

Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 13th November, 1945.

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

ELECTORAL—SWEARING-IN OF MEMBER.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have received the return of the writ for the election of a member to serve for the electoral district of Greenough. From the return endorsed thereon, it appears that Mr. David Brand has been duly elected. I am prepared to swear in the hon. member.

Mr. Brand took and subscribed the oath and signed the roll.

BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.

- 1, Increase of Rent (War Restrictions) Act Amendment.
- 2, Commonwealth Powers.
Transmitted to the Council.

BILL—SUPREME COURT ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Reports of Committee adopted.

BILL—STATE TRANSPORT CO-ORDINATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT (Hon. W. M. Marshall—Murchison) [4.35] in moving the second reading said: This measure, although small in itself, will, if it becomes an Act, be of tremendous advantage to a fair portion of this State. It will be remembered that when the State Transport Co-ordination Act was passed in 1933

it was considered to be absolutely essential in order to bring about some ordered system of transport, particularly where road transport was in keen competition with the railway system. So important did this aspect appear to Parliament at that time that the activities of this board were, by virtue of this particular measure, restricted to that portion of the State south of the 26th parallel of south latitude. That being so, it was not possible for the Transport Co-Ordination Board operating under the Act to take any cognisance of the co-ordination of transport north of that particular line. The stability of our railway economy was predominant at that time; and although the mileage of railway in the northern portion of Western Australia was so small, we never conceived the possibilities for this board if that restriction had not been imposed then.

Some members will realise what an advantage the Transport Board has been to several of those very isolated places situated south of the 26th parallel. There are several services which this board has been able to subsidise which have been of material advantage, first in feeding our railway system and secondly in giving a freight rate to people in isolated portions practically similar to that enjoyed by those adjacent to the railway. It may have been a little higher, but it has been of material advantage to those people situated at some distance from railway transport. Under the 1937 Act the board was authorised to subsidise such services as those I have mentioned, and even at that stage the advantages of such a system to the people of the North-West were overlooked, and it was only those people living south of the line who received the benefits of services made possible by the Transport Board, and they enjoy the cheap freights available owing to subsidies from the board. Members who know the North-West portion of the State will appreciate that if we are to encourage people to go to such places, we must make available to the greatest possible extent the amenities enjoyed in the more settled areas. Bearing in mind the terrific cost that would be involved in providing railways to open up the North-West, compared with the small number of people served, it will be seen that such a possibility must be set aside for some considerable time to come. Recently I received a letter from Nullagine and portion of it which I propose to read will give mem-

bers an idea of the adversities that people who live in such places suffer. This portion of the letter reads—

All these costs must be reduced, for why should we have to pay 5s. per stone for potatoes or, if we keep a few fowls, 35s. per bag for wheat?

Members will get some idea of the cost imposed by transport on individuals living in such isolated centres. We can never hope to develop the North-West unless we provide more and cheaper amenities than are available in such areas at present. The Bill proposes to remove restrictions and to give the Transport Board the right and jurisdiction to assist in the development of the North-West portion of the State by making subsidies available and thus assisting in the transport of ordinary commodities. Members will agree that there is little opportunity to achieve the desired end in any other way. The Transport Board has some money that it could make available for the purpose of instituting transport services by road, and by air if necessary, in order to reduce materially the cost of living for people in the North-West. It is only fair that whatever we can do in that way should be done.

No person stands to be injured by the introduction of this Bill. No one and no section of the community that desires to see the North-West of the State developed speedily will take exception to the measure I am introducing. Members will appreciate the services already being rendered in the southern portions of the State, such as the subsidised service from Newdegate to Holt Rock. Similar services are rendered in other parts of the State, and if this Bill becomes law it will remove the restrictions under which the Transport Co-ordination Board now labours, that prevent it rendering like assistance to the people of the North-West. At present the Transport Board can operate up to a certain line, and no further, and we have the spectacle of a service being subsidised from Geraldton to Carnarvon, in order to expedite transport, but the Transport Board can go as far as the 26th parallel only. This Bill seeks to remove that restriction. At the moment the board has power to control air transport within a certain radius, and does so. It can control and license all air vehicles, as it does road vehicles, up to a given point only. No form of transport will be more valuable to the

development of the North-West of our State than will air transport, having regard to the long distances and the scattered nature of the population. Air transport is one of the most important forms of transport for the development of this State.

Mr. Rodoreda: Will the board subsidise air transport?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: I do not know that it will subsidise it, but it will be able to license and control it so that we will not have a spectacle such as that which occurred in the city many years ago when uncontrolled transport picked the eyes out of the industry and left the public utilities to carry the burden, running only through densely settled areas and leaving isolated people without any service at all.

Mr. Rodoreda: But has the board power to subsidise air transport?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: I would say "yes." It has power to subsidise road transport or air transport. It licenses road transport and air transport.

Mr. Watts: It cannot subsidise either, at the present time, north of the 26th parallel.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: This Bill seeks merely to remove the restrictions and give the Transport Board the jurisdiction and right which will enable it to encourage settlement by guaranteeing a subsidy to any licensed transport vehicle that is prepared to operate between either of the ports or railway heads and the centres being considered by the board at that time. That is all that the Bill contains. This Bill will enable facilities and amenities to be provided for those people who are prepared to live in and develop our isolated areas. It will enable such people to live at a decent standard. Members must realise that the higher the cost of transport of ordinary commodities the lower is the standard of living of the individual. The income of those people is practically fixed and is very limited, too. So the greater the cost of commodities to them, the lower is their standard of existence. I suggest that the people in that part of the State have other financial obligations imposed upon them additional to those of people living in the more thickly populated areas.

In our city and many of the rural areas education is available to each child, but it is not equally available in the North-West, and this cost becomes a heavy financial responsibility when each and every child

must be sent south to get its education. Admittedly there are schools at the seaports and probably one or two inland towns such as Marble Bar and Nullagine, but apart from those facilities, the people of the North-West are under a heavy financial obligation to get elementary education for their children. This difficulty does not encourage people to go out and live in those centres. The Bill will give them greater opportunities, and I hope members will view the measure from that angle, give it wholehearted support and thus make amenities available to those people at reasonable cost. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Seward, debate adjourned.

BILL—AIR NAVIGATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT
(Hon. W. M. Marshall—Murchison) [4.53]
in moving the second reading said: This is another small Bill merely to clarify the position regarding the powers of the State and Commonwealth existing under the State Air Navigation Act of 1937. Many years ago the Commonwealth set out to control civil aviation to an extent only. The desire at the time was to bring about some form of control over civil aviation in the shape of rules and regulations, rules of the air, registration of landing grounds and other factors for the safety of the travelling public using air transport. The control was merely of a technical character—the licensing of pilots, the granting of certificates of airworthiness for aircraft, rules of the air and safety devices to indicate the altitude of buildings, etc., and in a general way to make civil aviation as safe as possible.

The Commonwealth assumed the right to do this, but ultimately its action was challenged in a case known as the Goya Henry case, and the High Court ruled that the Commonwealth did not have the requisite power. The Prime Minister then called a conference of State Premiers and sought the transference of power to the Commonwealth to that limited extent only. Under the Act of 1937, the power was transferred. The amount of control transferred to the Commonwealth was limited to the matters I have mentioned, but there has been a difference of opinion re-

garding the position, and I think the Leader of the Opposition some years ago displayed wisdom on this selfsame point when he questioned whether such power transferred to the Commonwealth could be recalled by repealing the Act or could be returned to the State at all. However, that point is not involved in this measure because the State, by virtue of the conference in 1937, did not give the Commonwealth power over civil transport aviation.

In order to clarify the position and draw a definite line of demarcation between the powers delegated to the Commonwealth and those retained by the State, this Bill has been introduced. It was never intended that the Commonwealth should take all the power vested in the States to control civil aviation, and I believe that the Prime Minister himself gave an assurance that there would be no interference with the State rights and functions provided under the State Transport Co-ordination Act. With that assurance, the conference of Premiers in 1937 agreed to introduce the measure giving the Commonwealth the limited amount of power which it still retains. This Bill will simply clarify the position.

The need for this measure has held up the State Government to some extent in arranging for air transport within the State. As many members are aware, there are companies wishing to operate passenger transport services between given terminals within the State. Some of the companies feel doubt—though I do not think any doubt should exist—as to where the State and Commonwealth powers begin and end. However, the matter of giving consideration to the applications was left in abeyance until this measure was introduced. While we should proceed to license aircraft for the carrying of passengers within the State, I feel that as some doubt exists, it would be better to make the position clear by passing this Bill. Then we shall be able to give consideration to applications for introducing services for the more speedy transport of passengers, as will be the order of the day when routes are gazetted and aircraft are licensed for air transport work. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Abbott, debate adjourned.

BILL—RAILWAYS CLASSIFICATION BOARD ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR LABOUR (Hon. A. H. Panton—Leederville) [5.0] in moving the second reading said: This is a Bill to amend the Railways Classification Board Act, 1920-1935. In 1920 an Act was passed for the appointment of a board to classify the salaried staff of the Government Railways. At that time, and since, the Act included the Tramway Officers' Industrial Union of Workers. For some years that union has broken away from the Railways Classification Board and has been registered under the Industrial Arbitration Act. The present Act, therefore, covers only the railway officers. Section 2 of the Industrial Arbitration Act precludes the Railway Officers' Union from being registered under the Industrial Arbitration Act, the obvious reason being that it was provided for under the Act which this Bill seeks to amend. The Railway Officers' Union is thus prevented from enjoying the privileges which unions registered under the Industrial Arbitration Act enjoy. Paragraph (b) of Section 5 of the Trade Unions Act, 1902, prevents any union from enforcing any agreement for the payment by any person of any subscription or penalty to a trade union.

That section of the Trade Unions Act is identical with Section 4 of the English Trade Unions Act, 1871. The rules of the union provide for inflicting fines, levies, etc., but the Act prevents the union from taking legal action to recover any such fines, etc. One can understand, of course, the existence of such a provision in 1871; but I think members will agree that times have changed since 1871. That is exemplified by our own Industrial Arbitration Act, which has been amended from time to time, and which extends all these privileges and rights to unions. With the exception of one or two unions in this State, all the unions are registered under the Industrial Arbitration Act. The Railway Officers' Union is not registered under that Act, and the Government feels that it should be given the same legal status as unions which are registered under the Industrial Arbitration Act.

Friendly societies and most clubs have the legal right to recover payment of subscriptions owing by their members. There

are several amendments proposed by this Bill but, with the exception of one, they are all for the purpose of striking out the words "Railway and Tramway Officers' Industrial Union of Workers." There is no further necessity for the inclusion of those words in the Act. They will be replaced by the words "W.A. Railway Officers' Union." The Act will then relate only to that union and to its classification board. Provision is also made in the Bill to give the union the right to sue for and recover fines, levies and dues in any local court or other court of summary jurisdiction. The title of the parent Act is also being amended to include the words "and to make provision for the recovery by the W.A. Railway Officers' Union of fines, fees, levies and dues owing by the members thereof."

Hon. N. Keenan: Is that retrospective?

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: No. If the member for Nedlands desires to move an amendment to that effect, I do not think any great objection will be offered to it. A similar Bill was introduced in 1941 by my colleague the Minister for Works, who was then Minister for Labour, but it was defeated in the Legislative Council for reasons which do not exist today. Had that Bill passed, other unions would have obtained the same rights. This Bill does not provide for any other union; it provides simply for the W.A. Railway Officers' Union. It gives that union, as I said, the same rights as are enjoyed by unions registered under the Industrial Arbitration Act. The Government could have brought in an amendment of that Act, but I thought it better to amend the Railways Classification Board Act. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Thorn, debate adjourned.

BILL—TOWN PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ACT AMENDMENT.

Council's Amendment.

Amendment made by the Council now considered.

In Committee.

Mr. Rodoreda in the Chair; the Minister for Works in charge of the Bill.

The CHAIRMAN: The Council's amendment is as follows:—

Clause 2, in proposed new Section 22A, paragraph (c) on page 2:—Insert the words "by reason of such subdivision of land" before the word "if" in line 28.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: By its amendment, the Legislative Council seeks to ensure that the action proposed to be taken under the Bill shall be taken only when the land within an irrigation or drainage district is being subdivided for the purpose of establishing smaller farms where previously a large one existed. The Bill, as it passed this Chamber, was safe enough on that point, but evidently the Council is anxious for a double safeguard. I have no objection to the amendment. I do not consider it necessary in the legal sense, but rather than have any further discussion or argument with the Legislative Council I propose to accept the amendment.

Mr. Watts: What is the difference between discussion and argument?

Mr. Doney: A discussion might be quite an agreeable business, but an argument would be scarcely that.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I think any argument at this stage would be out of order. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

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

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

BILL—NATIONAL FITNESS.

Council's Amendment.

Amendment made by the Council now considered.

In Committee.

Mr. Rodoreda in the Chair; the Minister for Education in charge of the Bill.

The CHAIRMAN: The Council's amendment is as follows:—

Clause 11:—Delete the word "fitness" in line 27, and substitute the words "and cultural fitness in the building of the national character."

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I propose to accept the amendment, which simply extends the items upon which the National Fitness Council is to advise the Governor.

Mr. Watts: Will you explain what it means?

Hon. N. Keenan: The Minister has accepted the amendment.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I understand the desire of the Legislative Council is that the National Fitness Council, besides advising the Governor on measures to be taken to develop the bodies of those who take part in these activities, will also advise how their minds may be improved as the result of educational films and of taking part in drama and things of that sort. The other place is not prepared to leave the council to do that, but wants it specifically stated in the Bill. The hon. member should ask the other place to give its reasons. I see no objection to the amendment. It does not detract from the Bill.

Mr. Thorn: The House of Review is proving very helpful to the Government, which has accepted two of its amendments already.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

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

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

BILL—BUILDING OPERATIONS AND BUILDING MATERIALS CONTROL.

Message.

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

Second Reading.

THE PREMIER (Hon. F. J. S. Wise—Gaseoyne) [5.18] in moving the second reading said: This Bill is introduced to assist in carrying on the control of the distribution and use of requisite building materials. In addition to the shortage of houses before the war, labour and materials which could have been used for home building and had to be diverted to war purposes, have left us in an acute state of shortages of many essential commodities. As the war progressed we had hundreds of thousands of people from all sections of Australia's life drawn into it, and with them went many artisans associated

with the building trade and many men engaged in industry connected with the manufacture of building materials. But a certain quantity of building requisites were manufactured during the war, the greater proportion of which has been diverted to war uses. It is hoped that in some directions many essential commodities, much needed in home construction and in the construction of schools, hospitals and factories, will be available to us as they become less needed for war purposes because those purposes are rapidly diminishing. At the outbreak of war, the number of homes built in Australia exceeded 40,000 per annum. The table on this subject is very interesting. It shows the decline from 1938-39 to this year and is as follows:—

| Year. | | | | New dwellings. |
|---------|----|----|----|----------------|
| 1938-39 | .. | .. | .. | 40,000 |
| 1939-40 | .. | .. | .. | 37,000 |
| 1940-41 | .. | .. | .. | 38,000 |
| 1941-42 | .. | .. | .. | 20,000 |
| 1942-43 | .. | .. | .. | 4,000 |
| 1943-44 | .. | .. | .. | 5,000 |

For this year, 1944-45, it is anticipated that approximately 10,000 new homes will be erected.

Mr. Seward: Have you got the Western Australian figures?

The PREMIER: I have, and I will give them to the hon. member later. The figure anticipated for 1946 is 24,000 dwellings for Australia. The hope for the following year is 50,000 and in the year after that it is anticipated that all things will be in train to reach a figure of between 60,000 and 80,000 homes. Even that total, which is a colossal figure, will merely overtake the lag and meet the demand that will be current at that time. In addition to home building, there is a big lag in all sections of building. Houses, factories, public buildings of all kinds, including schools and hospitals, are required, and, as members know, in the districts and towns they represent there is a demand and an anxiety to have all types of public buildings necessary to serve the public of this State. So the materials to be available for new buildings will be a very small proportion—perhaps only one-third—of what will be so badly needed. In addition to all the necessary structures I have mentioned, the belated repairs in connection with homes and the belated maintenance of

buildings, including public buildings, represent a big demand on the materials that are to be available to us.

