

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 15th October, 1931.

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

PAPERS—MEEKATHARRA-HORSESHOE RAILWAY.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS in accordance with the resolution passed at the previous sitting, tabled all papers relating to the building of the railway from Meekatharra to Horseshoe, known as the Manganese Railway, and all papers dealing with such amounts as were advanced by the Government to the W.A. Manganese Company, together with outstanding interest thereon, the last list of directors and shareholders of the W.A. Manganese Company, and figures setting out the subscribed and paid-up capital of the W.A. Manganese Company.

QUESTIONS (2)—WORKERS' COMPENSATION ACT.

Factory Registration.

Mr. SAMPSON asked the Minister for Works: Does registration of a factory under the Factories and Shops Act provide any assurance that workers engaged therein are protected under the Workers' Compensation Act?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: No.

Case-wood and Spot Mills.

Mr. SAMPSON asked the Minister for Works: 1, What steps are taken to ensure that all workers as defined under the Workers' Compensation Act are protected under that Act? 2, Is he able to give the assurance that all necessary steps are taken to ensure that employees are fully protected, more particularly those in country industries such as case-wood and spot mills?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1 and 2, The matter of enforcing the insurance of all workers is receiving active consideration.

QUESTION—NORTH-WEST STOCK ROUTE.

Reconditioning of Wells.

Mr. MARSHALL asked the Minister for Water Supplies: 1, Outside of inspecting and reporting by a departmental officer, has the work of reconditioning the wells on the main North-West stock route into Meekatharra been commenced? 2, If so, in which locality?

The MINISTER FOR WATER SUPPLY replied: 1, No. 2, Answered by No. 1.

QUESTION—POLICE ACT, BREACHES.

Mr. MARSHALL asked the Minister for Justice: What is the total number of applications and total time served for breaches of 2 (a) and 2 (b) of Section 66 of the Police Act?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE replied: There were 37 cases and 37 convictions in Perth and Fremantle. In 32 cases fines totalling £59 10s. were imposed, with costs totalling £3 12s., and restitution was ordered of amounts totalling £91. In five cases sentences ranging from 14 days to three months were imposed, without the option of a fine.

QUESTION—RAILWAYS.

Port Hedland-Marble Bar Line.

Mr. LAMBERT asked the Minister for Railways: 1, What has been the total cost of the building of the railway from Port Hedland to Marble Bar to date? 2, What is the total profit or loss, if any, on the rail-

way during the past five years respectively? 3, What is the total loss of interest, if any, on the capital cost of this railway since it was built?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, The cost of building this railway (including rolling stock) was £377,027. 2, Loss—year ended 30-6-1930, £15,384; year ended 30-6-1931, £14,478; year ended 30-6-1932, £11,839; year ended 30-6-1933, £10,499; year ended 30-6-1934, £12,552. 3, The loss of interest since inception was £305,143.

QUESTION--DRAINAGE.

Butler's Swamp and Shenton Park.

Mr. NORTH asked the Minister for Water Supplies: 1, Is it his intention to link the draining of Butler's Swamp with the sewerage works now being undertaken in Claremont? 2, Would it be possible at small cost to utilise the new sewer for this purpose before its normal duties are commenced? 3, Was the policy of dealing with the drainage of Shenton Park, Subiaco, undertaken at the request of the local authority or is it part of the departmental policy?

The MINISTER FOR WATER SUPPLIES replied: 1, No. 2, No. 3, Both.

QUESTION--TRAMWAY, CLAREMONT.

Mr. NORTH asked the Minister for Railways: In order that residents of Claremont may compare the position before and since the enforcement of bus restrictions between Loch Street and Bay View Terrace, will he inform the House—(a) the number of tram cars in use daily for the quarter before and subsequent to the suspension of picking up between Loch Street and Bay View Terrace; (b) the excess of revenue over expenditure, if any, for similar periods to those mentioned in question (a)?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: (a) The maximum number of cars in service on the Claremont line at any one time, prior to the enforcement of bus restrictions, was seven; this has been increased to eight; (b) the increase in revenue amounts to £12 per week; sectional expenditure for each route is not recorded.

QUESTION--ALFRED ROAD, COMPLETION.

Mr. NORTH asked the Minister for Works: In view of the request by the Nedlands Road Board for a deputation relative to the completion of Alfred Road to form portion of the proposed new highway between port and city, will he deal with this question when outlining the Government's road policy?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: No. Under existing financial circumstances the Government are not in a position seriously to consider the proposal referred to.

CITY OF PERTH SUPERANNUATION FUND BILL SELECT COMMITTEE.

Extension of Time.

On motion by Mr. Needham, the time for bringing up the select committee's report was extended for one week.

BILLS (4)—FIRST READING.

1, Dried Fruits Act Continuance.

Introduced by the Minister for Agriculture.

2, Industries Assistance Act Continuance (No. 2).

3, Agricultural Bank.

Introduced by the Minister for Agriculture, for the Minister for Lands.

4, Builders' Registration.

Introduced by Mr. Moloney.

MOTION--MINING RESERVES OR CONCESSIONS.

MR. MARSHALL (Murchison) [4.46]: I move—

That in the opinion of this House the principle of granting reserves or concessions for the purpose of gold mining to any individual, company, or syndicate, is wrong, and should immediately cease; further, that such reserves and concessions now in existence should not be renewed at the expiration of the term for which they were granted.

Rightly or wrongly I have always been hostile to the granting of large areas of auriferous country to any individual, syndicate or company. I agree there may be some argument that would influence the Minister

in authority to grant such a reserve, but I contend that such granting is more injurious than beneficial to the development of the mining industry and the welfare of the State. The question of reserves for gold-mining is no new thing. I wish those members who perhaps are not familiar with the industry to digest the arguments for and against these reserves, because I want a conscientious vote on the subject in order that the people of the goldfields may know what the Assembly thinks of reserves. Many years ago a proposal was mooted by the then Minister for Mines, Mr. Scaddan, and although, so far as I can ascertain from the records, that proposal was much more limited in effect than is the existing reserve, my colleagues, who then sat on the Opposition benches, or those of them that spoke, strongly opposed the proposal. The proposal was that an area be granted to an individual who declared he could induce large sums of capital to come into the country, provided he could get from the Minister a guarantee of a very large holding in the way of reserves over old mines or old mine workings. I objected to that proposal, and I object to any proposal that gives away extensive areas on the mere say-so of individuals that they will be able to induce large sums of capital to come into the country for the development of those reserves. The position has become aggravated. Arising evidently from this proposal some years ago, one or two reserves were granted, but the position has now become most acute and even old-time residents of goldfields are prohibited from following on a lifetime occupation. In refutation of the statement that reserves bring capital into the country, I can submit as good a case as that which the Minister might advance in support of the contention that reserves have brought capital into the country. Wiluna has always been looked upon as the beginning of the influx of foreign capital into our mining industry, but long before that happened the only argument advanced by those who could be said to be influential, while at the same time having mining knowledge, the only argument they advanced to encourage capital to come in was the bonus of £1 per ounce. They made no mention of large areas at all, but they influenced the Federal Government to give a bonus of £1 per ounce on all gold produced, and they said that would be quite sufficient to induce foreign capital to come

in. It was granted. Fortunately for this State it was not long before the gold bonus was found to be unnecessary. The price of gold has soared much higher. Although gold is now double the price of a few years ago, I am still to be told that foreign capital would not be introduced into the industry unless large reserves were granted, this in spite of the fact that capital was introduced for the development of Wiluna on the strength of the pound-an-ounce bonus.

Mr. Stubbs: What about Ravensthorpe?

Mr. MARSHALL: Ravensthorpe would have been developed without a reserve being granted.

Mr. Patrick: It would not have been developed had not the price of gold risen.

Mr. MARSHALL: If the price of gold had not risen, no one would have wanted a reserve. It is the price of gold that is attracting investments in reserves. The only reason why reserves are wanted is to enable those interested to hold large areas at a minimum cost. It has been argued that a reserve was established at Wiluna. To many people who have made that statement during recent months, I have replied, "You know nothing about it." During the flotation of the Wiluna mines a reserve was neither granted nor asked for. I do not know whether there is a reserve now.

The Minister for Mines: Wiluna never did have a reserve.

Mr. MARSHALL: And yet all the money necessary to develop Wiluna was obtained. Wiluna attracted capital and influenced the mining revival, though gold at the time was commanding a price of only £3 17s. 10d. plus £1 bonus. Now I am told that with gold at £8 12s. an ounce, huge areas are necessary in order that foreign capital may still be induced to flow into the State for the development of the industry. There is nothing in the law to prevent any company, syndicate or individual from pegging out the country desired without any reserve at all. Probably the Minister does not know or does not remember that when Mr. Claude de Bernales, the liquidator of the leases now held by Wiluna Gold Mines Ltd., held up about 20 leases as the assets of the company, there was no limit on the time during which a company might remain in liquidation. That company had been in liquidation for about 10 years before I became member for the district. I sought the assistance of Mr. Scaddan to amend the Mining Act in order

to compel companies to man their leases and comply with the covenants of the Mining Act, even when companies were in liquidation. Mr. de Bernales did his best by lobbying to prevent that amendment from becoming law, but as soon as it became law and he found it impossible to pay for the mining leases, he made a conditional surrender and pegged out the narrow ore channel, leaving the rest of the leases to the prospectors, as they desired. There are reserves everywhere.

The Minister for Mines: No.

Mr. MARSHALL: I ask the Minister to consider, when granting reserves, the advisableness of requiring applicants to apply, just as a prospector has to apply for a gold mining lease or a prospecting area. Often men begin prospecting on apparently virgin country without having the slightest knowledge of whether it is a reserve. When they find likely country, they must return to the town and inquire whether the country is reserved. Nobody can tell whether it is a reserve; no pegs are in and no application is displayed. The reserve is merely granted by the Minister and no one has the slightest idea as to who holds the land or what area is held.

The Minister for Mines: Immediately it is taken up a map is posted at the office of the mining registrar in the district.

Mr. MARSHALL: That is my argument; it is necessary for the prospector to return to the town and find out whether it is a reserve.

Mr. J. H. Smith: And it might be 30 miles from the town.

Mr. MARSHALL: Yes. If it was a mining lease, the pegs would be in and the application would be there. Anyone could tell that the area was held and would not waste any more time on it. That, however, does not apply to reserves. Who could possibly police a reserve under existing conditions? No one in the world.

Hon. C. G. Latham: What would be the area of those reserves?

Mr. MARSHALL: The area is unlimited. One alongside the Big Bell Mine is six miles by three miles.

Mr. Stubbs: Would not they be pegged?

Mr. MARSHALL: Could the hon. member see one peg distant six miles from another peg? I admit that the Minister imposes certain conditions. He asks the applicant to employ two or three men, whereas under the Mining Act a company, syndicate

or individual has to employ one man to every six acres.

The Minister for Mines: Two men can hold a prospecting area of 2½ acres.

Mr. MARSHALL: Why cannot applicants take out a lease instead of reserves and protect themselves in that way? One reserve granted three and a half or four years ago, comprising 300 or 400 acres, employed one or two men for three weeks, and since then every one who has gone prospecting on the area has been told that it was a reserve and has got off. An old resident of Day Dawn had a cruel experience quite recently. He submitted an application for a prospecting area. Let me explain that many men prospect without securing any title to the land until they have obtained sufficiently good indications to justify the payment for a prospecting area or lease. A prospecting area costs only 10s. a year, but it is customary for men to wait until they get indications before taking up an area. Any number of such men are to be found in the vicinity of towns adjacent to railways. The Government pay the men 15s. a week to go out prospecting—that is the policy of the Government, and I support it—and the men naturally cluster around the towns. Amongst those men was one who had lived practically a life-time on the goldfields and had spent thousands of pounds on prospecting. After getting fairly good indications, he applied for a prospecting area, but when he reached the court, the magistrate informed him that the Minister for Mines had directed that no further prospecting areas or leases should be granted within an area three or four miles square. That man was precluded from getting a living there, and with him 18 other men have left. Was that fair treatment?

The Minister for Mines: There were not 18 on it when the area was granted.

Mr. MARSHALL: The prospector lodged his application before the reserve was granted or known to be granted. The Minister cannot mention one reserve on the Murchison where operations are being carried on that is not immediately upon or in the vicinity of old workings, or known gold-bearing channels. What holders of reserves are doing is boring along known deposits originally discovered by prospectors. I do not object to that. The Minister, however, does not compel them to look after

their interests by taking out a lease, but gives them a reserve over miles of country, and while they are testing those previously discovered deposits, prospectors are precluded from operating anywhere near them. Men cannot prospect to see if there is anything good around the place. I admit that the Big Bell people have been engaged in boring for about two years.

