

The Minister for Justice: The Commonwealth officer is to do these things in consultation with the Chief Electoral Officer.

Mr. THOMSON: I am anxious to safeguard Western Australian rights. The only officer who can do anything is the State Chief Electoral Officer.

The Minister for Justice: But other persons can do things by his direction.

Mr. THOMSON: The officer who to-day compiles the Katanning rolls, if I may quote that instance, is in every way qualified to ensure that those rolls are correct. He should have the opportunity to check the rolls in future; but the Bill hands over the whole matter to the Federal Government, and the only check, apart from that exercised by members themselves or by country organisations, will be that of the Chief Electoral Officer, who, sitting in Perth, cannot possibly obtain knowledge whether certain names should be on the Katanning roll or not.

The Minister for Justice: Under the measure it is his duty to put on the name of every person entitled to be enrolled.

Mr. THOMSON: The Chief Electoral Officer, from his office here, would not be in a position to purify the rolls, of, say, the Geraldton electorate. I refer to the State point of view. We must accept the Commonwealth rolls compiled by Commonwealth officials.

The Minister for Justice: What is wrong with that?

Mr. Marshall: It must be admitted that the Federal rolls are more up-to-date.

Mr. THOMSON: I do not admit it. If the hon. member is willing to hand over our Electoral Office to the Commonwealth, I am not.

The Minister for Justice: We shall still require a Chief Electoral Officer and staff.

Mr. THOMSON: I want to have the same facilities for checking rolls in future as we have to-day.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: If the rolls were printed only a month before an election, there would be a nice mess.

The Minister for Justice: Under Clause 4 the Chief Electoral Officer can print the rolls whenever he thinks fit, without reference to anybody.

Mr. THOMSON: I move an amendment—

That after the word "shall," in line 2, there be inserted "in consultation with the Chief Electoral Officer."

If the Minister considers that his officer should have control, there should be no objection to the amendment.

Hon. G. Taylor: Clause 24 provides for that.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Yes, and so does Clause 38. However, some question arises as to the force of "may" and "shall." The carrying of the amendment would mean that the Commonwealth Registrar could not make additions, alterations or corrections without the Chief Electoral Officer. If the latter were not available, the registrar would not be able to do those things.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Progress reported.

*House adjourned at 10.30 p.m.*

## Legislative Council,

*(Wednesday, 5th September, 1928.)*

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

### BILL—EDUCATION.

#### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON SIR EDWARD WITTENOOM (South-East) [4.34]: I understand that Mr. Brown was good enough to secure the adjournment of the debate for me, and therefore I take this opportunity to thank him for his courtesy. It is rarely that we have the chance to discuss so important a subject as education, which I look upon as one of

the largest, if not the largest, avenues of expenditure indulged in by the State. At present I think the expenditure under that heading amounts to about £750,000. That is a huge sum, from the expenditure of which we naturally expect to get very good results. Some three or four years ago a good deal of attention was paid to some remarks I made. At that time I said we were educating our young people beyond their opportunities. I am sorry to say that I have found the opinions I expressed then confirmed in later years. In addition to our system of free elementary education, which is quite a correct system, we have high schools and other educational facilities made available by the Government. But now we have a fully fledged university possessed of so much money that those concerned do not know what to do with it. I think these additional facilities will merely serve to provide more blind alleys than ever for some of our young people. In the circumstances, I think we shall perhaps find we are going in for too much education. The main thing we want in this State is work and industry. Ours is a country that must be made successful as the result of primary production. Most of that production can be obtained only as the result of work, which is commonly known as manual labour. Unless we have a sufficiency of manual labour, we shall not be able to develop the immense area of virgin country within the borders of the State. I do not know whether it be true, but I have been told that many of those interested in this question of education are inclined to discourage manual labour. I have heard it stated that it is not only discouraged, but in many instances it is looked upon as degrading. For anyone to think that manual labour is degrading is an absurdity. No manual labour that is carried out honestly can be degrading. On the other hand, it can only be a matter of satisfaction to the person who undertakes it in a proper spirit. In view of the position confronting us in Western Australia, we must remember the great necessity for a sufficiency of workers in various industries to further the development of our country. The question is whether these higher avenues of education will provide what we require. It seems to me that this assertion I have alluded to regarding the attitude towards manual labour, is

borne out by the fact that we cannot get clearers to go to the country areas in order to assist the farmers who wish to extend their operations. We have heard a lot about that subject, so there is no need to go into it further.

The Honorary Minister: But your statement is hardly correct.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: It is correct from my point of view. I know of three or four properties where there was work available but not one individual applied for the work for months. Another point bearing on this aspect is the fact that we have to import shearers from the Eastern States. I can understand statements made the other day regarding the reluctance of men to undertake clearing contracts because the remuneration was not as satisfactory as they would like. That argument cannot prevail where shearing is concerned, because a shearer of moderate ability can easily earn £10 per week at the present rate of wages. I have advised many young men to go in for shearing. They start "picking up" at £3 15s. per week, with keep, and during the time they are engaged in that capacity they learn shearing. From that stage onwards, they are able to make £10 a week. Hon. members will appreciate that that is easy seeing that they get 40s. per hundred.

