments have done to bring educational opportunities to all sections of the community, organised along lines laid down by the best educational authorities, we still find in the long run that the chaff is sifted from the grain and that of the potential we had at the outset there is not much left before we get very far along the educational road. On one occasion the Senate of the University desired to have some statistics prepared to show the wastage of students throughout the various stages of education in the State—stages upon which we pride ourselves and spend quite a lot of money.

Perhaps, we spend some of that money wastefully and perhaps some could be saved by a greater concentration of the advantages provided so that the few who are fitted to take full advantage of them may be able to do so in a given centre rather than that their efforts should be spread throughout the community.

Over a six-year period, as a result of this investigation, it was shown that the average number of candidates entering for the junior certificate examination was 1,696, and of that number 1,106, or 65 per cent., passed, there being a wastage of 35 per cent. Over a similar period, the average number of students who sat for the full leaving certificate examination was 451, which is less by 1,245 than the total of those who sat for the junior and by 655 than those who passed the junior, and of these only 294, or 65 per cent., passed. So there was a wastage of 35 per cent., not allowing for the 655 who disappeared after having passed their junior examination. Of the 294 who passed the leaving certificate examination, which would qualify them for entry to the University, an average number of 177 entered the University, representing a loss there of about 30 per cent.

After entering the University, this report discloses that the first year eliminated a third of them. Mr. Justice Wolff, in his report as a Royal Commissioner, estimated the student wastage at the University to be 50 per cent., but Dr. Sanders, the Registrar of the University of Western Australia, who prepared this report in 1943, also referred to an American inquiry that had taken place in connection with wastage. In America it was found that the gross wastage was 62 per cent., accounted for as follows:—First year, 33.8 per cent.; second year, 16.7 per cent.; third year, 7.7 per cent.; fourth year, 3.9 per cent. Those figures refer to wastage of students after they entered the University. In his report, only part of which I am quoting, Dr. Sanders said that the first year at the University provided the best criterion of the success of students in later years of their courses, and that the factors involved in academic success are educational opportunity, application to study, and persistence of effort, intelligence, and special ability, or groups of abilities, while the factors involved in failure are

low intelligence, financial and economic difficulties, lack of application, social interests, illness, emotional difficulties, etc.

I do not think that failure to qualify in the academic field is an indication of whether those who fail will attain a reasonable measure of success in the struggle for existence. With all the talk of the importance of education—and, to some extent, it is most important—we find that those who are most successful, and most successful in the sense that the world loves—that is, the gaining of a great supply of this world's goods—are invariably those who eschew the academic field altogether and embrace the opportunities that are awaiting them in the field in which goods are bought and sold. These men and women are known in the community as businessmen and women, and the successful among them receive, as a result of their activities in the kind of society that has grown up around us, a much greater reward for their efforts than is received by those who are successful in the academic field.

These are the people who are supposed to have a very high status in the community—the business section of the community, the businessmen whose status is propped up by the Press, because it is from that field that newspapers draw their advertising. A well known American author, John Steinbeck, whose books are best-sellers in the U.S.A., recently published a book called "Cannery Row," a small book but well worth reading if for nothing else than this paragraph which I quote—

The things we admire in men, kindness and generosity, openness, honesty, understanding and feeling, are concomitants of failure in our system, and those traits we detest, sharpness, greed, acquisitiveness, meanness, egotism and self-interest are the traits of success.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Unfortunately, that is true.

Mr. SMITH: The extract continues—
—and while men admire the qualities of the first, they love the produce of the latter.

Hon. A. H. Panton: No wonder I am poor!

Mr. SMITH: Just at present we are being subjected, as a people, through the Press and through other avenues, to a lot of panicky propaganda, which is designed to raise fears within our breasts in connection with certain legislation. In this

connection, it is interesting to recall that at a Citizens' Education Conference held not very long ago, the President of the School Teachers' Union, who was also the chairman of the conference said—

Intelligent people are not gulled by panicky propaganda, but such intelligence is only gained through a broadened education which produces a mind trained to reason, and understanding of the minds and lives of our fellow-men and a real desire to put into practice the truths we have learned. Such an education cannot be obtained under conditions existing at present.

The only deduction we can draw from that particular paragraph in Mr. Frank Wallace's speech to the Citizens' Education Conference on that occasion is that we are all vulnerable to this panicky propaganda, that none of us is intelligent enough to resist being gulled by it, that none of us can obtain the necessary education in order to avoid being gulled by it. I think he makes out rather a good case for increasing the school-leaving age not only to 15, but rather to 50 years. I would certainly agree with Mr. Wallace when he referred to the necessity for a real desire to put into practice the truths we have learned. But where are we going to learn them? That is what I want to know. The member for Middle Swan the other evening spoke about certain distortions of historical facts.

Mr. Needham: Alleged distortions.

Mr. SMITH: All distortions are alleged distortions, of course, but most people are agreed that history is a fable agreed upon. I can recollect when I went to school we learnt more about Bible history and the catechism than about mathematics. One of the questions I was supposed to learn was whether any motive would excuse a lie, and the answer was that no motive would excuse a lie. A lie is always sinful and bad in itself.

The first job I had after leaving school was in the drapery business, in which I served for eight years. After I had been there for a couple of years, I got a position behind the counter selling the goods that this firm had for sale, and if I had not told lies from morning till night in that particular position, I would not have held my job for long. As a matter of fact while I was working there, the head-woman in the showroom was dismissed. The head of the firm in London was notified, and he wrote back to the firm in Melbourne saying, "I

am glad you got rid of Miss Jones. She was by far too conscientious."

Mr. Needham: She was telling the truth?

Mr. SMITH: Yes. Those are some of the things one does not learn at school. There are quite a lot of things like that, although Mr. Wallace seems to have the idea that the only things worth while are those one learns in the organised field of education. It is a trite saying that experience keeps a dear school and fools will learn in no other. It is not only fools that learn in the school of experience; most of us learn far more than ever we learned at school, although I realise that the elementary education is an absolute necessity if one is going to profit by the experience one will ultimately gain in that very dear school to which I have referred.

There is an aspect of education which I think we cannot ignore as a result of this student wastage, the haste by many to leave school, the lack of application among many who have educational opportunities—all the opportunities that they could possibly wish for. All those things point unquestionably to the fact that what is known as intellectual hunger by some and a thirst for knowledge by others is just as much a human attribute or characteristic as is a mechanical turn of mind or unusual ability in the field of literature or mathematics in others. Mr. Wallace apparently thinks it is only in the organised field of education that one's intelligence can develop, but all around us we find living examples to prove that such is not the case.

I know a young fellow in Kalgoorlie who, when he left school at 14—he left as soon as he could—took a basket of fruit on each arm and went from door to door selling it. He was one of a race of people who are noted for their business acumen, and before he was 21 years of age, he had a fruit and greengrocery business of his own in Hannan-street. I daresay during those few years he learned quite a lot. Some people might think that a fruit and greengrocery business is not much, but a friend of mine who conducted one in Hannan-street had an annual turnover of £18,000. Personally, I decline to speak on this subject of education with hated breath, or to envy those who have achieved success in the academic field, or who through their inherent genius have an infinite capacity for taking pains.

The American philosopher, Emerson, in dealing with an aspect of this subject said—

If the finest genius studies at one of our colleges and is not installed in an office within one year afterwards, it seems to his friends and to himself that he is right in complaining for the rest of his life. A sturdy lad from New Hampshire or Vermont who in turn teams it, farms it, peddles, preaches, keeps a school, edits a newspaper, goes to Congress, buys a township, and so forth in successive years, and always cat-like falls on his feet, is worth a hundred of these city dolls. He walks abreast of his days, and feels no shame in not studying a profession, for he does not postpone his life, but lives already. He has not one chance, but a hundred chances.

