

time to time. Parliament may not be sitting; even if it is, it is often difficult and takes a long time to procure an amendment to the Act. It has been thought to be more prudent, therefore, to deal with the general rules by way of regulation, so that in the event of an emergency arising it can be dealt with promptly and rectified. This procedure is considered advisable in view of the experience of the Mines Department over a long number of years. The department has always been watchful of any change in methods adopted in the gold-mining industry.

I have dealt with the main amendments of the existing law—indeed, I think I can safely say that I have dealt with all the amendments. Some are new provisions, others merely amendments of existing provisions, with one exception. Members will recall that last session Parliament passed a small Bill providing for the treatment of miners for the prevention of silicosis by what is known as aluminium therapy. Unfortunately, the draftsman overlooked that measure and so its provisions do not appear in the Bill. I propose, however, to have them included when the Bill reaches the Legislative Council. This will avoid re-printing the Bill; as members know, the Government Printing Office is congested at the moment. None of the provisions of the Bill can be said to be ambitious or not strictly warranted. It is hoped that the measure will bring about contentment and satisfaction to those working in the mines. If the companies have contented men working under conditions which they feel are satisfactory so far as their health and life are concerned, then they, too, should benefit equally. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. N. Keenan, debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

THE PREMIER (Hon. F. J. S. Wise—Gascogne): I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till 2 p.m. tomorrow.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 10.42 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Friday, 29th November, 1946.

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 2 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTION.

RAILWAY STRIKE.

As to Remission of Arbitration Court Fines.

Mr. McDONALD asked the Premier: Referring to paragraph 2 of the terms of settlement between the Government and the Locomotive Enginedrivers, Firemen and Cleaners' Union—

1, Will the "annulment of all current proceedings" involve the cancellation or remission of the fines imposed by the Court of Arbitration on the Union and certain of its members?

2, By whom and under what authority is it proposed that such "annulment" shall be effected?

The PREMIER replied:

1 and 2, These aspects have not received consideration.

BILLS (3)—FIRST READING.

1, Government Employees (Promotions Appeal Board) Act Amendment.

Introduced by the Minister for Labour.

2, Industries Assistance Act Continuance.

3, Farmers' Debts Adjustment Act Amendment.

Introduced by the Minister for Lands.

BILL—MARKETING OF POTATOES (No. 2).

Reports of Committee adopted.

BILL—BUILDING OPERATIONS AND BUILDING MATERIALS CONTROL ACT AMENDMENT.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—COAL MINES REGULATION.

Message.

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

Third Reading.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—MINES REGULATION.

Message.

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

BILL—FACTORIES AND SHOPS ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR LABOUR (Hon.

A. H. Panton—Leederville) [2.6] in moving the second reading said: An amending Bill introduced in 1939 provided for the closing hours of service stations. It was the only legislation making provision for this class of business, and set out to govern "the opening and closing of all shops for the sale of petrol, benzine, or other motor spirit; or motor oil; or motor accessories." Clause 2 of that Bill provided that:—

Such shops shall be "closed and kept closed, except between the hours hereinafter specified:—

In the case of shops within the Metropolitan Shop District:—

on Mondays to Fridays (not being public holidays), both inclusive—between the hours of seven o'clock in the morning and eight o'clock in the evening;

on Saturdays, Sundays, and public holidays—between the hours of seven o'clock in the morning and one o'clock in the afternoon;

Those are the hours prescribed in the legislation under which we are now operating. They apply to the metropolitan area and there are no prescribed hours for the country other than those prescribed for shops in the

various districts. During the war a National Security Regulation was issued under which the hours prescribed were: Monday to Friday, 7 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Saturdays, 7 a.m. to 1 p.m.; Sundays, 7 a.m. to 1 p.m.; Holidays, 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. On Xmas Day, Anzac Day and Good Friday the shops were to be closed. Those hours relate to the metropolitan area. Subsection (2) of the Act assented to in 1939 reads as follows:—