The last survey made by the appropriate Commonwealth officers suggests, looking at the matter from a Commonwealth angle, that there will not be available to us—at least for this current year—more than one-third of the building resources that we will need. The control of permits for building and the release of building materials has been a very difficult matter to administer. The Commonwealth was very anxious to relinquish this control. It found that this matter was full of difficulties. There were many complaints from all types of interested people, not only the home-builder and the contractor but all sorts of people who wished to purchase materials; some of them, one would think, simply because they were short. But it was very noticeable that when complaints were made by States about the Commonwealth carrying on different sorts of control, the Commonwealth showed great anxiety to place this item in the lap of the States as quickly as possible.

Mr. Watts: It was politically inconvenient perhaps.

The PREMIER: I think the Commonwealth found it very desirable to give the States this responsibility, which, I think, shall be able to show, is an unpleasant one, but because it is unpleasant it is none the less necessary for us to face it. In the issuing of permits for buildings the basis has been that of hardship and the essentiality of the project. The releases of materials in short supply have been approved on the basis of availability, and their availability was automatic in respect of the work that the permits provided approval for. I have a very interesting statement made by Mr. Dedman when he reviewed the position recently. He said—

Some allocation must be made as between one claimant and another. We cannot satisfy in their entirety all the claims of people who need houses. If we attempted to do so, and neglected the extension of factories and provision for reconstruction training, it would be wrong. Consequently, some judgment must be exercised in allocating the total various resources between the six different claimants.

The various types of claimant that he anticipated include the thousands of people awaiting housing and those who require

buildings for rehabilitation, including additions to schools, universities and training centres. Mr. Dedman estimates that 10,000 additional men will need to be trained at the universities of Australia. He also instances the buildings of the type I have mentioned, namely, Government buildings, schools, hospitals, police stations and, for the benefit of the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Williams-Narrogin I might mention court-houses, because I understand that for some time they have been unhappy about the position of that public utility in their centres. But with all of the demands there will be a tremendous claim on the resources and materials available to us. Mr. Dedman went on to say—

Just as a certain allocation must be made of those scarce resources between one claimant and another, so in the limited sphere of building itself, some method of selection had to be followed in order to ensure that resources for housing purposes should be allocated to the people most urgently requiring them. Accordingly, the permit system was introduced, and taken by and large, the system has resulted in the granting of building permits to those people who most required houses, and in the rejection of the claims of those who did not have such a good case. The criteria exercised in my department in granting or withholding permits covered a number of things. The first consideration was that, when an application was made for a permit, the department should consider the number of individuals to be accommodated in the new house. A married couple without any children did not have nearly so good a claim to a permit as had a married couple with a family. The limited supply of building resources available was not sufficient to provide houses for all the couples with families, let alone those who were childless.

No matter what form the control takes, whether it continues in its present form or some other, there will be many unhappy people who will be hard to convince that their case is not only not a parallel but, indeed, a better one, for the issuing of a permit to build and the release of building materials, than those of a dozen and one other people they would personally know. It would be very difficult to convince the ex-prisoner of war and others who are returning to their wives and small families, and others returning to be married, that their case for housing is not one that the nation could not take an immediate interest in. This Bill, which is necessary because of the relinquishing by the Commonwealth of control, endeavours to take up almost identical

functions with those which operated under National Security Regulations.

Under National Security Regulation (Building Operations) 1939-43, the control of building was covered by issuing permits for dwelling-houses and alterations thereto costing more than £25, and for factories, business premises, etc., costing more than £100. In August of this year the regulations were amended, making it unnecessary to obtain a permit for a dwelling house the cost of which was less than £1,200 or for alterations costing less than £150. This State Government protested very strongly against that decision. It meant very little in effect, but it did give encouragement to people to believe that with the lifting of restrictions on potential buildings costing up to £1,200 each, they would be able to get all the materials they required. Some States were quite satisfied that these restrictions should be removed, and in all the States there was a tremendous stampede of people to the local governing authorities for permits to build and for the release of materials. Fortunately, many people who then came into the field by reason of the relinquishing of the regulations, quickly found that they had to act in competition with the urgency and needs of others who plans were also considered with regard to the release of materials.

The control of materials that has applied in this State came into operation under the direction of the order published in the State "Government Gazette" of March, 1942, and that control was exercised under that direction and authority over the signature of the then Premier, Hon. J. C. Willecock, who acted under delegated authority in that connection. All permits for building were based on considerations of hardship and the urgency of the project. Under the control vested in the Deputy Director of War Organisation of Industry, who was then Mr. S. A. Taylor—he has since been appointed to the position of Public Service Commissioner—he had the right and responsibility of saying "yes" or "no" to any approach or application for the issue of a permit. In recent weeks, since Mr. Taylor's elevation to the position of Public Service Commissioner, that authority has been delegated to Mr. Bond, the secretary of the Workers' Homes Board.

The release of materials has been placed in charge of Mr. P. V. Andrews, representing the Materials Supply Directorate, which

is under the direction of the Ministry of Munitions. Mr. Andrews was formerly an officer in the State Sawmills Department, and he has a very wide experience and considerable knowledge regarding building requisites and materials generally. Thus with the materials we possess and the availability of sites, the position is automatically covered under these arrangements. In all cases where the priority system rules, releases will not be difficult and as certain materials become more plentiful gradually the list of materials difficult to obtain will be lessened. In the schedule to the Bill will be found the types of materials that will come under the control of the authority now to be set up. It will be clear that control is essential while such items as bricks, cement and asbestos sheeting, which are made locally, and imported items such as galvanised piping and certain types of enamel ware, are difficult to obtain. In the case of the first three mentioned commodities, the difficulties associated with the stepping up of manufacture centres in the coal production of the State.

I have had figures taken out showing what is necessary in that regard, and the Minister for Industrial Development is having an exhaustive examination made of the total requirements for the future. We will have then the measure of the immediate need and we shall endeavour to get this commodity supplied as fully as we need it. It will be found that the provisions in the Bill differ only slightly from the National Security Regulations under Statutory Rule 85 of 1944. As a matter of fact, the phraseology used in the Bill follows very closely that of the statutory rule I have mentioned. I shall be pleased to make copies available to Opposition leaders so that they can trace throughout the Bill the authority sought in the various provisions. It differs from the present position in that the Bill will provide for the control of, and need for, permits for all dwelling houses or alterations of a value in excess of £25. At present although no permit is needed for a home costing £1,200, in which respect the restriction was removed overnight by the Commonwealth, there will remain the necessity I have mentioned of getting the release of materials.

Mr. Doney: A permit is not much use without the materials being available.

The PREMIER: Not a bit. In the Bill we have incorporated a provision for both the permit and the release of building materials.

Mr. Watts: Will that apply to second-hand materials?

The PREMIER: Not at all. With regard to building requirements, although the authority in whom control is vested in accordance with the provisions of the Bill is the Workers' Homes Board, we have arranged to take over some of the administration formerly acting for the Commonwealth. We are taking over Mr. Andrews, and some people appropriate to the task who formerly operated under his jurisdiction. The control generally in that way will give an equal opportunity to all deserving cases. As members will have noticed from a perusal of the Bill, it will bind the Crown. Therefore it is considered quite proper that there shall be just as much scrutiny respecting the releases needed and the priorities with regard to a Crown undertaking as there will be over the very wide field operating not only outside the Workers' Homes Board but by private people generally.

Mr. Watts: If the Commonwealth Government proposed to build another Commonwealth Bank, would you be able to control it?

The PREMIER: I am afraid the State cannot exercise any control over the Commonwealth, but this legislation will help the State to obtain the materials necessary for homes to be built under the State and Commonwealth agreement regarding the construction of homes for renting, and also for the provision of houses for people in the country districts. Those people will include Government employees such as railway workers, flax mill employees, coalminers, and other people working in the country districts. It will ensure that the private builder will be able to have an allocation made on a fair basis and, indeed, will provide for private persons who can make arrangements for the building of their homes. The Bill will place the department in a position to refuse a permit to a man who has already a home and desires to build a dwelling of exceedingly large proportions, the granting of a permit for which could only be to the detriment of more than one person applying for a permit and for the release of materials.

Mr. Doney: Will the fact that a man has been on active service be of assistance in connection with priorities?

The PREMIER: All such cases will be dealt with on the hardship basis, and the man who has been on active service will have the advantage of the Commonwealth instrumentality—the War Service Homes scheme—the State and Commonwealth agreement with respect to the construction of houses for renting, which operations will be under the control of the Workers' Homes Board, and, in addition to that, he will have the benefit of the general programme of the Workers' Homes Board. There will be a field more specifically for the returned man, and in all such cases they will be dealt with on the basis of hardship and necessity.

Mr. Abbott: But the returned man will get no absolute preference.

The PREMIER: He will have preference because the War Services Homes scheme has a proportion allocated specifically for returned men.

Mr. Abbott: Then they will not come under the provisions of this legislation.

The PREMIER: Yes. Recently I had an interview with the Chairman of the War Services Homes Commission and he is quite convinced that they are prepared to leave their construction in the hands of the Workers' Homes Board of this State, which will see to it that the proportion set aside for such a purpose will be reasonable and fair. Thus not only have we control and authority vested in those who know the requirements of the State itself and of the minimum requirements for the building of homes, but in men who have an over-all knowledge of the number of types of buildings that are not only in most demand but are essential for the immediate future. The board is in an excellent position to adjudicate in the matter. I am hopeful that because of that, we shall have a reasonable speeding-up of the building programme, and at the same time a fair allocation regarding the supplies set out in the schedule to the Bill, which also provides that as soon as the position improves in connection with some of those items, they will be removed from the list. It is easing up in connection with some items already but at the moment all are necessary for control.

The member for Pingelly asked a question about the applications for permits in this State, and I can inform him that in recent months such applications have been very heavy. For the year ended the 30th June, 1945, the applications received

totalled 4,350, of which 2,810 were granted. Of the permits granted, 1,560 were for dwelling houses and the balance were for shops, factories and other types of buildings. For the four months ended the 30th October, 1945, 1,066 applications were received, of which 650 have been granted. Of those granted 393 were for dwellings. These are figures that count. I am not so impressed by what may be regarded as target figures, for they may or may not mean very much. I am concerned about our ability to meet necessities as soon as possible, having regard to the manpower position and the use of mechanical contrivances in every possible way to step up coal production.

We are hopeful that with the gradual return of men to the industry, we shall, with the co-operation and help of the men, secure the supply of coal that is required for the production of much building material that can be manufactured in this State. The private home contractor will be allotted a substantial share of the housing programme. The private home contractor and the contractor himself will represent a large proportion of the number of permits issued and in consequence a large proportion of the materials available. The cost of the work in connection with the materials control has been accepted in part by the State in the taking over of all the essential officers who are now in Commonwealth employ, and it is expected that the addition to the workers' homes expenditure will be a little over £3,000, and in connection with the materials supplied also about £3,000. A request has been made to the Commonwealth for some contribution to this expenditure, but we have not any reply to hand. In any case, I feel sure that the amalgamation of the two matters will be much more economical than it has been with the two services provided and being controlled by different State and Commonwealth departments.

I wish to stress the point that in asking Parliament to pass this legislation the Government is asking for nothing for its own benefit.

Mr. Watts: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: We are not under any illusions at all about the lack of popularity of the control of materials for which there was such a need and such a clamour. I feel quite confident that the Commonwealth

very quickly discovered how unpopular many sections of its control happened to be, and certainly how very difficult of implementation and of putting into effect on an equitable basis some of these controls proved to be. There is no doubt about its anxiety to hand back to the States this very difficult one.

Mr. Doney: Did the Commonwealth ask you to take over the control?

The PREMIER: The Commonwealth did not ask; it decided the States would take it back only on the understanding that if all the States pressed the Commonwealth to retain control, it would retain it. Unfortunately all the States were not of the same mind as was this State because they were anxious to get rid of Commonwealth control as quickly as possible.

Mr. Watts: That is not surprising.

The PREMIER: Members will understand that the authority exercising control will to some extent receive the blame for the shortage of materials and therefore for the delays in construction. There will be many applicants and many claimants with unanswerable claims in regard to their need for home building. Some of these will include servicemen. Naturally they will feel bitter and be constrained, I feel sure, to blame the Government. It is not with considerable enthusiasm, therefore, that I introduce this Bill. I introduce it as a duty expecting that there will be plenty of abuse, and very little credit in connection with this legislation. On the other hand, unless it is introduced there will definitely be many injustices, and unless we shoulder this task chaos may easily result. Applications which are to hand, dozens of them, show that the applicants are persons of very limited means. What chance have such people in the race for materials with those who have plenty of money and are quite prepared to pay for the buildings they require immediately? I think it is a very important factor that the most needy people irrespective of their financial standing, whether it is substantial or not, should have the opportunity to have their needs met.

Mr. Doney: Is this pressure on the availability of materials likely to force prices up still further?

The PREMIER: We have arranged for control, as the hon. member knows. There will be plenty of people prepared to pay almost any price. I hope that the rigid and proper control, and the proper allocation

of the share available to us, will give satisfaction in spite of the unhappy circumstances that will be created in some particulars. I hope that will be something which will very quickly go overboard. I trust that with the return of normal manpower to our manufacturing industries, in connection with which injustices associated with timber and the working of timber and also in the production field have appeared, will mean that we shall quickly—perhaps at the end of next year which this Bill provides for—the duration of control—arrive at a happy state in that connection.

I think that the firms of reputable builders and the people associated with the building trade whose standing is very high will find very little objection in this Bill. I feel sure that irrespective of the claims of hundreds of people, this is the best way to approach the problem and to ensure that we shall have order instead of chaos. I am confident that in handing this matter to the Works and Homes Board we shall be vesting authority in persons of experience and repute who will operate for the good of the State as a whole. I repeat that while it is difficult and unpleasant legislation, and it is a difficult and unpleasant task administratively, I hope it will be received with the recognition that the need is indeed a vital one. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Watts, debate adjourned.

BILL—MARKETING OF ONIONS ACT AMENDMENT.

Returned from the Council without amendment.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1945-46.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from the 8th November; Mr. Rodoreda in the Chair.

Vote—Native Affairs, £50,000 (partly considered):

MR. KELLY (Yilgarn-Coolgard [5.53]: Firstly I wish to refer to the subject of river jetties and desire to supply some of the remarks made by the member for Claremont. I also wish to bring before the responsible Minister the very unsatisfactory position that exists in the various road board localities in which jetties on Swan River are situated. I am led to understand

stand that some of the difficulties regarding the repair and maintenance of these jetties are more or less brought about by what seems to be a somewhat confused position in so far the responsibility for the maintenance is concerned. I feel the time is overdue when the Government should assume complete control over and responsibility for the present unsatisfactory state of affairs. We are now in the summer months, and the dangers that are associated with some of our jetties will be intensified because of the greater uses to which these jetties will be put. In many instances the planking and decking have been removed from the jetties. Particularly is this so in connection with the Canning Bridge jetty, from which a vast amount of material has been removed. The structure now is in a very unsafe condition.

This unsatisfactory position could be overcome if the entire management of all these jetties was placed under Government control. The employment of one or two inspectors is very necessary. Those men could, while engaged in other occupations, constitute a form of patrol and they could be entrusted with the duty of looking after public property. No doubt a good deal of the disrepair in which the various jetties are known to be is the result of vandalism. On one occasion last summer I approached a number of youths, and young men a little beyond the age of youthfulness, while they were engaged in removing material from the Canning Bridge jetty. I entered upon the task with a certain amount of diffidence because on such occasions one is sometimes told where one gets off. At any rate, I approached these lads and pointed out to them the error of treating public property in that manner and the grave danger to which they were subjecting, not only children but grown-ups, by the removal of the planking and decking. These lads saw the wisdom of my remarks and desisted from further vandalism.

As I have said, the difficulty could be overcome if a few inspectors were given power to intervene on such occasions, and make periodical visits to these jetties with the idea of limiting the vandalism that causes so much inconvenience to the public and leads to so much otherwise unnecessary expenditure. I hope some consideration will be given to the suggestion of bringing all the jetties on the Swan River under one

control, even if the local governing bodies concerned have to pay subsidies to the Government for such central control. It is essential that all doubts on this score be removed, and that the Government shall ensure that the dangerous position that has been created is overcome by means of adequate central control.

The second point to which I wish to refer is in connection with crabs. I tackled this subject on a previous occasion and also asked a number of questions. I am sorry to find that although 12 months have elapsed since there was quite a big agitation concerning the crab position on the Swan River, no legislation has been brought down to rectify the position. What I should like to see is the passing of legislation that would prevent people from taking from the river crabs in an immature condition, and those that were below a certain measurement. Now that we are at the commencement of the season, it is very necessary that some move should be made in this direction with a view to eliminating the wanton destruction that took place last year, and has taken place in previous years when the supply of crabs has been prolific.