There is much truth in that. It was brought home to me on one occasion when I learned of a young fellow out of the University who had attained degrees or diplomas in about 23 subjects and could not get a job. Not long ago I met a young man who has a diploma as a consulting engineer; he is working at present in one of the Government departments as a clerk, because after he came back from the war he was only employed for six months by the person for whom he worked prior to enlisting. I said to him, "Surely a man with a diploma as a consulting engineer has better opportunities than those that present themselves to a clerk in a Government department." What he told me was—I do not know whether there is truth in his statement or not—that young men are being turned out on production lines at the University by the dozen and are thankful to get a job at £4 10s. a week in order to gain experience.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: To gain education.

Mr. SMITH: Yes, it might be to gain education, but the competition is pretty keen. I remember an accountant saying to me some years ago that there is plenty of room at the top. I would like to know where it is.

Mr. Needham: It takes a long while to get there.

Mr. SMITH: And when you get there you find there is not much room; the higher you get, the fewer the jobs, so that there is not plenty of room at the top. That is not to say that I do not realise the importance of education and the necessity for having, in the widest possible sense, educational advantages for those who have the necessary attributes. But to imagine that

these form a big section of the community is, in my opinion, all wrong. I think it is but a small section of the community. Some have the necessary brain power—the grey matter, as it is called—but not the necessary application, the persistency or the “stick-at-it-ness,” as I once heard it referred to. It is difficult for young persons, with all the distractions that are widespread today, to stick at their studies unless they have an inherent thirst for knowledge, or intellectual hunger, as some people undoubtedly have.

As I said, I think that is a human attribute which is hard to develop if a person has not got it naturally. From time to time education has been criticised in this State and comparisons have been made between our methods and our organisation and those in Great Britain. We hear extracts quoted from English legislation; we are told stories about what is to be done in the future in relation to education in England and when it is done how much better it will be than any education which it is possible to receive in this State. It will be good to wait until such time as they do it. Many of these proposals remain on the stocks for years. I was rather interested to note in “The West Australian” of June, 1947, that Mr. and Mrs. A. J. Marshall, who disembarked at Fremantle at that date, had an interview with the Press. Mrs. Marshall, who is the wife of the newly-appointed lecturer on psychology at the University of Western Australia, is said to be keenly interested in education. The report reads —

She said one of the reasons why she returned to Australia was for their child's benefit. A Victorian, she knows Perth well, having lived here for two years some time ago. The educational system in England, she said, was at present under revision, and in due course would probably develop into an excellent one, but it would take a number of years to lay the foundations and build up a solid extensive curriculum. In the meantime, there was no comparison between the standard of the Australian and the English schools.

On the same vessel, it was reported on the 1st July, 1947, were Mr. and Mrs. R. P. Donnelly. They arrived at Fremantle in the “Orion” with their six children. The report states—

Mr. Donnelly will take up his appointment as fuel technologist to the State Government. I presume he has already done so. Continuing—

The six children are from 10 years to 14 months. Mr. Donnelly, who is B.Sc., Oxon, was previously station chemist at Battersea Power Station. “One of the reasons we have come to Australia,” he said, “is for our children's sake. Not only are we thinking about the benefit they will derive from the sunshine and food, but we are also greatly concerned about their education. Here I believe education is up to date. You can send your children to the State schools and they will have a good mental, spiritual and physical education, such as they could not possibly get in England at present.”

I think that discounts any effect of the pictures of the wonderful English schools that were published in the “W.A. Teachers' Journal” during the election campaign, and also the effect of the wonderful school pictures which were published here after the election campaign. At all events, the references made by Mr. and Mrs. Marshall and Mr. and Mrs. Donnelly certainly seem to indicate that one cannot judge standards of education by the school building in which the education is given. A leading article on education appeared in “The West Australian” on the 26th June, 1947, and I thought the paper was very fair on that occasion in its comments on education in this State. But, of course, that was some months after the election. They admitted in that leading article that this educational service, with other social services, had run down as a result of the war and that the Wise Government was trying to overtake the leeway. They pointed out that the change of Government had not solved the problem, and that fine buildings do not necessarily make fine schools; and they were good enough to admit this, which I thought was a great admission on the part of “The West Australian”—

No doubt this generation of children will have to put up with a lot of makeshift conditions as part of the price they must pay for victory and for the higher standard of education planned for the future.

There must be little doubt about the truth of that statement. I think it can be deduced from the Minister's speech on the subject of education and it was certainly accentuated by the speech made by the ex-Minister, the member for North-East Fremantle. As they point out in this article, real reform begins with young teachers—their selection and their training. The shortage of teachers is acute and it takes time to train them and we may have to wait for two or three

years for a vigorous junior and technical high school building programme. I would like to see that leading article read by every adult citizen in Western Australia, because if people studied it and considered the deductions and assertions that are made in it, they would know that the previous Labour Government had done all it possibly could to advance education in this State during the trying period of the war, and that the present Government is not likely to be able to effect very much improvement for some time to come.

MR. LESLIE (Mt. Marshall) [8.34]: I look on this section of the Estimates as the most scintillating of the stars presented by this Government in its 1947 budget.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: That is a flight of fancy!

Hon. A. H. Pantou: You must have sat up all night thinking it out!

Mr. LESLIE: No, I did not. But I think this is the brightest star of the lot. I want to start at the beginning by making some kindly reference to the co-operation of the previous Government, which has been continued by the present Government, with the Department of Post-War Reconstruction, in connection with the training of ex-Servicemen as teachers at the Training College. I fully appreciate that the State is assisting itself as much as it is assisting the scheme of post-war rehabilitation by falling in with the representations and plans which have been submitted. At the same time, I wish to express appreciation of the co-operation received in that direction and to say that the State will, as a result, have its reward in due course.

An increase in the number of teachers is a vital necessity and we are obtaining, in the class of person being trained today—the young ex-Serviceman with the necessary qualifications—the right type of individual to make good, inasmuch as he will inspire the young generation he has to handle with the proper ideals; because he will, as a result of his own experience at a trying time, have had those ideals inculcated into his mind in the most practical way possible. One item that intrigues me in connection with the Estimates is the very large increase in the amount being made available for staff costs, including allowances for primary and central schools. I am wondering

why that particular increase is necessary in view of the fact that we are continuing the policy of school consolidation which I understand is to reduce the volume of expenditure as a whole in connection with education. It is hoped to save money by that proposal.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: You have never heard anybody say that.

The Minister for Education: I do not think so.

Mr. LESLIE: I am delighted to hear that from the ex-Minister and from the present Minister, because in practically every case of school consolidation the argument has been used to me by departmental officers—not by the member for North-East Fremantle or the present Minister—that consideration was given in this connection to the saving in cost. When it came to the establishment of a bus service which had for its purpose the closing of an existing small school, one argument which was used as to why that service should not be introduced was that it would cost more to run the bus service than to maintain the small school.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: You have it the wrong way round.

Mr. LESLIE: No, that is the way I have had it.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: That is the wrong way round—the way you had it.

Mr. LESLIE: Then I have been given the wrong information and that is the basis on which I have worked.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: The basis was that in doubtful cases, if it could be shown that the establishment of a bus service would result in a saving of money, it would help the project very considerably.

Mr. LESLIE: I understood it was one of the purposes, apart from the improvement in the educational standard. I agree that that was a primary consideration—the making available to country children of an improved educational standard by means of this consolidation. At the same time, the financial aspect was considered to enter into it.

The Minister for Education: There were cases some years ago, but not of recent years.

Mr. LESLIE: Dealing with the question of improving the educational standard of

country children, I was astonished to hear the ex-Minister for Education say the other evening that it was impossible to improve the standard of education of country children, and bring it anywhere near the city facilities.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: No. Say what I did say!

Mr. LESLIE: Unfortunately, I have not taken an extract out of the book of words and I am not allowed to read from it. But it is in front of me and I would suggest that the member for North-East Fremantle refer to it.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: There is no need for me to refer to it. I give that an emphatic denial. I do not think that and I would not say it.

Mr. LESLIE: If I remember aright, the hon. member, in reply to an interjection by me, said, "I said it was impossible to provide the children in country districts with the same standards as can be provided in the towns."

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: That is right.

Mr. LESLIE: I am still surprised to hear the hon. member say that it is impossible.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: You prove that it is not.