The Honorary Minister: For how many weeks will those shearers be employed?

Hon. J. J. Holmes: All the year round in this State.

The Honorary Minister: That is absolutely impossible.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Very well; we shall see.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: Let us suppose that the men are not employed all the year round. Hon. members will realise that a young fellow engaged in shearing will be able to save £300 or £400 out of his wages earned during two or three years. He can then refrain from continuing as a shearer and follow some profession or occupation that may be more in keeping with his tastes.

Hon. H. J. Yelland: How could such a young fellow follow some profession if you deprive him of the necessary education?

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: No man is deprived of the education that he receives at the elementary State schools. The system furnishes a young man with the finest foundation he can procure anywhere. I have no hesitation in saying there are num

bers of men in this Chamber and in the Legislative Assembly who have had no greater educational advantages than they obtained in the State schools.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Do you think that is sufficient in these days?

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: Yes, for certain occupations, such as those followed by manual labourers. Such a young fellow may go in for farming or shearing. While he is engaged in those occupations, he can procure books and read them in order to improve his mind. That is what most of us did in the days gone by. When we went out pioneering the country with sheep and engaged in the production of wool, we got hold of all the books we could and read them. They gave us the information required to help us in the industries we were following. Had we gone to the university, and had various subjects crammed into our heads, a lot of that education, which is now regarded as of the higher type, would have had to be eliminated because we could not have made any use of it. The elementary education that is procurable in our State schools is quite good enough to enable anyone to start in life, unless that person intends to enter a profession.

Hon. J. R. Brown: How will you be able to discriminate? You will have to ballot for the positions.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: I did not catch the hon. member's interjection; I am satisfied that it must have been a good one.

The Honorary Minister: Mr. Brown wished to know how you would discriminate.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: When I was interrupted, I was pointing out that these avenues of higher education extend every inducement to our young men to refrain from going out into the country at an earlier stage, and encourage them to remain in the cities. This will lead to a lot of trouble and to many of these young fellows being led up blind alleys. I speak from experience. If we consider what has been going on in Egypt and India, we will realise that nearly all the troubles in those countries have been caused by over-education. I had the pleasure of a conversation with a very talented and highly educated Indian. He told me that nearly all their troubles were created by numerous young men who had been through the universities and had secured the highest education. When those young fellows were asked to undertake occupations natural to their country, they said, "Oh, no!

We cannot do any manual labour; we want some occupation in keeping with the teachings we have received. We want to be demonstrators or to have positions more in keeping with what we have been taught at the university." That is why I say it is unwise to educate our people beyond their opportunities. I do not say that out of any spirit of hostility to education. What I want to see is that we get the proper education that is suitable to our people. If we give a young man his choice, he will not go into the country after he is 14 or 15 years of age, especially if he is a good cricketer, a noted oarsman or a fine boxer. Neither will he go out if he has a good sweetheart in the city.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Or if he is a good mathematician.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: I will not say that because a good mathematician comes more within the scope of the sciences. I was referring more to the sporting side of the young men of to-day. Such a young fellow will prefer to go on to the high schools and subsequently to the university—it all costs nothing! In these circumstances it is so easy to induce young men to remain in the city rather than to go out into the country.

Hon. J. R. Brown: I do not think you believe that.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: In speaking along these lines, I do not do so after the fashion of Disraeli when he made his remarkable speech and said, "You will not hear me to-day, but the day will come when you will hear me." I do not put it like that. I am afraid the day will come when it will be realised that the remarks I have made contain more than a semblance of truth, though I hope not. My theory is that a young fellow, very highly educated and with his head full of so-called education from the University, will not have a very hopeful life if his pocket at the same time is full of emptiness. I do not think education makes up for lack of means to enjoy life in a reasonable manner. I am safe in saying—and I intend no offence to anybody—that most of the successful men in this State have never had the higher education. When I speak of higher education, I mean the education imparted by high schools and the University. If we look around the city or in Parliament, most of the successful men have had what is called an ordinary educa-

tion. But that ordinary education has been combined with sense—I would not say brain, because that comes from education.

Hon. H. Stewart: Sense is inherited; and so are the brains.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: I think the brains can be developed.