Any shopkeeper or person acting or apparently acting in the management of any such shop who sells or permits to be sold from such shop at a time when such shop is required to be closed as aforesaid any petrol, benzine, or other motor spirit or motor oil or motor accessories shall be guilty of an offence against this Act:

Penalty: Twenty pounds:

This is followed by a proviso which this Bill proposes to alter, and which reads—

Provided that, if a sale of petrol, benzine, or other motor spirit or of motor oil or of motor accessories to any traveller in a case of emergency (which such traveller could not reasonably have been expected to foresee) for the purpose of enabling him to undertake or continue any journey in a motor vehicle takes place from any shop at any time when such shop should, pursuant to the last preceding subsection, be closed that sale or the opening of such shop for the purpose only of that sale shall not be deemed to constitute an offence.

That proviso covers the whole State, and there is no intention to alter it. All the Bill does is to endeavour to amend the hours. The hours, therefore, will be, from Monday to Friday, 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. and on Saturdays from 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the metropolitan area, and those are the same hours that are prescribed in the Bill and under the National Security Regulations. In the 1939 amendment and in the National Security Regulations the hours for the metropolitan area were 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Sundays and the Bill now seeks to close these places absolutely on Sundays. The position will be the same on holidays. Instead of their being open from 7 a.m. to 1 p.m., they will be closed. That will apply on Anzac Day, Christmas Day and Good Friday. Pre-war they could be opened till midnight on the day preceding Christmas Day, and also on the day preceding Anzac Day. It is proposed to make Easter Saturday a holiday. That is not being done by this particular measure, but it is a holiday now in factories and shops, generally. It is proposed to allow these people to open on Easter Saturday from 7 a.m. to 1 p.m.

It will be noticed that under the Factories and Shops Act these establishments in the country are expected to comply with the shop hours of from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. The Bill proposes to allow them to open from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. The hours, pre-war, in the country were from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., and under the National Security Regulations they were from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. On the weekly half-holiday, which varies in different parts of the country, they were, pre-war, and under the National Security Regulations, open from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. The Bill provides that they may open from 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. On Sundays and public holidays they will be closed throughout the State. Prior to the introduction of this measure they were supposed to be closed on those days because they should have been complying with the shop hours. The measure is all subject to the emergency proviso which I understand is giving satisfaction everywhere. It means that if a person is travelling and runs out of petrol he simply says that he is travelling and signs a book to that effect, and that gives him and the trader exemption from breaking the law.

Mr. Perkins: Is it worth while offering to stay open for such a small trade?

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: If it is not worth while under this Bill it was not previously. There is nothing to compel anyone to keep open; as a matter of fact, these concerns in the country are supposed to be shut because they are expected to comply with the shop hours. It would not pay, even if we wanted to do so, to send police officers into the country to see whether these little garages were open.

Mr. Perkins: They were selling petrol all the time before.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: They will be open for about 61 hours a week now. liable to be caught; except in cases of emergency. I travel a lot in the country and my driver pulls up and gets oil and petrol whenever he wants it.

Mr. Watts: If, when travelling, you ran out of petrol, would you call that an emergency?

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: Yes. If a person were travelling from Katanning and ran out of petrol at Williams and wanted to get to Perth, it would be an emergency.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: What is the difference between the present hours and those proposed in the Bill?

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: In the metropolitan area they will be compelled to close on Saturday afternoons and Sundays. They did not have to do that previously.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: How many hours a week will they be open?

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: They will be open for about 1 hour a week now. The country is getting an extra hour per day as a result of the Bill. Instead of being open from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., it will be from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. As far as the North-West is concerned, the Bill will not operate above the 26th parallel. These hours have been arranged, by agreement, between the service station owners and the Australian Workers' Union, and the requests have come from both parties. The Bill was introduced and passed in the Legislative Council, and sent to us. The only alteration is that instead of its being optional for service stations to keep open on Saturday afternoons and Sundays in the metropolitan area, they will have to close. The position in the country is to remain the same except that these concerns will have to close on Saturday afternoons and Sundays, subject to the emergency proviso. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Thorn, debate adjourned.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1946-47.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from the 14th November. Mr. Rodoreda in the Chair.