Mr. LESLIE: The member for North-East Fremantle is aware of the standard of equipment provided for the schools in the big towns and that provided for the small country schools, accommodating 16 or 17 children. Equipment is part of the standard of education. We have miserable equipment in some of our schools. The children are sitting at obsolete desks.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: That does not prove the point you set out to prove.

Mr. LESLIE: The hon. member said it was impossible to improve the standard. Why cannot the children in the country schools be provided with the same comfort and facilities that are made available for those attending the city schools? The ex-Minister went a long way to try to prove his argument. Of course these things can be provided.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Could any Government provide a science laboratory or a metal-work centre for one child?

Mr. LESLIE: Again, the member for North-East Fremantle is going to extremes to prove what he knows to be a weak case. Nobody is suggesting there should be a science laboratory for a primary school.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: It is provided in the city.

The CHAIRMAN: The member for Mt. Marshall must address the Chair.

Mr. LESLIE: I do not want the present Minister for Education to get any idea that the other side of the Chamber is convinced that the existing standard is incapable of being altered.

Mr. Marshall: You need not worry about the present Minister getting any ideas!

Mr. LESLIE: He has quite a number, and he is altering the present standard. The member for North-East Fremantle says it is impossible.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Yes, and the present Minister knows that too.

Mr. LESLIE: I am not talking of appointing two teachers where one can do the job, but of providing reasonable facilities for the children and the teachers.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Do you think the Minister could provide a science laboratory, a metal-work centre or a domestic science centre for one child?

Mr. LESLIE: I am not going to worry about that because it is not called for.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: He cannot give the country children the same facilities as those in the town, unless he does.

Mr. LESLIE: Ordinarily they are not called for but there may be circumstances where they would be justified, and then they would be provided. I am talking of the small schools. At times we have practically had to ask repeatedly for permission to drive a nail into a door to keep out the draught. What is written in the book and is put on the blackboard by the teacher does not comprise the standard of education. When a child goes to school it learns first of all from the surroundings. If a child goes into a dilapidated building at an early impressionable age it starts on a wrong basis. It is no good saying to the child, "It is impossible to provide you with a better standard, although brick schools are provided in the metropolitan area with, liter-

ally, gilded door-knobs, but you have to be satisfied with a rusty bolt on the door."

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: I do not know who said that.

Mr. LESLIE: Those are facts. I do not want the ex-Minister to rest content with the idea that the country schools cannot be altered.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: They can be altered, but they cannot be brought up to the standard of the city.

Mr. LESLIE: There is no reason why a country school should not be equipped with the same comfortable desks and the building constructed so that it would be cool in summer and warm in winter.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: That is so.

Mr. LESLIE: There is no reason why it should not be provided with additional facilities. It should be fly-proof.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Approval was given by the previous Government to make country schools and quarters fly-proof.

Mr. LESLIE: As I leave that point, all I can say is, when I hear a statement like that from the ex-Minister, that I am not surprised that the present Minister has to come here and tell us what a hard job he has to do because of the leeway he has to make up.

Hon. A. H. Panton: If you keep repeating what you say the ex-Minister said, you will believe it yourself.

Mr. LESLIE: I do believe it. One of the provisions made by the Minister in the Estimates is—

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Is this another star?

Mr. LESLIE: Yes. This has been wanted for a long time. What I refer to is the recognition of the work of the parents and citizens' associations. That recognition has been long delayed. The work of the parents through these associations has been going on for many years, but has never been fully recognised. The organisation has been accepted as another milking cow to save the Government's revenue. I would like the present Minister to clear up the position with regard to the improvements provided by the parents and citizens' associations. I am referring to the pianos, radios, sewing machines, libraries and other facilities. I speak from a practical knowledge of the circumstances. The

moment these amenities are installed in the schools the Education Department reaches out with a grasping claw and says "These are mine."

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Wrong again!

Mr. LESLIE: I have known of occasions when a community, after having stored a piano in a school, asked permission to use it in the school, and it was denied because it was the property of the Education Department.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Who denied it?

Mr. LESLIE: I do not know. It was an official denial.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Can you quote that instance?

Mr. LESLIE: I can quote a number.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Tell us the date of that one.

Mr. LESLIE: I cannot do that off hand. If the hon. member cares to search the records of applications made to school teachers and inspectors, he will find numerous such cases.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: I suggest you ask the present Minister to show you the copy of the letter refusing that request. I do not think you will find it.

Mr. LESLIE: I am not prepared to say that the letter came from the Minister, or even the Director. I do not know whether the request got as far as the Education Department, but the department is responsible for the actions of its officers, and I take it that the teachers and inspectors, when saying what shall or shall not be done with such property, are carrying out the policy or instructions of the department. On many occasions applications have been made for the use of such facilities provided at schools. A few years ago we endeavoured to get the use of the piano at the Wyalkatchem school in order that children might practise on it, but the reply was that it was the department's piano.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: If that happened, it was between 1930 and 1932.

Mr. LESLIE: I can only say it was between 1930 and 1939, as I was absent for a number of years after 1939. It has occurred on several occasions. There should be some clarification of the ownership of such property, and to what extent it can be used by the people who have provided it.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: It is clear now. If the parents and citizens' association gives it to the department, it belongs to the department. Otherwise it belongs to the association.

Mr. LESLIE: As far as I know the department has grabbed it, whether it has been given to the department or not.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: That is easily straightened out.

Mr. LESLIE: During the debate on the Address-in-reply I mentioned the necessity of making an allowance to parents to cover the cost of school books.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: You should talk to the other side of the House now.

Mr. LESLIE: I am sorry that such an allowance was not mentioned in the Minister's speech and is not included in the Estimates. Possibly the Minister has decided to investigate the complaint I made about the difference that exists in the ideas of schoolmasters as to what books are to be used at various schools. The books should be standardised so that they could be handed down from one child to another as they moved up through the various classes. Perhaps the Minister will make some provision in that regard in order to help parents. The cost of school books and equipment is such, particularly where there is a large family, as to give the lie direct to any suggestion that education is free. Actually, it is a very costly business.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: It is cheaper here than in any other part of the world.

Mr. LESLIE: We say that ours is a free education system, and it should be free. Something should be done to lower the cost to parents of large families. We should eliminate the necessity for parents to purchase a new set of books every year. I believe that the selection of books is largely at the discretion of the teachers at the respective schools, and it would only require an instruction from the Director to solve the problem. If that were done, there would no longer be the urgent necessity to press for a school book allowance to be made available to children. The member for South Fremantle mentioned an allowance to local governing authorities for the purpose of putting school grounds in order. Local governing authorities should be given power to carry out necessary repair and maintenance

work at schools, particularly in the country, where they are keenly interested in school activities, and combine with the parents and citizens' association and other organisations to provide all the facilities possible to assist in the work of the schools.

When minor repairs are required at a country school, it is galling to find, upon the attention of the department being drawn to the matter, that it must await the arrival of an inspector, and then an officer of the Public Works Department, before anything can be done. In that way inter-departmental red tape delays the work and adds to the cost. If local governing authorities were given power to expend up to a certain amount on repairs and maintenance work, it would save the department a lot of money and would safeguard valuable Government assets against depreciation. It would also be a source of satisfaction to those who take an interest in such local affairs. I could mention numerous instances of how local governing authorities interest themselves in such matters.

The member for South Fremantle mentioned the parents and citizens' association's purchase of a projector for visual education purposes. One road board in my electorate has purchased, out of its three per cent. fund, the whole of the necessary plant, and has installed it, and two other road boards, in conjunction with the parents and citizens' association, are also moving in that direction. It is pleasing to know that the Government intends to assist in the purchase of such apparatus. Local governing authorities can be trusted to act as agent of the department and to see that its assets are preserved at a proper standard of maintenance, and that the children are provided with decent facilities.

One of the most important items mentioned by the Minister passed practically unnoticed, and I doubt if it even got mention in the Press. I refer to the announcement that the Minister had decided to make £3,500 available for assistance to school hostels. That is a step in the right direction and will undoubtedly be welcomed in many country districts in Western Australia. Even if it is not welcomed at the moment, it will, when it is established as a matter of policy, be welcomed as the years go by. It will be particularly welcome in one centre

in my electorate which has already established a school hostel and has requested assistance from the Government. I presume that hostel is to receive some assistance out of that £3,500, though I do not know the basis on which the payment or subsidy will be made.