The Minister for Mines: It was a long while before they did any.

Mr. MARSHALL: A lot of work was done at the Big Bell long before a reserve was asked for. When it was discovered that they wanted more country, there was nothing to prevent them from taking up the necessary leases in the ordinary way, without their being given a strip of country six miles by three, and other people being prevented from going upon it.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Prospectors ought to be allowed on it.

Mr. MARSHALL: There are two different forms of reserves, the open and the closed. Apparently the closed reserves are the popular ones. It is not right that country should be held up when we know that the companies interested will never prospect it. A company does not send men out as a party to prospect, but waits until some prospector has found something worth while. Although on the one hand men are invited to go out prospecting, on the other hand the granting of these reserves makes it impossible for them to go out. More particularly does this apply to the sustenance prospectors, because they have no means of transport. The well-equipped old hand may get away from the railway, but most of the men who are sent out remain close to the siding.

The Minister for Mines: Not too many remain there.

Mr. MARSHALL: Not in the Cue and Day Dawn areas, where all the country is reserved.

The Minister for Mines: No, it is not.

Mr. MARSHALL: A very fair block of it is reserved. I am told that most of the country between Nannine and Meekatharra is also reserved. In the case of Jimble Bar, although the company operating there will bore only on the defined ore channels that were found by prospectors, they refuse to allow other men to come anywhere near them, and there is a reserve all around them. Although the company desire to ob-

tain the actual value of that which was discovered by prospectors, they refuse to allow anyone else to go near it. I cannot see the logic of that attitude. If a company looks at the proposition before it takes an option over it, why should it get off at a cheaper rate than that at which the ordinary prospector gets off? Why should a company get a reserve upon which no rent is paid, when the prospector has to pay his £1 per acre, and is limited to 24 acres? I disagree with the view that with gold at its present price we cannot get foreign capital into the industry unless these reserves are granted. I say we can get it. The Mining Act is quite liberal enough for any company to take up whatever land is required. I do not think special concessions should be granted to the exclusion of prospectors who have gone over country that foreign companies would not look at. I am becoming very agitated about it. I do not mind a reserve here and there, but the principle has become too popular. No one will look at a proposition unless it includes a reserve.

Hon. C. G. Latham: People get a reserve and then go away to find capital to work it.

Mr. MARSHALL: That is so, and meanwhile they prevent prospectors from going upon it. If they fail to get the capital, they then surrender the reserve.

The Minister for Mines: How many of such reserves are there?

Mr. MARSHALL: I cannot say.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: If there is only one, it is all wrong.

The Minister for Mines: I want to know where they are.

Mr. MARSHALL: I know of one that has been held for four years, and de Bernales has been waiting all this time to raise the capital to work it. That sort of thing applies to most of the reserves.

The Minister for Mines: I wish we had ten more de Bernales in Western Australia.

Mr. MARSHALL: That may be all right, but in my opinion it is the price of gold which charms the investor more than de Bernales does. His name is not good with English investors. I have been informed by an influential man, who was in England recently as the representative of one of the biggest newspapers in Australia, that this is so.

The Minister for Justice: That does not matter.

Mr. MARSHALL: I have my own opinion of that gentleman.

The Minister for Mines: I am not expressing an opinion of the man, but of what he has done.

Mr. MARSHALL: I agree with the Minister as to what de Bernales has done. I know he has done a great deal for the country, and he has "done" the country for a great deal. He has never gone out of his way to help the country unless there was money in it for him.

Mr. Sampson: The country owes a great deal to him.

Mr. MARSHALL: Of course it does, and always will owe a great deal to anyone who bleeds it. Apparently, we must be grateful to anyone who "does" us for something.

Mr. Stubbs: He got the gold bonus for Western Australia.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! This discussion is out of order.

Mr. MARSHALL: I know his history well, and know as much about him as does any member. I know the tactics he has adopted.

Mr. Sampson: What about the motion?

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member might discuss his motion.

Mr. MARSHALL: I do not like these reserves; they are not in the best interests of the State. If the practice had never been started, people would not have expected it to be continued. We would have had just as much money brought into the State without the quantity of reserves as we have with them. From what I can see of some of the reserves, all that happens is that three or four are granted to a company, which begins to bore in one place, and when it has finished with its diamond drill in one place it goes off to another reserve. The people concerned do not comply with the paltry conditions imposed upon them, but are able to keep prospectors out of the way. I have told the House about the man who applied for a prospecting area long before any reserve had been granted there, and he did not know it had been granted until he went to the court. The principle is wrong. It puts me in mind of the land laws of the country. It suggests that Western Australia is so bare of gold-bearing ore that, before a company can make a success of its undertaking, it is obliged to take up half the country! The Fenian leases at Meekatharra comprise six acres, and the Con-

sols another six acres, a total of twelve. These mines are worked down to about 1,200 feet vertically, and are worked out. They have been the exceptional mines of the State. They made a fortune for the shareholders, and equipped and developed themselves without the use of a penny of foreign capital. They also paid extensive dividends. To-day £145,000 is being got together for the purpose of taking up these two leases of 12 acres.

The Minister for Mines: No, it is not.

Mr. MARSHALL: And the people concerned will get the money.

The Minister for Mines: No, it is not for their 12 acres.

Mr. MARSHALL: These are the two principal leases, and there is no reserve there. I do not object to a company taking up leases, because it is then on equal terms with other people. But companies nowadays will not apply for leases; they want reserves. Between the Globe and the Havelock there are four or five miles of country owned by different people. The representatives of English capital are breaking their necks to get into it. They do not want a reserve, but the leases. The Minister would be well advised to keep to the lease principle. I am sure he will not lose much.

The Minister for Mines: Not a shilling of English capital is going into those leases.

Mr. MARSHALL: My argument is that no reserve is required there, and there is not one in existence there.

The Minister for Mines: You said that there was a large amount of English capital going into those leases. They have not one penny of English capital.

Mr. MARSHALL: I said that people were prepared to subscribe £140,000 odd for the leases. I do not care where the capital comes from. The point is that these people do not want a reserve in order to put their money into the industry. No reserve was asked for at Wiluna. This practice has been brought about by one individual. He saw an economical way of getting hold of big areas of country, and have them held up for him. There is now a following in his wake, and these people, too, are entitled to similar concessions. It will not be long before there is no auriferous country left to prospect over; it will all be held up. I want to nip that in the bud.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: You are a little late.

Mr. MARSHALL: I hope the House will agree that the principle is wrong, and will carry my motion. One can see the virtue behind the power that has been granted to the Minister. In the early days it was no doubt intended to be used as a means of inducing capital to come into the country. With gold at its present price, it should be possible to bring capital in without giving away huge areas of auriferous country and locking it up from the prospectors. I should be the last one to discourage investors. I have proved, however, that they do not all want reserves; only a few of them do. They want them because they are cheaper to take up and afford better protection. No one will apply for the forfeiture of a reserve. For one thing they would not know how to start making the application. So it is that people get away with these things. Other people, however, have to work under the Mining Act, and so all their activities are exposed to the public.

Mr. Stubbs: Evidently you have no confidence in the Minister's judgment in this matter.

Mr. MARSHALL: Not so far as reserves are concerned. I disagree with the principle and I hope he will reconsider the whole matter, and at all events let it go no further. I could tell him of as many cases where capital is coming into the industry without reserves as he can tell me of reserves that are required for the inducement of capital. The prospectors ought to be considered. It is not right to penalise them in this way. If the Minister would make the people who want reserves go to a warden, so that objection could be raised if desired, and so that what is done could be seen, the position would at least be alleviated. But to grant such applications without the knowledge of the public—that is, unless one goes to the registrar's office every morning to find out what reserves have been granted—is not right. I hope the motion will be carried as an indication that the Chamber does not agree with the practice of granting large reserves for the purpose of gold mining.

On motion by the Minister for Mines, debate adjourned.

BILL—WESTERN AUSTRALIAN AGED SAILORS AND SOLDIERS' RELIEF FUND AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 26th September.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. A. McCallum—South Fremantle) [5.17]: The Bill appears merely to provide that the collection on Poppy Day shall be a monopoly for the R.S.L., and that no one else shall be permitted to make collections on that day. Such has, I believe, been the recognised practice for some years; but the practice has not been capable of legal enforcement, and there has been some poaching on the preserve. It is thought necessary to pass the Bill in order to give legal force to the established practice. It is generally understood that the Poppy Day appeal is for the R.S.L. Consequently I offer no objection to the measure.

HON. C. G. LATHAM (York) [5.18]: I am entirely in sympathy with the desire to give the R.S.L. an opportunity to get all they can out of the Poppy Day appeal. In my opinion, however, the better course would have been to introduce a Bill for the special purpose of authorising the league to collect money in this way. The principal Act, which the Bill seeks to amend, merely sets up a trust to control the fund consisting of one-half of the net proceeds of the annual Poppy Day appeal and any other moneys set aside by the league itself or any donations or bequests received by the league. The Bill seeks to amend what is purely a trust Act, for the purpose of giving the R.S.L. a monopoly on Poppy Day. Under the Bill, if passed, the only people able to sell poppies will be the R.S.L. I offer no objection to that proposal, which in my opinion does not matter a great deal. However, the R.S.L. are to have the sole right to sell poppies at any time. The principal Act refers only to half the proceeds of Poppy Day, whereas the Bill deals with the whole of the proceeds. However, so long as the desire of the league is effected, I offer no objection. In the Committee stage I propose to ask hon. members to agree to a small amendment.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Sleeman in the Chair; Mr. Warner in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1, 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Authority to conduct the Annual Poppy Day Appeal:

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The clause proposes a penalty not exceeding £500. That is the highest amount which, under the Criminal Code, can be fixed. I regard it as far in excess of the maximum that should be fixed. Besides the penalty, all money illegally collected from the sale of poppies will go to the league.

The Minister for Justice: Unauthorised persons could buy poppies at a penny a dozen and sell them at a shilling each.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: That can be done now. However, I do not wish the maximum penalty to be made too heavy. With a view to reducing it from £500 to £100, I move an amendment—

That in the last line of Subsection 3 of the proposed new section the word "five" be struck out and "one" inserted in lieu.

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

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with an amendment.

MOTION—GOVERNMENT HOSPITALS.*Working Hours of Nurses.*

Debate resumed from the 29th August on the following motion moved by Mr. Needham (Perth):—

That in the opinion of this House the hours worked by nurses in Government hospitals are excessive, and that the Government should make arrangements to provide that the working hours of probationers, nurses, sisters, and matrons in Government hospitals in this State do not exceed forty-four in any one week, without adversely affecting the present salaries.

THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH (Hon. S. W. Munsie—Hannans) [5.26]: I congratulate the mover of the motion on the considerable amount of pains he went to in obtaining particulars of the conditions prevailing in the principal hospitals of the various States of the Commonwealth, and I regret that after collecting the information he did not assimilate it correctly. As

regards the hours worked by nurses in the Perth Hospital, I candidly admit that I recognise just as much as the mover does that the nurses are working too long hours. I also recognise, however, that the nurses in every other Western Australian Government hospital work hours that are too long. If there is to be a reduction in hours, it cannot apply to the Perth Hospital only, but must apply to all Government hospitals in Western Australia. I do not know why the Perth Hospital was singled out by the mover.

Mr. Sleeman: Would not the motion apply to all Government hospitals?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Irrespective of the hours worked in the Perth Hospital and other large hospitals in this State, it is a matter of impossibility to give effect to the motion, if carried, under our present financial conditions. In the first place, it would mean the employment of three matrons in each hospital. It could not be done without that. In some Government hospitals both nurses and matrons at times are called upon to work, and do work, exceedingly long hours; but there are other periods during which they do not work more than perhaps three hours a week, owing to there not being even one patient in the hospital.

Mr. Sampson: That applies to small hospitals too back.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: The question is not one that can be dealt with easily, and there is a good deal more in it than appears on the surface. Much of the excessive time worked in the Perth Hospital is due to bad rostering. I make that statement, knowing the conditions that prevail. I admit, and have always been prepared to admit, that from the nurses' point of view there is no worse constructed hospital in Western Australia than the Perth Hospital. Firstly, the wards are far too large. Secondly, the nurses' quarters are right at the extreme end of a ward of 32 beds, and in some instances the number of beds is 40 and even as large as 43. When a nurse has occasion to attend to a patient, she frequently has to walk from one end of a long ward to the other end. A modern hospital has the nurses' quarters in the centre. Moreover, no hospital is now being built on the system of the 30-bed ward. In fact, the Perth Hospital is out of date. The conveniences are not what they ought to be,

by any manner of means. The member for Perth (Mr. Needham) practically concluded his speech by saying that with the exception of the Devon Hospital in Tasmania, the hours worked by the nurses in the Perth Hospital were longer than those worked by nurses in any Government hospital in the Eastern States, and that in some instances the nurses here received smaller salaries than those paid in Government hospitals elsewhere in the Commonwealth. On the figures he quoted in his speech, he is not correct. I will deal with that phase later on. I am pleased that at last, after many years of agitating, and after I have been criticised severely, particularly by medical men who were representatives of the Australian Trained Nurses' Association, the nurses have awakened and are applying for registration as an industrial union in order that their conditions and pay may be fixed by the Arbitration Court, which is the proper tribunal to undertake that task. I am giving them every encouragement to proceed with their application. If they are successful, then the award will apply not only to the Perth Hospital and Government Hospitals, but to private hospitals as well.