Hon. H. Stewart: But not if they are not inherited.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: The point I am trying to make is that if we are going to develop the country in the way we wish and if we want our own countrymen to do that work—

Hon. J. R. Brown: You will have to keep them in ignorance in order to get the work done.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: Does the hon. member term it being kept in ignorance to have the elementary education imparted in our State schools? If so, the hon. member could not have received it. Another matter we have to consider is that wherever we go, the popular cry is that we cannot spend too much on education. Every man wants his son to be educated better than he himself has been. That is quite a nice and proper idea, but do we find those young men coming into Parliament? At the latest election almost all the retiring members were returned, and none of those progressive young men were found to take their places. How many University men have we in Parliament to-day?

Hon. J. J. Holmes: They have sense enough to keep out of it.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: No, I think they have discretion.

Hon. J. R. Brown: The work is too hard.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: At any rate, the fact remains. While the public are talking so much about education and are pleased that the expenditure is about three-quarters of a million a year, we do not find that we are getting much return for the money. However, the existing policy is in force and I doubt whether anything I can say will lead to its being altered. I am merely putting forward these views in confirmation of what I said some years ago and to avail myself of the rather rare opportunity to say a few words on the subject. I have no desire to disparage the Education Department, but I do not think anyone can successfully contend that we are getting value for the three-quarters of a million spent annually on education. The

Bill, I consider, is a most useful one. It is a good thing to consolidate all the different measures concerned. Still, there are one or two points that appear to require consideration. Clause 13 provides, among other things—

The parent of every child of not less than six nor more than nine years of age shall, if there is a Government or efficient school within two miles of such child's residence, measured by the nearest road or other reasonable means of access, cause such child to attend such school on such days as the school is open.

I take exception to the idea of sending a child of six to a State school. It is making a nursery of the school. If the Minister wishes to be returned on the next occasion without the slightest opposition, he should make the age four, and thus convert the schools into nurseries. Yesterday afternoon I happened to be going to Fremantle when the children of the North Fremantle school were coming out. There were hundreds of them, little toddling things for whom it was not safe to be about the streets. Six is an absurd age to insist upon a youngster being sent to school, especially if he has to walk two miles. When I was of that age, I had to do it. The way to the school lay through the bush and I was terrified. It is too much to expect a child of six to walk two miles to school. Of course I am taking the extreme limit in both instances; the child might be seven and the distance might be less. Clause 32 contains a very strong provision that should be carefully considered. It begins—

The proprietor, headmaster, or principal teacher of any school, not being a Government school, may apply to the Minister in writing to have such school found "efficient" for the purposes of this Act, and upon such application being made the Minister shall forthwith cause such school to be inspected by an inspector of schools. . . . Provided always that the Minister may, if he is satisfied that any school is efficient as aforesaid, certify that such school is efficient without inspection, and upon any school being so certified, the Minister shall include such certified school in the list.

The Chief Secretary: I think that provision dates from the time when you were Minister for Education.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: Then I am sorry I did not notice it. Suppose we had a Minister for Education who was an enthusiastic supporter of some particular denomination, he could do a lot by

way of favouritism and by refraining from inspecting a certain school. Suppose the communists got into power in New South Wales and Garden became Minister for Education, how many schools would he pass without inspection? I think we should have some excellent schools of disloyalty in such circumstances. The clause gives the Minister very great power. Probably the Chief Secretary will be able to explain how it has worked in the past, but I think members will realise that it is great power to vest in a Minister. I do not suppose that anything I have said will have much effect.

Hon. J. R. Brown: It will not cut any ice.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: Still, I have had the satisfaction of saying it. The Bill is a good one and it would be a fine thing if we could get more of our Acts consolidated.

**HON. H. STEWART** (South-East) [4.54]: My remarks on this Bill will indicate what I endeavoured to convey when I referred to education during the Address-in-reply debate. While I feel myself in sympathy with a good deal that Sir Edward Wittenoom has said, I put quite a different interpretation upon certain phases of education. One thing we should consider, particularly in the matter of primary education, is that of relativity, not the relativity of Einstein, but the relativity in our educational system to ensure to the people pioneering the timber, agricultural and mining areas, that their children will receive first-class primary education before we start to deal with the mentally defective children of the State. That is the point I wished to stress during the Address-in-reply, and I am glad that the Minister did not say he was going to deal with the subnormal children straight away. Instead of that he gave some information, of which I was well aware, regarding the facilities offered in this State for primary education. He asked if I was prepared to bear my proportion of increased taxation on this score. I am prepared to do that provided there is relativity, and that before tennis courts are provided in West Perth for State school children of the city, we give children of the parents I represent, primary education. I am well aware that there is a first-class system of correspondence instruction for outback children from the age of six, under which bright children have competed successfully in the scholarship examinations to enable them to attend

secondary schools and the University. I am also aware that in the outback portions of the State parents often have not the time, experience or knowledge to enable them to assist the children.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Nor the inclination.

Hon. H. STEWART: Even if a parent has not the inclination, why should the child suffer? I should like the hon. member to answer that.

Hon. J. R. Brown: He says "no."