Commencing last year in November, all the banks in the Swan river were teeming with crab lines and, as fast as crabs appeared, many people—not only the very young, but even those of mature age—obtained great sport from destroying them. In many instances they were not killed for their food value, but with a view to obtaining fertiliser for gardens. But many crabs were left on the beaches. They were not taken home to give to the fowls or to put in the garden; they were just destroyed and left there. As the season went on, it became noticeable that though teeming masses had been there at the beginning of November, by the commencement of the New Year the crabs were very scarce, and those being caught were in deep water and required a considerable amount of effort to capture. They were thus placed beyond the ability of the average person to secure. If the season were normal and the crabs were controlled in the manner I am going to suggest, they would last from the beginning of November until about the end of May.

What was the position during that period last year, as far as marketing was concerned? During that period 83 per cent. of the crabs

marketed—that is in the 1944 summer and in the early portion of 1945—were of a standard measurement. That is to say, from tip to tip of their claws they measured from 12 to 20 ins. Throughout the whole of last season I kept data, having the intention, if something were not done to control the number of crabs taken from the river, to make a suggestion in this Chamber regarding the matter. From that data I found that a 12-inch crab weighs about $2\frac{3}{4}$ ounces and has a carapace measurement of $3\frac{1}{2}$ ins. That weight makes the crab useless from a food value point of view. These crabs were all of the blue-manna type. A month later the crabs were $13\frac{1}{2}$ ins. and had a total live weight of 4 ounces and a carapace measurement of 4 ins. A period of six weeks passed before I took further stock of the crabs then most plentiful. I found that they were $17\frac{1}{4}$ ins., weighed 13 ounces and had a carapace measurement of 6 ins. Towards the end of April, the average crab was 22 ins., weighed $15\frac{1}{2}$ ounces, and the carapace measurement was $6\frac{3}{8}$ inches.

I do not care what amount of C.S.I.R. information or other scientific knowledge is going to be brought to bear on this subject. The figures I have given are the result of an investigation I carried out to secure information for this purpose, and there is no conjecture about it. What I have said is not somebody else's word but purely my own finding. I contend that when small crabs, from 12 to 15 inches, are taken from the water, 50 per cent. of their potential food value is wasted. It therefore seems to me that a regulation fixing the minimum carapace measurement is badly needed, if crabs are to be conserved for future years. Not long ago, the Fisheries Department made this statement:

If regulations were framed with the object of preventing the taking of immature crabs from the Swan river between the Causeway and Fremantle, it would be impossible to police them.

Why? Are we going to baulk at the appointment of a few inspectors who would be necessary to patrol from time to time our ports, jetties and sandspits and other places where crabs are to be had in the early part of the season, which represents the only danger period in this connection? Is it impossible to employ a few inspectors? If such inspectors were not obtaining sufficient assistance from the general public, would

it not be possible to launch one or two prosecutions which would quickly have the desired effect of bringing to book any persons still intent on destroying this wonderful heritage? The Fisheries Department's statement went on to say:

A fisheries inspector giving evidence in 1906 to a Parliamentary Joint Committee said that in some years crabs constituted a plague to professional fishermen.

That was in 1906; and now, nearly 40 years later, it is dished up again as a tangible reason why the taking of crabs should not be controlled and why it would be almost impossible to police any regulations of this kind!

The Minister for Lands: The same old fishermen, I suppose?

Mr. KELLY: I will tell the Minister what has taken place regarding the same old fishermen. In 1906, Western Australia had a population of a little over 200,000 people; today we have nearly 500,000. In 1906 there were between 50 and 60 licensed fishermen, and they were getting a reasonable living. The price of fish at that time was not exorbitant as it is today. It was reasonable, and fishermen received a reasonable return. Today the number of licensed fishermen varies from 16 to 30, and they cover the same ground as was covered 40 years ago. They are probably getting double what the fishermen received in 1906. The argument put forward previously and the reply I have had to questions in this House are most unsatisfactory; and it is high time that the Minister took his department to task and compelled the terminating of what has been a most unsatisfactory state of affairs over a period of years. The official statement also said that the quantity of crabs sold was comparatively small. Again I would ask: How accurate is that statement? For the 12 months ended December, 1941, not fewer than 29,932 lbs. of crabs passed through the markets alone. For the year ended December, 1942, the figure was 26,299 lbs. In 1943 crabs were very scarce and the number of men fishing for them was less than in previous years; consequently only 6,880 lbs. reached the market for the year ended December, 1943. Up to December, 1944—one of the most prolific years the State has known in 25 years—27,740 lbs. were marketed.

That represents only a small portion of the crabs caught. Every night, week after week, throughout the season one can find hundreds of people around our river banks, many catching between 4 and 5 dozen crabs. That takes place in the earlier part of the year, when I contend the crabs should be protected so as to enable their food value to increase. That would take place in two months' time and there would be still plenty of opportunity for people to obtain crabs, which would then be more than double the size. The figures I have given do not suggest comparative smallness, but disclose that average years yield, through the markets alone, over 60,000 crabs a season. This heritage belongs to the people of Western Australia, and it is up to us as legislators to see that that heritage is passed on and that the young ones of today will be able to enjoy later an advantage equal to that which we have enjoyed over a period of years. No reasonable excuse can be offered for refusing to introduce legislation to control the carapace measurement during the first 5 or 6 weeks of the season commencing from about the 1st November. I would ask the Minister to make every effort to bring down legislation on those lines.

The next item to which I wish to refer concerns shags. The last time I brought up this matter I caused a certain amount of amusement; but I assure the Committee that the time has gone by when shags should create amusement amongst sound-thinking people. The protection of this multiple-species cormorant must give way to wholesale and systematic destruction. The time has long gone by in my opinion, and in the opinion of hundreds of others, when the protection of these cormorants should cease. There is only one way to eliminate the shag, which I suppose is one of the most useless birds that has frequented our shores, estuaries, jetties and bridges, and that is by attacking it at the rookeries. At certain times, thousands of shags are hatched at Serpentine, Chittering Lakes, Gingin Brook and Moore River swamps.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. KELLY: Before the tea adjournment I said I considered that shags and cormorants should be attacked at their rookeries and I instanced four of the main breeding

grounds where they congregate yearly, between the beginning of November and the end of December, to hatch huge numbers of young shags. Even if the eradication of the shags is an expense to the Government I think action would be fully justified. Many years ago a royalty of 6d. per head was paid on shags and, if no other means is available, I think the royalty should again be introduced and paid as an incentive to the destruction of these useless birds. The alternative is to put on paid men—it would not need a great number of them—to police the breeding grounds of the shags during the few weeks of the breeding season in an endeavour to stamp out this menace. In years gone by licensed fishermen have expressed the opinion that shags were doing no harm, but today there is a complete reversal of that idea and many of the fishermen I have spoken to in the last 12 months are fully alive to the danger created by the shags in the Swan River, particularly in the last few years. Some fishermen have complained that the shags not only caused a depletion of many species of fish in the river but have attacked the nets when they have been left unattended.

On a conservative estimate the shags' daily consumption of small fish and fish food is one-half to three-quarters of a lb. per head. The harm that is being done can be seen when we consider the amount of other fish food that is being consumed daily by this huge flock of birds. Dr. D. L. Serventy of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research says that the shag's average diet is 1½ lb. of fish daily, made up of cobblers and other slow moving fish of little economic value as human food. I think that assertion is contradictory, as regards the type of fish mentioned, cobblers and other slow moving fish. As the member for Claremont said, the cobbler is a nice fish, and hospital authorities and many householders in the metropolitan area have thought so during the last four or five years. For the 12 months ended the 31st December, 1941, the fish caught and sold by licensed fishermen totalled 171,133 lbs., of which cobblers amounted to 43,257 lbs. During that period and at all times the price of cobblers to householders has been little below that for mullet.

In 1942, 259,501 lbs. of mixed fish was marketed by licensed fishermen, and of that

total cobblers amounted to 42,496 lbs. In 1943 the year's catch amounted to 213,564 lbs. of mixed fish and there was a falling off in the number of cobblers, which represented only 16,707 lbs. Besides the valuable food that the cobblers have made available to the people of the State during that period, and their consequent value to the community, it must be realised that the shags are not feeding mainly on cobblers. The shag is not as discriminating as the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research would lead us to believe. Anyone who cares to observe the habits of shags on the river will find that they do not concentrate on cobblers, as some of their feeding grounds are devoid of cobblers. The majority of the food of shags in most portions of the river is comprised of prawns, shrimps, smelt and other small fish life that inhabits the shallows of the Swan River.

It is significant that during the years 1942-1943 and in January, February and March of 1944 there were no prawns sold on the local market. The prawn has become practically extinct in most parts of the Swan River. During that period a great incentive was offered to licensed fishermen to catch prawns, as they were offered as much as 30s. per gallon by the Allied Services, yet there were still no prawns caught. During last year a few king prawns again made themselves conspicuous, and if one had sufficient time to drag for a couple of hours one would probably get a quart potful. That was the extent last year of the prawns in most portions of the Swan River. On a conservative estimate the shag eats from one-half to three-quarters of a lb. of fish per day, so estimating the number of shags on the Swan at 1,000 birds they account for no less than 500 lbs. of fish per day. I think 1,000 birds is a conservative estimate when one can see shags stretching for half a mile, a chain wide, from Canning Bridge to the Mount Henry narrows. That 500 lbs. of fish per day would represent, in 12 months, 182,500 lbs. of fish.

Mr. Abbott: That is a matter of doubt. The experts say, "No."

Mr. KELLY: I do not think there is any doubt about it in the minds of those who observe the habits of shags on the Swan River or its tributaries. I have watched them with powerful glasses, from a vantage point, and they do not eat only cobblers, though the cobbler supply in the river

is becoming depleted. At one time one could go to almost any part of the Swan River where there was dark water and catch cobblers, but today they are just as scarce as most other fish in the river. That 182,500 lbs. of fish taken by the cormorants represents more than the whole catch of the licensed fishermen in 1941, when the total reached 171,000 lbs. of fish. That state of affairs is alarming and it is no use simply saying that the scientists tell us otherwise. They have a lot still to learn about the marine life of our rivers and estuaries. I think the shags should be destroyed and treated as were many of the other pests dealt with recently by the Committee as vermin in this State.

In the last 12 months much has been said in the Press regarding fish and their habits and the amount of air observation that is taking place, and what we can look to in the future in the way of controls and action. We have also heard that we have a fish policy, but that is of no value unless immediate steps are taken to conserve what we already have. It is useless to chase a new policy and tell people about orderly marketing and fixed prices if, at the same time, we are depleting the stocks of the rivers and estuaries as we have done in the last few years and are doing today. The only way to remedy the position is by taking certain essential action. Firstly there should be a complete closing, on a rotation basis, of the various waters used as fishing grounds over a period of years. It would not be necessary to deprive the 10 or even 30 licensed fishermen of an opportunity to earn a living.

Results could be obtained by a systematic closing of certain sections of the various estuaries, as well as the Swan River, and it would be a matter of enforcing the closure against fishing only about twice in a decade. The second point is strict adherence to a suitable minimum size to ensure opportunity for reproduction of the species. This has been the subject of quite an amount of controversy over a period of years, and I wish to demonstrate how little has been accomplished in the way of conserving fish supplies. The first point to take into consideration, apart from the closing of waters to net fishermen, is the prohibition of fishing in breeding-grounds during the spawning season. This must be insisted

upon if we are going to build up stocks of fish to give the industry a bright future. Finally, we must wage total war on shags. This, although the last to be mentioned, is by no means the least. In this way alone can we hope to conserve not only much of the fish in the river but also the food on which the fish live.

An examination of the available figures gives cause for great concern. I am taking the period to 1943 because I have been unable to get reliable data covering the period since that year. The department has handled through the markets a large quantity of Perth herring and a considerable amount of canning has been done, but I wonder whether we know the full and true story of the Perth herring. I feel that we do not because frequently contradictory figures are published and contradictory information given by way of answers to questions, showing that a not very accurate account has been obtainable and that there has been a certain amount of guesswork. Dealing with the various types of fish caught in the Swan River, I wish to make a comparison between the years 1941 and 1943, as follows:—

| | 1941. | 1943. |
|-----------------------|--------|--------|
| | lbs. | lbs. |
| Mullet | 67,431 | 21,938 |
| Yellow-eyed mullet .. | 12,523 | 3,334 |
| Flathead | 2,567 | 1,944 |
| Cobbler | 43,257 | 16,707 |
| Skipjack | 1,085 | 404 |

Thus mullet and yellow-eyed mullet declined by more than 66 per cent. Of the fish that in the past contributed largely to the total quantity passing through the markets and canned, there has been a decided falling off in those two years. What the figures for 1944 and 1945 will disclose can only be conjectured. More alarming still is the disparity in the quantity of mullet taken in the year 1943 as compared with the year 1937. It may be argued that this is a wide range of years, but it demonstrates the amount of depletion that has occurred over that period. In 1937, the mullet marketed totalled 312,000 lbs., representing 130,000 dozen averaging 5 ozs. each, while in 1943 the quantity marketed totalled only 22,000 lbs., or only one-fourteenth of the 1937 catch. Another indication that should be regarded as a definite warning is found in other official figures. In 1943, 550,808 lbs. of fresh fish were used for canning which

produced 229,748 lbs., a wastage of 41 per cent. In 1944, 655,542 lbs. of fresh fish were used to produce 214,389 lbs. of canned fish, thus disclosing a wastage of 68 per cent.

What inference can we draw from this additional wastage? Although the catch was larger—the quantity of fish caught was 100,000 lbs. more—the wastage, instead of remaining about proportionate to that of the earlier period, showed a marked increase. The reason for this is obvious. During the year 1944, the quantity of under-sized fish that passed through the processing plants must have been greater. It is a well-known fact that in dealing with small fish, the proportion of head and gut is far greater than in larger fish. Therefore the position is alarming. Though 655,000 lbs. of fish were taken there was a decrease in the net result. No sane excuse can be advanced for the continuation of the unwise policy we have been following during the last four or five years.

It is obvious that the department is perfectly well aware of the danger. My reason for making this statement is that in 1941 the department took steps to determine whether mullet stocks were being depleted and, as part of a general investigation, measured 16,000 mullet sent to the Perth markets between the months of February and July. As a result of this investigation, licensed fishermen were advised that the minimum length at which mullet might be caught would be raised yearly, thus indicating that all was not well and that the department was satisfied there was only one way of protecting the diminishing fish supply in our estuaries. The circular issued stated that the outstanding features of this measurement test were that one-fifth of the 16,000 fish measured were under size, that is, less than 9½ inches; nine-tenths were fish which were immature and had not been given an opportunity to reproduce their species; and only 10 per cent. were over three years old and sexually mature, and that of these only a negligible few came from the three main estuaries. The fisheries report went on to say—

Remedial measures are of course necessary if we are going to preserve this most important species for posterity, and it seems that the most effective manner of dealing with the subject is to increase the minimum length to a standard which will ensure that all fish caught have had an opportunity of spawning at least

once. The first spawning does not take place until the fish are three years of age, by which time they reach an average length of 13 inches.

That is all very interesting. The department intended to increase the minimum size until a standard was reached to allow of the fish multiplying. That was firmly fixed in the minds of the officials in 1941. There have been certain factors to make it difficult for the department to maintain that standard. I was astounded to read in a newspaper of the 9th November some reflections published under the headings "Fish Conservation, Test with Mullet, Relaxation of Restrictions." The statement was as follows:—

In order to test the results of the recent fish conservation scheme, the Fisheries Department in this State is now permitting fishermen to market all mullet caught in the nets of 2½ in. mesh during the three months ending January 31 next, even though they may be less than the present legal minimum length of 11¼ inches, provided all such fish are disposed of through the Metropolitan Markets, where a daily check is being made by Dr. D. L. Serventy, of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research.

Prior to March, 1942, the legal minimum length at which mullet could be sold in this State was 9½ inches. This was then extended to 10¼ inches and in March, 1942, to 11¼ inches, the ultimate intention having been to raise the minimum length to 13 inches, at which age, it was considered the fish would be sexually mature and able to reproduce their species.