Mr. Sampson: They should not be treated badly, even if they are not registered.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: That is so. While I am sympathetic with regard to the hours worked by nurses, I do not desire the nursing profession—it is a profession—ever to reach the point at which a nurse will be able to say, "I am going to work 44 hours, and not one minute longer." I do not want the Australian nursing profession to be a set-hour job. I want them to secure as reasonable conditions as they can, and I will help them with that end in view. There is no question about my attitude on that point. I admit that in New South Wales and Queensland nurses have, in most instances, better pay and shorter hours of work than elsewhere, but in each instance the nurses of those two States secured those improved conditions from the proper tribunal. I hope the nurses of Western Australia will succeed in securing improved conditions from the proper tribunal in this State.

Mr. Needham: Why not set an example here?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: We have had experience along those lines before, and it did not pan out as well as we

anticipated. However, we have now set the ball rolling, and I hope the effort will end in success.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The Minister had better address the Chair.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I am sorry, Sir. Now I will deal with the statement of the member for Perth (Mr. Needham) regarding the hours of work, particularly with reference to his statement relating to the Devon Hospital. In the Perth Hospital the nurses work 52½ hours per week on day shift and 52¼ hours when on night shift. All the nursing staff, including the probationers, have four weeks holiday leave each year. In Melbourne, the sisters and staff nurses get four weeks holiday per year, and the remainder of the nurses and the probationers three weeks holiday annually. I admit that they get slightly better wages, but the extra week's holiday the nurses enjoy here nullifies the advantage from the salary standpoint. So it can be said that the Victorian nurses and the nurses in Western Australia are about on a par. The member for Perth mentioned the Adelaide hospitals. The nursing staff at the Adelaide Hospital numbers 228, of whom 46 are staff nurses, and the member for Perth told us that the hours of work at that institution were 49½ per week. He did not tell the House that 46 nurses only out of 228 work those hours. The information that was supplied to him related to the staff nurses who work 49½ hours, as against 52½ hours per week worked by the same class of nurse at the Perth Hospital. On the other hand, the probationers and the remainder of the nursing staff at the Adelaide Hospital work 55½ hours per week. Therefore, on an average, the nurses at the Adelaide Hospital work about 1¼ hours per week longer than the nurses at the Perth Hospital and the nursing profession generally in this State, and get less pay. With regard to the Devon Hospital, I shall quote the figures mentioned by the member for Perth, which I had verified by the health authorities of Tasmania. Those figures were absolutely correct, and why the member for Perth ended his speech with the statement I have quoted and his exception of the Devon Hospital in particular, I do not know. The weekly hours worked by the nurses in Tasmania are 63 at Hobart, 57 at Launceston, and 69 at the Devon Hospital. Those are the hours actually worked there, so that

the nurses in every hospital in Tasmania work considerably longer hours than the nurses in Western Australia. There is no doubt about that. Another point to which I would direct attention refers to the comparison drawn by the member for Perth between the position of the nurses employed at the mental homes with that of the nurses in our hospitals. Personally I do not think there is any fair comparison between them. The nurses employed in the mental homes secured their conditions by forming a trade union registered in the Arbitration Court, and by virtue of an Arbitration Court award. Apart from that, I claim the comparison is not fair because the nurses at the mental homes do not go through the same class of training. Unless a mental nurse happens to have had previous medical training, there is none at the institutions, apart from any such qualified nurses employed there, who could take a job in any ordinary hospital in Western Australia or any other State. Therefore members will agree that the comparison is not a fair one. As a matter of fact, the majority of the nurses at the mental homes are employed more in the capacity of attendants than as nurses. Naturally, I do not disparage the mental nurses in the very least. They are carrying out magnificent work, but the fact remains that they are not required to pass the examinations necessary to fit them with qualifications to act as ordinary trained nurses. The main point, however, is that under existing circumstances, it is not possible for the Government to put into operation the scheme contemplated by the member for Perth.

Hon. C. G. Latham: You would have to do so if the Arbitration Court issued an award.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Yes, and the present Government will never legislate against, or break, an award of the Arbitration Court.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Hear, hear!

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: There need be no worry on that score. The member for Perth admitted at the outset that he did not know what the scheme would cost, but expressed the opinion that it would not entail very much expenditure. The figures I am about to quote represent the very minimum it would cost to put the scheme into operation in this State. I am talking only of the three big public institutions—the

Perth, Fremantle and Children's Hospitals—and the Government hospitals throughout the State, leaving the private hospitals and other such institutions out of consideration altogether. To launch the scheme under those conditions would mean we would have to employ 138 additional nurses, and I question whether we could get that number if we required them to-morrow. In fact, I am sure they are not available in the State.

Mr. Cross: There are plenty of young girls out of work.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: But they are not trained as nurses.

Mr. Cross: They could be trained.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: But even if we could train them, I doubt if we could get 138 additional nurses for our purposes. However, if we could get that number, it would cost the Government an additional £8,050 a year for salaries alone. If that were all the cost involved, it would not be very much, and the member for Perth would have been quite right in his statement. On the other hand, with regard to 99 out of every 100 nurses in Western Australia, it is necessary to provide them with some sort of quarters, and quarters are supposed to be provided for them at hospitals. I admit that in many instances the quarters available are not adequate and are overcrowded. To supply quarters for an additional 138 nurses at an average cost per furnished room of £120—I think that estimate is at least £15 per room below what it would cost, and, at any rate, it is £10 lower than the amount we have had to pay to date—and that would represent between £18,000 and £20,000. At present the Government have not the money with which to undertake that work. Furthermore, as Minister for Health, I am opposed, even if an area were available, to building any further quarters on the present site of the Perth Hospital. I know the matter has been held up for some considerable time. That has been through no fault of mine, nor do I know that the blame can be laid at the door of anyone in particular. The matter has simply been hung up. Before the present or any Government spend any great amount of money on hospitals in the metropolitan area—Heaven knows, an additional hospital is wanted badly enough, because the Perth Hospital is certainly over-crowded—they should first of all secure a site. It will be agreed that any such expenditure would be better on buildings erected on a new site than

on any extension of buildings on the existing site. In any case, we are precluded from building there at present because there is no room available for extensions, unless we resume additional land. Instead of doing that, I believe a first-class site, adequate for many years to come, can be procured elsewhere.

Mr. Sleeman: Government House would be satisfactory.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I am negotiating for a site that, I think, will be better than Government House.

Mr. Marshall I thought you would try to get Government House.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I am hopeful of getting the site I want. If I do not, and the Government have to get a suitable site somewhere else on privately-owned land, members know what the result will be. We shall have to pay through the nose for the property. Immediately the owner knows we are pressed for a site, and that we are prepared to go on with the proposition, up will go the price.

Mr. Wansbrough: What about taking 20 acres in King's Park?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: So long as I am a Minister of the Crown, I will never advocate taking one acre of King's Park for hospital purposes. I am hopeful of an early settlement of the matter. I am negotiating for some land adjacent to King's Park and, if I can get it, it will be in exchange for some other land that the Government hold, so that it will not mean any cash expenditure on the part of the Government. If I can do that, it will mean saving money we would otherwise have to spend on a new site. I have not been idle regarding the proposed buildings. I have gone into that phase, and I believe if we can reach an agreement regarding the site within the next month at the outside, the amount we will save by the transfer will be sufficient to enable the Government to commence building operations at once. The position is not an easy one; it is not a matter that can be carried into effect, by simply moving a motion. There are a lot of things to be taken into consideration, and an important point I wish to stress is that in Western Australia to-day a young lady who enters the nursing profession can obtain her certificate, if she can pass her examination, in a period of three years. If the motion is given effect to, or even if an Arbitration Court award

should provide for 44 hours a week, I am very doubtful whether any trainee desirous of becoming a qualified nurse after that date would be able to get a certificate inside four years. In every State where the hours have been reduced, the qualifying period has been increased to four years. As a matter of fact it has been put up in Western Australia that the period of training should be four years instead of three.

Hon. C. G. Latham: And then they get married.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: More power to them, provided they marry well. I am sorry to lose many of the nurses in that way, but we are not discussing that aspect to-day. I repeat that the Nurses' Registration Board may, if the working hours are reduced, demand a course of training extending over four years. I want members to realise that at the present time, with all those that are being trained at the Fremantle Hospital, the Children's Hospital, the Perth Hospital and the departmental hospitals, there is still a shortage of nurses in the State. If the period of training is to be extended to four years it will mean a still greater shortage. I am sorry that the Government cannot see their way clear at the present time to give effect to the proposal contained in the motion. The individual members of the Government as well as the members of the House are just as sympathetic towards the nurses as are other sections of the community, but as I have explained it is not possible under existing circumstances to put such a proposal, as is contained in the motion, into effect.

MR. CROSS (Canning) [5.49]: I was astonished to hear Ministers say that because the nurses worked long hours in Tasmania they should work long hours in Perth.

The Minister for Health: I said nothing of the kind.

Mr. CROSS: That was what I understood the Minister to say.

The Minister for Health: I may have conveyed that to you but not to anybody else.

Mr. CROSS: It is not an excuse that should be offered that because nurses work long hours elsewhere they should be asked to work similar hours in Perth, or that because firemen work 84 hours a week the nurses should do likewise. When comparing the hours worked by nurses and their

earnings in the other States the Minister was careful to omit mentioning New South Wales where the nurses work 44 hours.

The Minister for Health: I mentioned New South Wales and Victoria.

Mr. CROSS: Then I must be deaf. In Western Australia a first-year probationer is paid £26 per annum, whilst in New South Wales the payment is £81 8s., and for a shorter working week. These figures were quoted by the member for Perth. There is another feature in connection with the working of the nurses in the hospitals of this State. Whilst the hours are said to be 52 a week, it is common knowledge that actually nurses work much in excess of those hours. It is known also that nurses work two or three hours overtime on several days of the week, and for this they do not receive anything. Whilst I know it is impossible to fix the working hours of nurses to a few minutes, it should be possible to pay overtime rates when overtime is worked. I am aware that nothing can be done even if the motion be carried, but I consider that some attention should be paid to the matter because the work of nurses is arduous and exacting, and the hours are inordinately long. I feel that everything should be done to make their conditions as easy and as pleasant as possible. The Minister may be under the impression that I do not know much about hospitals, but I can assure him I have spent a lot of time in at least three in this State, months at a time on more than one occasion. Thus I have a first-hand knowledge of the working hours of nurses. In the Perth Hospital and in country hospitals as well, they begin at seven o'clock in the morning and I have known instances of their having to remain on duty until one o'clock next morning. I know of one case at the Perth Hospital where a sister on five days in the one week worked four hours overtime on each of those five days and received nothing for it. I agree with the Minister that it would be almost impossible to prepare a roster for a hospital and particularly an institution like the Perth Hospital.

The Minister for Health: It is not impossible; it can be done.

Mr. CROSS: It could not be done very satisfactorily. Take for example a day on which there are 15 or 16 operations. These may begin about two o'clock in the afternoon and last well into the early hours of

next morning. There is a tremendous amount of extra work thrown on the nurses in the surgical ward, and it is almost impossible for any nurse to complete her work in the scheduled time. Nurses do not complain, even though they are obliged to remain on duty day and night. I have the utmost sympathy for the nursing staffs of the hospitals because I know that the hours they work are very much too long. A serious effort should be made to eliminate a good deal of the overtime nurses are obliged to work at present. If the authorities are not prepared to cut out that overtime, they should at least pay the nurses additional remuneration. I hope the motion will be carried to show that we are of the opinion that the nurses' working hours should be reduced.