Hon. H. STEWART: Then he is in agreement with me, and I thank him for his interjection. If a parent has not a sense of responsibility towards his children, it is all the more reason why the children should not be denied educational facilities. In the outback districts eight children ranging in age from 6 to 14 years are necessary before a teacher is provided. In many instances even a school building is not provided. Recently at Moulyin the residents got together eight children between the ages of 6 and a little over 14. The parents were prepared to send a child of more than 14 to school probably because it had lost education during earlier years, but they could not get a school. Those hard-working agriculturists had to combine and build their own school on a property centrally situated to the various farms for seven or eight children to attend. I gave evidence to this effect before the Royal Commission on Education, of which Dr. Saw was a member, and I have not failed to stress this phase year in and year out. Parents distant eight or nine miles from Wagin, because they could not get an attendance of eight children, have had to leave their farm and take up their residence in the town, the father working at some avocation for wages or as an agent, simply because they had an interest in their children's education. Thus agricultural production has suffered. Some of those things could be overcome by the provision of transport. It is not fair to ask children of tender years to drive to school a distance of eight miles or more: they cannot do it. I am not blaming the Minister or the system, but I do want to bring home to the authorities the importance of the position, that so long as there are children whose parents have not the time or perhaps even the inclination or the knowledge to help those children in connection with the correspondence classes, or who are prejudiced against the system, some consideration should

be given to them. There may be four children only, not of one family, who are unable to take the advantage of the correspondence system. Why should they be made to suffer? We pride ourselves that any child in this State, possessed of mental equipment can avail himself or herself of the opportunities afforded by our education system. There are opportunities for any child who is fortunate enough through heredity to be possessed of brains and character, to attain the highest phase of education, not only here but at Oxford, and then to return and benefit the State in the highest walks of life. But there are also many that cannot get that opportunity. I resent the indulgence in frills in connection with education, and experiments that are carried out before more necessary matters receive attention. Those people who have the ability and the mental equipment to enable them to acquire knowledge should be given the opportunity. If a man has obtained the highest form of education, he can do as much as the next man; in fact, he can do more, being possessed of a well-stored mind. There are phases of our education system that give cause for wonder—when so much is being written about new theories and new phases of education giving particular opportunities to a child—whether it has developed on sound lines. There is no doubt in my mind that in connection with the education of children there is need for discipline. We have had compulsory education for a good many years, and in this respect Sir Edward Wittenoom's remarks are justified. Can we, as the result of compulsory education over the last half-century, say that it has been attended with success, that success in accordance with what we desire? If the result of education had been what was anticipated, we would not find the community as it is to-day, taking very little interest in the affairs of the country, and being so prone to spend leisure hours in frivolous entertainment. Let me refer to secondary education. There have been instances where bright children have qualified for entrance to Government secondary schools. The Government require to know whether the parents will keep those children at the secondary schools for a period of five years, except in special circumstances. If children complete the five years' course and take their leaving certificates, there is nothing to prevent them from going away to carry

on shearing, road making, or anything else saving money and then, if they so wish, back for a further few years to continue their studies so that they may enter a profession, law, medicine, or anything else. I have found that a large proportion of children do carry out their undertaking with the Government to complete their full term at secondary schools. In some instances it is the fault of the pupils and in others the fault of the parents who are not able to make the necessary sacrifice. Thus the children go to a certain extent and then seek employment in dead-end occupations. It matters such as these that need to be inquired into and remedied. The community as a whole, or at any rate a section, look upon agreements made with the Government as something that can easily be broken or compromised. If parents of children sent to secondary schools undertake that those children will complete their course at that school they should honour the obligations undertaken. There are good and sound reasons that prevent them from doing so. I do not know what it costs to put students through training College, but I do know that teachers on leaving that college are under agreement to serve the Government for so many years. Perhaps the amount lumped will be £1,000 or more and this is all lost if the student after having qualified as a teacher, decides to marry perhaps a year or two later. In some instances I think they can compromise with the Minister about the period they are to serve the Government. If there is no compromise, the State will not suffer pecuniarily. This may be the cause militating against children in outback districts not getting the educational opportunities to which they are entitled. At some of the schools, particularly those in the country, there are too frequent changes in the personnel of the staffs. I can instance the Wagin school, which during the last two years of the war and in fact at intervals since, there have been a number of changes. It seems to be a defect to which to send headmasters for the purpose of moving them soon afterwards. The present headmaster was there for less than six months and after having had to start the year's work with a new staff except for one teacher he went on long service leave for six months. This again occurred in the case of the last two headmasters at that particular school who also went on long leave after having been only a short time connected with the school. That kind of thing does not give a headmaster a chance to become familiar

with the running of the school. It should not be necessary for such things to take place. It came particularly to my notice that the headmaster had declared that the frequent changes prevented the children from securing proper training. One of the headmasters asked the inspector to report the matter to the department and to urge that it was not a fair thing that changes should take place in this way, because the children were not getting a continuity of training. I remember that in the earlier years at any rate some of the teachers there would be carried on from year to year, and so there was a personal touch set up between the teachers and the children. I felt that with all these matters coming to my knowledge I really wished I had more time to go around and tell the parents of the children at the school that they were not getting a fair deal.