With the increase in the minimum size permitted it was obvious that the size of the mesh would also have to be proportionately adjusted. Because of the lack of the necessary gear on account of the war, the annual increase was temporarily discontinued. No change in the minimum length was made in 1943 and the legal minimum at which mullet could be sold has remained at 11¼ inches.

The only expedient the department could think of was to allow the fishermen to have a go at what they could catch in a 2½-inch mesh net, instead of closing the Swan River sufficiently long to permit of the fish reaching maturity and reproducing their species. A 2½ in. net will catch an 8 in. mullet without any doubt whatever. I make that assertion from personal experience. All these facts that I have brought forward are obtained from departmental sources; as it were, they are marked down in the Good Book. There is no guessing. Everything is there for the Minister or anyone else to read. Yet we are taking no action; instead, we are leaving a wide open gate for everything which the fisherman likes to catch for the

next three months; as the report goes on to say, "Another week in which to slaughter this immature and ungrown fish!" I urge that the matter be treated even more seriously than has been attempted in the past and that a sane level-headed policy be adopted in order to ensure the conservation of one of our main sources of fish supply in the metropolitan area, the Swan River and the estuaries.

MR. McLARTY (Murray-Wellington [8.1]: Reference has already been made to the illness of the Minister in control of the department; and those members who occupy these benches would also like to express regret at the Minister's enforced absence and to say that, whilst we hear it is most unlikely he will be returning to the House this session, we hope he will be with us when we meet next year and fully restored to health. I desire to say a word or two on the vote for Native Affairs and also a few words on the Vote for Fisheries.

Dealing first with native affairs, I think that the provision which the Minister outlined when introducing the Estimates, namely, to provide a certain area where natives might be taught agricultural and pastoral activities, is a very good move; because, Mr. Chairman, you will realise that by far the overwhelming majority of natives are fitted for those pursuits, but fitted for little else. Unquestionably, they can be turned into useful farm-hands, and so that training they will receive will be of great benefit to them. The Minister also said that there had been a great reduction in the money which had been provided for natives during the past year to provide rations. I consider it unnecessary to provide money for rations for natives under present conditions, except, of course, for the old and the sick. Natives today can earn all the money they require. Their services are in demand and they are being offered high wages. I notice that for the year ended 30th June, 1944, the natives drew £29,484 for child endowment, while for the previous year they drew £27,440, an increase of £2,004 in 12 months, and I have no doubt that the increase will continue.

Mr. Doney: There is going to be no increase in population as far as they are concerned.

Mr. McLARTY: One of the objects of the revision of child endowment is to help to increase our population; there is no doubt about the increase in our half-caste population. The Native Affairs Department might give consideration to this matter of child endowment and the way in which it is spent by the natives. I am convinced that much of it is being wasted.

The Minister for Lands: We have no control over them.

Mr. McLARTY: No, it is a Federal matter. Mr. Doney: Indirectly, we could exercise control.

The Minister for Lands: How can we? he money is paid to the natives.

Mr. McLARTY: The money should be spent wisely. It is taxpayers' money and I feel convinced that it is not being spent wisely at present. Any member who has a knowledge of natives and the way in which they live will agree that there should be an overhaul of these child endowment payments.

Mr. Cross: Would you increase the endowment to the natives?

Mr. McLARTY: No, I am not suggesting any increase.

Mr. Doney: Does the member for Canning suggest an increase?

Mr. Cross: No.

Mr. McLARTY: I wish to say a word or two about the natives and drink. Anybody with a knowledge of natives knows perfectly well it is most undesirable that they should be supplied with intoxicating liquor. According to the report of the Commissioner of Native Affairs, he says that during the past 12 months only three persons were convicted for supplying intoxicating liquor to natives, yet there were 90 convictions for offences by natives, and 42 per cent. of these offences were attributable to intoxicating liquor; and for supplying intoxicating liquor one person was fined £30, other £25, and a third received six months' imprisonment. We know that wherever natives are they are getting intoxicating liquor—in many cases in as great quantities as they require. Wine is the drink for which they crave; it is their weakness. The effect of it is to drive them silly and they are not responsible for their actions.

Wine has a different effect upon a native than that produced upon a white man; the difference may not be seen in a native's legs, but it has a quite different effect on his head.

I suggest to the Minister that he consider overhauling the legislation which provides for punishment of those who supply intoxicating liquor to natives. Under present conditions it is exceedingly difficult to get a conviction. As I have just quoted from the Commissioner's report, only three persons were convicted during the past 12 months for that offence. At present, unless a constable can actually see the liquor being given to a native, he stands no chance of securing a conviction. I understand that in a court of law a native's word is not accepted and so the prosecuting constable cannot make use of the native's evidence. In these days, where we have half-castes living amongst the white population and know full well that they are offending against the law, consideration should be given to the evidence of the native concerned. As I said, the time has come when there should be an overhaul of this legislation. The offence is regarded so seriously by the Legislature that there is a minimum penalty of £20, and a maximum penalty of £100 and six months' imprisonment, if the court so decides. What I have to say now affects native children. I presume I shall be in order in discussing the matter under this Vote, but it really concerns the Minister for Education.

The Minister for Lands: He comes next.

Mr. McLARTY: It is in connection with the attendance of native children at schools. The policy is now to provide for these children at all State schools. I am not raising any objection to the educating of the native, particularly the half-caste, as I admit the State has a duty in that direction. I think, however, that consideration should be given to the conditions under which these native children live. A great majority of them live in camps and I think it desirable that both the Ministers concerned—the Minister in charge of Native Affairs and the Minister for Education—should inspect some of these camps. If they were to do so they would gain valuable information.

Many white people object to half-caste children attending State schools. I have discussed the matter with many parents and find that they do not object to the half-caste children being educated, provided these children are properly housed and looked after. But they do object under present conditions. How can the natives

keep their children clean and free from vermin, as well as from some diseases which attack them, such as scabies? The natives live in huts, with no covering on the floor and no proper bathing facilities, and certainly no proper sanitation. Yet they are expected to keep their children clean and send them to school. It is not possible to do so under present conditions. Not only do these native children use the same accommodation as is provided for the white children, but they also use the same sanitary conveniences. I consider that to be neither fair nor right.

There is need for the native children and half-caste children to be taught something about cleanliness; that is particularly important. They should be taught something about the evils of drink, because under existing conditions they know that their parents, or their elders, will get drunk on every occasion they possibly can, and they naturally grow up thinking they are perfectly right in doing the same thing. They see the gambling that goes on. It seems to be part of a native's nature to gamble, and I think that is where much of this child endowment money is wasted. The children should be taught something about the evil of gambling. Sanitation is one of the chief subjects in which they should receive instruction. The Leader of the Opposition told the Committee that a certain number of houses were to be built in various centres for natives. I do not think they would live in them very long. You, Mr. Chairman, know, as you come from the North, that the native is very superstitious, and that is something we must try to correct.

Mr. Doney: Do you say the natives will not live in those houses?

Mr. McLARTY: Yes. I said that the native was a very superstitious person. Those of us who know the habits of the natives know that if one dies the hut is pulled down or they shift camp. If a native died in a house the others would leave it. The report of the Commissioner of Native Affairs states that some white people leave their house after a death has occurred in it, and they go to another one. That is not so with the native. He will pull down the house if he gets the opportunity, or he will leave it altogether. I do not know that it is a wise provision to build these houses. If

money is spent in that way we will have to be careful to see that the right type of native is given these houses.

The Minister for Lands: We will have to be careful to see that no native dies in one.

Mr. McLARTY: That is all I have to say on native affairs, and I have very little to say on fisheries. I approve of the suggestion by the Minister that a guardian of game should be appointed. We have certain game in Western Australia that we are trying to preserve, and we have certain people who do not care whether they shoot rare birds or animals, as long as they shoot something. If we can preserve some of the game that we have in this State we will be doing the country a service. There is much of certain game that we want to get rid of.

Mr. Thorn: Is not the local constable the guardian of game in each district?

Mr. McLARTY: He has something to do with it. If a person shoots ducks out of season and the policeman catches him he prosecutes. The Minister also said something about taking control over fisheries. He said he was going to copy the Queensland Act.

The Minister for Lands: I said a conference was called and that was advocated.

Mr. McLARTY: I have not seen the Queensland Act, but I know that Queensland is rather keen on the idea of State trading concerns. I do not want to see any Government fish shops opened. I recently had an opportunity to talk to an officer of the Fisheries Branch of the C.S.I.R., and he is most optimistic about the wealth that can be derived from the fishing industry along our coast. He said that it could be one of our greatest primary industries. He is certain of that. Not only are we short of fish in Australia, but there is an export market for it as well. If this industry can be developed it would be wise for the Government to expand it to the fullest. In conclusion I want to say that the waters of the Peel Inlet at Mandurah are the chief source from which the small fish are supplied to the metropolitan area. These waters supply by far the greater part of the small fish to the whole of this particular area. In view of that I suggest to the Minister that now we have reached the post-war period he should do something to keep the bar at Mandurah from closing.

The Minister for Works: Hear, hear!

Mr. McLARTY: I mean the ocean bar. It depends to a large degree on what happens to the bar as to what amount of fish is available to the metropolitan area. It would be wise to do something to keep that bar open. Again, something should be done in regard to keeping the bar open where the Murray and the Serpentine Rivers meet at Yunderup. I have, by way of deputation, discussed this matter with the Minister for Works and I do not think that there is need for me to say anything further at this stage.

MR. DONEY (Williams-Narrogin) [8.20]: I associate myself with the regrets expressed by the member for Murray-Wellington with regard to the very serious illness that overtook our friend the Minister for Native Affairs. I understand that recent reports of his condition indicate that he is improving at a satisfactory rate, so it will not be long before we see him back with us. The member for Murray-Wellington made excellent references to the native problem. I am at one with him when he says that the conditions, under which the natives dwelling in our towns are forced to live, are such as to preclude absolutely the possibility of their children being clean enough to attend schools. He says, and I agree with him, that the fault is ours. Speaking generally, I am entirely dissatisfied, and always have been, with the native position. I regret that tonight I am not in a position to offer anything useful towards a solution of the many problems presented by the natives of this State. I have been concerned in the past with native problems in many parts of the world, but never before have I regarded the problem as being so difficult of solution as it is in Western Australia. The Minister said that there is today plenty of work for the natives. He is quite right, but the natives are not too keen on working, and I think he knows that.

The Minister for Lands: Some 6,000 ac.

Mr. DONEY: His remarks about the natives would not be in such an optimistic strain were it not that the department, with which he was dealing when he introduced the Estimates, is one to which he is unaccustomed. There is plenty of work but the natives are, in my opinion—along the Great Southern in any case—far less industrious than has been the case for a long while. The Minister said too that the natives today are passing

through a period of considerable prosperity. The prosperity that the Minister sees among the native is an entirely spurious one. Surely there can be no two opinions on that point. The suggestion of prosperity among these people arises from the child endowment payments. That money is all too frequently, as most members know, grabbed by the husband and used for two-up purposes instead of for what it was intended, namely, to give the children food and clothing.

I was with a farmer friend of mine about three months ago and, with the object of contacting a native in whom I was interested in respect of a job he was supposed to be doing, we went down to a certain outhouse and stumbled across a two-up school. I singled out the native I was interested in and said to him, "How is the game progressing so far as you are concerned?" I read him a little bit of a lecture, as is my habit on occasions, and he told me—and he showed me proof too—that during the afternoon, which was then about three hours old, he had won £18 in money and 40 rabbit traps. The 40 rabbit traps were of greater concern to my farmer friend than the £18 because this fellow was under contract to catch rabbits for the farmer and the traps were the farmer's property. I do not blame the aborigines or the half-castes for that sort of thing. I think the general drabness of their lives forces them to use two-up and so forth for the sake of the excitement that such pastimes bring to their otherwise poor existence. They have, as we well know, no ambition of any sort. Their lives seem to be entirely purposeless. When I meet them under these conditions I do not feel like blaming them, but I do feel intensely sorry for them. I cannot see that life holds anything for these people. The fault and the responsibility are ours. I think, too, that in a large measure much that contributes to the debasement of the natives is what he has, speaking in a general way, copied from us.

With the member for Murray-Wellington, I agree that the woes and worries represented by the natives here constitute a problem that we are in duty bound to try to solve. There is need for an intensive inquiry. I had hoped that it would take place this session. I am not prepared to say what should be done. I do not know, but I do know that there are bits and pieces of plans in the State, but nothing that can be worked to

with any hope of arriving at a sensible conclusion. So it seems to me that a Select Committee or Royal Commission to inquire into the matter is still outstanding. I think that to a far greater degree than ever before when we have been inquiring into matters affecting the native and his welfare, we should canvass the opinion of the native himself. All too frequently we have been prone to disregard him and his views. We bring in cranks by the score and let them have their say, hour after hour, about the native but the aborigine himself is kept outside. Incidentally I think that in the matter of hospital treatment the member for Canning might be answered if the endowment money was set aside for the purpose of servicing separate hospitals for natives.

Natives, when in native hospitals, should be nursed by native nurses. This is not the Vote of the Minister for Agriculture, but he might have the same idea with regard to native teachers in schools. It was the Minister who made some mention of the attempt to improve the lot of the natives by the settlement at Wandering Brook. I am very hopeful about the work being done there. The methods followed seem to be entirely sensible and I am hoping that some good may result from them. There is a great deal that one could say but I repeat, in closing, that I am not qualified, tonight at any rate, to say anything at all that I feel to be in any way a useful contribution towards the native and his problems. But I do hope that before the next session is over we shall have sense enough to set going a commission of inquiry into the natives with the object of improving their lot generally.

MR. LESLIE (Mt. Marshall) [8.30]: I join with other members who have expressed regret at the absence of the Minister for the North-West on account of illness, and I trust that our expression of regret will be conveyed to him. I particularly regret the Minister's absence because another Minister had to present his Estimates, and that presentation was not complete enough to provide the Committee with as much information as could be desired.

The Minister for Lands: I am glad I did not give much more information, in view of the talk that has been indulged in on this Vote.

Mr. LESLIE: That has been indulged in because members received so little information. We did not have as much as such an important department warrants.

The Minister for Lands: I am afraid you have not been in the Chamber to deal with many Estimates.

Mr. Doney: Many Ministers in the circumstances would have skipped the Estimates entirely!

Mr. LESLIE: That may be, and the Minister's suggestion may be quite correct. The Vote for the North-West shows that £200 has been provided, an increase of £17 compared with last year's Vote. I presume that is not all the money that is to be spent in the North-West.

The Minister for Lands: Only by the particular department.

Mr. LESLIE: I notice that the provision is for incidentals, postages and so on.

The Minister for Lands: That is so.

Mr. LESLIE: I think the Committee should be told by the Minister what is to be spent in the North-West in other directions.

The Minister for Lands: Other Ministers will be able to give that information.

Mr. LESLIE: As the North-West is regarded as of sufficient importance to justify the appointment of a separate Minister, it should be regarded as sufficiently important for the Minister to inform the Committee just exactly what is going on in that part of the State and to let members know that it is not merely a matter of the expenditure of a paltry £200.

The Minister for Works: But you have been told that this is for incidentals!

Mr. LESLIE: We have been told what the State intends to spend in the North, but apparently nothing is done.

The Minister for Works: That is not so.

Mr. LESLIE: I am going on the fact as presented here, and unfortunately I cannot get any information.

The Minister for Lands: You are not looking for information but merely making assertions.

The Minister for Works: Most of the expenditure is from loan funds.

Mr. LESLIE: There is nothing to prevent the Minister from telling us what has been done in the North and what it is intended to do in the future.

The Minister for Lands: You should know that the Chairman would prevent me from giving you such information on this particular Vote.

Mr. LESLIE: The Minister for the North-West is surely consulted regarding the expenditure of money in that part of the State. He must be aware of what is going on there and could give us information in that regard.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: You are talking with your tongue in your cheek, are you not?

Mr. LESLIE: Nothing of the sort. I know nothing—

The Minister for Lands: Hear, hear! You are quite right there.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

The Minister for Lands: It is the most accurate statement you have made.

Mr. W. Hegney: And the most truthful.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member must confine himself to the Vote under discussion. He will be able to get information such as he seeks from other Ministers when they deal with their particular departments.

Mr. LESLIE: I will accept your ruling, Mr. Chairman, but I think that we should be provided with more information than has been presented to us. I am not the only one who is ignorant in that respect, for there are many others—but perhaps they are not game enough to confess it! Dealing now with the question of fisheries, the member for South Fremantle suggested action should be taken to enable fishermen to market their supplies under more satisfactory conditions. I submit to the Government—I have in mind the statement made by the member for Murray-Wellington in particular—that in the country districts we do not know that such a thing as a fish is ever caught in Western Australian waters.