MR. NEEDHAM (Perth—in reply) [5.55]: I wish to point out to the Minister and to members generally that I did not intend the motion, if carried, to apply solely to the Perth Hospital. The wording of the motion itself indicates that it should have general application to all Government hospitals in the State; but I did single out the Perth Hospital as the most important institution, and I was surprised to hear the Minister's statement that that hospital was not considered a Government hospital. I understood that he was responsible for it, and consequently that it came under the category of Government hospitals. But, for the moment, that is beside the question. The indisputable and incontrovertible fact remains that the nurses are working too long hours. The Minister admits that they are working too long hours, and he gives as his reason for not being able to comply with the request contained in the motion, that it would involve considerable expense to put into effect. I have heard that argument used before in connection with other industries when men and women have sought to obtain shorter hours and better conditions of labour. That argument has been advanced by employers in private industry in reply to a request from employees for reduced hours. I am sure the Minister himself on many occasions during his busy life has heard that argument adduced and has condemned it. It has often been contended that if an industry cannot pay proper wages or give proper conditions of labour it should not be in existence. Of course

the conditions applying for the time being to the nursing profession will, I suppose, have to go on; hospitals are there to relieve the sick and injured. But it is a lame and weak excuse that because it is going to cost a certain sum of money to ameliorate the conditions of nurses, an effort should not be made to improve the system by reducing the hours that obtain to-day.

The Minister for Health: Hospital employees have had their hours reduced since the present Government have been in power.

Mr. NEEDHAM: I am not disputing that, and I know that the Minister himself, and indeed every member of the Government, is sympathetic towards my proposal. But we want something more than sympathy; we want something practical, and the argument about increased expense should not be a barrier to giving the relief that is sought. The Minister mentioned that the nurses of the State have obtained registration under the Arbitration Act. I hope the Minister is not going to hide behind that. It is the prerogative of a Government, especially a Labour Government, to be a model employer and so, without waiting for any move by the newly formed organisation of nurses to approach the court, the Government should themselves set the ball in motion by endeavouring to meet the requests contained in this motion.

Mr. J. H. Smith interjected.

Mr. NEEDHAM: The hon. member is seldom here to listen to what any other member is saying, and when here he indulges in pointless interjections. I suggest that before making any more inane interjections he should put in some time in the Chamber listening to the debates. The Minister said he hoped the day will never come when members of the nursing profession will not work a minute longer than 44 hours per week. I agree with him when he characterises nursing as a profession; but I hope we are not going to use that word "profession" too much, for it has been played on too long. One of the nurses who took a leading part in the formation of the Nurses' Union stressed that very point, that it had been played upon too long with its implication that since the nurses constituted a profession they should be prepared to work for indefinite periods.

Mr. Hawke: What is a profession?

Mr. NEEDHAM: I am referring to the term in its general application. Most members of professions look for a fairly good reward for their services and, outside the nursing profession, they make sure that they get it. My friends of the legal profession make sure of their fees, and they are not low fees.

Mr. McDonald: I wish they did.

Mr. NEEDHAM: And we may be sure that the very gentlemen with whom the nurses work hand in hand, the doctors, also get their proper reward for the work they do.

The Minister for Health: No profession in the world works longer than does that of the medical men.

Mr. NEEDHAM: I admit that they do a great deal of work in an honorary capacity in the hospitals, but I am speaking of those in outside practice. So it is of no use stressing this title of "profession", especially since the Minister says he does not want to see the day when the nurses will not work longer than 44 hours per week. If the Minister cannot reduce their hours, why not pay them for the overtime they work? The Minister also said that a comparison between the nurses in the Hospital for the Insane at Claremont and those in medical hospitals was not a fair one, that the nurses in the Hospital for the Insane had not the same skill as those engaged in the other hospitals. Yet those nurses, who the Minister says are not so highly skilled, are getting better conditions, shorter hours and higher wages, and are also paid overtime rates. If the nurses in the Perth Hospital have the greater skill, they should have the better conditions of labour. But they have not. Again, on the score of expense the Minister points to the difficulty in securing a sufficient number of nurses. He says that if the 44-hour week were brought into operation three extra matrons would have to be appointed.

The Minister for Health: No, I did not. I said that in many small Government hospitals it would mean that we should have to employ two matrons.

Mr. NEEDHAM: All right, extra matrons would have to be appointed. Also the Minister instanced a certain number of additional nurses, and said he was doubtful whether, in the event of the 44-hour week being introduced, sufficient nurses could be obtained. At least why not make a start?

There are any number of eligible girls idle who would make exceptionally good nurses if given encouragement to take up the profession. I have little more to say. I repeat that the nurses are over-worked, that they are very skilful and are doing excellent work in our midst, and that the time is long past when we should relieve them as far as we can. The question of quarters could be overcome to an extent. The Minister says it might not be desirable to increase the present buildings at the Perth Hospital, but I think use could be made of another place not far away from the hospital, and so relieve the pressure there. I had hoped the Minister would agree to give this motion a trial, but evidently he and the Government are not prepared to do so. I submit the motion to the House and I hope it will be carried, which will suggest to the Government that they should put the nursing staff in the various hospitals on a 44-hour basis.

Question put and passed.

BILL—TIMBER WORKERS.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

MR. J. H. SMITH (Nelson) [6.11]: I agree with a number of the points made by the Leader of the Opposition. The Bill looks simple enough but, on going into its details, we find that it is far from being simple. The Minister, in moving the second reading, traversed a great deal of ground, as did also some of the supporters of the Bill. It is proposed to extend the provisions of the Masters and Servants Act, but I do not see why that Act should be extended. While the Industrial Arbitration Act does not apply to the hewers, it does apply to a number of other people mentioned in the Bill, as, for instance, fallers, haulers, and those engaged in the carriage, sawing or milling of timber for another person. Hewing is the only branch concerned, for the other branches are already under the Industrial Arbitration Act. We have to decide whether we shall concentrate on contract or on piece work, or whether we want to put the hewers on a day basis of labour. I know the industry from A to Z, and I say the timber workers to-day are not asking for any alteration in working

conditions. In the past the trouble has been that the industry has been squeezed almost out of existence by legislation passed by this House, and containing a schedule of compensations. It was on account of that legislation that we had the foreign element come into the industry. The insurance companies would not insure those working in the industry at less than £25 per £100. For long the insurance had been at 1s. 9d., but it moved up to 3s. 6d. and then jumped to 14s. 6d. per load, until, in the end, the insurance companies would not touch it at any price, for people in the industry were cutting off their toes and fingers wholesale. It is only lately that we have been able to combat that.

Mr. Wilson: There were not so many of them.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: A great number of them. To-day there are 800 cutters in the industry besides others not cutting on Crown lands. The majority of those are foreigners. I am going to oppose the Bill, because I do not see that it will do any good.

Miss Holman: I did not expect you to do anything else.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: If the hon. member is not very careful, I will expose her in a very bad light. I do not desire to be in any way unfair.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: A great deal of the trouble in the timber industry was caused by the member for Forrest and other misguided people endeavouring to get the timber workers into the Federal union.

Mr. SPEAKER: I do not think the hon. member can touch on that.

Miss Holman: When was that?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I will pass over that and deal with the important portion of the Bill. I agree with the member for Collie in the case he made out. People who succeed in getting contracts often hand them on, as the hon. member expressed it, to the fifth and sixth generation. I should like Parliament to pass legislation insisting that when a contract is secured for an overseas order, the contractor in the first instance shall be bound to pay the compensation charges.

Mr. Wilson: And also the wages.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Yes. The Minister's idea is that wages may be recovered more

promptly by proceedings under the Masters and Servants Act.

Miss Holman: Can the cutters get to the court now?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Of course they can. I know of sleeper-cutters who have never been paid for their work. At the same time the provisions of the Bill are impossible of fulfilment, and the men in the industry will not thank the member for Forrest for her remarks last night. My remarks will be supported by 95 per cent. of the hewers in the country. Under existing conditions it would be impossible for hewers to work under an arbitration award. The Minister and the member for Forrest know that it is impossible.

Miss Holman: I do not.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: As it is impossible for them to work under a uniform award, there must be piece work and contract. The member for Forrest said she would be in favour of creating a monopoly.

Miss Holman: I did not.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: If the hon. member refers to the "Hansard" report of her speech, I think she will find that she said she favoured a monopoly of the whole industry. She would not allow me or anyone else to enter the industry. I entirely disagree with that view. I know contractors who take sub-contracts, perhaps from Millars, to supply sleepers cut off a certain area at a certain price. Those contractors have their own trucks. They are contractors in that they work as a community. They pay no insurance; the responsibility is theirs. But there are also sub-contractors and perhaps even second, third or fourth sub-contractors. A certain area of land is secured and men are required to fall the timber and make it marketable. There are 800 men working under the Forests Department and perhaps another 500 or 600 working on private property. My remarks cannot be refuted. A certain area is thrown open. If it is in forest country the hewers licensed to cut previous to 1918 are allowed to operate. There are 300 odd hewers so licensed. Then there are areas of Crown land and areas thrown open for cutting by the department. Every tree to be felled is marked by an officer of the department. In the old days the price per load was 28s. and it rose to 48s. The recognised price to-day is 40s., but a fair price on forest land would be £3 per load because it

is impossible for men to make a living on less. One of the best cutters in the State—I could give his name—is able to cut six loads of sleepers per week. He is one of many working under the department's conditions and he told me only three weeks ago that he went out and felled five trees. He had to saw the lengths off and knock them into billets, and out of the five trees, instead of getting 40 sleepers, he was able to get only two sleepers. How would it be possible to set a rate under those conditions? Other cutters go on to private property 25 or 30 miles from a railway where the timber is virgin. They pay the owner a certain amount of royalty and have to pay increased cartage, but many such men can cut one load per day. Compare that with the experience of the man who is able to cut scarcely one load per week. Is it possible under the Bill to fix a price? Such work could not be done under day-labour conditions. If it were attempted, a minimum would have to be prescribed. The Bill will not do one iota of good; on the other hand, it will do the industry harm. It is impossible to fix any price for the cutting or hewing of sleepers because the price depends entirely upon the nature of the bush. When a sub-contractor interviews a number of cutters, he tells them that he has acquired some decent bush and is prepared to pay 35s. or 40s. per load, as the case might be. The cutters inspect the bush and, if it suits them, they undertake the work. If it does not suit them, they do not accept it. Governments past and present have been the greatest exploiters of the industry. What is happening in the sleeper-cutting industry? The Conservator of Forests, after a great deal of persuasion, throws open an area of land for the hewing of sleepers. A minimum of 10s. per load is fixed. A number of contractors, possessed of trucks and having an order from Millars or from other firms, inspect the bush, and instead of its being sold at the upset price of 10s., competition results in the price being raised to 17s. or 18s. For an area not far from Busselton the price was carried to 35s. When that happens someone gets squeezed and someone is not getting a fair deal. I wish to ensure that everyone engaged in the industry is adequately paid. I would not mind if the royalty imposed by the department were abolished so long as the men were put to

work. When the industry was buoyant, everybody in the South-West was doing well. To-day it is not buoyant, but there are indications that it is improving. Prices are low and there is little scope. Everybody has touched bedrock, but people are content so long as they can earn a livelihood. We must not crush the industry out of existence by passing legislation of this kind. You, Mr. Speaker, were once a miner. If you had been asked to sink a shaft in good soft country, you would perhaps have taken a contract at 10s. or 12s. a foot. If you had gone into diorite, you would have wanted £7 a foot. The same thing applies to the timber industry. In good bush, a sleeper-cutter might be prepared to supply sleepers at 35s. a load, whereas in some of the bush thrown open by the Forests Department he would require £3 per load. Very few men could hope to earn as much as £5 or £6 a week. Their earnings could hardly exceed £3 or £4 a week.

Mr. F. C. L. Smith: What royalty is paid?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: It works out at about 10s. a load. I understand the Railway Department are getting 6ft. 6in. sleepers at 62s. 6d. per load at siding.

Mr. Stubbs: How much a sleeper is that?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: On the basis of 26 sleepers to the load, the price is very low, but men are cutting the sleepers for that sum. My principal concern is to see that the men are protected. It was customary, prior to the war, to pay 90 per cent. of the value of sleepers that had been passed.

Miss Holman: That was in the award.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: It has been the custom for many years, and still is the custom.

Miss Holman: It is not.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: It is the custom amongst responsible people. The member for Forrest referred to a certain case that occurred at Greenbushes. I know the individuals concerned, and what happened. I have no sympathy in that direction. A mountain has been made out of a molehill. To my mind, the Minister has been influenced in bringing forward this legislation which will cripple the industry. An arbitration award would detrimentally affect it. Suppose a man were able to get only two sleepers out of five trees; how much would he want per load?