The Chief Secretary: Have you ever reported this?

Hon. H. STEWART: No. However, I am mentioning the matter now. I know there are difficulties in that class of school. Still, the roads are better now than they were a few years ago, and since there are only two of the Class III. schools in the State, it may be found that the remedy is to make of it a consolidated school and bring the others in. In certain outlying districts there might be opposition to the scheme. That, however, could be overcome. I am not trying to show that the thing can be easily remedied. There are difficulties from the department's point of view. But the department should give consideration to that school and other schools of the same grade, and perhaps to schools of other grades. These things should be watched by some officer in the department, and there should not be these frequent changes of staff. A teacher should be at least two years in a school before being transferred to another. I believe that is actually the principle in the department, but that certain influences get to work, or certain difficulties arise, such as sickness, and that these things cause variation in the carrying out of that established principle. When Sir Edward Wittenoom was speaking of the age limit of 4 years, Mr. Lovekin asked did he think that was sufficient education. Here the question of elasticity comes in again. I would not favour the raising of the compulsory age to 16, for I am satisfied that plenty of children would not benefit by being kept at school for another two years. They have not the necessary mental equipment to profit by it, but

special training, probably in some vocational instruction, might be helpful when the finances permit of its introduction. The children I am thinking of have not the type of brain that would enable them to acquire the extra book knowledge. What we would require to do is to provide for those who have natural mental endowment facilities to obtain the education for which they are fitted. Also we should safeguard their position by providing that parents who are unsympathetic towards that idea will not try to prevent their children from getting what is their natural right. But we should be careful not to bring in legislation for the people in a general catch-ery for more education. We should not be led into bringing into force some law which will mean that a certain proportion of the children will be retained to be given what is an ordinary primary education, and are to be kept at school although benefiting in no way whatever. They would be better out in the open fields, developing those physical powers with which, generally, they are well endowed. In doing that they might expand their mental powers and so later be able to take advantage of other scholastic opportunities offered.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: We want more bursaries and scholarships to keep the clever boy at school.

Hon. H. STEWART: Yes, I am fully in accord with that. I am not concerned if a boy has not the brains to enable him to get to the secondary school and take his leaving certificate. But if when a child has done that, he has not the character to go out and work at his vocation, even at manual work, he is not worth worrying about. In the United States and in Victoria it is not considered discreditable for a University student to tackle manual work. I should like evidence from Sir Edward Wittenoom that it is considered degrading for them to do so in this State. If a young man has qualified by getting his leaving certificate, and then goes off and for seven or eight years works at shearing and afterwards wants to qualify for a profession, there is nothing to prevent him from doing it. I have known a number of leading professional men in Melbourne whose academic education was obtained in that way. At one stage, while Sir Edward Wittenoom was speaking, I felt strongly inclined to interject. He said that amongst the leading men of this State practically none had anything but a primary education. All the more honour to

them for their success. But he cannot say that they would not have been even better men if they had had better educational opportunities. If Sir Edward measures success by £ s. d., he does not measure it in the way I do. He will find that the people of higher education, professional or otherwise, are not the men who make the most money; unless it is that as professional men, or academicians they, like Lord Kelvin, happen to be super-men and so get very high salaries. If so, it is more by accident than by striving after emoluments. For the effect of higher education is to make a man satisfied with sufficient to provide, first necessities and then comforts, for those dependent on him. He soon learns that money is not the only thing in life. Amongst those who have enjoyed the advantages of higher education we find that the desire for accumulating money becomes practically a secondary consideration. A little while ago I referred to a clause in the Bill, and said I would come back to it. I was then speaking of the unfortunate people who are pioneering this State out in districts where the children are few and scattered, and where for some reason they are not able to benefit by the very excellent system of correspondence instruction in operation in the department. In Clause 50 we have a provision that the Minister, at his discretion, may excuse from attendance at school children who are required to help in the fields at harvest time or other special periods. From the reading of that clause I take it there is no limitation as to the age of the child to be exempted, that the people who are engaged in harvesting can keep the whole of their children, of from six years to 14 years of age, at home to help with the harvest. If so, it is a reflection on the agricultural industry. I, as a practical agriculturist, say that the utility for that purpose of children up to 14 years of age is such that they should not be allowed to participate in it.

Hon. A. Lovekin: It is a great injustice to the children.