To show what can be done in this direction I will mention the Koorda school hostel. Koorda is a town with a large district, though not large enough to justify a school big enough to warrant the number of teachers that is thought to be required, or to convince the department at that time that they were entitled to a better standard of education than was being provided. The population of the district is extremely scattered. A number of small schools has been established but, on account of the decreasing number of children, various schools had to be closed. Then the question was raised as to the institution of bus services, but the number of children to be picked up was too small to justify a bus service, or a number of bus services, as would have been required.

So most of the parents were faced with the seemingly inevitable result of having to place their children on correspondence courses. I have nothing against the correspondence system; it is excellent. I think that the scholastic record of the pupils who take correspondence courses stands extremely high, but it is a tremendous burden upon the parents, who are required to supervise those lessons. The Koorda Road Board, the parents and citizens' association, the Country Women's Association and various local bodies got together and decided that they had to do something about providing decent and reasonable education for the children in their own district. As a result of the combined effort, they took over an existing vacant building in the town.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: You have left something out, have you not?

Mr. LESLIE: No, I shall come to that presently.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: No, you have left it out. Before they went ahead they asked the Government whether it would be prepared to assist them in some way with a subsidy, and the Government said that it would.

Mr. LESLIE: Yes, they got the Government's blessing.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: They got more than a blessing; they got money.

Mr. LESLIE: No, they did not.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Yes, they did.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. LESLIE: I am prepared to concede that they may have received a measure of assistance merely to start their effort, which was small. I have the balance sheet of the effort made by the people of the district, and I fear that the measure of assistance that came from the Government at that stage appears so small that, by comparison with the figures of local effort, it fades into insignificance. Therefore I must be pardoned if I overlooked it.

Hon. A. H. Pantou: You are pretty miserable about it.

Mr. LESLIE: I concede that the ex-Minister gave the project every encouragement, and I believe he was keenly interested and desired to see it succeed. Representations were made to him, but I do not think they reached the stage of finality for some form of subsidy.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: They reached the stage of finality. The Koorda people asked me to go up and open the hostel, even though the Labour Government had been defeated, because of what I and the previous Government had done to assist.

Mr. LESLIE: The desire of the Koorda people at that time was to pay a tribute to the interest shown by the ex-Minister. They also wanted the present Minister to attend, and at that time they did not know who the new Minister would be. They wanted to put all the facts before the Minister and show that it would be impossible to carry on the hostel unless they got a generous measure of Government assistance by way of a recurring subsidy.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: You do not know your facts. They got an annual subsidy.

Mr. LESLIE: Now the hon. member is dragging in something that has nothing whatever to do with the question.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: It has everything to do with the question.

Mr. LESLIE: Not only the Koorda hostel but all the parents throughout the district got an allowance. That is paid to the parents of the children, and if it was expected that the parents were to hand over that

sum of money, plus the normal costs of maintaining their children at the hostel, it would be too much.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: That is part of the cost.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member will address the Chair.

Mr. LESLIE: Actually, it was not assistance to the hostel; it was assistance to the parents.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: I do not concede that point at all.

Mr. LESLIE: That is the nature of the assistance; it was not given to the hostel. I do not say it was not that the Minister was unconvinced of the excellent nature of the experiment. It was an experiment.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: The Koorda experiment was the genesis of the living-away-from-home allowance.

Mr. LESLIE: I thank the hon. member.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: That was told the people, and they know it.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. LESLIE: The living-away-from-home allowance was introduced as a result of the Koorda experiment to establish a school hostel, but I still revert to the point that the hostel has not been assisted directly. The ex-Minister was invited to attend the opening and, had he done so, he would have been handed a balance sheet showing a debit balance of £300, in respect of which the people were asking the Government for assistance. That was the hostel, not the parents. The Government did assist the parents. The hostel boarded the children at below cost.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Was not the money made available to the parents to enable them to pay part of the cost of the children's board at the hostel?

Mr. LESLIE: It was paid by way of a living-away-from-home allowance. This is a question of there having been no living accommodation available. The living-away-from-home allowance would not have been sufficient to enable parents to send their children to school where they could obtain boarding facilities. There were no boarding facilities at Koorda.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: There were boarding facilities at the hostel five days in the week.

Mr. LESLIE: Without the living-away-from-home allowance, the parents would have been obliged to send their children elsewhere to school but for the hostel being brought into existence.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: And pay the full cost.

Mr. LESLIE: Regardless of the allowance, the Koorda people made their experiment.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: No, they did not. That is where you are wrong.

Mr. LESLIE: The hostel was established before the living-away-from-home allowance was introduced.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Are you sure?

Mr. LESLIE: The hon. member said the experiment at Koorda influenced him.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: No.

Mr. LESLIE: The hostel was started before the allowance was granted. Then the hon. member, as Minister for Education, went to Koorda to see the hostel for himself and was thrilled with it.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: I went there before it started.

Mr. LESLIE: The hostel was started as a result of the initiative of the local people and has proved a success. At present, it has over 40 children who could not possibly get similar education by correspondence. But for the hostel, even with the living-away-from-home allowance, the parents of the children would have been involved in considerably more cost to send their children elsewhere. Now the question arises how the people of the district will continue to maintain the hostel.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Look to the Government side for that.

Mr. LESLIE: The Government has provided for it.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Then why worry about it?

Mr. LESLIE: I was very proud, for the sake of the Koorda people, to hear of the living-away-from-home allowance. I feel that the £3,500 which the Minister has made available for school hostels is the result of that privately-initiated scheme.

Hon. A. H. Panton: I can see Koorda getting £3,000 of the £3,500!

Mr. LESLIE: So can I, because Koorda very much needs it. There is room for expansion and the hostel there would be able to accommodate children from other centres.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: I bet Carnarvon will not get any part of the £3,500!

Mr. LESLIE: One never knows one's luck. I believe that the hostel could be made to provide accommodation for more children than it is accommodating now. If this were done, the parents of the children would be able to avoid some of the expense which they must now incur. An investigation of this school hostel at Koorda by members would be well worth while, because the provision of such a facility, in conjunction with the consolidation of schools, I believe is the solution to many of our educational problems today. By these means we shall be able to establish not only the secondary schools and junior high schools which the Minister mentioned when introducing his Estimates, but also primary schools of a better standard than we have today. In saying "a better standard" I mean that a greater number of children will be able to attend the school and by so doing will gain human contacts that must reflect favourably on our social system. I have once again to commend the Minister on literally having taken the bull by the horns and—

Hon. A. H. Panton: That is what the Honorary Minister said when she wanted milk!

Mr. LESLIE:—having done something really worth while. He has entered upon a new era so far as our educational system is concerned.

MR. HILL (Albany) [9.13]: When one looks at our educational system, one must agree that the present Government has inherited a very difficult problem. It is not much use trying to blame the war. For many years before the war the Education Department was neglected; six years of war on top of that neglect makes the problem still more difficult. I cast no reflection upon the member for North-East Fremantle who, during his term as Minister, I consider did an excellent job. It is not my intention to roam round the State, as other members have done in speaking to these Estimates, but I draw the attention of the Committee to the importance of my electorate from the educational standpoint. We had a few country schools but most of them have been closed on account of the consolidation of schools. We have two main centres, Albany

and Denmark. We have an infants' school at Albany which is in need of enlargement.

One very long-felt want is a shelter shed for the children. I think there are between 300 and 400 children attending the school and they have no shelter shed. New lavatories and septic tanks are also urgently needed. The State school is a very old school and is at present filled to capacity. The biggest need there is improvement to the grounds. I hope the Minister will soon resume the land facing York-street and so improve the school ground. We have one of the best high schools in the State. It has a fine record and the buildings and grounds are something of which the people of Albany are justifiably proud; but a hostel or hostels for the school are urgent requirements.