Mr. Moloney: But he would get 10 per cent. above the minimum wage.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: No man wants to work on the daily rate basis. The industry is now beginning to recover. I ask members to take no notice of the Greenbushes case. Things are beginning to go smoothly again. Let us not disrupt them by legislation. Surely the House does not intend to make a show by passing this Bill merely to satisfy some people. Let us not put a spoke in the wheel of the industry. Have not those concerned suffered sufficient hardship during the last five years? Just when the industry is beginning to become buoyant and a few orders are available, we do not want to pass foolish legislation of this sort. With the exception of sleeper-hewers, everybody connected with the timber industry is covered. There are many old cutters in my district. They have not asked for this measure, but are satisfied to accept what they get, according to the bush they are working in. Their only ambition is to work in decent bush. If they could get good timber to work on, they would not think of working for wages. The member for Forrest referred to the earnings of cutters in certain areas. We do not know whether she was talking about cut-out bush or not, nor do we know the circumstances of the men in question. It may have been old bush, or bush which had been marked by the departmental officers. If it was dedicated forest land, I am sure every tree was marked. The comparison is not a fair one. If that same body of men were put into bush 25 miles from the railway on the other side of Manjimup, they would increase their earnings threefold. The hon. member also took the winter months into consideration. A cutter does not work in the winter months except between showers. Here again the comparison is unfair. Many men make a good living out of sleeper-cutting. In the old days, when all they got was £2 a load, it was a poor man who did not earn his £1 a day and who did not draw a £30-cheque at the end of the month. There is a hide-bound conservative policy in the Forests Department that prevents them from throwing open good bush. If they do throw it open, they mark everything in it. It would break the heart of any man to go into that type of bush. He may be working on a tree only 2ft. 6in. in diameter, and after halving

and quartering it, he may not get a single sleeper out of it.

Mr. Wilson: There is not too much of that.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I have seen this happen with old sleeper-cutters working on marked trees. We know that unless the men fall every marked tree, they are debarred from working in the forest. The Bill will effect no good purpose. The other branches of workers associated with the industry are all provided for under arbitration awards. It is only the sleeper-cutter who is not covered.

Mr. Moloney: What about compensation?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I know of no claim for compensation that has not been met. There have been plenty of disputes and court cases, but there are now not nearly so many of these as there used to be. An arbitration award would certainly kill the sleeper-cutting industry. The same thing would happen if the price for hewing was fixed. The industry could not possibly afford a price of £3 or £4 a load.

Mr. Wilson: The worker is entitled to some protection.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: If the Government would bring down legislation to provide protection for those who work for small contractors, they would have my support. In respect of sleeper-hewers, the Bill is a retrograde step and will not do any good.

MR. BROCKMAN (Sussex) [7.35]: The Bill is likely to have a serious effect upon the sleeper-hewing industry. Although there are many hewers in my district, I have not had a request from one of them to be brought under an Arbitration Court award. Since the Bill was brought down last Thursday, I have made many inquiries in my electorate and elsewhere, and find that the general impression is that this legislation will be very detrimental to the industry. I ask members to regard the industry first of all as an employer of labour. I am sure it has relieved the Minister for Employment of a great deal of worry in the South-West. I understand that if the Bill becomes law, very little hewing will be done there. That will be harmful not only to the workers, but to the State. The export trade used to be of great value to Western Australia, and we hope it will soon build up again to what it was. To bring down a

Bill of this sort at this stage in the revival of the industry must injure it considerably. I hope members will be careful before they record their votes in the affirmative. Much has been said about compensation. I know of no case in which compensation has not been paid. It is a fact, as the member for Forrest stated, that in my electorate there was a case connected with timber milling. The Bill will not affect that. It was a case of wages, coming under the Workers' Compensation Act. I should welcome any legislation that would place the cutter on a sound basis when working for small contracts. There have been instances in which the hewers have not been paid their money when they have earned it.

Mr. Wilson: It has been going on for a year.

Mr. BROCKMAN: It has been going on for many years. The Bill will not cover the cases of sub-contractors who have failed to meet their obligations. Even under the Federal award these things occurred. I fail to see how the Bill will protect the hewers in that regard. Therefore I must oppose the measure. I consider it will prove detrimental to a most important industry of the State, one which has brought millions of money into Western Australia and is likely to bring millions more in the future. As the previous speaker said, the difficulty lies in the Forests Act. Whether that Act is administered rightly or wrongly I am not prepared to say. I take it that the officers of the Forests Department do what they consider best in the interests of the State; but the bone of contention, as regards the hewers, is that the marking of trees makes it impossible for them to earn reasonable wages. If that is so, I would welcome the legislation protecting hewers from that aspect. I believe in rendering justice to the hewer as well as to the contractor—and also to the Government, if it comes to that.

Miss Holman: How are the hewers to get justice?

Mr. J. H. Smith: Not by the fixing of one price.

Miss Holman: What about a minimum price?

Mr. BROCKMAN: I do not think that an arbitration award would be satisfactory.

Miss Holman: In your opinion it would not.

Mr. BROCKMAN: The member for Forrest has only one viewpoint. The position of

the hewer is really wrapped up in the bush in which he cuts. Many hewers in my electorate would be willing to cut in bush further afield than they are doing to-day, and at a reduced price in virgin bush. All these matters can be left to the men and the employers. Timber firms operating in my district tell me that not in one instance are they paying less than £2 per load for the cutting of sleepers. That is the same as the price paid in New South Wales where there is no award, and where there are no complaints.

Miss Holman: Were they a few months ago?

Mr. BROCKMAN: We should not look at the past. I prefer to look to the future. The industry is coming back into its own; but if we place obstacles in the way of its recovery—as I contend the Bill would do—the progress hoped for within the next year or two will not be realised. During recent years it has been indeed difficult for employers to secure contracts at all, even at a very low margin of profit, and the passage of the Bill will not relieve that position. I am told by big contractors that if the measure is enacted, it will end their operating in the industry. That will mean the throwing out of work of many men, with a resultant tax on the State for relief. The member for Nelson (Mr. J. H. Smith) and the Leader of the Opposition have dealt with the question fully from one point of view, and the member for Forrest (Miss Holman) has dealt with it from her standpoint. I hope the Chamber will turn the measure down.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. A. McCallum—South Fremantle—in reply) [S.6]: The main argument put up against the Bill is that it will abolish piecework and will mean that the timber hewer will be employed on wages. In moving the second reading I said that the best answer to that objection is that when these men were under the Arbitration Act and worked under an arbitration award, the result was not to abolish piecework. To my own knowledge, the hewers worked under the jurisdiction of the Arbitration Court for a quarter of a century on piecework. Piecework operated during the whole of that period. In the face of that fact, what is the sense of arguing that the passing of the Bill will abolish piece-

work? That is a spurious argument, designed only to avoid the main issue.

Mr. J. H. Smith: The Minister knows—

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member interjecting wants to support the companies. While he has been here he has constantly declared that he is prepared to do justice to the workers, but he has never given a vote in favour of the workers. He has at all times voted in favour of the employers.

Mr. J. H. Smith: Will you listen for a moment? I spoke of cutting on Crown lands.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member has said that he wants the hewers to be given full protection. We have brought down a Bill to bring all of them under the labour laws. Now the hon. member finds an excuse to vote against the Bill. He has never yet given a vote in favour of the labouring man. He always votes in favour of the employer. He puts up a case prepared for him by the employers. That has been his attitude ever since he has been in the Chamber. It is said that the aim of the Labour Party is to abolish piecework, and that the Bill represents another step in that direction. I can quote labour unions which have nothing but piecework. Everybody knows that the shearers, for instance, will work nothing but piecework. Linotype operators are on piecework. The same thing applies to the clothing and bootmaking trades. As regards multiplicity of rates, I have seen schedules for the clothing and bootmaking trades consisting of page after page of different piecework rates fixed by the Arbitration Court.

Mr. J. H. Smith: You do not know what you are talking about. There is no comparison.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The comparison lies in the fact that for a quarter of a century the hewers were on piecework.

Mr. J. H. Smith: On Crown lands.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Surely it does not matter which side of the fence they were on.

Mr. J. H. Smith: That just shows what you know about the subject.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It shows how spurious the hon. member's argument is.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The member for Nelson will keep order.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I wish to point out also that we have working under the Government to-day men clearing bush on piecework, and that the bush which is being cleared varies quite as much as the bush in which the hewers cut. We have a long list of different piecework rates for the clearers operating under Government auspices for the time being. That is done by the same method as the Arbitration Court adopts. A board is appointed. The Arbitration Court does not set out figures in its award, but establishes a board to study conditions and fix rates in accordance with the various conditions. We have men clearing bush in the karri country, and in bank-sia country and in scrub country; and they are on piecework at different rates.

Mr. J. H. Smith: What you suggest would mean fixing a minimum price.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: What has that got to do with the case? The hon. member contends that for piecework it is necessary to fix a flat rate.

Mr. J. H. Smith: I said that?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member said it half a dozen times. I wish to point out that that has never been the case.

Mr. J. H. Smith: It always was the case in the sleeper-hewing industry, and you cannot deny it.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. J. H. Smith: I defy contradiction.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. J. H. Smith: It always was the case.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member for Nelson must keep order. He has had his opportunity to speak.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The argument that the hewers do not want the Bill comes strangely from members opposite, who do not know the hewers. The recent conference of workers in the timber industry carried a resolution in favour of the Bill. The resolution came from the hewers themselves. The men speak through their organisation. Yet it is urged against us that we are doing something the men do not want. Why should we do it if the men do not want it? The Bill is here at the request of the hewers. It has sprung from their

initiative. They have asked for the measure for a considerable period. Let me make perfectly clear the point that the hewers worked under arbitration awards for many years, and the argument that the Bill means the abolition of piecework is answered by the fact that the Arbitration Court fixed piecework conditions. Again, the objection that the Bill involves different rates for different classes of bush is answered by the fact that the clearers working for the Government have different rates for different classes of bush. Where is the difficulty, then? In reply to all the difficulties raised against the Bill, we can show that the system proposed has operated in the past or is operating at the moment.

Mr. J. H. Smith: The system never operated in the hewing industry.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have already stated that to my own knowledge it operated for 25 years in the hewing industry.

Mr. J. H. Smith: It never operated in that industry.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: As to supervision not being possible if the Bill is passed, I think all hon. members will agree that the difficult part of supervision under labour laws is not in relation to wages, particularly when piecework operates, for then it depends on the man himself how hard he will work and therefore what his earnings will be; if the man does not work, he will not be paid. The real difficulty relates to accidents under the Workers' Compensation Act. At the instance not of a Labour Government, but of a Government representing hon. members now sitting opposite, this Chamber passed a Bill making workers' compensation apply to the hewers. Everyone admits, I believe, that the difficulty as regards men working in the bush without supervision is far greater in respect of accidents than in respect of earnings, for if a man sat down in the shade all day long instead of working, he would earn nothing. In such a case it would not matter to the employer, otherwise than as regards getting other men to fulfil the contract. It has been asserted that the Bill involved a penalty on the timber industry; one hon. member said the passing of the measure would ruin the industry. But surely the greater liability is as regards workers' compensation, and not from the

aspect suggested. I believe that all hon. members agree to the extension of the principle of workers' compensation. It has been alleged that the hewers do not want the Bill, as they are doing all right. The member for Sussex (Mr. Brockman) said that until yesterday he knew nothing about the Bill. He went on to say, "I have discussed the measure with hewers all over my electorate, and none of them wants it." Yet he said in the same speech that he knew nothing about the Bill until yesterday. That is the kind of argument that has been advanced against the Bill.

Mr. Hawke: No wonder he left the Chamber as soon as he finished his speech.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The faller is now covered; his wages are fixed. Was it any less difficult regarding the faller than it would be regarding the hewer? If there would be difficulty in dealing with the hewers, then that difficulty must also apply to the fallers. But, as I have pointed out, the rates for the fallers are fixed. If that has not worked harm regarding the fallers, why should it operate harmfully regarding the hewers? The fact is that there are many workers scattered throughout the bush who are being absolutely imposed upon, and are cutting for all sorts of prices, with absolutely no redress. We have heard talk about a rate of £2 a load. The member who spoke of that must know that in his own electorate men are cutting for 26s. a load, and it is a common thing for them to cut for 30s. a load. It is all very well to argue about the recognised rate. The fact remains that the men are not getting it. The men the Bill seeks to affect are entirely unprotected. All that is asked is to provide the legislative machinery that justice may be meted out. It does not by any means contemplate the abolition of piecework. The Arbitration Court will fix the rates and will probably set up a board who will decide the class of bush in which cutting is being done, and the rates will vary accordingly. I hope the Bill will be passed.

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

Ayes	25
Noes	16
Majority for				9
				—

AYES.