Hon. H. STEWART: I agree. The Government that recognised that the agricultural industry should be given a concession like that ought to realise the truth of our remarks when we speak here and say there are disabilities in connection with the agricultural industry, that not all the people are wheat growers, and that not all the wheat growers are making incomes that excuse the Government for stopping the driving allow-

ance for their children. A Government bringing down a clause like this should have imposed increased land taxation, and should not have imposed a greater burden on the agriculturist under the vermin than is imposed on the pastoralist.

The Chief Secretary: This provision has been in existence for the last 30 years.

Hon. H. STEWART: But why put it in a consolidating Bill?

Hon. A. Lovekin: Why not see about taking it out?

Hon. H. STEWART: I agree with the proposal in the Bill to increase the age of special exemption from 12 years to 13 years. I should like to see that exemption abolished, but I realise there may be in the metropolitan area, widows with respect to whom there are certain reasons which would make that a hardship. Still I am not at all in sympathy with any provision, unless it is under very special circumstances, that exemption should be granted for the non-attendance at school of children under 14 years of age. Even at the age of 12 there are some children who can do more good by being out in the open and learning the use of their hands than by being kept at school. I would be glad of Dr. Saw's corroboration of that statement, but even if he fails to corroborate it, I will beg to differ from him. It is impossible to drive knowledge into some heads, and in such cases two more years at school would be of very little benefit. Some children should be given special exemption. Mr. Lovekin has had a great deal of experience of children, but probably those who come before him are pretty bright in the upper storeys, though they may not have been brought up in quite the right kind of way.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Do you think that might be brushed up a little?

Hon. H. STEWART: I am in accordance with the proposals for the treatment of habitual truants and for tightening up the position as indicated in the Bill. This consolidating measure will be a boon. By the time one has examined all the Education Acts and the amendments, and tried to put each amendment in its proper place, one can see that it is high time a consolidating measure was brought down. I was astonished when I examined the Bill, to find that such a mass of paper as is represented by the different Education Acts had been assembled in such a convenient and compact form.



Hon. A. Lovekin: And even this could be condensed.

Hon. H. STEWART: I support the Bill.

**HON. J. J. HOLMES (North) [5.33]:**

I do not know that I am qualified to speak on this Bill, nor would I have spoken except for some points raised by previous speakers. I was born in the bush in the early days when schools were not available. I have had to learn what little I know since I began to work for my living in Fremantle. It was no fault of my parents that I did not remain at school because no school was available. I would point out to Mr. Stewart that in a big country like this there must be some children in isolated parts who are neglected in matters of education. I fail to see how we can overcome that difficulty. I have been astounded to find how much this and other Governments have done in the way of providing educational facilities for children. If I understand the Chief Secretary correctly, not only do the Government pay men to drive their children to school in buggies, but pay for the petrol in the case where the man owns a motor car. That is going a little too far. If a man can afford a motor car, he should be able to take his own children to school. It is the man in the backblocks, to whom Mr. Stewart referred, who has neither horse nor cart, who should be assisted in getting his children to school. In this State there are something like 50,000 motor cars, or one to every eight persons. The Government are encouraging the use of motor cars in these cases by paying for the petrol in order that men may take their children to school. The system of education is somewhat wrong. We are trying to teach all children on the same lines. My views for many years have been that if parents will not decide upon what lines their children should be educated, the teacher should do so and take the responsibility. We should first of all study a child's character, see what stage he is capable of reaching, and educate him accordingly. The practice is to teach children French or Latin, but a decision should be arrived at as to what point a child is capable of reaching, and he should then be educated in that direction. Mr. Stewart referred to children who go through the Modern School, and then break faith with the Government by leaving school altogether. The trouble confronting these young people is that there is no room

for them in the professions, and they cannot learn a trade. They therefore become unskilled members of the community. The restrictions upon apprentices are so severe and arbitrary that the children who might, with their higher education and better training of mind, become excellent tradesmen are prevented from doing so.

Hon. H. Stewart: They can only go half way.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: That is a difficulty the rising generation is faced with. Unless a child is very clever and is of outstanding ability, he does not make headway. As a result of arbitration and other things, the individual can to-day earn more with his hands than with his head. This applies to a lot of young people who have brains and have received a good education. They are unable to enter any of the professions, and revert to unskilled labour. Clause 32 provides that the Minister can grant exemption to certain children if, in his own opinion, they are inefficient. That is not right. Our secondary schools fail owing to that clause. The difference, as I visualise it, between the State school teacher and the teacher in secondary schools is that the former is taught how to impart his knowledge to the child—a very essential qualification—while the latter is not so trained. The State school teacher is paid on results, another very important thing, and if he gets a certain percentage of passes he is moved into a higher school and paid a higher salary. There is an incentive for him to teach the children properly and efficiently, and get results which will bring him additional remuneration. It is different with the other schools. In those schools we have men and women of the highest education and exceptional qualifications, but, so far as I can judge, they have not been taught how to impart their knowledge to their pupils. That is a great disadvantage to the children. So far as I can gather such teachers go on from year to year at a fixed salary. There is no incentive for them to specialise on children and get a certain percentage of passes in order that they may receive additional remuneration. When we figure it out from the standpoint of commonsense, we see that children attending the State schools have the advantage of a teacher to whose interest it is to push them along, whereas in the other schools there are teachers who

receive the same remuneration year after year irrespective of results. Thus it is that in State schools the children get an all-round education, whereas in the other schools only the boy or girl who has outstanding ability can get to the top of the ladder. The brighter children only secure a certain percentage of passes, sufficient to give them an exemption certificate, while the rank and file do not receive the attention they deserve. These are my views as a casual observer on matters of education. I have much pleasure in supporting the second reading of the Bill.