Another educational activity at Albany is the physical fitness camp at the quarantine station. We have a lot of fine buildings there, beautifully situated for summer holidays. The taking of country children to the seaside for a summer holiday is a job well worth while. I shall never forget my experience when travelling about the State with the Outports Commission. I saw the conditions on the Goldfields and along the Wongan Hills line; I observed the poor little children in the backblocks, and I thought that to give them a holiday at the seaside would also be a job well worth while. Denmark is another important centre. We have there the State school and the School of Agriculture. The latter is the dairy school for the State; it is a recently-constructed building of which we are proud. But we should not put all our money into elaborate schools and so neglect other schools.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Do you think it is too good?

Mr. HILL: No, but I would like to see money spent on some other buildings.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: We should have saved the money and spent it elsewhere?

Mr. HILL: That is the opinion of quite a few people.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: It is not my opinion.

Mr. HILL: I do not know that I altogether agree with the member for North-East Fremantle. Education is something we must not demean. We must remember that in carrying out our education policy we are preparing for future generations.

In my opinion, education is one of the most important activities of the Government.

Hon. A. H. Panton: You do not believe in posterity doing something for us!

Mr. HILL: There are two things we have not got at Albany at present. One is a kindergarten, the other a technical school, but I hope that ere long these will be provided. Taking our education system right through, I think it is very fine. I remember a prisoner-of-war during World War I in Germany talking to a Russian prisoner-of-war. The Russian said, "In Germany where there is a town of only 300 or 400 inhabitants, a school is provided." The West Australian prisoner-of-war said, "You should be in my country. Where 10 children can be got together not only is a school built for them, but the children are paid to attend the school." The Russian could hardly believe him. I conclude by repeating that by attending to our education we are building up the future of the State.

MR. NALDER (Wagin) [9.18]: I desire briefly to touch on a point which has not been mentioned by other members. I refer to the allowance made to mothers whose children are taught by correspondence. Members no doubt are aware that only those mothers who are in a position to employ a domestic or someone to supervise the correspondence class, receive the allowance. Some assistance should be given to families who are not in a position to employ domestics or persons to help with the correspondence class. I have received a number of letters from people in my electorate and will mention again one letter from a lady that I quoted before. This lady lives 29 miles from the nearest school; she has been teaching her children for three years and has received no allowance whatever; yet a few miles away a person, who could be in a position to employ help, could receive assistance from the department.

Some consideration should be extended to mothers who cannot employ help. They should receive financial assistance to encourage them in the education of their children. Those who are living in the remote areas, far from existing facilities, should, I consider, receive all the assistance that is possible. They are helping to develop our out-back country and are pioneers in every sense of the word. Everything that the Government can do should be done to assist them,

especially with regard to the education of their children. I believe that financial aid should be forthcoming to help them.

MR. NIMMO (Mt. Hawthorn) [9.21]: I am very concerned about the educational facilities in my electorate. During my campaign I mentioned that I was greatly in favour of no more than 30 to 35 pupils being taught in one class. I am still of that opinion. I hope the Minister will look ahead and not be concerned about just tomorrow. For my part, I am not so much interested in what happened last year but in what should be done in the future. When we plan in connection with the provision of schools, consideration should be given to the prospective growth of a district and the number of classes that would probably have to be catered for. In one district we might have to plan for a school building with six or more rooms, but in the existing circumstances we might not be able to erect more than three. My electorate starts from Graylands with quite a number of homes situated around the mental hospital and the children there have to walk to Claremont, which is quite a long distance, for their schooling. Then we go to City Beach and there we have 57 children between the ages of one and fourteen, 31 of them being in the four to ten year-old group. There is no school there.

Then we come in to Floreat Park where there are 404 children between the ages of one and 14, and approximately 234 between four and ten years of age. There is no school in that part. Then in Wembley we have a small school which we cannot enlarge, and that is the point I want to make in my remarks. In future when we set out to provide a school, let us see that there is space for extensions. In that particular area the previous Government provided two extra rooms but no more can be erected there. The City Beach children have to go to Jolimont, travelling in the bus and taking up room that should be occupied by business people. At Mt. Hawthorn there is quite a nice school but the same trouble exists there—lack of space. Then we get to Innaloo where there is a very small school, but fortunately there is sufficient land on which three or four additional rooms could be erected.

Next we get to Scarborough, and the same position exists there. The school is overcrowded and there is little room for expansion. Fortunately the Government has seen

fit to buy 14 acres there. Then we get to Osborne Park where we have a rather old school upon which a lot of money should be spent, although the present Government has expended in the vicinity of £2,000 on outhouses. At Tuart Hill there is a rather small school and plans have been drawn for the erection of a new building. Dealing next with kindergartens, we have some in a number of areas, housed in small halls. The main kindergarten is at Mt. Hawthorn, which is a fine institution.

I would now like to deal with the parents and citizens' associations and their work in my electorate. At Tuart Hill the association has spent upwards of £180 on the purchase of a machine in order to show pictures to the children. As most members know, the association at Mt. Hawthorn has spent about £1,000 on the provision of a kitchen which is well worth seeing. We hope to have in the vicinity of 75 families housed in the Air Force huts on the border of the Wembley area, which means we will get an increase, taking an average of two children per family, of about another 150 odd in the district. I trust the Minister will be able to do something more with regard to the educational facilities in my district.

MR. CORNELL (Avon) [9.27]: I understand that the debate on the Estimates is a sort of consolation prize to enable those members who did not say what they should have during the Address-in-reply debate, to fill in the gaps. I did not think it possible that so many members would have so much to say on the Votes we have dealt with to date. I do not propose to take members on a tour of the Avon electorate because the educational disabilities there have been placed before the Minister who is fully aware of the deficiencies that exist. In any case, it would be futile for me to say any more than has been stated by my distinguished friend, the member for Mt. Marshall, who this evening indulged in a dissertation on education, and he was fully aided and abetted by the member for North-East Fremantle. In the circumstances, any member who knows nothing about education now is, in my opinion, rather dumb.

During the course of his speech in introducing the Estimates, the Minister for Education made some reference to a proposal to set up a committee to inquire into the question of the consolidation of the Acts

applying to local governing authorities. The object was to formulate one statute to cover them all. Whether or not that is practicable, I do not know. A road board is a road board and a municipality is a municipality and, in my opinion, "never the twain shall meet." There are many things applicable to a road board that are not applicable to a municipality and vice versa. To put all matters concerning them into one Act would, in my opinion, provide a statute under which a road board secretary would be expected to administer his road district but the Act would contain a lot of useless material that would not be applicable to his particular province. A similar position would obtain so far as a town clerk is concerned. He would be asked to administer the Act and in that Act would be a lot of redundant stuff which would not be applicable to a municipality.

The new Act, whatever it might be, will concern road board secretaries and town clerks more than anyone else. They will be asked to administer the Act in the main and up to date they have not been consulted, I understand, insofar as the preliminary investigations into this matter are concerned. I venture to say that these gentlemen know a good deal more about local government matters than those who tick their books with green ink. The best service that could be rendered to the field of local government—and I mentioned this on the Address-in-reply—would be a provision to give local authorities the right to strike one rate instead of the multiplicity which obtain at present—one rate which would cover all financial activities of local authorities, in place of the provision that requires road boards, at any rate, to strike three different rates: road, health, and vermin.

If for some reason or another a local authority is faced with an epidemic and has to expend all its health revenue, it does not cease its control measures when the health vote is extinguished, but goes on with the job by overdrawing the health account against one of the other general accounts. It would probably be put on the mat by the local government office; but that has to be done because local authorities have a duty to perform to the public and cannot neglect that duty through lack of cash. In my opinion there is no insurmountable difficulty in connection with the striking of

one rate and I suggest to the Minister that he give consideration to that being done.

The Minister made reference to the town planning office. As yet, I have not had a great deal to do with that particular department. But as the result of one little incident in connection with which I had occasion to disagree with the Town Planning Commissioner, I was led to the belief that there could be a little more elasticity in the mind of that gentleman. I had occasion to submit to him a proposition to subdivide half an acre of land on which were constructed two dwellings. The respective tenants who had been renting them for some time desired to purchase them. The proposition was to cut the land into two equal portions and for the respective occupants to take over the buildings.