Mr. Clothier	Mr. Munsie
Mr. Cross	Mr. Needham
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Rodoreda
Mr. Hagner	Mr. Sleeman
Miss Holman	Mr. F. C. L. Smith
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Kennelly	Mr. Troy
Mr. Lambert	Mr. Wan-brough
Mr. McCallum	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Marshall	Mr. Withers
Mr. Millington	Mr. Wilson
Mr. Moloney	(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Ferguson	Mr. Sampson
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Seward
Mr. Keenan	Mr. J. H. Smith
Mr. McDonald	Mr. Stubbs
Mr. McLarty	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Mann	Mr. Warner
Mr. North	Mr. Welsh
Mr. Patrick	Mr. Doney
	(Teller.)

PAIRS.

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Collier	Mr. Latham
Mr. Raphael	Mr. J. M. Smith

Question thus passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Certain persons engaged in the timber industry to be deemed workers and employers and to be party to contracts of service:

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I have read the clause over and over again and I cannot quite understand it. It refers to any person working in connection with the felling, hewing and so forth, of timber for another person "who is engaged in the timber industry for the purposes of such other person's trade or business." What is the reason for the inclusion of the words I have quoted? I suggest we cut them out, and that will make the meaning of the clause quite clear. I move an amendment—

That in lines 3 and 4 of Subclause 1, the words "who is engaged in the timber industry for the purposes of such other person's trade or business" be struck out.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If the amendment be agreed to, it will destroy the Bill.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Of course, I do not want to do that.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The intention is to cover only people employed in the timber industry. There may be men

falling or hewing timber in the mining industry.

Hon. N. Keenan: Or in the agricultural industry.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That is the position.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I realise the point. By leave of the Committee, I will withdraw the amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 3—Operation of the Act:

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I hope the Committee will not agree to this retrospective clause. If we are to pass the clause, it should be limited in its application to contracts made after it becomes operative. As it stands, the clause will be retrospective and apply to any contract, some of which may have been running for five years or more. I do not see how those contracts could be affected. It might mean that if the men went to the Arbitration Court and an award was secured, a tremendous sum would have to be paid in respect of contracts that have been running for years. Under those contracts, the sleepers have been disposed of at a fixed price.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not think that I will insist upon the clause being retained.

Hon. C. G. Latham: It is very dangerous.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I can see that there would be difficulty in some instances, but it would apply to current contracts, most of which would not date far back.

Mr. Marshall: Contracts may be dated a long way ahead if you do not cover them.

Miss Holman: That is the difficulty.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes; current contracts would not affect the decision of the Arbitration Court because one cannot contract out of such an award, which would have to apply from the date of issue and would override all contracts. In the great bulk of instances, the clause would work equitably. I do not desire to create any difficulty that is avoidable.

Hon. C. G. Latham: You should be satisfied with the Bill without the clause.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I think I will be.

Clause put and negatived.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with an amendment.

BILL—ROAD DISTRICTS ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

MR. DONEY (Williams-Narrogin) [8.30 : So far as my knowledge of this matter goes, the facts submitted by the Minister last night pretty accurately set out the position. I have not heard nor can I think of any objection to the provisions of the Bill, but had there been time for the necessary investigations some objections might possibly have been disclosed. Despite the comparative brevity and the seeming simplicity of the amendments to the Act, nevertheless they deserve a deal of study in more than one direction. I think, therefore, the Deputy Premier should not have required us to debate the Bill quite so soon after his opening speech. It cannot of course be claimed that we are pressed for time, and so the Minister might well have given us at least one more day for consideration. The Bill seeks to facilitate the re-vestment in the Crown of those lands upon which no rates have been paid for five years, and which so far as can be ascertained are vacant. Great care needs to be taken that we do not facilitate a process of this kind to an extent that will mean hardship to the registered owner of such lands. The House will easily understand that land which appears to be vacant very frequently is not vacant at all. In a matter of this kind the discretion of members of a road board is as good a guarantee of fair play between the individual, the road board and the Crown as one is likely to get. I agree too that there is further evidence of the wisdom of the step being taken in the Bill in the fact that the road board conference held in Perth a few weeks ago strongly pressed for legislation of this kind and so, for that matter, did the executive of the association as well as several other conferences during recent years. So it would appear that the Government are on pretty safe ground. What really gave rise to the Bill were two resolutions passed at the recent conference at the instance of the Beverley Road Board. The first was that a

more satisfactory method be adopted to deal with lands on which rates had not been paid for over five years. The second was that the Act be amended to read that lands offered for sale under court order and not sold shall revert to the Crown and be deemed to be and become unalienated lands open for re-selection, all accrued rates and taxes thereon being completely written off. Members will notice that all the requirements of those two resolutions are comprised in the Bill. It is objected by a number of people that land that does not in the circumstances outlined find a purchaser should revert, not to the Crown, but to the road board. We know that in the strict sense of the word "revert" land cannot revert to the road board at all, because it was never in the possession of the board. We know too that by the provisions of the Land Act, such land can revert only to the Crown. There would also be this objection, that if the road board did possess itself of such land it could not escape liability for water rates or land tax or for its own tax, although obviously that last tax would not be paid. The House, I presume, understands that the Bill does not refer to land within the boundaries of municipalities at all, but only to lands within the road board districts, that is to say, pastoral land, farm land, building lots and so forth, and only then to vacant land. I do not think there can be in the minds of members any doubt that the position is an aggravating one and needs correction. In the past the continual piling up of rates and taxes that cannot in any circumstances be paid has been a source of great worry to all road board officials and members, to say nothing of auditors, and will always prevent the actual monetary position of the board from becoming properly known. I feel like saying it seems a pity that small amendments of this kind should be brought before the House so soon after the passing of the Act of last year to consolidate the Road Districts Act. For the need of these amendments has been known for a few years past and so they should have been included in the Act of last year. One thing about the automatic reversion of land to the Crown is that the position is thereby cleaned up very quickly and cheaply, and of course, with finality. But it must be understood that in the future there will be upon the road boards the greater onus to see that every possible source of protection to owners is exhaustively exam-

ined before the order to sell is secured from the court. I do not know whether I am right in this, but I am assuming that when an order of sale can be procured, road boards can still, if they wish, buy any land of the type we are discussing on their own account for investment purposes or any purposes at all: although of course it is understood that in those circumstances they cannot escape liability for land tax or water rates or other exactions of that kind, and there is always the possibility of their being proceeded against by the Water Supply Department for overdue water rates. From that fact it would seem that the method adopted by the Government to overcome the difficulty is probably the best available. In conclusion, I repeat that within the time permitted the House I have not been able to find any objection to the Bill, and therefore I will have pleasure in supporting the second reading.

MR. SAMPSON (Swan) [8.40]: I agree with what the hon. member has said in respect of the undue hurry in dealing with the Bill. The position is, however, a simple one, for we know that a request has been made by the road boards that the Bill be put through. I take this opportunity to express appreciation of the promptitude that has marked the bringing down of the Bill. At the same time there is something to be said for the desirability of giving members generally an opportunity to look thoroughly into the measure. It relates to lands which have been offered for sale under order of the court for non-payment of rates and have not been sold. It has been urged that the period of five years, which is the minimum period before the lapse of which it is not competent for a board to sell land for non-payment of rates, should be reduced. I do not agree with that. I think five years is a reasonable time, although I do agree with everything the hon. member said in respect of the disposal of such land. When land has been ordered to be sold for non-payment of rates and no offer is received, clearly the land should revert to the Crown. Some reference was made to an upset price. There is no upset price for these lands, and I do not think there should be a reserve price. The object of the local authority in having the land put up for sale is really to clear the position. The rate book becomes cluttered up with a

lot of debts for land which will never be paid, and in the circumstances the only thing is to accept whatever price is offered and, if no offer be made, the land should revert to the Crown, after which applications could be received for the land. It was suggested at the recent road board conference and on various other occasions that if the reserve price is not reached, or if there is no bid for the land, the land should pass into the possession of the road board. That, of course, would be quite impracticable. The functions of a road board do not include trafficking in land, and if the board attempted to do that it would soon find itself in difficulties. A road board is established for the maintenance and care of roads and certain associated responsibilities. If it were to take up land even when it was going cheaply, in the final analysis it would do itself more harm than good. It would mean that the board would become responsible for the payment of water rates, vermin rates, land tax and various other exactions.

Mr. Patrick: They could turn it into a park.

Mr. SAMPSON: The position in regard to much vacant land throughout not only road boards, but municipal districts, is that it is bought for speculative purposes, and the person who buys it has been inspired by those selling it to believe that the land has a high prospective value. A little time teaches him that he has been wrongly informed, or has gathered a wrong impression. The trouble is that so many people who buy land move from the locality, and they seem to be particularly the class of person influenced by representations as to the prospective value of the land.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: Influenced by land hawkers.

Mr. SAMPSON: Yes. It is realised that land unutilised is one of the most costly things possible to possess. Practically all road boards and, I believe, municipal councils too, have many entries in their rate books for land assessments that will never be paid. The introduction of the Bill will give satisfaction, and the Minister deserves thanks for having brought it down so promptly. The Bill provides for a more or less automatic reversion of land to the Lands Department, and I believe that will have the effect of bringing the land

into use. When land is held up through the non-payment of rates, inconvenience is caused to ratepayers as land that could be used is sometimes not used simply because the owner is unknown. If we simplify the means whereby the land can again be made available to the public, so much the better. If something of the sort could be done regarding goldfields blocks, I think such action would receive general support. Too many blocks are held up through non-payment of rates, and people who desire residential blocks are forced further out. The same thing applies in the business areas.

Mr. Marshall: How do you feel about land which is held out of use and on which the rates have been paid?

Mr. SAMPSON: The Bill does not apply to such land. If an owner is prepared to pay the rates on land not utilised, he is carrying the burden. I support the Bill.

MR. CROSS (Canning) [8.49]: Many complaints have been received by me from road board officials about the cumbersome methods that have to be adopted before a sale of land can be effected. The procedure is also very costly. I have had some figures tabulated which disclose that one road board in my district had to spend over £700 before a sale could be effected. The request made to the Minister was for a simplification of the methods of procedure in order to effect a sale. To comply with the procedure, it is necessary in the first instance to examine the rate book for a period of five years and prepare a tabulated list containing full particulars. It is then necessary to have a search made at the Titles Office of each lot concerned and to obtain from the Titles Office a certified copy of the title for each block. Schedules must be prepared and submitted to the Taxation Department and to the Water Supply Department for the insertion of the amounts due to them. Each of the parties concerned must be given notice of intention to sell. The road board must do all that work. At the expiration of three months from the date of service of the notices, a petition for sale has to be made to the local court. The magistrate appoints a day on which all matters pertaining to the petition shall be investigated, and the next step is the publication of the schedule in the "Government Gazette" and

in a newspaper at least 40 days before the inquiry is held. This must be done at the expense of the road board. When the order has been issued and a date appointed for the sale, the schedule must again be published twice in a newspaper. When this procedure is observed, it is doubtful whether any sale can be arranged in a shorter period than eight months. I have received a letter from a road board in my district showing not only what the procedure involved in one instance but what is expected in another instance. I propose to read the history of the proceedings leading up to an actual sale. On the 25th October, 1926, the board decided to take steps to procure an order for sale for non-payments of rates. On the 28th April, 1927, the owners of land on which more than five year's rates were owing were notified of the board's intention to apply for an order for sale. On the 4th September, 1928, the sale took place. Although proceedings had been expedited as much as possible by the board, 17 months elapsed from the time the owners were advised until the matter was finalised. The board complained that the Taxation Department alone held them up for six months while deciding the amount of rates due on the various lots. Under the existing system, the board claim that any department can hold up proceedings almost indefinitely, as the clerk of courts will not accept the schedule on Form A1. until details of the amounts due to the board, plus all other rates and taxes due on the land, all moneys due to the Agricultural Bank and any mortgage due on the land have been supplied. In this instance the board had 187 lots for sale. The out of pocket expenses on each block submitted were £1 6s. 1d., the total being £243 odd. The sale realised £1,861. Of that amount, the board received on account of rates £562, and the board then applied for permission to write off rates to the amount of £523.

Hon. C. G. Latham: This Bill will not affect that.

Mr. CROSS: There remained in the hands of the local court an amount of £700, the bulk of which will eventually pass into Consolidated Revenue. It is claimed by the board—and I think there is much in their contention—that the departments that benefit by the transaction should bear portion of the cost. The board have 600 blocks of

land on which rates have been owing for many years. The land is worth about £6,000. On the basis of the sale referred to, it will cost the board roughly £782 before they can get any return. Not only the board in question but another board in my electorate consider that the proposal to vest the land in the Crown as contemplated by the Bill, is wrong. I am sorry that the Minister has seen fit to rush through the second reading of the Bill. Time should be given to refer the measure to the various road boards with a view to obtaining their opinions.

Mr. Mann: The boards are unanimous now.