The Minister for Lands: We do not see so much in the metropolitan area either.

Mr. LESLIE: Then I suggest there is ample room for action to improve the situation.

The Minister for Lands: We must catch the fish first.

Mr. LESLIE: We had not gone into the possibilities of the fishing industry in Western Australia to an adequate degree, because it is apparent that a quantity quite insufficient to provide for the metropolitan area, quite apart from the country districts,

is being provided under existing circumstances.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: It is not just a matter of catching the fish but a question of whether they will sell them if the fish are caught.

Mr. Abbott: Is it not a question of transport?

Mr. LESLIE: No, it is not a question of transport at all. That difficulty can be overcome at Easter-time when fish is in great demand and is only available at exorbitant prices. In fact, fish makes its appearance in the country districts once a year. If the transport problem can be overcome at that season, it can be overcome during the rest of the year. In any case, goods that are equally perishable are transported satisfactorily, and why not fish? I earnestly suggest to the Government that the question of fish supplies for the country districts should receive proper consideration. If that difficulty could be overcome, the effect would be to provide much needed requirements and to expand a very valuable industry. I appeal to members representing the electorates where the fishing industry is established, to interest themselves in this problem and help to supply the requirements of people who are fish-hungry. By so doing, they will render a service not only to their own electorates but to the country districts as well.

Dealing now with the native question, when this problem was discussed last year I had little to say despite the fact that I maintain that no member of this Chamber has had more experience in association with the natives than I have had. I have been surprised at the angle from which the problem is tackled in Australia, and particularly in Western Australia. I do not know how much investigation has been carried out regarding the native problem but, in my opinion, scant effort has been made to understand native psychology or to educate the average white person to understand the native. I find it difficult to reconcile some actions of the Government—I do not refer to the present Government but to various Governments, irrespective of their political colour—with regard to what has actually happened in the past and the intentions for the future. We are told that natives are to be segregated on farm settlements, and that that is to be the future policy. On the other hand, we

have been told that it is not the policy of the present Government to segregate native children with regard to their education. Natives can work. We must not get away with the idea that they cannot do so. On the other hand, the native will not work so long as he can make his living through any other easier channel.

Mr. W. Hegney: There are many white men to whom that applies equally well.

The Minister for Lands: Yes, the native is not alone in that respect.

Mr. LESLIE: The member for Williams-Narrogin explained the position very well. I was going to say that the native is without a sense of responsibility, but that hon. member declared more effectively that the native is without ambition or purpose in life. With him it is "sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof," and for that reason he lives only for today and takes no concern for tomorrow.

Mr. Seward: Why should he?

Mr. LESLIE: He will continue along those lines, so long as we dole out charity. In my young days I lived on the border of native territory in South Africa and, literally speaking, there were 2,000,000 natives at our backdoor.

The Minister for Lands: There is no comparison between them and our natives!

Mr. LESLIE: I found their mentality very little different. The native of South Africa will not work if he can be given charity, and that applies to the Australian native as well.

The Minister for Lands: You would not class the Zulu and the Basuto with our natives?

Mr. LESLIE: No, they are of a better type. Where any attempt is made to provide them with employment, the policy of bringing them amongst whites only aggravates the difficulty. I found that the native, from earliest childhood, is envious of the privileges of the white race and that envy develops into an anti-white race feeling. It leads to an inferiority complex which follows the native throughout his life; he never escapes from it. I give all organisations interested and Governments of all political creeds every credit for the high ideals that have animated them.

The Minister for Works: It might be interesting to have the native's opinion of the white man.

Mr. LESLIE: We have had it; it is one of pure envy. I know that members can point to natives who have attained great heights, as I can with regard to South African natives where some have reached positions of eminence through education and opportunity. We have some types of white people that will never thrive outside the walls of Fremantle Gaol but that does not say that because there are black sheep amongst us, all whites are black! That cannot be applied equally to the natives. Because some have attained success it does not mean that all natives have the same capacity.

The Minister for Works: Your logic is terrific!

Mr. LESLIE: I still cannot understand the argument that has been advanced from time to time with regard to the natives. They are entitled to all the assistance we can render, because we have interfered with their natural mode of living. South Africa has attempted various methods of dealing with the problem and has found only one effective. In order to educate the native to care for the future and to develop a sense of responsibility, South Africa imposed a tax of £2 per head with respect to every male native. By that means the native is compelled to work. The money raised is spent for the benefit of the native in his territory.

[Mr. J. Hegney took the Chair.]

The Minister for Mines: The native revolted against it at first.

Mr. LESLIE: He made a lot of noise, but it did not get him anywhere. Following upon that action, results were achieved as the natives had to work to provide themselves with their requirements and essential amenities in their living conditions. That was done in an endeavour to create in the native a sense of responsibility or purpose; but it achieved nothing, and today the authorities are faced with the position that there is only one alternative: To segregate the natives and allow them to live their own lives according to their own ideas. Attempts were made in dozens of directions to interfere with the native laws, but they too, got nowhere. I suggest that ideas are all right as long as they are not injurious; and in these cases they are, because the native—and particularly the ca-

native—when brought in to mix with whites, suffers an inferiority complex and never rises above that, no matter how hard people try to raise him.

No matter how we try to absorb natives into the white race and accustom them to white practices, they never lose their native qualities. Take these rumbas and the jitter bug dances which are so fashionable! I saw them years ago. They were practised ages ago in Africa, from where negroes were transported to America. Colonies were established over a period of years in America; and the evidence is there today that the natives have not been absorbed. Instead of their being absorbed into the white race, the white races are absorbing the native ideas! Today it is fashionable to do in our civilization what the natives in Africa did years and years ago.

Mr. Abbott: Do you want a native colony in Western Australia?

Mr. LESLIE: Yes, if a portion of this country could be set aside for it; and I do not see why it could not.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: They have reservations.

Mr. Watts: Or even more than one portion of the State.

Mr. LESLIE: Yes. We cannot attempt to do two things at once. We cannot separate them and at the same time try to absorb them.

Mr. Abbott: Why not absorb them?

Mr. LESLIE: We cannot. We must segregate them and give them an opportunity to develop along their own lines. It has taken us centuries to reach our standard of civilisation—if we can call it civilisation to use atomic bombs to kill each other with! To expect to take the most backward race in the world and absorb it into the white civilisation in a very short space of time is an erroneous expectation. To attempt it along the lines on which we are attempting it today is to make the position very much worse. We are only aggravating the situation; and, instead of absorbing these people, we shall find that we are creating a section of the community which, because of the inherent quality in its nature, will always be opposed to the white man's standard. I would ask those who are prepared to talk about non-segregation of the native whether any one of them is prepared to allow his

daughter to marry a native or a half-caste or his son to marry a gin or a caste girl. That is the only standard upon which we can judge whether these people are qualified to be amongst us at the present time.

Mr. Abbott: Or a German for that matter.

Mr. LESLIE: That is a matter of opinion. People might not be prepared to marry Germans because of propaganda, and because of the feeling engendered during the last few years. I would not associate with some of them if I could help it! If a man talks to me about the rights of the natives and what we should and should not do for them, and if he is prepared to answer the question I have propounded—if he is prepared to answer that question in all honesty and his answer is in conformity with his expressed ideas, I would say, "Go out and do the job." Until such time as that, he has no right to suggest that the other fellow is the man who should be living with the native while he is not prepared to do it or to have his children do it. It is necessary for this Government to put into practice a definite policy. I agree with the member for Williams-Narrogin that this question should be investigated by a commission composed not of people who look at the matter from the outside but of people who have a knowledge of the native question.

The Minister for Lands: Who do you suggest that might be?

Mr. LESLIE: Those who have been in close association with the natives for many years.

Mr. Watts: The member for Roebourne would do for one.

The Minister for Lands: He would not have many views like those of our friend.

Mr. LESLIE: In the University of South Africa is a section devoted to the study of the native and his past history. From five to seven years are required to complete that course of study into the background of the native, and the man who qualifies is then fitted to become one of the Government employees who go out and assist in administering native affairs. His job is not to listen to white men who have no experience of the natives, and many of whom have never seen a native, but to understand native mentality and background and build up from that, slowly and methodically raising the natives through their own system to achieve the main

objective desired; namely, to raise them to a higher plane than they are accustomed to.

Mr. Abbott: Do you not think it will be a question of the whites being segregated and not the natives?

Mr. LESLIE: It is pretty nearly that, when we consider that in the southern part of Africa the white population, when I was there, totalled only 1,250,000 as against the native population of 11,000,000. But we had no native problem to the extent that it exists here; because there was a method of segregation, and they realised where their place was and so did the whites. While the natives were envious of the whites, there was no compelling a white child to mix with a black. In fact the white child was forbidden to do so, and the native was similarly forbidden to mix with the whites. There was no hard animosity, and the white man respected the native who knew his place, and the native respected the white who knew his.

Mr. Abbott: What is the native's place in Africa?

The Minister for Lands: Keeping off the footpath and off the trams.

Mr. LESLIE: No; that is an old propaganda idea.

The Minister for Lands: I have seen it.

Mr. LESLIE: The natives and the whites respect each other. It is only when a foreigner comes into the country who has no knowledge of native psychology that damage occurs.

The Minister for Lands: I have seen natives kicked off a tram in Johannesburg.

Mr. LESLIE: We must follow some definite policy. Last year the member for Roebourne suggested that the Government had no policy. From what I have seen, it appears to me that I can confirm his statement. The other night the Minister said that he had visited Norseman and found a native settlement within two miles of the town. He deplored its proximity to the town. Yet he also says it is proposed to establish a school of agriculture, which will be a sort of native settlement, within 100 miles of Perth. In view of present-day conditions, I consider that is far too close. Why not establish the natives in an area from which they can extend and develop properties for themselves?

The Minister for Lands: Put them where they could not grow anything, I suppose?

Mr. LESLIE: No. There is plenty of country where produce could be grown and we do not need to come within 100 miles of Perth to find it.

Mr. Abbott: Would not that create an inferiority complex?

Mr. LESLIE: No; because we would make the native realise that he must stand on his own feet and not come into competition with the white man in the white man's own field. The fact that Italians are in one part of Europe and Frenchmen in another does not breed inferiority complexes. There may be animosity, but not an inferiority complex; and there should be no need for an inferiority complex to arise if the natives were in one section of this country and the whites in another. Let the natives work in their own area and reach a standard equal to ours, they will naturally move amongst us eventually. But to endeavour to force the position is only to make it a lot worse.

We hear more discussion and more criticism of native affairs today than we ever heard in Western Australia although it is not a problem that has only just arisen. It has been with us for some time, but it did not arise so acutely before we attempted to interfere with natural processes. Because we have now attempted to do that our difficulties are intensified; and they are going to be worse without getting any better, so far as I can see. I hope the attitude of the department on this question will be changed; that it will be approached from a different angle; and that departmental officers who have not had a close association with natives and an understanding of their nature will be willing to allow a complete investigation to be made with the hope of evolving something acceptable to the natives and the white men. We want something not based merely on the humanitarian ideal of elevating the natives to the white man's standard—a humanitarian ideal which is excellent but is only resulting in aggravating the problem because of the impractical methods being used—but something that will definitely improve the lot of the natives and give effect to that ideal.

MR. THORN (Toodyay) [8.57]: In the report of the Vermin Royal Commission it was suggested that kangaroos be brought under the Vermin Act. At present the

are known as game, and the member for Murray-Wellington referred to the preservation of game in different districts. That is not so in my district. I have just received permission for the local authorities to destroy some of the game. I hope that if the Government does not apply the recommendation of the commission to all districts, it will apply it to some districts where it is essential. In my electoral district kangaroos do a tremendous lot of damage, and I am quite sure this Chamber will be surprised to know that on several occasions I have applied for a permit from the Fisheries Department to destroy as many as 5,000 kangaroos. I refer to the area just north of Gingin from the Moore River to the coast; and in no time those animals were destroyed. I have just been successful on behalf of the road board in having that area thrown open for six months. That is as much as the local constable, who is the guardian of game, would recommend to the Fisheries Department. That department sent up two inspectors who were shown through the country and I have been through myself and seen the kangaroos. Their skins bring a good price now, and in this six months there will be from 10,000 to 5,000 destroyed in that area.

When I was younger I saw kangaroos in mobs of 100 to 150 in the Premier's electorate north of Carnarvon, and I chased them on horseback many a time just for the fun of it. Now the same sort of thing can be seen north of Gingin. Kangaroos are there in hundreds and destroy whole crops. Not only that, but on the coastal country, which is some of our main cattle country, where some of the finest bullocks in the State are raised, they are cleaning up all the best feed. So, having explained the position existing in that country, I hope the Government will see fit to examine that portion of the commission's report suggesting that kangaroos should be declared vermin and will apply the declaration to districts where its application is necessary. I am sure that in my district, in the area I have mentioned, it is absolutely necessary. Kangaroos are cleaning up a great deal of feed in that country. They can be seen in groups of 50 or 100. As far as the eye can see, there are groups of kangaroos and emus. I shall be pleased to report to the House the effect of this six months' shooting. There will be a tally,

because the skins will be checked, and I feel sure that 10,000 or 15,000 kangaroos will be destroyed in that time. I hope the Government will consider declaring kangaroos vermin in districts where it is necessary.

MR. ABBOTT (North Perth) [9.1]: I had hoped the Minister might be able to say a little more about the investigation of the fishing resources of the North-West coast that have resulted from the work done by the Commonwealth. I think he said the report had not yet been received, but I have been led to understand, by persons who assisted in that investigation, that the results have been astonishingly good though unfortunately most of the fishing will be school fishing, which can be fished beyond the three-mile limit. That presents a problem for the State because, if mother-ships are sent out from foreign countries, they are sure to fish inside the three-mile limit as well as outside it, and in other parts of the world that has caused a great deal of trouble.

It is well known that on at least two occasions America claimed the right to control the waters of her coasts to a distance of ten miles, once in the matter of liquor, and again on the question of oil. I know this is not a State matter but I suggest that the Government might consider it before it becomes so serious as to raise problems that may not be capable of solution. It might be worth while for the Minister to give consideration to that point as soon as possible. Undoubtedly we have one of the finest fishing grounds in the world off our coast and I would like to see it preserved for Western Australia.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Harbours and Lights and Jetties, £41,953—agreed to.

Vote—Fisheries, £8,584:

Item, salaries and allowances, etc., £6,434.

Mr. NORTH: I wish to deal with river cormorants, known as shags. Some years ago the question was raised as to their effect on fish in the river and the then Chief Inspector and others concerned argued that the shags did no harm. On that occasion a permit was granted to certain sportsmen to shoot shags and the matter came to a head when the shags fell into Butler's Swamp and were left to die there, causing a stench which brought complaints from local residents. Members

heard a strong speech tonight on the matter of checking the river cormorants. In the days when the Chief Inspector thought they were doing no harm I believe he was influenced by those permits. I trust that matter will again be raised by the Government. I support the remarks of the member for Yilgarn-Coolgardie.

Mr. DONEY: I notice that the number of inspectors has been increased from nine to 11. Would the Minister tell the Committee what extension of work there is to justify that increase, and from what source the two extra inspectors were secured? I notice the item "clerks." They might have come from there, or possibly from some outside department. If so, from what department did they come?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I am not in a position to tell the member for Williams-Narrogin exactly where those men came from. The staff is chosen by the Chief Inspector, who picks his own men. It would obviously be of no use to put a clerk on as an inspector of fisheries unless he knew something about it. The extension of the fisheries necessitates the employment of more inspectors. The member for Yilgarn-Coolgardie told the Committee tonight that it would take another six to look after crabs alone.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—North-West Generally, £200—
agreed to.

Vote—Forests, £169,588:

MR. THORN (Toodyay) [9.8]: I appeal to the Government to adopt the recommendations made by the member for Swan in his maiden speech in this House on the throwing open of the rich gullies in the forestry reserves. There is a great number of these valuable gullies that do not grow marketable timber. The timber grows on the heights and hillsides and one has only to travel through my district and that of the member for Swan to see some of the finest orchards in the State established in such gullies. A great number of such gullies is to be found on the ranges, tied up in water catchments and forestry reserves, and they could be released if surveyed out. They would be a great avenue for settlement; in a guaranteed rainfall area, where small areas would produce a lot and would mean a good living for those settled on

them. At the last Returned Soldiers' Conference in this State there was a resolution of this nature brought forward, in the land section, and some valuable contributions were made to the debate on these gullies.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: The selfish people want the gullies.