On motion by the Chief Secretary, debate adjourned.

### **BILL—PERMANENT RESERVE (KING'S PARK).**

#### *Second Reading.*

**HON. A. LOVEKIN** (Metropolitan) [5.42] in moving the second reading said: This is a short Bill. I do not think there will be much objection to it when I have fully explained it. In the early days certain resumptions were made along the frontage of King's Park, and the blocks running down to the river. One of these blocks known as L5 and half of block L6 faces the vertical cliff, which hon. members may know is near Mr. Guilfoyle's house. This is where a pipe has been taken into the Mount Eliza reservoir. The cliff was so vertical that the pipe could not be taken up its face, and the department had to make a tunnel through the cliff, and put a shaft down from the top in order to bring the pipe up through it. That block is inaccessible from any other part of the Park unless one goes round from Crawley or down the Mount's Bay-road to the site along the lower road. About 1905 or 1906 the Park rented this ground to a Chinaman for market garden purposes. The original rent was 10s. a week. After a time this was reduced to 5s., and then to 4s. The Chinaman could not keep it on, and we were unable to induce him to do so even if we charged no rental whatever. It was swampy moist land, and the snails and slugs played such havoc with his vegetables that he could not make a living there.

**Hon. J. Nicholson:** He might have done well in France.

**Hon. A. LOVEKIN:** The health authorities then got to work. They said this land was a breeding ground for mosquitoes, and

that we must get rid of them. The Park Board went to the expense of providing kerosene sprays, and spraying the land in order to keep down mosquitoes. The board also bought a lot of cinders from the brewer and put a top-dressing on the land in an endeavour to allay the pest.

**Hon. A. J. H. Saw:** Is that where numerous mosquitoes in the park came from?

**Hon. A. LOVEKIN:** Possibly their ancestors came from that particular spot. At present the mosquitoes constituted a serious nuisance, and were a great expense to the board. The expense has gone on and on. I may add that the board have not had too much money for the past 10 years. Recently a man approached the board and said if he could get some fixity of tenure for the block, about an acre and two rods he would pay the board a rental of £100 a year, subject to re-appraisal of the rent every ten years, and would put up a tennis house and some tennis courts, spending £2,000 or £3,000 on the block. The board thought it was a good scheme, as it would reclaim the block after being a plague-spot for mosquitoes. Accordingly the board thought it well to recommend that the applicant be given a term of 25 years, subject to the conditions laid down in the Bill, one of which is that he shall not use the land for any purpose that the board do not approve of. Not having the power to lease the land, the board have agreed to ask Parliament to give them the power. The Bill is really on all fours with an Act passed in connection with the Point Walter Reserve, where an area was leased for the purpose of establishing tearooms. I originally put up this Bill as an amendment to the Parks and Reserves Act, but the Lands Department thought it would be better to put it up as a separate Bill on the lines of the measure referring to Point Walter. In connection with public reserves, one has to be careful not to part with land. All lands reserved will be required in the future, and we should steadfastly hold on to every acre that we can. A period of 25 years, however, especially in the case of a block such as this, is neither here nor there.

**Hon. J. Nicholson:** The block is isolated.

**Hon. A. LOVEKIN:** Yes. If the block can be put to some use in the immediate present, we shall be doing the right thing. The leasing of it will really be in conformity with the policy adopted in the park since its inception. We desire to see the park a place for the recreation and enjoyment of all manner of people. If a person wants

to walk into the bush, he will at the present moment find in the park nearly 600 acres of fairly good bush. If a person wishes to walk there amongst shrubs and flowers, he can do so. If it is his desire to have a drive, there is a splendid road now to drive on; and in future, with the help given by the Government through traffic fees, there will be still better roads. If a person desires views, he can get peeps from that park which, I think, are unsurpassed anywhere in Australia. Others who desire to dissipate their surplus energy can play tennis or, if older, bowls, and the boys can play football and the children can enjoy the swings. In a short time we shall see the park developed by the scheme now being carried out on King's Park-road. I am glad to say that quite a number of people are sufficiently generous to help the park, and they have found the money required to do that work. It will not cost the board or the country anything to beautify the park all the way from Crawley; and the municipalities have undertaken their part of the work. Eventually we shall have there one of the most magnificent drives in Australia, not even excepting the St. Kilda-road in Melbourne, because we have no tramways along our road. We have a thoroughfare from the Barracks in St. George's terrace all the way along King's Park-road, down Thomas street and Ferdinand street to the Memorial Hall at Crawley. The scheme for this little teahouse will assist in the board's policy of providing something for everybody, where such conveniences are not available otherwise. I commend the Bill to the favourable consideration of the House. I have here a plan bearing on the Bill, which hon. members may like to see. It shows the block and a half proposed to be leased. I have also the file relating to the lease to the Chinaman. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by the Chief Secretary, debate adjourned.