Mr. CROSS: Paragraph (b) of the proposed new Section 285A. provides—

All rights of property which may have at any time been vested by statute or otherwise, in any person whomsoever in the said vacant land shall absolutely cease and determine, and the said vacant land, and all the estate, right, and title in law and equity therein or thereto, shall by virtue of this section be and become vested in His Majesty freed, released, and discharged of and for all rates and taxes then charged upon or owing in respect of the said land and of and from all encumbrances, and the estate, right, title, interest, claim or demand of any person whomsoever.

Many road boards do not know that.

The Minister for Works: They asked for it.

Mr. CROSS: They did not know it in the Canning electorate. No one else knew about it. The land should be vested in the road boards. The Government departments which benefit from the sale of the land should contribute something towards the cost. Any profit arising out of the sale of the land should revert to the road boards which have had to force the sale. What special right have the Crown to confiscate land which has had its value increased by the activities and the expenditure of road boards? It is unfair. If the Bill is passed without being referred to the road boards I believe there will be a storm of protest when they wake up to its provisions. I hope the Minister will delay the Committee stage for at least a week so that the Bill may be referred to the road boards.

HON. C. G. LATHAM (York) [9.2]: I agree with the member for Canning (Mr. Cross) that the Minister has hurried the Bill through too quickly. The speech of the hon. member conveys to my mind that

he has not read it, or the Act either. The Act deals entirely with the point of view raised by him. That is where the trouble lies. The Bill proposes to deal only with the land after the road board has been unable to sell it at auction.

The Minister for Works: How could they make a profit out of land they cannot sell?

Mr. Cross: Why should the Crown take it?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: It is a wise safeguard. Suppose a road board gets its eye upon a piece of land and says, "Let us delay the sending out of rate notices." Eventually it will reach the stage when it can put up the land for sale, and the property will revert to the local authority. The best way to dispose of this sort of land is to allow it to revert to the original owner—the Crown. If a road board wants land and it is proved to be valueless because no one will buy it, let the board buy it. That is the best way to handle that difficulty. There are two matters to which I desire to draw the attention of the Minister. Some road boards do not always make sufficient effort to collect rates due from people who can afford to pay them. A little while ago, a Bill went through dealing with land on the goldfields. This land is owned by wealthy people, and the road boards refused to collect the rates. Not only was that so, but Government officials neglected to collect the water rates that were due.

The Minister for Works: Many of them have paid up since.

Mr. Sampson: That is an exceptional case.

The Minister for Lands: I do not know of any road boards that refused to collect the rates.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: They neglected to do so, and as they neglected to do what the Act says they should do they, in effect, refused to do so.

The Minister for Lands: That is correct.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I hope the road boards will take cognisance of the expressions of opinion that have fallen from members. It is their duty to collect the rates. If people can afford to pay them they should pay them. The same thing applies to Government departments who have the collection of rates due on property. At such places as Albany, Bunbury, Augusta, and so on, it is often difficult to trace the owners of blocks of land. Some of these properties have not

had any rates paid upon them for 40 years because the owners could not be found. When I was in Albany on one occasion my attention was drawn to a large strip of land that had been held for many years. The local authorities could not sell it because it had no market value.

Mr. Wansbrough: It comprises an area of three square miles.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: We have to be careful lest people who owe rates use this Bill as a means of clearing the land of debt for the rates, and re-selecting it afterwards. I have only risen to draw attention to these two points. Of course, if a man cannot pay rates he cannot be made to do so any more than blood can be squeezed out of a stone. I can assure the member for Canning that the disabilities he referred to are provided for in the Act. Road boards are not at the disadvantage he would have the House believe they are. The local authorities are permitted to take all expenses and rates and taxes, together with the Crown charges, before the rights of the mortgagee come in.

Mr. Cross: They have to sell the land first.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: If they cannot sell the land there can be no profit.

Mr. Cross: If the land is sold the rates due upon it ought to be paid.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I hope the two points I have referred to will be taken into consideration.

MR. GRIFFITHS (Avon) [9.7]: From my reading of the proceedings at the Road Boards Conference, I was satisfied that the attempt of the Minister to simplify the disposal of land was all to the good. It appears from the remarks of the member for Canning that the road boards in his area do not know what their executive is doing. The executive of the Road Boards Association has asked for something of this nature. The Leader of the Opposition has brought forward two important points. Safeguards should be inserted in the Bill to prevent the exploitation of the Act in such a way as to enable a man to avoid the payment of rates, and to re-select the land afterwards. Let me instance what has been going on in the goldfields areas because of the revival of the mining industry. People who were trying to evade their responsibilities may now meet with outside competition and may be deterred from their desires. Reversion to the Crown

seems to provide the easiest and simplest way out of the difficulty. If the land reverted to the road board, as desired by the member for Canning, the local authority would have to face the payment of Federal taxation.

Hon. C. G. Latham: The land will not be freed from Federal taxation.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Then the Federal authorities will certainly get their pound of flesh. I agree that we have not had much opportunity of consulting our road boards upon this Bill. I have posted particulars of it to all the local authorities in my electorate, and am now awaiting their reply. The Minister would be well advised to defer the debate for another week.

MR. LAMBERT (Yilgarn-Coolgardie) [9.11]: I am pleased that this Bill has been brought down. The machinery provisions of the Road Districts Act and the Municipalities Act set up many difficulties for local authorities on the fields. Many blocks may have remained unoccupied for 30 or 40 years. A great deal of difficulty has been experienced both in Coolgardie and Southern Cross from this cause, and rates have been outstanding for many years. To-day there is considerable demand for blocks in those towns for building purposes. The Bill will simplify the Act, and greatly assist road boards in having the blocks struck off the rate lists. It will also enable them to dispense with a good deal of book-keeping that now has to be done. Blocks which could now be used and rated are held out of occupation. The measure will tend to rectify that position.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Sleeman in the Chair: the Minister for Works in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—New sections: vacant land to revert in His Majesty in certain cases:

Mr. CROSS: I ask the Minister to report progress. No great harm will result from delaying the Committee stage for seven days. Meantime this clause could be referred to the road boards objecting to it, and the nature of their objection ascertained. The boards desire simplification

of procedure, but not all the provisions of the Bill.

Clause put.

Mr. CROSS: I move an amendment—

That in the fourth line from the end of the clause the words "all rates" be struck out.

If the amendment is carried, then when a sale of land is effected the rates owing on it will be a first charge, and the board concerned will be able to recoup some of the costs incurred. The board are more entitled to the back rates than is the Crown, which has done nothing to raise the value of the land.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The amendment is useless, as a great portion of the land affected is not worth the rates owing on it. Huge amounts of rates are owing on thousands of blocks of land. The Crown will not get those arrears.

Mr. Doney: No one will get them.

Mr. Cross: Why should not the blocks revert to the boards concerned?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Because the boards cannot own them. Many reasons could be given against the suggestion. The road boards, so far from not having been consulted, have requested the introduction of the Bill, and desire it to be passed as speedily as possible, since it is urgently needed in some districts. Two or three boards did suggest that the land should revert to them, but that would mean the amendment of four or five Acts. I repeat, there are many reasons against the proposal. On many blocks not far from the city of Perth four or five times the value of the land is owing in the form of rates. I will give consideration to the argument of the Leader of the Opposition that the passing of the Bill would prevent people from repossessing blocks.

Hon. C. G. Latham: A reserve price might be fixed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes; and if the reserve price was not reached, the land would revert.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 3, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1934-35.*In Committee of Supply.*

Resumed from the 11th October; Mr. Sleeman in the Chair.

Department of the Minister for Education (Hon. J. C. Willecock, Minister).

Vote—Education, £614,000.

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION

(Hon. J. C. Willecock—Geraldton) [9.25]: In introducing the Education Estimates I do not wish to traverse all the ground or deal with the history of the depression. Hon. members are aware that the Education Department, in common with others, has had its expenditure seriously curtailed as a result of the requirement, under the Premiers' Plan, to effect a decrease of 22½ per cent. in governmental expenditure. I wish to inform hon. members of the result of that cut in expenditure during the last three or four years. If hon. members will refer to the first part of the Estimates, they will see that for this year there is a reduction of £78,000 in governmental expenditure; that is, expenditure controlled by the Ministers of various departments. The expenditure of some departments has increased, and that of others has decreased. For various departments there is a total decrease of £161,000, whilst for others there is a total increase of £80,000. The net decrease in governmental expenditure is therefore about £80,000.

Hon. C. G. Latham: That is, covering the whole of the Government services.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Yes. I regard the decrease as satisfactory. The Education Vote has been increased by nearly £40,000. Thus nearly half of the total increase over Government departments has gone to the Education Department. In 1929-30 the expenditure on the department was about £700,000, which in 1930-31 was reduced to £681,000. For 1931-32, however, when the full extent of the Premiers' Plan was in operation, the amount allotted to the department was only £554,000, showing a decrease of nearly £150,000. While the allocation was £554,000, the amount expended was £550,000. In the following year the authorisation was £555,000, and the amount expended £553,000. Upon the present Government taking office, the amount

authorised for the department was immediately increased by about £11,000, and the vote was exceeded by about £12,000, making a net increase of about £24,000 for that year. For the current year the estimate is £614,000, or £38,000 more than last year. It appears that there has been some effort to make the people of Western Australia believe that the present Government are pursuing a policy of absolute niggardliness in regard to education, whereas the fact is entirely different. I do not desire to draw comparisons between what one Government may have done and another Government may be doing, but during the last two years of the previous Government's term of office there was no increase whatever in the Education Vote, and there was little increase on the authorised expenditure. Since the present Government took office, £60,000 more than the amount allotted has been spent on the Education Department.

Mr. Stubbs: What is the difficulty between the teachers and yourself?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I do not want to go into that on this occasion.

Hon. C. G. Latham: If you want your Vote through, you will not go into that subject.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I merely wish to say there has been an endeavour to impress on the people that the present Government have been niggardly in the expenditure on education. From various parts of the State I have received letters urging me to increase the expenditure, which implies that the Government have not increased it. I wish to put it plainly, candidly and clearly that there was no increase whatever in the expenditure on education during the last two years of the previous Government—who, I admit, had great difficulty owing to large deficits and inability to secure loan money—whereas during these last two years the expenditure on education has risen by £60,000. That is the policy of the present Government in regard to finding money for education. While general expenditure has been reduced to the extent of £80,000, the Education Vote shows an increase of £37,000. There ought to be an increase in the Education Vote regularly every year, because each year larger numbers of children attend our schools, by reason of the increase in population. During the depression the rate of increase in at-

tendance has been accelerated, because many adolescents who in ordinary times would have left school found that they could not obtain employment, and so, rather than idle their time away, continued to attend school. On behalf of the people of Western Australia it has to be said that no adolescent, of whatever age, has been refused admittance to the school, even though the statutory age of attendance is only 14 or 15 years.

Mr. Thorn: You are quite right about children remaining at school.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Yes, and it is better for them to do that than to idle their time and, perhaps, not use it to their advantage. We have not denied any child the right to that education, despite the difficulty we have in providing the necessary money. Of course, in considering this phase, it is not merely a matter of the money spent that counts, but rather whether we are getting efficiency in return for the expenditure. I think it can be said that we are obtaining that. It is a question whether the increased expenditure means that the educational facilities provided are relatively improved. While it is gratifying to know that the Treasurer, even in these difficult times, can find the money, despite the deficit of nearly £700,000, it is certainly also gratifying that the education of the children has not been selected as one of the fields for decreased expenditure. It may be said that the aim of education should be to give the children a general knowledge of what is known as the three R's and to encourage them to acquire a certain amount of proficiency in manual training as well. Comparing our system with that of most other countries, it can be said that we concentrate more on essentials than on what might be termed "frills." I do not deny that even in this State there have been subjects introduced into our educational curriculum that might be regarded as extraneous, and should be the responsibility of parents rather than that of the State. It should be the aim of an educational system to expand in every possible direction the number of subjects taken, and that is quite all right in its way so long as we can afford to do so. Certainly we should be able to afford to provide a good general education for every child in the State, and to make available to them a thorough knowledge of the rudiments of education, thus fitting them for

after life. This is a machinery age, and economists the world over suggest that there will be more leisure for the worker, who will not have to devote so much time to labour. It should be the aim to educate children so that they will be able to make an intelligent and proper use of the extra time we may expect them to have at their disposal. The main essential regarding children is to fit them successfully to carry on whatever avocation they choose as their life's work. Of course, the proper thing would be to decide at some time, either for the child or by the child himself, what avocation or calling he will follow, and then specialise on subjects likely to be useful to him in his future employment. To do that would be exceedingly difficult in Australia because adolescents, in the great majority of instances, start off with no idea of what avocation they will follow. That applies to a much greater extent in a country like Australia than in, say, the industrial centres of England where families have followed the same calling generation after generation, and the children naturally follow in the footsteps of their parents. The position is totally different in Australia. Most young men and women, particularly in these times, cannot possibly know what avocation they will follow. In fact, the problem of parents is not so much a matter of selecting avocations for their children, as of finding jobs at all for their offspring. Under such circumstances, it must necessarily be most difficult to select subjects to equip the youth for after-life in avocations pre-determined for them. There can be no such pre-determination in these days. I suppose every member of this Chamber, looking back over his own experience, realises that he did not know at the outset what calling he would follow. For my part, when I was at school, I certainly did not think I would ever be a Minister of the Crown.