The matter was submitted to the Commissioner and he agreed, but only subject to the proviso that the subdivision be carried out by a licensed surveyor. The cost of getting a licensed surveyor to cut half an acre into two equal quarter-acre blocks would have been in the vicinity of £25. I communicated with the Titles Office to see whether they had any objection to the division of the land and they said that in view of the difficulty and expense of getting a surveyor to go into the country and do the work, they would raise no objection. However, the Town Planning Commissioner was adamant and the subdivision was carried out at a cost of £25, which the two tenants had to meet. They were not able to pay the amount in one sum and arrangements had to be made for the money to be paid by instalments. That has been my only experience of the Town Planning Commissioner, but I think that in that instance he could have been a little more lenient, considering all the circumstances.

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION

(Hon. A. F. Watts—Katanning—in reply) [9.35]: It is not my intention to take up a good deal of time in reply. At the outset, I would express my thanks to members for the way in which, in general, they have received these Estimates. I propose, in as short a time as possible, to deal with one or two questions that have been raised. The member for South Fremantle drew attention to the question of remedial work on school grounds. In

July last, under instructions, a report was obtained from the various district inspectors as to the school grounds that require urgent attention, and if my memory serves me right, approximately 48 of them were found, roughly speaking, divided between the country and metropolitan districts. Prior to that, a list had been prepared which dealt only with the metropolitan districts. Every effort will be made to deal with those school grounds.

A number of expenditures have been authorised on school grounds already, and as quickly as possible work will be done on those where the conditions have been reported by the inspectors as requiring urgent attention. Reference was also made to allowing local authorities to do the work. That may be practicable in some cases, though I cannot say that any definite consideration has been given to it. I do know, however, at least one instance—and the member for North-East Fremantle will remember it—where the work of the local authority was productive of considerable argument, and that was at Bunbury in connection with the high school grounds. Difficulties that lie in the way of local authorities in complying with the needs of the department for work on school grounds are fairly considerable I think; and while I would be quite prepared to consider any approach made by local authorities in regard to these matters, I do not think it could be laid down as a general rule.

The member for Irwin-Moore made some reference to the infiltration of Communism into the University and the Training College. I have no means of speaking as to the University. I have not had an opportunity to come into close contact with the operations of that institution since I assumed office, and therefore I do not propose to say whether the hon. gentleman has grounds for his statement or not. But he made use of the phrase "definite influence of Communism" in regard to the Training College; and I must say that I do not think that any such suggestion can be given reasonable credence.

Most of us are acquainted with the principal of the Training College, Mr. Sten, and I do not suppose there is in our community a more loyal citizen to the British Crown, after the many years of service he has given to it, both as a public servant of this State and as a soldier. As far as I can gather from acquaintance and discussions with them, I

would say that those who serve under him are substantially of the same calibre, though without, in some cases, his experience. So I would require more in regard to that particular staff than mere obiter dicta of the nature that have been made during this debate to convince me that any such difficulty exists at the college at the present time.

The member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe, in the course of a most interesting speech in many ways, gave me the impression that he under-estimated the value of education as we know it. I hope I do not misjudge the hon. member when I say that he indicated to me that he considered education was valuable only if a person wanted to go into business. I tremble to think what might be the result of a general conclusion of that nature. I suggest that the main value of education is to make people able to think soundly.

Mr. Rodoreda: The schools do not do that.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: They make every effort to do that with the younger generation. So far as I can see, the curriculum generally and the interests of the teaching staff are directed along those lines. I do not suppose they attain their objective in every instance, but I am firmly convinced that many do gain the ability to think along intelligent lines and decide for themselves, for example, which of a number of conflicting ideologies is the one they should follow. In addition, it is necessary to give them, in the primary and post-primary stages, some insight into the various matters which may concern them when they go out into the world and enter the occupation they see fit to follow, and generally to equip them to take their place in a fiercely competitive world. Whether they take advantage of it or not when they go into commerce or industry, or remain in some backwater more pleasing to them, does not seem to me to matter. They gain the opportunity to take their place in a competitive world, and that is what one of the foundation stones of our education system should be, and I think it is, substantially.

The member for Mt. Marshall made reference, *inter alia*, to the question of assistance for the supply of school books. My sentiments are with those desires. The Premier murmurs that the Treasury may be the trouble. I had some investigations

made into this question and I found that to provide as little as 6s. per head in the primary classes, and from £1 to £2 per head in the post-primary and secondary classes, depending on the requirements of the individuals, it would cost approximately £28,500 per annum, in round figures. That would not altogether meet the position desired by the hon. member, but it would make some contribution towards it. For the time being, I can inform him that the matter will have to rest, however desirable it might be.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Cannot you spend some of the deficit?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The member for Wagin made reference to the supervisor's allowance paid in respect of correspondence children. I suggest to him that if he will refer to the "Hansard" report of my observations when introducing these Estimates he will find, over about a page of that report, a statement covering the matter to which he referred, pointing out the difficulties with which the department would be faced in complying with his requests. Those difficulties are not only of a financial character. He will there find reasons why it might be advisable to do something other than adopt the proposition which he has so much in mind. If, after looking into that statement, he feels inclined to discuss the matter with me, I shall be glad to enlarge on it. I do not think there is anything else I need mention at this stage.

Vote put and passed.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: You Mr. Chairman, have not allowed the Committee any opportunity to discuss the items, because immediately the Minister resumed his seat you put the division. The practice previously has been to go through the sub-divisions.

The CHAIRMAN: It has been done by divisions. A great many divisions were involved in the previous portfolios. There was only one in the division of Education. Members could have had an opportunity, after the Minister had replied to the general debate, of rising to question any particular item in the Vote. The division has gone now, I am afraid.

Vote—Town Planning, £2,700—agreed to.

Vote—Department of Industrial Development, £24,220:

THE MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT (Hon. A. F. Watts—Katanning) [9.47]: These Estimates deal with the Department of Industrial Development which at the present time is generally recognised as being of considerable importance, and has, indeed been of such importance for many years. There are a great many matters to which I could make reference in connection with this department, but as some of them will be dealt with in legislation, of which I gave notice this afternoon, and one or two others have been covered in the debates that have already taken place, I do not propose to deal with them. I refer more particularly to the charcoal-iron industry at Wundowie and the proposals for the establishment of a steel industry in Western Australia. Both of those projects will be referred to during the course of the debate on the Bill which I have mentioned. I therefore propose on this occasion to make no reference to them.

The activities of the department are expanding very rapidly. I can almost say that the stage has now been reached where we do not need to ask industries to make inquiries as to their establishment in Western Australia; they are coming forward entirely of their own volition. It may be that in the not too far distant future we will have to make a selection from the many offering, because it will be impossible to cope with the desires of all the people looking for industrial development in this State. It is the intention of the Government to encourage the establishment of industries where suitable conditions can be found outside the metropolitan area; in short to decentralise them wherever possible. To that end, it is hoped that the textile industry, in which the member for Collie has been very interested of late, and naturally so, will be able to be established at Collie, because it is felt that there will be suitable facilities there and that it could not be anything but of advantage to the State to press for its establishment there.

We are hopeful, also, that an important cheese company will shortly decide to establish itself in the Albany district, because it has expressed the opinion that it would prefer to be established in an area capable of development and at present not substantially developed. I have every expectation

that it will be agreeable to going to that part of the State. The climatic and other possibilities of that area are eminently suitable for its purpose and I have no doubt that, when the company in question—a well-known and firmly-established one—is settled there it will make a considerable contribution to the development of that area. Similarly, efforts are being made to attract suitable industries to other parts of the State outside the metropolitan area, with the idea of making some contribution to the development of those areas.

In conjunction with the Department of Agriculture, efforts have been made to encourage the growth of linseed and tobacco in Western Australia. The Tobacco Panel, which I think had fallen into disuse, was revived, and activities are now under way with the Department of Agriculture in an endeavour—with the assistance of the Commonwealth Government—to bring back the tobacco-growing industry in Western Australia to the level at which it was in the early stages of the war, when nearly 1½ million pounds of tobacco was produced, as against the 250,000 pounds produced in the last year under review. I do not know whether the Commonwealth Government will be prepared to assist in the way which we feel inclined to recommend, and I suppose the first step towards obtaining that assistance would be the control of the product through some marketing legislation.