## **BILL—ELECTRIC LIGHT AND POWER AGREEMENT AMENDMENT.**

*Second Reading.*

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY** (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [5.53] in moving the second reading said: The purpose of this Bill is to ratify an agreement entered into by

the Commissioner of Railways with the Perth City Council and the Melville Road Board relating to supply of electric current. Under the Electric Light and Power Agreement Act of 1913, the Perth City Council are vested with power to enter into an agreement with any local authority to supply current in bulk to such local authority; provided the municipal or road board district is situate wholly or partly within the radius of five miles from the Old General Post Office. But they cannot supply retail current outside the five-mile radius, as that right is reserved to the particular local authority concerned. The Cresco Fertiliser Company some months ago applied for a supply of current for their works at Bassendean. These works, being within a five-mile radius of the old General Post Office, would, in accordance with the provisions of the Electric Light and Power Agreement Act, be supplied from the City Council's underground main cables in Perth. To give the large supply required, would mean increasing the capacity of these cables at a heavy cost much sooner than would otherwise be necessary. Other means of supply was therefore sought. The Government have a 22,000-volt line going out to Midland Junction and passing close to the Cresco Company's works, and it was suggested by the Perth City Council that they should be allowed to take the current from this Government main. Negotiations to this end were entered into, and the Government naturally asked for a quid pro quo. It was finally agreed that in consideration of their being permitted to supply all consumers in the Bayswater district, including those outside the five-mile radius, the City Council should surrender to the Government the right to supply current in the Applecross area. The arrangement suits both parties. The connection at Bayswater cost the department £500, and the City Council pay £50 a year as rent for the use of the connection. The direct supply will be much more economical than through the ring main, and we shall receive the same price for it, viz.,  $\frac{3}{4}$ d. per unit. For the Government to supply the very few consumers outside the five-mile radius would mean an extension of our mains at Caversham—an expense which would not be commensurate with the return. The Melville Road Board's plant—poles, lines, and transformers—was purchased by the Govern-

ment for £1,500. Additions will entail a further expenditure of £850. From the supply in bulk through the council to the Melville Road Board we received about £173 per annum. From the direct supply we should receive £700—an increase of £527 per annum. To put the whole thing in a nutshell: The Bill proposes an exchange of territory between the Government and the Perth City Council. The Government are undertaking not to supply retail current in any portion of the Bayswater Road District in consideration of the Perth City Council surrendering the right to supply retail current in the Applecross area, which is under the control of the Melville Road Board. The exchange of rights is satisfactory to both parties. The Government do not desire to supply the few retail consumers outside the five-mile radius at Bayswater, and so have arranged for the Perth City Council to take them over. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

*In Committee, etc.*

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

## ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY** (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [6.2]: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn until Tuesday, the 11th September.

I would be glad indeed if hon. members would place on the Notice Paper any amendments they propose to move in connection with the Education Bill. I trust they will do that as early as possible. It is a very important measure and any amendments proposed will require careful and serious consideration.

Question put and passed.

*House adjourned at 6.3 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly,

*Wednesday, 5th September, 1928.*

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

### LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Mr. Panton, leave of absence for one month granted to Hon. W. D. Johnson (Guildford) on the ground of ill-health.

### BILL—KULJA EASTWARD RAILWAY.

Introduced by the Minister for Works and read a first time.

### MOTION—FREMANTLE HARBOUR DEVELOPMENT.

*To inquire by Select Committee.*

**MR. THOMSON** (Katanning) [4.35]: I move—

That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the scheme proposed by the Engineer-in-Chief, Mr. Stileman, for the development of Fremantle Harbour, and that in the opinion of this House no further expenditure should be incurred on the Leighton-Robb's Jetty railway, including the bridge over the Swan River, until such time as this House shall have an opportunity of discussing the report of such Committee.

I sincerely hope the House will discuss this matter purely from a national point of view. I am not approaching it from any party point of view or with any desire to obtain a party advantage. We are now dealing with a matter of vital importance to the future of the State. I am making this request for a select committee because I think, in view of the diversity of opinions expressed upon this very important subject, the House should have fuller information before it is asked to come to a decision. Speaking as a representative of the pri-