Mr. Hawke: Neither did your teacher!

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I started as a shop assistant and then became a law clerk. Then I went into other industries, and, after coming to Western Australia, I entered the Railway Department. I became a member of Parliament, and finally finished up where I am to-day.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I would not say that you have finished up altogether.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I am speaking of the present moment. I sup-

pose it can be said that throughout Australia, and particularly in Western Australia, half of the people do not finish up in the avocation in which they commenced. In the Education Department we have available reports on vocational training, and these stress the necessity for compiling statistics regarding the capacity of various industries to absorb workers. When some finality is reached regarding the money the Prime Minister has said is to be available for the employment of adolescents and the portion allotted to Western Australia is available, we should expect further steps to be taken along those lines. We will then know what industries have a sufficient capacity to absorb more of our youth. The difficulties in that respect are great. In New South Wales the authorities have spent a large amount on vocational guidance in an endeavour to fit children for future careers. That money has not been spent altogether wisely, and the move has not been as successful as could be desired. The ideal of every educationist should be to concentrate on things that matter in the future life of the children, rather than to deal with extraneous subjects. I am aware that any knowledge assimilated is of advantage, but there are some forms of education that matter and some that do not matter to an equal extent. We should concentrate on the things that do matter. Another serious problem regarding education is found in the natural desire of every parent to provide his child with as complete an education as possible. I have discussed that phase with many people and I have heard many men say, "I cannot leave my boy much money, but I will do my duty and give him a better education than I had and a better start in life, so that he may be able to take advantage of any opportunity that may arise." Many parents set out with that object in view, and they keep their children at school to the leaving standard, which means that they remain at school even up to 17 years of age or more. No doubt they receive a good education, but then there arises a conflict with the industrial position. For each year the well-disposed parent retains his child at school, so the avenues of employment for the lad diminish. There are many callings that boys and girls cannot enter after they reach 16 years of age. The result is that although these children leave school with a good sound education, they have not much chance of getting a job.

Mr. Stubbs: They are too old.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Yes, they are too old for many positions and for apprenticeships too.

Hon. C. G. Latham: The apprenticeship must end before the youth is 21 years of age.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: And apprenticeships generally extend over five years, so that the lad must start at 16 years of age.

Mr. Hegney: He must be 16 on the birthday before he becomes an apprentice.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: When the youth reaches man's estate, he should receive a man's wages and so the term of his apprenticeship should end at least within a year of his reaching his 21st birthday.

Mr. Stubbs: The Civil Service is closed to these well-educated lads.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: That is so. This conflict between our industrial life and the natural desire of parents to provide their children with what is regarded as a good education, even though it involves a sacrifice for those parents, means that the parents have, in effect, restricted the opportunities for the employment of their children. I remember the Premier saying on one occasion that within a period of two or three months, men with University degrees had asked him to get them jobs on the trams or any other job that was available. We all know from reading American reports that one of the greatest tragedies in the United States is that a million people with University degrees are wandering about without any employment.

Mr. Sampson: I was shown through the City of Oxford by a Master of Arts working as a tourist guide.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I can quite believe it. It is a distinct disadvantage to a child who, in after-life, will have to go into an industrial occupation, that his parents should keep him at school after he is comparatively well educated. I do not know how we are going to overcome that problem, but it gives serious cause for reflection, and it must be tackled some day. It is the instinct of parents to give their children a thoroughly good education.

Mr. Thorn: Some of them have not brains enough to absorb a good education.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: It is a very difficult problem.

Mr. Stubbs: But it is a laudable object.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Of course it is. Now I wish to deal briefly with some of the activities of the department. The attendance at high schools shows a slight increase on last year's figures. The schools are continuing to do most useful work in their respective parts of the State. The district high schools at Collie and Geraldton are also maintaining a high state of efficiency. Coming to secondary schools, it was found necessary in February of this year to provide temporary accommodation for 200 girls in the Training College at Claremont. While this was a satisfactory temporary expedient, it was felt that the steady increase demanded a permanent building. It is intended to erect a girls' school at East Perth. This will serve to vacate premises at James Street, which, in turn, will provide considerably increased space for the boys, and will help generally to solve the problem of providing necessary accommodation. The department for many years has stressed the advantage of giving opportunity for classes in household management, and in this new girls' school proper instruction will be given in household management and other allied subjects for girls. The valuable service rendered by the correspondence classes has been much appreciated by people in remote districts. The character of the work reflects great credit on the organisation which has carried it out, and I notice in the Press that the system that obtains in Western Australia has been extended to various parts of the world, including South Africa. During the depression, the amount expended on school buildings was seriously curtailed.

Hon. C. G. Latham: You have not provided much money on these Estimates for that.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: But these Estimates constitute strictly the education vote. Facilities in the shape of buildings will be provided elsewhere. In 1928-29 the expenditure on school buildings was £80,000; in 1929-30 it dropped by £15,000; in 1930-31 it was £25,000; in 1931-32 it was £10,000; in 1932-33 it was £40,805.

Hon. C. G. Latham: And how much this year?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I do not know, because the Loan Estimates have not been finalised.

Hon. N. Keenan: How much was it in 1933-34?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: In 1933-34 the expenditure was £65,000, a marked increase on the expenditure of the previous year. Last year we spent six times as much as the expenditure of two years earlier.

Mr. Griffiths: The teachers have been seething in their criticism of the expenditure on school buildings.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Well, these figures show that their impression, in respect at all events of last year, is quite wrong. The expenditure for the present financial year amounts to £4,000. At least £10,000 will be available for schools and buildings. That is the amount which can be authorised and the expenditure commenced, even before the Loan Estimates are considered.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I dare say you have already spent four-twelfths of the amount you will get.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: No. As a matter of fact, in the early part of the financial year not much is spent, because we do not know what money we shall be able to get from the Loan Council, which will meet at the end of this month.

Hon. C. G. Latham: That is for the second half-year's expenditure.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: It depends on whether we raise a loan. Interest on loans just now is about 3¼ per cent. If the money can be raised at that rate, we shall not quarrel with it for use in effective work. The Teachers' College and the training of teachers was suspended in December, 1931, the department then having a sufficient number of trained teachers for staff requirements for some time. More students had been trained than could be absorbed, and during the acute period of the depression practically no women were leaving the service to be married. The allowance made for that purpose fell by about 60 per cent., so nobody could object to the suspension of the Training College. We have managed to do without the college until this year when, in July, it was found it would be impossible adequately to staff the schools in 1935 unless the Teachers' College was reopened. Accordingly, in July a short course was instituted to train 60 monitors as teachers, some for rural schools and the remainder for work as assistants in the larger schools.

Hon. C. G. Latham: What is the length of that short course?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Six months. Of course, that is not all the training they have. A number of the monitors who are being trained have university degrees, have had years of school experience and, in many instances, have, in addition, the diploma of education, which requires another year at the University. So, from an academic standpoint, they are very well trained before going to the college at all, and all they need is to be trained in the imparting of the knowledge they have to the children under their charge. I expect the college will remain open and that we shall go on training teachers, because we still have our increases in attendance, and a number of vacancies are occurring in the department, while a percentage of women teachers are leaving to be married. The re-opening of the Teachers' College was responsible for an estimated increased expenditure of £1,500 over the current half-year. The monitors being trained at present will be ready for positions when the schools re-open in February, 1935. However, it is unlikely that the college will ever be required as a residential institution again. Many teachers try for the grade increase.

Mr. Griffiths: They go to a higher-grade school.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: No, in many instances they occupy the same position and do exactly the same work. That is to be encouraged, because a teacher that has passed in the higher grade should be a better teacher for that. Of the total expenditure of the department, 91 per cent. represents salaries. Thus very little remains to be expended in other directions. Between four and five per cent. is spent on exhibitions, scholarships and driving allowances, and the rest covers purchases of stock, furniture, apparatus and incidental expenditure. The increase in expenditure is due to the fact that the teachers' remuneration has been increased by the amendment to the Financial Emergency Act, which operated for half the year, and the amendment proposed to be made this year to grant a further remission of the financial emergency reductions. This involves an amount of £15,000 to £16,000. Thus the conditions of the teachers have been considerably improved. The resignations of female teachers in 1931 totalled 50; in 1932,

70; and in 1933, 83. This increase represents about 60 per cent. I wish to deal briefly with technical education, which is an important part of the system. We give boys and girls instruction in manual training and other subjects. When children show an aptitude for a certain kind of work, we should concentrate on giving them technical education the better to fit them to engage in that work. At the Fairbridge Farm School we have a curriculum somewhat similar to that of our ordinary schools. A week or two ago the principal of the school informed me that every boy educated there eventually went to the country to engage in work. None of them came to the city. In that instance I think we should, even at the expense of some other subject, give them double the amount of instruction in the subjects that we know from experience will be useful to them in after-life. Almost invariably, too, the girls undertake domestic work, and instead of the usual half-day a week being devoted to the subject of household management, I think we could give those girls one and a half days a week. At the Perth Technical College the average attendance last year was 3,014 individual students, an increase of 182 on the previous year's figures. Funds are still limited, but expansion of class work has been made this year by the commencement of the following new self-supporting classes:—Marine engineering, refrigeration machinery, Diesel engines, oxy-welding, architectural design, Japanese, education, and nurse's preparation. Those who attend the self-supporting classes pay a certain amount towards the cost. Such classes are carried on with much advantage to the children. One particular instance is the provision of the architectural design class. By attending this class and allied classes, architectural students are now enabled to cover the whole course for the Architects' Board examinations. The number of trade apprentices attending the Perth Technical College decreased by 57, but the number of apprentices, owing to the slackness of trade, has decreased. The number of railway apprentices increased by 28. No special classes have been commenced for unemployed boys and girls, but the ordinary day classes, with an attendance of over 300, include many students who in ordinary circumstances would be in employment. The Prime Minister stated some time ago that £3,000,000

would be made available for the training of boys and girls for employment. This amount was whittled down later to less than £1,000,000, but I hope that some money will be available from the Federal Government to finance the training of youths for employment, so that they can be absorbed in the industries. At the Fremantle Technical School there is an attendance of 550 individual students. This school meets the needs of the district in commercial, domestic and general subjects. There is very little demand for trade instruction. The Midland Junction Technical School has an average attendance of 450 individual students, of whom 220 are railway apprentices. The balance consists of students taking commercial, domestic and general subjects. The Eastern Goldfields Technical School at Boulder has 230 individual students, this being a slight falling off on the previous year's figures. This covers the ground of the administration of the department and gives an indication of what is proposed for the coming year. Most members are anxious to know what facilities will be provided and also whether the facilities will be increased where the needs render that necessary.

Mr. McLarty: The Parents and Citizens' Associations have helped a good deal in that direction.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: They have helped very considerably. They have done wonderful work throughout the State. I might mention the Nedlands and Thomas Street schools where the associations have done excellent work, not only for the school grounds but in providing many desired facilities. It is my desire to reciprocate, and do something for those who have done so much for us. We wish to show some appreciation from the departmental standpoint of the good work that has been done at Nedlands and Thomas-street. In fact, I can say the same thing in connection with all our elementary schools. Some good work has been done by all the Parents and Citizens' Associations. I am indeed grateful to the hon. member for reminding me of it. Every member of Parliament is aware of the valuable work that is being done. Almost everywhere is to be found a band of people who seek to give this kind of service. They are improving the facilities at the schools, they are bettering the condition of tennis courts and sports

equipment, providing material for the use of the children, maps, books for libraries, and innumerable other things that go to make up the amenities of school life, things that it has been found impossible in the past for the Government to provide. In fact; these associations have filled an important role. I commend the Estimates to members, and shall be pleased to afford any further information that may be desired.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 10.12 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 18th October, 1934.

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

BILL—ROAD DISTRICTS ACT AMENDMENT (No. 3).

Introduced by Mr. Warner, and read a first time.

BILL—ROAD DISTRICTS ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Read a third time, and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—TIMBER WORKERS.

Report of Committee adopted.