All those things are now being considered with a view to formulating some proposal that will result in an increase in the production of tobacco in this State. Not only will that be advantageous to this State, but obviously advantageous to the Commonwealth, in that its present position regarding importations, particularly from dollar areas, does not make it easy for the Commonwealth to increase, or even maintain the inflow of tobacco products into this country. Quite apart from the development of the State, we owe it as a duty to the Commonwealth, and the people of the Commonwealth, to make all the contribution we can in that direction. Somewhat similar considerations apply to the production of linseed. There is available in this State the necessary machinery for expressing the oil, which is very scarce and badly needed in connection with the preparation of paints and other substances, many of which are required for the house building programme.

While we had had luck in the commendable efforts made some years ago, in that cutworm got the better of most of the linseed planted in the Northam and York-Avon-Valley areas, it is hoped, by those who today are investigating the position, that with more modern methods of spraying and disinfecting generally, it will be possible to obviate those problems in the future and produce a reasonable crop at a payable price. In consequence, an increase of £1,000 has been provided in the Estimates to permit of work being done to foster the growing of linseed and other oil-bearing plants in this State.

The Fuel Technology Bureau, under the direction of Mr. Donnelly, has been doing very valuable work, and I am assured that there is now no doubt that, given the correct plant and machinery, gas suitable for both domestic and industrial purposes can be produced from Collie coal. Investigations are still proceeding.

Mr. May: Where is that work being carried out?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: I could not say, but I know the investigations are proceeding. The establishment at Welshpool, which was taken over from the Commonwealth, is now virtually filled. Considerable progress has been made in the erection of the new building for Chamberlain Industries Ltd.—for the foundry—and a start has been made on the installation of the furnaces. There again we find ourselves in some difficulty, because industrial troubles in the Eastern States have rendered the importation of the machinery required for those premises, and for Chamberlain Industries generally, rather difficult. Whether the expectation that I gave the House during the debate on the Address-in-reply, or about that time, that the factory of Chamberlain Industries should be in production by February, is now going to be realised, is something more than I can say. It may be necessary to put that figure back a bit. I commend to members the advisability of taking the opportunity of going to those works at some convenient time in order to have a look not only at the lay-out of the machinery that has been imported, but the very desirable way in which it has been set up, and the enthusiasm with which the limited number of people at present employed there are dealing with the work that they have to handle.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: It was a strenuous effort on the part of the previous Government.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: And ably backed up by the present Government. Although we had some difficulty with our friends of the Commonwealth with regard to the financial side, we took over manfully and made the best bargain we could for Western Australia, and incidentally for Chamberlain Industries also. I do not think it can ever be said that I have offered any criticism—either before or since election day—regarding this particular enterprise. I have had a look at it on three or four occasions, and have discussed it on many more, and while it was a baby that looked as though it might be a bit overweight at birth, at present I am hopeful that it will succeed. I have no doubt whatever as to the suitability of the machine that it is proposed shall be manufactured, provided it can be turned out in sufficient numbers and on a market that will enable it to be produced profitably, without imposing too great a cost on the producer. I feel that that can be done, but that is only a personal opinion which the future must weigh. Members when they get an opportunity should have a look at the premises, because they are well worth an inspection.

Mr. Marshall: But they are not by any means completed yet.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: The hon. member should have a look at them, completed or not.

Mr. Marshall: That is most unsatisfactory.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: I observed that the foundry was not yet finished and that some of the machinery had not yet arrived. Therefore, the hon. member could gather from my remarks that further work remained to be done. But what is there, is worth inspection.

Mr. Marshall: As a lover of machinery, I will accept your invitation.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: There are 18 tenants in the Welshpool area, including manu-

facturers of aluminiumware, furniture, tennis strings, hosiery, confectionery, toys, electrical appliances, etc. It is unlikely that James Hardie & Co. will move in until early next year. The estimated revenue from leasing the buildings is £7,356.

Among the more recent inquiries made with regard to industrial development is that of a representative of an English syndicate who is at present in this State inquiring into the possibility of bringing out two 600-ton trawlers from England. These vessels, it is suggested, would go trawling in the Bight, and have their headquarters at Albany. Bradford Insulating Pty. Ltd., which manufactures slag wool insulation, building boards and tiles has expressed its intention of establishing a manufacturing branch in this State. It is likely that it will operate at Fremantle. Investigations are being made by a firm interested in the establishment of a chemical industry here. This concern would manufacture chlorine, caustic soda and various other chemicals.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: What about the wool-scouring company?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: The building for that company is well on the way to completion. I saw Mr. Michell only a few days ago, and he expressed the hope that the works would be in production before many weeks.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: That will be one of the best.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: The Hardie Trading Co., manufacturers of lacquers and enamels, has reserved land at Welshpool and intends to work on the factory as soon as the material position permits. An English company has been inquiring into the establishment of a factory to manufacture augers and auger bits. Due to business problems in England the company has not yet decided to move to Western Australia, and it is expected that, in view of Britain's export position, some governmental problems may be experienced regarding the move. A well-known Eastern States manufacturer is pursuing inquiries with a view to establishing a branch factory in Western Australia to manufacture canned goods of various kinds. The director of an English company manufacturing custard powder and allied products will be visiting this State in the near

future. It is anticipated that this visit will be of approximately 12 months' duration, and will result in the setting up of a new company to manufacture these products in Western Australia, in which the company has shown great interest.

Following an inquiry received through the Secondary Industries Division, a local firm has been negotiating with a well-known English firm interested in manufacturing instantaneous gas water-heaters in Australia for the Australian market and for export. It is hoped that some agreement will result. An English company is interested in the manufacture in Australia of all types of patented household mops and other products, and there are prospects of its establishment in Western Australia, possibly in partnership with an existing firm. As a result of a report forwarded to the company, a director has recently arrived in Australia to make an on-the-spot investigation. A couple of local firms have been put in touch with an English company which is interested in the manufacturing in this country of water-heaters, washing machines, drying cabinets, toasters and electric fires, possibly in partnership with an Australian firm. The matter is at present under consideration by the English firm.

An inquiry was received through the Secondary Industries Division from a well-established Dutch firm, which is interested in the cutting and polishing of diamonds from the rough to the gems for the Australian market and for export. The firm has been assured of a supply of rough diamonds from existing suppliers. It has been strongly recommended that this industry be established in Western Australia, but a reply is still awaited.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: There are plenty of rough diamonds here!

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: All the rough diamonds are not in Western Australia. I have made some reference to the question of establishing the textile industry at Collie. In enlargement of that statement, I will say that the spinning plant is a very large one and that there is an excellent opportunity to serve the Australian market if this industry can be established. An English company is interested in manufacturing on a fairly large scale in a country town in Australia

woven children's-wear, ladies' blouses, and children's and ladies' knitwear. There is a possibility of a partnership being arranged with an existing firm and it is thought that a very good opportunity exists for partnership with a factory already established in a country town in this State.

Regarding the Chandler alunite industry, planning and design work for the plant to utilise the new process is proceeding as quickly as available staff will allow. In order to get the new process completed, I am given to understand that the plant will have to be closed down for a few weeks. After that, it is expected that production on a profitable basis of potash up to the 60 per cent. grade will be practicable and, in fact, easy, and the future prospects are considered to be very good. Approach has been made to the Commonwealth Government to recognise the considerable amount of extra capital cost that will be entailed in this additional work, and also to recognise the fact that no bounty was paid on the Western Australian product during the war. But for the war, it is unlikely that the works would ever have been started.

In consequence of the production by these works, although the potash was not of the grade that we would have liked, the Commonwealth has been saved the payment of an import bounty on a considerable quantity of potash product. Therefore we consider that the Commonwealth should recognise these two factors—the high grade of potash that can be produced in future and will be of immense value to the Australian agricultural and other industries, and that it ought to make a contribution towards the capital cost of the work and in reduction of the loss that has already been sustained, or both. After a conversation I had with Dr. Raggett, of the Secondary Industries Division, I understand that these representations have been favourably received, but at the moment I cannot say that any decision has been arrived at that I can communicate to the Committee.