Mr. THORN: The member for Geraldton misunderstands me. These gullies do not grow timber. There is a small-minded attitude of the Forestry Department being ventilated through our ex-Premier, who says that selfish people want the gullies. It is not selfish people.

The Minister for Mines: What area would be involved?

Mr. THORN: There are forestry reserves right down through the Rockingham area and beyond.

Mr. Abbott: Would not the fire risk be increased?

Mr. THORN: The clearings would be firebreaks. The first thing that a man does when he settles on the land is to endeavour to protect his property from fire and to ensure that fire does not get away.

Mr. Abbott: He makes provision against fire getting in, but not against it getting out.

Mr. THORN: That is not so. That is a one-eyed view to take, and a reflection on the settler, as much as to say that he protects his own property and lets the fire go. There are any number of responsible settlers in this country, as well as responsible businessmen, and they do not do that sort of thing.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: There are a lot of irresponsible people, also.

Mr. THORN: There are irresponsible people in this Chamber. I am putting forward what I think is a helpful suggestion to the Government.

The Minister for Lands: It is not a new one.

Mr. THORN: I am getting a good hearing from the Minister for Lands, because he knows the value of this suggestion from the settlement point of view. The matter was brought up at the Land Congress of the Returned Soldiers' League. The member for Swan, who is a man experienced in horticulture, brought it forward, and I do not think he has any selfish motives in the matter. He knows the value of those

gullies and how valuable they would be to future settlement when we have to look further afield. We should not think we can carry on as we have done in the past. This country must be populated and people must be given encouragement to go on the land. If there is suitable land close to our cities we should make it available. We have had the experience of sending men out into the far eastern wheatbelt, where they lived a life of semi-starvation, but now we have this opportunity and I bring forward a suggestion to the Minister for Lands and ask him to look into the question. I ask that wherever he finds an area where gullies can be made available for settlement he will endeavour to have them thrown open.

MR. DONEY (Williams-Narrogin) [9.12]: I support the remarks of the member for Toodyay. No-one on this side of the Chamber is so foolish as to decry the value of reafforestation or any other aspect of forestry work in this State. A splendid contribution to progress in this State was made by Mr. Kessell, the Conservator of Forests, and that work is being continued today by the present Conservator. We realise that it is necessary for the forestry officials to exercise great care that the best timber country is not let to settlers, and thus used for purposes other than growing timber. At the same time we know that forestry officers through an excess of zeal, sometimes insist on keeping closed areas which should be thrown open to settlement. There are many areas that should be thrown open and, by following up requests that are made to that end, we find that by and by such pieces of country are thrown open.

I have in mind an area situated between Bulading, a place west of Darkan down to and 11 or 12 miles beyond Collie. In that area, known as the Collie Forests Area, there is a number of very rich gullies upon which, as some member on my right interjected a while ago, no marketable timber grows, but for some strange reason, responsible officers of the department insist upon retaining them. I ask the Minister whether all the land likely to be involved in the catchment for the enlarged Wellington Dam is to be closed entirely to settlement. Recent applications that I have been supporting for prospective settlers have been turned down on the plea that all the land situated

between Bulading and the point west of Collie must be reserved for the purpose of a water catchment.

The Minister for Lands: If it were suitable for soldier settlement, it could not be taken up.

MR. DONEY: What does the Minister mean by saying that it could not be taken up?

The Minister for Lands: It would have to be reserved for returned soldiers.

MR. DONEY: The Minister does not know whether the applicants are returned soldiers or not. The reply is not that the land cannot be granted to the applicants; it is that it cannot be granted to anyone because it has been reserved for the Wellington Dam catchment purposes. I admit that the Minister has only recently taken over the department and might not have the information, but if he has the information I would like to know whether the decision is to keep that land in reserve.

HON. J. C. WILLCOCK (Geraldton) [9.17]: I hope there will not be any tinkering with the policy of forest reservation in this State.

MR. DONEY: The references I made should not be regarded as tinkering with the policy.

HON. J. C. WILLCOCK: Year after year we have to listen to special pleading for some little area that somebody wants in a forest area, even at the risk of incurring danger by fire in the forest area. I had some years of administering this department and I know it is doing excellent work. Each year a list of revocations is submitted to Parliament. When any good reason is advanced for throwing open an area for settlement, the department has not been unreasonable in revoking the reserve for the growing of timber.

The timber industry is one of the big industries, one of the big assets and one of the best heritages we have, and we would be extremely foolish to interfere with its successful exploitation. We ought to realise that two-fifths of the timber required in Australia has to be imported, and so this does not seem to be a time when we should tinker with our timber reservations with a view to reducing them further, even if somebody could grow a few apricots, peaches or other fruits in one of the gullies or creeks that contain good soil and might support

half a settler. This endeavour to break down our forest policy is made almost every time the Estimates are discussed. The former member for Nelson, Mr. J. H. Smith, made of it a hardy annual. He had many interviews with the officials and every reasonable request was agreed to in the way of opening comparatively small areas where a few settlers could be placed. To put one settler on a block five miles out in the bush and provide roads for him because he might be able to grow oranges, peaches or apples a little better than they could be grown elsewhere, would be quite wrong.

Mr. Thorn: Or carrots!

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: Parrots, too. By this nibbling at our forest areas, it would be easy to break down the whole forest policy of the State, and to do so would be entirely and absolutely shortsighted. We hear a great deal of criticism of the railways, but the department earns more per ton per mile from the product of the timber industry than from anything else it transports. The forest products of this State in ordinary times are worth over £1,000,000, and the industry employs over 2,000 people directly. But when someone picks out a small area suitable for orange or vegetable growing, we are asked to break down a policy of forest conservation that has been affirmed over the years. Goodness knows we butchered our forests for a good many years. Only since 1920 have we had a real forest policy, and it is the envy of other States. I hope that this little piece of propaganda about settling one or two returned soldiers on forest areas will not succeed in breaking down our forest policy. I issue this word of warning that we should be very jealous of the timber resources of the State. We have some of the best timber in the world. Many countries would like to have the equal of it, and they take all sorts of care of their reserves. We have the rainfall and the climatic conditions for growing good timber, and we know that it will be in much greater demand as time goes on. Members would not be well advised to importune the Minister to open up forest reservations and permit those reservations to be gradually nibbled away.

I should like to pay a tribute to the ex-Conservator of Forests, Mr. Kessell, who came to this State when quite a young man and has done excellent work over the 20 or 25 years he was in control of our forests.

He has won encomiums from forest authorities of worldwide repute for the policy laid down in this State. In Victoria disastrous fires burnt the wonderful asset of mountain ash in that State, and Ministers and officials came here to learn how fires were prevented and the forests were controlled. As I said, we have embarked on a policy that is the envy of other States, and most of this has been possible because we had a young man in charge full of enthusiasm and a lover of the work. In his departure to another position, a great public servant has been lost to this State.

Mr. Thorn: Could not we keep him?

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: The Commonwealth, recognising Mr. Kessell's great capacity and ability, made him Timber Controller for war purposes during the war period. This brought Mr. Kessell in touch with big business concerns in Melbourne and Sydney. Big people became acquainted with his great technical knowledge and commercial ability and made him an attractive offer.

Mr. Read: Why not pay him to come back?

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: To do so, I think we would have to pay him more than £5,000 a year.

Mr. Read: It might be cheap to do so.

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: It might be. His successor, Mr. Stoate, has ability running on different lines but still of great value to the State from the standpoint of his forestry knowledge and the policy laid down. This policy will be carried on by the present occupant of the office and will make the position of forestry secure in this State. Mr. Kessell is greatly interested in the future of our forestry and timber industry, and when he comes here, will be able to give the benefit of his advice, whenever it is sought. Having received an offer of considerable financial benefit to himself which gives him even greater scope—a position in connection with paper manufacture and the utilisation of forest products—he felt it his duty to accept it. I am pleased to pay this tribute to his work.

MR. GRAHAM (East Perth) [9.28]: Because of what has aptly been termed by the member for Geraldton the "nibbling process" regarding our State forests, I wish to say a few words on this matter. Ever

member is fully seized with the value of the wonderful asset this State has in its forests. Yet there does appear to be a tendency on the part of some people, probably for selfish ends or to ingratiate themselves with settlers or prospective settlers, to sacrifice this wonderful asset of which so much has been said. As has been pointed out by the member for Geraldton, who was formerly Minister for Forests, the department is fully aware of its responsibilities to the State, apart altogether from the timber aspect. It is generally appreciated that we have forests consisting of islands of timber with numerous projections, and all sorts of administrative and other difficulties occur as a natural consequence. The administrative costs tend to become really top heavy. It is generally realised that if a small area is granted to a settler, not much time elapses before he finds it essential to seek additional land, either because the original area is insufficient for his purpose or because he desires to make extensions for other purposes. When one farmer is settled in a valley, he has started the rot and then other settlers move to secure adjoining land. So, as has been pointed out, this nibbling process, once allowed to start, is very difficult indeed to stop.

Although it might appear on the surface that low-lying land, by and large, is not timber-bearing—that is, from a marketable point of view—nevertheless those who are familiar with our forestry methods are aware of the fact that belts on low-lying portions are left. They are known as firebreaks, that is, an area between two fire lines, from which the undergrowth is cut and periodically burnt, so that if a forest fire commences it shall be confined, if possible, to a compartment instead of being allowed to spread over the whole of the forest. If the more low-lying and fertile areas are granted to selectors, it means that these firebreaks, which usually average 10 chains in width, will have to stretch part of the way up the hills. Accordingly there will thus be an encroachment upon what is actually forest country, suitable for raising timber of a marketable value. In addition, as members are probably aware, there is a whole network of roads and other communications throughout the length and breadth of the forest country. It therefore stands to reason that the forestry workers, in order to get from one point to another,

instead of being able to proceed direct will have to make a considerable detour. There is no gainsaying the fact that once holdings are established within a State forest area, the fire hazard is substantially increased.

One has only to glance at the annual report of the Forests Department to ascertain the large number of fires that are caused either by travellers or by landholders in the vicinity, or by the children of the latter. I would say, therefore, that we should be prepared to sacrifice the small areas—if it is a sacrifice—which possibly could be made available to selectors, in view of the fact that many million pounds of wealth is likely to be prejudiced because of their existence in the midst of the forest country. There is the added difficulty with which the Forests Department will be confronted in the event of these areas being made available for selection. What I desire to emphasise above all else is the fact that this practice, once started, is difficult to discontinue so far as the individual settler is concerned. It certainly is exceedingly difficult to reason with other persons desirous of taking up holdings. It should be pointed out, too, that as a rule there is no definite demarcation of classes of timber. The farmer notes the type and extent of the timber upon his holdings and observes that just outside his boundary fence the timber is not greatly different. He immediately develops a complex and feels that the Forests Department is adopting a dog-in-the-manger attitude. While I think that experience has shown that there exists between farmers and the Forests Department the greatest goodwill imaginable, in those instances where the properties abut on forest reserves, and I am sure there is the greatest co-operation in combating fires, I sincerely hope that this gradual nibbling into forest reserves, which are such a tremendous asset to the State, will be discontinued.

Mr. Seward: I ask the Minister, through you, Mr. Chairman, whether he is going to give us any direction on these Estimates.

The Minister for Lands: After eight members have spoken? I did not have a chance to get on my feet.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

MR. OWEN (Swan) [9.35]: I would like to associate myself with the member for Geraldton in the remarks he made about our ex-Conservator of Forests. I think Mr.

Kessell did a wonderful amount of good work in the interests of forestry in this State, and I think we must all regard it as a matter of regret that we could not keep him here. Unfortunately, that is the way with many of our men, particularly our technicians, who, because our Government does not pay them sufficient, look to more remunerative fields in other States. I also agree with the member for Geraldton that we have a wonderful asset in our jarrah and karri forests; but I still think there is room for better co-operation between agriculture and forestry. In the Swan electorate there are many settlers living happily with the Forests Department. I agree that sometimes settlers are blamed for setting fires, but I am not sure that this could be sheeted home to them, because they are interested in our forests, even in those forests just over the fence. They try to work in harmony with the Forests Department.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: I think they do.

Mr. OWEN: In advocating the opening of some of the gullies that have been mentioned for agricultural purposes, I never for one moment suggested that they should be opened in a widespread or general manner. When any areas are excised from forest reserves, that is done with the consent of the department. If any area is considered to be suitable for forest purposes, it is never let go for agricultural purposes. I maintain that many of those areas, because they are not suitable for forests, would be better devoted to agriculture.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: The Forests Department adopts a reasonable attitude.

Mr. OWEN: The department has not been at all unreasonable to settlers applying for adjoining land, but still there are many areas of forest land which could be better utilised for agriculture. The member for East Perth said that firebreaks would have to be shifted further up the hills to make way if the gullies were taken up by settlers. I disagree with that, because if the settlers occupied the gullies there would be no need for additional firebreaks; the orchards or gardens would act as firebreaks.

The member for East Perth also mentioned roads through forests, but those roads could also serve the settlers. If new roads had to be constructed for the settlers, they could be utilised for the Forests Department, thus enabling the department's employees to move

freely through the forest areas. Another suggestion—I think the department has given consideration to it in a modified way—the use of some of those gully lands for the growing of pine forests. That has been done to a great extent in the Mundaring Weir area. Hundreds of acres there are devoted to pine forests, which are doing remarkably well. In the metropolitan area we have quite a few pine forests. In speaking with an official of the Forests Department, he mentioned to me what wonderful results had been obtained by the use of artificial manure and, in some instances, the addition of minor elements to the soil. It has been demonstrated that on very poor soil in our coastal plain pines can be grown and that is a most useful means of utilising those poor lands. But compared with pines grown in the hills, particularly along the low-lying areas, the growth made by those on the sandplain is very poor indeed. The Forests Department cannot see its way clear to open up these areas to agriculture; it should utilise more of them for pine plantations.

The war has brought home to us the need for softwoods in this State. We have large areas of hardwoods, mainly jarrah, karri, tuart, wandoo and others, but we are at a definite disadvantage when it comes to softwoods. The pines grown here, *radiata* and the *pinasta*, are quite suitable for many uses for which we have imported timber in years gone by. It had always been said that *pinus insignis* is an inferior sort of timber that could only be used for rough packing-cases. But many members have probably seen some of that timber that has been sawn and dressed and used for table-tops, etc. Apart from its use in packing-cases, it is quite a valuable timber. Although our Forests Department has a wonderful asset in its hardwoods, and it is hoped that it will continue to exercise proper control over the millings of those forests so that they will be kept in perpetuity. I think it should expend a little more effort in the conversion of some of our country to pine forests either in the cut-over areas or those where jarrah, karri and other hardwoods do not thrive. Again, reverting to that sore point of opening up gullies to agriculture, I think there is room for some of those areas, with the consent of the foresters concerned, to be opened up to other industries, particularly fruit and gardenin-

so that they can be built up fairly close to the metropolitan area.

MR. HOLMAN (Forrest) [9.43]: I wish to add my expression of regret on the loss of our ex-Conservator of Forests, Mr. Kessell. As the member for Forrest, I had a high regard for him and I have been thankful for the assistance he has given me in his capacity of Conservator. I much regret that this State has lost his services. He has gone, evidently, to a more remunerative job. In going back over the history of the Forests Department, we see that officers, one by one, have left this State. Although they have set down a policy that we are proud of, the persons who formulated it are no longer with us. We have the spectacle of the machine being left by the driver. I can go right back to about 1918 when we had Mr. Benjamin and Mr. Boas and others who have since gone. There must be some weakness causing the drift. I do not think we have far to go to find the fault. I believe it is because we do not offer them a sufficient salary. Mr. Benjamin is, I understand, employed at Boyer, and Mr. Boas is with the C.S.I.R. in Melbourne. Mr. Kessell has gone to one of the big paper firms. In my maiden speech in 1939 I went to a lot of trouble to place before this Chamber facts dealing with the retarding of any efforts directed towards the manufacture of paper pulp in Western Australia. I also produced evidence of the fact that there were samples of a paper pulp made in this State.