At Albany, Hunts Salmon Cannery, after only nine months' operation, is being expanded to enable the factory to process 5,000 tons of fish per annum. The present output is between 1,500 and 2,000 per annum. Many orders are being received from the Eastern States, and a large East-

ern States consignment is now on the factory floor awaiting shipment. The Albany brickyards are producing* at the rate of 600,000 bricks per annum, which is considerably below the capacity of the plant. A commencement has been made with the production of a good quality cement roofing tile at that centre. The Commonwealth Investments Trust Ltd., the company formed to develop the black sand deposits at Cheyne Bay, has raised sufficient capital to produce a considerable amount of black sand concentrates, which will be shipped from Albany.

During September, members of the Secondary Industries Division visited this State and were entertained by the Government. They also discussed the problems attendant upon secondary industrial development in Western Australia with the various persons concerned therein, as well as with myself and the Director of Industrial Development (Mr. Fernie). I think they were favourably impressed by the existing industrial development and the prospects of further development and left the State imbued with the idea that industrially—and when I say industrially, I refer to the aspect of the industrial worker—Western Australia was particularly well served, much better served perhaps than many of the other States of the Commonwealth. As regards the attitude of the State Government to any reasonable proposal, I am sure they felt that it would receive very favourable consideration.

At this stage I wish to express my thanks for the cordial assistance which, during the seven months I have held this portfolio, has been given to me by the Director and his officers. Mr. Fernie was a wise choice for this position. He undoubtedly has the interests of the development of the State very much at heart. It was no easy task for me to step into what was virtually an unknown quantity, the Department of Industrial Development, and obtain a reasonably clear and sufficient understanding of its ramifications in a period of six months without the assistance of a knowledgeable and capable officer. In that respect I found Mr. Fernie filled the bill remarkably well, and I do not hesitate to say that I am sure in my own mind of his desire to further the interests of the department to the utmost

of his ability, and this applies to those limited number of officers who work with and under him.

Many other industrialists are, as I said, making inquiries as to setting up in Western Australia. For example, we have, among others, one who contemplates removing the whole of his machinery and plant from Denmark or Sweden, I am not sure which.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Denmark.

THE MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: He proposes to manufacture Diesel engines in this State. I am not anticipating that that project will fall through. Some little difficulty has arisen owing to restrictions on export from the country where the machinery is situated and the necessity to evolve a method of extricating the proprietor from the regulations which govern the position. However, I think that matter is in hand and I am hopeful that those concerned will commence operations here. I think they will bring with them a limited number of workers experienced in the industry who, I take it, must be established here in order to provide training for a considerable number of our own people.

We also have in hand the matter of manufacturing insecticides with the idea of using them in the destruction of our insect pests. A panel has been set up for that purpose from among officers of the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Industrial Development, as well as from the people interested in the manufacture of these insecticides. Water meters are also to be manufactured on a fairly large scale in the State. It is expected that two plants will be installed here, one by the Dobbie Dico Meter Company (W.A.) Ltd. and the other by George Kent (W.A.) Ltd. These plants will produce in the vicinity of 11,000 meters up to three inches per year. This production will be in excess of the State's requirements, but an export market is assured, as both companies have received numerous inquiries from overseas for supplies.

The plywood industry is making considerable headway. The premises at Carlisle—where the big peeling machine received after much delay a remission of Customs duty by the Commonwealth Government—are doing great work. I visited the premises with the members of the Secondary Industries

Commission and was most interested to see a large karri log, having been duly boiled or softened by intense moisture and heat, skinned for a considerable time, producing as it were miles of veneer which finally became the most beautiful fibre boards one could possibly wish to see. The proprietors are extending their activities very considerably in this direction. There is no doubt whatever that the establishment will continue for a very considerable time and probably be expanded because of the high quality of the goods which it is producing.

The department continues to submit to the Housing Commission recommendations for permits for the erection of industrial buildings. Conditions over the past winter months have been difficult. In some instances, although the Housing Commission did issue permits in accordance with the recommendations, it was unable to implement them by making materials available. We continue to impress on the Commission the need to allocate to industrial buildings a proportion of available building materials where the need is pressing. I am satisfied that up-to-date negotiations between the Department of Industrial Development and the Housing Commission have been very satisfactory. We must be careful not to allow any industrial establishment to expend materials and labour unless it is absolutely essential for the continued employment of the people concerned in the industry that the premises should be erected, because I have no doubt whatever that the Housing Commission is justified in saying that its housing commitments should receive first priority, except in essential cases in other directions.

The department, with the assent of the Treasurer, made an offer to the Commonwealth Government of £20,000 for the purchase of the whole of the assets of the North Fremantle shipping yards, including buildings, plant, machinery and stock. Much of the stock, including timber, paint, steel, brass fittings, etc., which are scarce in the State, could be disposed of with advantage to our local industries. It was hoped that the premises could be secured and made use of in a way similar to that in which the Welshpool buildings were made use of for the further development of industrial establishments in the Fremantle area. The Commonwealth, however, despite the careful valuation that had been made by the officers

of the department here, decided that £20,000 was not enough and made a counter-offer which reached us only today. I do not know what the fate of that will be, although I am hopeful that these premises and the material in them will be acquired, because, alternatively, it appears to me that the Commonwealth Government will sell them at their breakdown value. I hope that can be obviated and that an agreement can be reached in the near future. I do not think it would be profitable for me at this stage to engage the Committee further on this subject and I have much pleasure in submitting the Vote.

The CHAIRMAN: Is the Minister covering the other divisions in this general debate?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: I did not propose to touch on Farmers' Debts Adjustment or State insurance, unless questions were asked by members to which I could afford replies.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 10.21 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 6th November, 1947.

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

QUESTIONS.

MILK.

As to Treatment Licenses Applied for and to be Granted.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN (on notice) asked the Minister for Agriculture:

(1) How many treatment licenses for the year commencing the 1st July, 1947, have been issued by the Milk Board in the exercise of its powers under the Milk Act?

(2) To whom have such licenses been issued?

(3) What is the number of applications for treatment licenses at present before the Milk Board, and what are the names of the persons or firms on whose behalf these applications have been made?

(4) How many treatment licenses does the Milk Board propose to grant for the current year?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Four (4).

(2) Brownes Ltd. at Charles-street, North Perth; Brownes Ltd. at Brunswick Junction; R. M. Mounsey at 738 Albany-road, Victoria Park; R. M. Mounsey at Wagerup.

(3) Estate late G. E. Birkbeck (trustees C. E. and E. W. Birkbeck), 3 Balfour-street, Cottesloe; James Carrie, 164 Canning-highway, South Perth; Albert George Conway, Albany-road, Gosnells; William Della, 90 Mabel-street, North Perth; Goldfields Amalgamated Dairies, Pty. Ltd., Forrest-road, Kalgoorlie; Grant Bros., Albany-road, Cannington; Ideal Dairies Ltd., 149 South-terrace, corner Price-street, Fremantle; C. J. Kielman and Sons, 366 Albany-road, Victoria Park; Estate late James Kelly, 15 Pangbourne-street, Wembley; Martin Francis Kilkenny, Seventh-road, Armadale; Masters Dairy Pty. Ltd., 174 Hampden-road, Hollywood; Masters Dairy Pty. Ltd., 158 Stirling-highway, Claremont (previously A. Dreyer); F. J. Roberts and Co., 298 Suburban-road, South Perth; Sheppard's Dairy, 118 Mary-street, Fremantle; Arthur Smith, 119a Cambridge-street, Leederville; South-West Co-Operative Dairy Farmers Ltd., Lot 74, Roy-street, Leederville; Westralian Farmers Ltd. "Pascomi," Stuart-street, Perth; Charles Linton Wild, Canning-highway, Bicton; Alan James Fletcher, Firie Dairy, Kalgoorlie.

(4) This depends on the circumstances.