A well known fact, contained in the report of the Forests Department dealing with paper pulp—it is not called that but “Survey of Raw Material in Western Australia for a Pulping Mill”—is that a series of tests were made by Messrs. Benjamin and Boas as far back as 1918. Just after that time I was at the Technical College myself and had an opportunity to see some of these experiments. But the people who make the experiments and find out anything about our timber by-products are taken from us. That is why we have not gone far in the exploitation of the by-products of the timber industry of this State. Having in mind a question that was asked of me by the member for Williams-Narrogin when I made a speech on a previous occasion and referred to the by-products of timber in the United States of America, I wrote to the various depart-

ments of that country concerned with timber and forests and asked for further information about the by-products of timber there. The literature I received in reply is really amazing, not only as regards the steps taken there, but the extent to which the United States have gone in advertising the value of their forests. I will refer to some of these facts later.

The position I started to outline is that I am very sorry Western Australia is to be continually losing its keymen to the financial interests of the Eastern States. The sooner the Government takes that aspect into consideration, the greater will be the progress, not only of the timber industry and the utilisation of its by-products, but of other undertakings. I have expressed my thanks to Mr. Kessell, and I also wish to express them to the Deputy Conservator, Mr. Stoot. He has filled Mr. Kessell's position for the past few years. I can recall no single occasion when he has refused me any information that would be of value to me or my electors. As a matter of fact, both he and Mr. Kessell have gone a long way to give satisfaction in every respect.

Mr. Thorn: Have they done anything they should not do?

Mr. HOLMAN: I will talk about that later. I have probably more respect for them than for the interjection that has just been made. At all times they have greatly assisted me in every respect. I know they have troubles in the matter of land settlement, and on many occasions I have had applications sent in by settlers and would-be settlers in my electorate who wanted land allocated to them by the Forests Department. I know the difficulties that arise and I do not blame the department for not giving way in the case of isolated settlers, but I have some comment on cases where the department will not consider expanding settlements already established. It has been argued in this Chamber tonight that, because a settler has been given some land, sooner or later, by a process of development, he will need further land. That is so, but because he needs further land we should not say that a mistake may have been made in the first place, and then refuse him further land. Once we have provided him with some land in a forestry area and it becomes apparent that the settlement should be extended, that should be done. I know of a case at pre-

sent where a certain amount of land was granted and for at least two years the settler has been trying to get an extension of the property.

Many arguments have been put forward by the department for refusing to grant further land. One argument has been put forward in this Chamber this evening; that is, the fire danger. Once the settlement is there I do not think the fire risk would be increased by increasing the size of the settlement. If we allow a new isolated settlement there is straightaway a new fire risk, but that is not the case where a settlement is already established. A settler who takes up land by virtue of the goodwill of the Forests Department is expected to provide certain facilities such as fire-breaks, and if that is properly done it will assist the department in quelling fires and lessening fire risks. I think, therefore, the department should be more lenient to these settlers. When the proposed soldier settlement scheme comes into being I wonder whether it will be the policy of the department to place at those settlements mills to utilise the timber cleared off the land. I understand that the Government is not going to use much virgin land if it can be avoided, but I hope that if virgin land is acquired for this purpose the timber will not be wasted as has been the case in the past.

I notice, from the report of the Forests Department, that Western Australia is one of the few States that will have timber to export, but we should still utilise every piece of timber possible. I congratulate the Forests Department on its new scheme of settlement. It is a scheme that I have advocated in this Chamber for the betterment of timber workers generally. At Dwellingup the department is building a settlement of 30 or 40 houses and it is bringing to that settlement forestry workers from the outback areas of the district. There it is going to establish a community centre that will enable the wives and children of forestry men to have amenities such as can be provided at Dwellingup. There they will have better schooling and many other facilities. That is a step forward for the betterment of the department's workers, and I hope to see that policy carried further in the near future.

The next point with which I wish to deal is the matter of roads in the timber country. Some such roads are in a shocking condi-

tion and the local governing bodies are not doing their job on them. Their excuse is that they collect few licenses from motor vehicles and they use that excuse to avoid doing practically any work on the roads. On certain occasions bridges have been burned down or washed away and workers have been isolated to a degree, but still the local governing bodies have said they had not the money to do the necessary work as they were not receiving revenue from the centres concerned. I think the department has great use for those roads and bridges and I know it has done a great amount of work to assist in keeping them in repair. It has often fallen on the shoulders of the Forests Department to do such repairs and to provide machinery such as graders, and so on, for the work. I think there should be some reform under which the Forests Department could take over those roads altogether, and do away with this nonsense of their being under the control of local governing bodies that will not do the job. I suggest that the Minister should seriously consider that view. The department has been doing the work that local governing bodies have been neglecting. I do not say that this applies to all local governing bodies. Some of them have tried to assist; some have stated that they have not the necessary revenue because of the areas of Crown land along the roads.

Apropos of this matter, I would like to mention the bridge between Nanga Brook and Dwellingup. I approached the Main Roads Department and asked what it proposed to do about the bridge, which was burnt out in the first place and then was completely washed away by the floods. The reply I received was that nothing was being done because no request had been received from the road boards concerned—the Drakesbrook and Murray Road Boards. In addition to writing, I visited the Drakesbrook board at Waroona and placed the position before the secretary. The latest letter received from him, dated last month, stated that the board is not contemplating any action for the restoration of the bridge. Yet that board collects the revenue from the people affected. The Murray Road Board, which collects no revenue, has requested the Main Roads Board to do something and has indicated its willingness to co-operate.

The utilisation of waste products has received some mention in the report of the department for the year ended the 30th June, 1945. The following is the reference:—

The Forests Products Utilisation Panel, established within the department to report on matters relating to the utilisation of forest products, continued to function. Consideration has been given to extending the use of Western Australian timbers for paper pulp, handles, plywood, furniture and minor purposes such as clothes pegs and smokers' pipes. In addition, the commercial possibilities of local fibres and barks have also been given attention.

That is all the information given, and I should like to know how far the consideration has gone. We know that the transition period from war to peacetime economy is the time when these by-products should be available. As I stated earlier, the United States of America has been preparing for this time for many years, in fact practically since the war started. It has advertised the fact extensively, has provided funds, and pointed out the tremendous possibilities for the utilisation of wood plastics during the post-war period. Yet we in this State do not seem to have got very far. One of the American publications states that it is contemplated that in 1946 there will be a 35 per cent. increase over 1940 in the aircraft industry and that plastics, in their use for aircraft, will share in the increase. The publication stressed the following:—

The automotive field presents rich possibilities for the use of plastic materials in the form of protective coatings and various items of electrical apparatus, clocks, handles, and other parts too numerous to mention.

I have mentioned this matter because of the announcement in the Press of the possibility of Australia's building automobiles for its own requirements. Here, then, is a possible outlet for our forests products. Wood plastics are being used extensively in America for the manufacture of automobile bodies and also for aeroplane and other industries. The publication stated—

The 1941 model (motorear) used some 110 plastic parts, with a total of more than 225 possible plastics, and the possibilities are that the car itself may be made of plastic bonded material.

This is one direction in which we might turn our attention even at this late stage, namely, to the utilisation of waste products of the forests. There are many other aspects I should like to deal with, but on some future

occasion I hope to place the information before members.

I am disappointed that nothing has been done towards establishing the rayon industry in this State. Last year I questioned the Minister for Industrial Development on the subject and he announced that rayon interests from the other side of the world were making inquiries as to the possibilities of using Australia as one of their centres. The Minister also said that the State Government's efforts were directed towards the manufacture of rayon yarn to supply Australian weavers. Recently the Press announced that a company was establishing an industry in New South Wales at very large cost.

[*Mr. Rodoreda resumed the Chair.*]

Mr. Watts: Five million pounds.

Mr. HOLMAN: And we are left in the background.

Mr. Watts: Just as well, perhaps.

Mr. HOLMAN: I am hopeful from information that has reached me that the representatives of a Swiss company will be visiting Western Australia shortly to make further investigations. I am bringing this matter forward because the base for making rayon is mainly wood. There, again, we have tremendous possibilities for the utilisation of our timber. Another form of wood plastics has been developed in the United States. It is made from hardwood, and we may have the counterpart of that hardwood here. It is called hydroxylin and is made in two forms—moulding powder, and laminated sheets, both from hardwood wastes. It is relatively hard and strong, has high electrical resistance and can be cut with machine tools like metal. It is relatively light in weight and bonds well to metals, such as brass, bronze and aluminium.

I would like to see some report upon the development of our own hardwoods in this respect. As I have said, we get very little information in the report of the department. I suggest to the Minister that it would be well for the department, or for the Forests Utilisation Panel, to issue some propaganda advertising our forests and our timbers and showing what they are used for and what they could be used for. In this way, we might get somewhere. It is stated in one of the publications that I have received that a tree is a laboratory, and one of the most

remarkable laboratories in the world. If we could but publicise our timber in a suitable fashion, I feel sure there would be a very bright future for our forests.

MR. SEWARD (Pingelly) [10.12]: I do not wish to take up much time, but I think the Minister might give us some information about his department. The question I desire to bring up is firewood. I drew attention to it last year, when a lot of money was expended in providing firewood for Perth. I drew the Minister's attention on that occasion to the mills in our country districts where timber was being burnt night and day, because railway trucks were not available to haul it to Perth. At a place within ten miles of such a timber mill foreigners were employed cutting firewood for use in Perth. What is the position this year? Is an end to be put to the employment of aliens on this work? What was the cost of the work done last year, and what was received for the firewood sold? I should be glad if the Minister would supply that information.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. A. H. Panton—Leederville) [10.13]: Firewood was cut last year because of the tremendous shortage in the metropolitan area.

Mr. Seward: But the mills were burning it night and day.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The mills are always burning wood. Ever since I have been in Western Australia, for some reason or other, timber which is unsuitable for firewood has been burnt in that way. The firewood cut last year amounted to about 70,000 loads, but this year there has been a slackening of supplies, owing to the fact that war prisoners and aliens are not available to do the work. I have been given to understand that private enterprise will have to take care of firewood supplies this year. As a matter of fact, we have sufficient firewood to keep us supplied to the end of the year. We are notifying the woodyard proprietors that they must make their own arrangements now and not depend any more on the Forests Department. Last year the Government experienced considerable difficulty in the transport of firewood on account of the shortage of railway trucks and petrol. The trucks were being used by the Military authorities. No profit was derived by the Government from the sale of firewood last year.

It had to be carted over too long a distance.

Mr. Seward: I did not think there would be a profit.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It was only from sheer necessity that the Government undertook the supply of firewood last year. It appreciated the fact that the people in the metropolitan area would otherwise have been without firewood supplies during the winter.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Education, £915,350:

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. J. T. Tonkin—North-East Fremantle) [10.16]: At £915,350 the Education Vote shows an increase of £26,406 over the expenditure for last year. The amount appropriated by Parliament last year was not fully expended, but it was expended with an amount of £358 of the total. Occasionally I have had protests from various parts of the State because the full amount appropriated by Parliament has not been devoted to education. It has been stated that in allowing the amount to remain in the Treasury the department has failed to take advantage of an appropriation, and that therefore the education system has suffered to that extent. I have endeavoured to point out that while it is a fact that the amount appropriated is occasionally not fully expended, nevertheless on a number of occasions the Vote is considerably exceeded and the Treasurer makes additional money available when that is so.

In 1943-44 the Vote was £842,000, but the expenditure £873,747, or an excess expenditure of £31,747. In 1944-45 the Vote was £889,302, and the expenditure £358 less, or, £888,944. In that appropriation there was an amount of £29,131 for contingencies including sums provided for furniture, books, etc. It was not possible to procure the furniture we wanted, nor the books otherwise the Vote last year would have been exceeded, as it was the year before. The Vote at £889,302 was an excess over the expenditure for the previous year, not over the Vote for the previous year, of £15,565. This year a further increase of £26,406 is anticipated over last year's expenditure, and I have the assurance of the Treasurer that the amount is an estimate only, and that if it is necessary to exceed it in order to carry out the functions which

we desire to carry out, then the money will be provided.

Mr. Doney: But it does represent the sum that you anticipate you will be called upon to spend.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: That is so. It is an estimate. As I have shown, in previous years, with the exception of last year, the estimate was very considerably exceeded.

Hon. N. Keenan: Not very considerably.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The sum of £31,000 is quite an excess.

Hon. N. Keenan: What is the percentage?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: About three per cent.

Mr. Doney: It would really be more, because you need not take into account the salaries. Would this mainly be taken up in salaries?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: No, it would not. It would be in contingencies. I pointed out that the Vote last year was an excess of £15,565 actually over the previous expenditure; but that included an increase of £29,000 for contingencies, indicating that the salaries requirement was actually less last year than normally, the reason being that we had a number of people away in the Services and had taken into the department a number of women teachers whose salaries were less.

Mr. Doney: I thought those teachers brought in temporarily were paid at a higher rate as a rule.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: No; that is only because, being on supply, they are paid at a higher rate per week because they are not paid for holidays; but if they teach for a year from the commencement of the school year till the end, they draw an amount equivalent to the amount drawn by a teacher on the permanent staff on the same grade.

Mr. Doney: But not less.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: No; but we brought in a number of women to replace men, and women's salaries are less than men's. An analysis of our schools and the enrolment would show clearly where we spend money on education in Western Australia. I have had a table prepared which indicates that 9.6 per cent. of Western Australian schools have more than 200 pupils and the cost per pupil in aver-

age attendance is £11 9s. 1¼d. There is an attendance at 20.5 per cent. of our schools of from 41 to 200 pupils and the cost per pupil in average attendance for those schools is £13 6s. 9d. A school such as the Kellerberrin school would come into that group. There is an attendance of 21 to 40 pupils at 13.7 per cent. of our schools and the cost per pupil is £21 11s. 6d.

More than half the schools in this State have under 20 pupils in attendance; actually, 56.2 per cent. of our schools are in this grade, and the cost per pupil in average attendance is £26 18s. 6¼d. So it is clear that our low density of population sends up very greatly our expenditure on education and makes it extremely difficult for us to do for everybody what we feel we ought to do. Nevertheless, the Government is determined to follow a policy based upon the principle of equality of opportunity, and that is to be afforded not only to children who live in isolated areas but also to afflicted children. Previously we have not assumed responsibility for the education of deaf children, except that from year to year the Government has paid a subsidy to the W.A. School for the Deaf. Those children have been educated at the school but no inspections have been made by the departmental officers. We have accepted the fact that education has been provided there and that is all there has been to it. Also we have not interested ourselves in the School for the Blind. That work has been done by the Blind Institute. We have not supplied the teachers and have not certified to the standard of education; nor has any attempt been made to provide a requisite standard of education for sub-normal children, the Government having been content so far to permit a number of institutions to do something in a small way. We have also had a few opportunity classes in several schools providing for children who are not quite normal.

Mr. Doney: In regard to sub-normal children, what occurs in the Eastern States; is it the same as here?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: No. In some States they have gone much further. In Victoria, for instance, at Traralgon, they have quite a well-equipped and well-appointed school, where excellent results have been achieved. That school is run by the Health Department, and it has

taken sub-normal children with an I.Q. of about 75 and has worked on those. They have proved that if such children are educated, they can take their places in industry at repetitive work and can earn quite a decent living. But they require to be looked after outside working periods, and attention has been given to that aspect of the matter. They have shown clearly that those children are educable and that when they are educated they can engage in industry. Boys and girls from this institution in Victoria are sought after by several types of factories which do a good deal of repetitive work, and they state that those children are far more reliable in monotonous jobs, because monotony does not pall on them, than are normal children. There is definitely a place in industry for sub-normals, when educated.

During the war period it was not possible for us to develop along the lines we intend to follow, because of the obvious restrictions which were imposed; but we realise that education can be a very potent instrument in reconstruction, and therefore it is intended to take the fullest advantage of this and to enlarge our curricula, and to enrich them so that when we are able to proclaim the Act which makes provision for extending the school leaving age to 15, it will not be merely an extension of time for which we are providing but actually an extension of education. To be able to do that, we shall require a largely-augmented staff and much additional accommodation. Unfortunately, I am bound to admit that the outlook at present for new buildings is far from bright; the housing position is so acute. Each day we have examples of the great shortage which exists; we hear of the very bad housing conditions under which a large proportion of the population resides; and we know that we must have houses built to alleviate that position before we can expect to engage in large-scale public building.

The schools required are large in number and size, and until we can get them we cannot expect to be able to insist that children shall remain at school until 15. It will be foolish to force them to remain at school if we cannot adequately accommodate them when they are there. Our schools are overcrowded now. In some cases we are using hat-rooms as class-rooms; we have been doing so for some time. We are endeavour-

ing as far as possible to alleviate that position. We have built some additional rooms but the speed at which we can have them erected is so slow that we cannot do more than make a very small improvement on existing conditions. We need a very large increase in the number of buildings before we can hope to remedy the existing conditions properly, let alone make ample provision for the additional number of children who will be attending school when we proclaim the Act to which I have referred. We realise that a number of junior high schools will be required in country districts. It is not right that the children in the country should be obliged to travel long distances to get their education. They should not be forced to leave the country and go to the metropolitan area for high school education. We therefore propose to take the high schools to the children.

Junior high schools will be built throughout the State to meet the need of secondary education. In addition a number of senior high schools—not as large a number because not so many children continue on to the leaving standard—will be established. We have made a survey of the districts where the junior high schools will be required, and although we have not yet been able to start on the actual building of the schools the necessary exploratory work has been going on so that we have the figures of the probable numbers of children who will attend and plans are made so that we can go right ahead as soon as building is possible. The school sites committee has taken a very generous view of school requirements. Not only is the committee busy in selecting new sites for new schools in various districts but it has also made recommendations for the enlarging of the sites of existing schools.

One big fault made in past years was that of placing schools on very small pieces of ground. We have schools like Newcastle street, for example, where there is a large school on a pocket-handkerchief piece of land, with insufficient ground for the playing of the children. Where it is possible to remedy this fault, the remedy is being applied. We have already acquired additional land in some places to enlarge the playgrounds. I can mention one that comes readily to mind, and that is Swanbourne, where we have taken steps to acquire additional land to enlarge the playground. Unfortunately we find that, now that settl-

ment has developed, it is a very costly business to add to some of the existing playgrounds. But that has not deterred the department from proceeding with this policy. It is only when the cost is out of all proportion to the quantity of ground to be acquired that we decline to proceed. That policy will be gone on with wherever we can do so, so that adequate playing spaces may be provided around the schools for the increased numbers of children expected to attend.

The primary factor in education, of course, is the teacher. There can be palatial school buildings and compulsory education to 15 or 16 years of age, but if the teachers are not of the right quality and well trained the system will fall down badly.

Mr. Needham: And well paid.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: That, of course, is the factor that attracts teachers of sufficient quality, but I am dealing now with the training aspect of the matter. If we have the right people coming forward then we have to see that proper training is afforded them. This year teacher-training was completely reorganised and a two-year course of training recommenced. Further, a teachers' training advisory committee was established, and that committee has, during the year, been giving attention to teacher-training and the requirements of an improved system, with the view that it is necessary to provide the best possible training for teachers in order to form the foundation of an improved educational system. I expect that that policy will give us excellent results.

Mr. Doney: Every now and again you get a teacher who discloses himself or herself as being entirely unsuited to the teaching of children.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Yes.

Mr. Doney: What do you do in such a case?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: It is only occasionally that such teachers remain in the service. The job becomes so irksome to them that they resign sooner or later.

Mr. Doney: Would you discharge them?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: It would depend upon the degree to which they were unsatisfactory. If a teacher was

just not happy in the job, but was able to do reasonably well, we would give him a chance to work out his salvation.

Mr. Doney: But there are occasions when you do discharge them for being unsatisfactory.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Teachers have been discharged because they have not met the requirements of the department, but such cases are few and far between. They are the exceptions rather than the general rule. They are very rare, I am glad to say. Some people who commence training very often find out before their training is completed that they do not suit the job. Last year we discontinued the training of a trainee teacher because it was obvious to the principal that she would not make a satisfactory teacher. She was told so, and was not permitted to continue with her course. Any unsuitability generally becomes apparent in the course of training, but not always. There are instances, of course, where a teacher has become fully trained and subsequently it has been made clear to the department's inspectors that such person has chosen the wrong vocation.

Mr. Doney: I have known a few and they have not been discharged.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: It is a serious step to take. After a teacher has spent a period in the training college at a very low allowance, it is a very serious thing to discharge him without giving him an opportunity to make good.

Mr. Doney: I realise that.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: In order to make good our proposal for equality of opportunity for children in isolated districts, it is essential that we should follow the policy of consolidation of schools. The small isolated one-teacher school cannot possibly make good the policy of equality of opportunity. It is impossible under any circumstances to give to eight or ten children in a small country school the same opportunity as can be made available in a school of 300 or 400 pupils. The cost of equipping such a school on the same standard as the large city school would be prohibitive. Furthermore, we cannot give to eight or ten children the benefits of association that are obtainable in schools where there are larger congregations of children. We could not, for example, make use of visual aids to educa-

tion by the use of projectors and film strips in small country schools, except, possibly, to a limited extent by itinerant operators. The large city schools can be equipped with projectors and can make full use of a film library by using the films in visual education.

If we are to move with the times and give the country children the opportunity they should have it is essential that the policy of consolidation should be proceeded with. Unfortunately some parents are so misguided as to attempt to stand in the light of their children and to resist the department when consolidation is mooted. There are a number of districts that at present have protested at the proposal of the department to consolidate. I am not worried about that, because consolidation is not easy at present, and it suits me to carry it out in districts that are ready for it, and to allow those expressing dissatisfaction to wait. Later on the department will carry out consolidation against the desires of the parents if it is satisfied that it is essential in the interests of the children.

Mr. Needham: What about the distance?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: We are the best judges, in the light of our experience, of what distance can be travelled successfully. We do not like anything beyond 30 miles, though if the roads are particularly good we will go a little beyond that. The time involved in travelling a 30 mile route is such that we hesitate to go far beyond that. We prefer to consolidate in some other direction to obviate the necessity for an extra long bus route. In addition to the use of bus routes it appears that we will have to establish hostels, so that children, who live beyond a reasonable distance for daily travel, can be placed in them and returned home weekly.

Mr. Fox: How are the children to be maintained?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The parents will be expected to maintain them. It is their obligation to feed and clothe their children.

Mr. Fox: The ordinary working man will not be able to afford to board them out.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: He will be expected to pay for the maintenance of his children the amount which he would be required to pay if he maintained them at home.

Mr. Berry: What would that amount to?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The Government will pay the difference between what it would cost to maintain the child at home and what it costs to maintain it at the hostel.

Mr. Needham: That is a better statement.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I was not given the opportunity to finish what I was saying. There are one hundred and one bus contracts operating at present at a cost of £27,000 annually, carrying 2,530 children to school.

Mr. Abbott: Would it pay to standardise those buses?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I think it would, and we will probably carry that out later, but at present it is so difficult to get buses that it would be foolish to attempt standardisation. Our present job is to get buses, so as to get on with the consolidation.

Mr. Watts: The Minister has not been very successful in that.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: No, there have been many difficulties to contend with but consolidation is proceeding and the figures I have quoted will show that it has gone ahead. The increase during the war period has been 60 per cent. on pre-war figures, so despite the handicaps imposed by war we have been able to get the consolidations in.

Mr. Doney: Does the number mentioned represent a saving in cost to the department?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: It works out at about the same figure. That figure gives about £270 per bus and the average small country school costs about £250 per year to run. The Government has already announced its intention to establish area schools similar to those operating in Tasmania and a sites committee has been engaged in selecting suitable sites. The requirements are that the population shall be of sufficiently high density to enable the requisite number of children to be obtained within a reasonably short distance, and that the locality must be climatically suitable for the establishment of such a school. We have to find sites where the soil is suitable, reasonably good, where we can get the requisites

number of children, and where the climate is such that farming operations can be carried on.

Mr. McLarty: Are the members of the sites committee officers of the Education Department?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: On that committee are the Director of Education, the Town Planning Commissioner, the Principal Architect, the Under Treasurer and, I think, another officer.

Mr. Doney: Is there an actual instance of an area school in this State?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: No, but we have already selected some sites, the locations of which I do not wish to disclose at the moment. Further appropriate centres for these schools are under consideration. On the education of deaf, blind and sub-normal children, I have already said that the Government intends to make special provision for such cases. Owing to the existence in this State of a large number of what are called rubella children, children who suffer deafness caused through their mothers contracting German measles during pregnancy, attention has been focussed on their needs.

Mr. McLarty: What does the Minister call "a large number"?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: About 80 rubella children in this State, of about five or six years of age, who require almost immediate attention if the best results are to be obtained. It was intended originally to establish a large residential school for the deaf and to make it compulsory for the parents of all the deaf children in the State to permit those children to attend that school. A school has been carried on for many years in my own electorate, the principal being a man called Love, who has done an excellent job.

Mr. Needham: An excellent job.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: He has not been able to take into the school all the deaf children in the State available for attendance. It was impossible for him to contemplate accommodating the rubella children who are now almost ready for school. I gave a lot of attention to this problem and had inquiries made in the Eastern States and sent one departmental officer over to ascertain what was being done in other States. As the result of those inquiries and information obtained here it was decided that we should establish a single

large residential school for the deaf, equipped on modern lines. That was my intention up to the end of last week.

I asked the present Minister for Lands, who was then Minister for Health, when this problem was brought to my notice, to get in touch with the Commonwealth authorities and ask them to make available an officer of the research laboratory to carry out research on rubella children in this State in order that we could have the latest information on the problem. Mr. Murray, the officer in charge of that laboratory, came to the State towards the end of last week. I had a long discussion with him and the information he was able to give me regarding the results of the experiments was such as to cause me to decide that we had better have a thorough investigation before I proceeded with my original idea. There now seems to be a distinct probability that a large number of these rubella children, who we previously thought would have to be developed along the lines followed for some years for educating deaf children, will be able to go into the normal schools like normal children and be educated with the use of hearing aids. Mr. Murray told me that he has not yet ruled out the possibility of 100 per cent. of these rubella children being educated with the use of hearing aids in the ordinary schools. On the results of the experiments to date, it would seem that there is opening up a very attractive vista for those children who previously appeared to be doomed to a very difficult existence. Mr. Murray told me in all seriousness that he believes these rubella children, provided they are all right mentally and compare favourably with normal children, will be able to receive education for the professions just as normal children do.

Mr. Abbott: That is very gratifying.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: It is very encouraging indeed. I do not wish to be too optimistic at this stage lest I give too much encouragement to the parents of such children, but I am very hopeful that a large proportion of the children who previously appeared to be heading for our institutions may now be educated in the ordinary schools after a very short period of preparatory education.

Mr. Needham: What about combating the cause?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: That has not to do with my department. Because there is a comparatively small number

of children involved, as compared with the other children under instruction, we have not given consideration to the cost of these aids. Specific aids adapted to the needs of each child will be required and there will be a proportion of the rubella children who will not require rubella aids at all but who can be educated in the normal schools without the use of hearing aids. This might be a small proportion, but still it is a proportion. Regarding children who are deaf but not as a result of German measles, a number of them will also be educated by the use of hearing aids. We cannot say just how many of them but a fairly large proportion will be able to go to the normal schools, leaving only a relatively small number who will have to be provided for in a residential institution.

Members will appreciate how necessary it is for me to call a halt now and have a thorough survey made so that all these deaf children may be tested out and their hearing assessed. Then the particular aid required can be designed and provided. So I am going to ask the Commonwealth Minister for Health to make available to this State immediately the services of a couple of officers who can carry out the necessary tests into the use of hearing aids and other relevant matters, so that we shall be in a position early in the new year to proceed with our plans for the education of these children. I am very happy to say that the prospect, as compared with what it was a few weeks ago, is decidedly bright, and of the results of the experiments that have been carried out in the Acoustic Research Laboratory in Sydney, the people will be informed.

I mentioned that it is intended to make extended use of visual aids. The use of visual aids for educational purposes has been very well proved in Army instruction. The member for North Perth will know what valuable use of such aids was made by the Air Force. Precision bombing, gunnery and other things were quickly taught and well taught by the use of visual aids. That valuable experience will be used in the schools, and so steps are being taken to build up a film library so that films will be available to the various schools and projectors will be supplied so that they may be used. This is a further reason why the consolidation of schools is necessary; it will not be necessary to equip all the small isolated schools. If the children in the country are to get the decided advantage of the use of visual aids,

we shall have to congregate them in larger groups. Consequently, we must proceed with the consolidation policy.

As members are aware, the education of native children was taken over by the department, and considerable and gratifying progress has been made. The member for Katanning asked me to table the reports of teachers on this matter. I have a report before me that I did not table because it is not the report of a teacher. It is the report of one of the inspectors, and what he says on the education of native children is very interesting. This relates to the Moor River native school which was taken over by the department for the education of the native children at that settlement. The report reads—

It was agreed early in the year that no formal inspection of this school would be made in 1945. Accordingly, this visit has been of a consultative and advisory nature. Generally it can be said that this venture of the department's into the realm of native education is proceeding remarkably successfully. The children have been gradually weaned from their shyness and in most cases have been encouraged to read individually.

In singing, recitation, etc., they still need the courage induced by the group situation, and their work in unison is thoroughly enjoyed and is reaching a good standard. The skills have been thoroughly taught as far as individual abilities and backgrounds permit. Good habits of cleanliness and tidiness have been developed. Art shows a remarkable development on the boys' side in pictorial work. I am forwarding several pictures to the Superintendent of Art. The girls have for the first time learned sewing, with very pleasing results. The girls' pride in this achievement has been most gratifying to the head teacher. Similarly, the older boys have learnt some useful craft work.

He then mentions the names of the teachers and proceeds—

They are not merely teachers; they are all imbued with a zeal which exceeds that of the normal teacher, for the demands made upon them in the sacrifice of time, of social amenities, of normal social companionships, are far greater than those made upon teachers in other appointments. They have all worked with enthusiasm, have given considerable thought to the problems and have adapted their plans to the varying needs of the situation. They are to be highly commended for the work done. I desire to place on record this excellent organisation and planning carried out by Miss Holland, head teacher, in this first year.

I think members will agree that, for the first year of the department's work in this

new field, that is a most gratifying result. The report is issued by one of our inspectors upon whom I can place the greatest reliance. I ask members, therefore, to be a little patient with us in the education of the native child, as we are convinced we can get results.

Mr. Triat: That is obvious.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: As to the problem facing us of teaching native children along with white children, I say quite definitely that there will be no segregation. For one thing, it would not work even if we attempted it. Two sets of lavatories, two sets of wash-basins, in fact, two sets of everything, would be required.

Mr. McLarty: That is desirable in some cases.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: No, it is not. Cleanliness on the part of all children attending school is the requisite. If all the children are clean, there is no need for separate conveniences. It is not always, unfortunately, the black child who offends; we have had trouble with some white children.

Mr. McLarty: I think you should have a look at some of the native camps.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I am aware the hon. member mentioned a matter which is a worry to us. One cannot expect children to come to school clean if their home conditions are dirty; but education will improve that position. If the children are segregated, it will take much longer to effect improvement in the home than it would if we kept the children together and gradually raised the standard. We hope, in co-operation with the Health Department, to effect improvements in the living conditions of the natives and so make it all the more desirable that there shall be no segregation.

I could not close my remarks on this Vote without making reference to the work being done by the Parents and Citizens' Associations throughout the State. I am happy to say that we have had the most friendly co-operation. As a result of the existence of these associations, schools have benefited considerably. Only a few months ago, one of these associations, not far from Perth, spent the sum of £250 in equipping a school right throughout with radio and amplifying devices. That is something which would have taken the school a long

time to obtain in the ordinary way; and the equipping of the school in that way will confer a very distinct benefit upon the children. Similar work has been done in other schools throughout the State. I am grateful indeed to those associations, the members of which have given much of their time and money to improving the lot of children attending school. Without their help, the work of the department would be much harder and the children would not be as well off as they are. I take this opportunity to express the thanks of the department to those generous men and women who devote so much of their time to this very interesting and very important work.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 11.5 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Wednesday, 14th November, 1915.

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| Electricity, 2R. | 1876 |
| Legal Practitioners Act Amendment, 2R. | 1877 |
| Resolution: Gaol site and modern prison requirements, Assembly's Amendment | 1875 |

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

MOTION—TROTTING CONTROL.

As to Report by Mr. E. A. Dunphy.

HON. J. CORNELL (South) [4.35]: I move—

That the report, if any, made by Mr. E. A. Dunphy, to the Chief Secretary as a result of his inquiries into the recent dispute between the W.A. Trotting Association and the Owners, Breeders and Trainers' Organisation, be laid on the Table of the House.

Some months ago there was a total cessation of trotting in the metropolitan area, arising out of a dispute between the Trotting Association and the Owners, Breeders and