Vote—Education, £1,113,510:

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. J. T. Tonkin—North-East Fremantle) [2.19]: For 1945-46 the Education Vote was £915,350, and when the Premier was announcing, in the House, the figures showing the amount to be provided he stated it was only an estimate and that it would, if necessary, be exceeded. What he said was subsequently borne out and, for the first time in the history of the State the expenditure on education exceeded £1,000,000; it was almost £100,000 in excess of the amount that

the Premier indicated. That proved conclusively that what he said on that occasion did not amount merely to empty words. As additional money was required by the department, the Treasurer found it without hesitation. The Estimate this year is £1,143,540, or an increase of £141,020 over last year's expenditure—not last year's Estimate. When addressing himself to this subject, the Leader of the Opposition said—

Out of the increase of £141,000, £101,489 is represented in increased salaries. Practically £138,000 out of the £141,000 is accounted for in that way. Therefore it does not appear to effect as great an improvement in the facilities available for education as would seem to be the case at first sight.

That is not so. The Leader of the Opposition—I do not blame him for this, because he has not the close association with the department that I have—has not a proper grip on what the expenditure on salaries really involves, because most of the improvements that can be made in education are made through increased expenditure on salaries. Apart from some additional equipment in schools, which comes under the incidental vote, the things of real value that are done for education are done by means of increasing the allocation for salaries. For example, there is a good deal of agitation from time to time—it has died down at present—for a considerable reduction in the size of classes. If I were to halve the sizes of the classes, that would mean doubling the number of teachers, which would result in doubling the amount of expenditure by the department on salaries. Surely the Leader of the Opposition would not look at the Education Vote and say that, because we had doubled the amount previously provided in salaries, we had not done much except to pay more teachers.

Mr. Watts: No, because then you would be halving the classes.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Looking at the amount spent on salaries gives no indication, unless one has knowledge of what has actually been done, of what improvement has been effected. Let us see how the increased expenditure is accounted for! The quinquennial reclassification recently put through absorbed £68,700 of the £141,000 increase; that is, an increase in the salaries of teachers already on the staff, due to the quinquennial reclassification to which they were entitled. That leaves a

considerable balance of increased salaries to be accounted for, which is done in this way: A number of ex-Servicemen have returned to the service of the department and refresher schools have been provided for them. When they go to such schools, they commence to draw salaries. They are not actually teaching, but they draw their salaries, and therefore the amount paid to them increases the figure shown as salaries expenditure for education. Those schools have been in operation for many months.

Then there is the expansion of technical and secondary school facilities, which requires additional teachers. To give more secondary school education and more technical education required more teachers, and so again the expenditure on salaries was increased. That increase represents a definite improvement in educational facilities. Then there must be considered the large increase in the number of student teachers in training at the college. Because we were faced—and are still faced—with a grave shortage of staff, it was necessary to encourage as many young people as possible to go in for training, and to that end the Government substantially increased the Training College allowances for students. The result is that we have in training today more students than usual, and that increase in the number of student teachers has meant an increase in the salaries expenditure of the department.

Mr. McDonald: Have we as many now as we want?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: No, but the position is quite hopeful.

Mr. Doney: Have we enough for our immediate needs?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: No, there are not sufficient teachers for immediate needs. When we decided to make adequate provision for an expansion of visual education, that necessitated the appointment of a special visual education officer to the staff. That improvement is only shown in the expenditure on salaries. The officer concerned has displayed excellent qualifications for the job, and the work he has already done is of high quality and augurs well for the future of that branch of the department. I repeat that the improvement is measured, if we examine the Vote, by an increase in salaries expenditure. Then there is the junior farmers' organisation,

which was in operation prior to the war, but which had to be dropped during hostilities. We have now started it again, under an excellent officer, who has been travelling round the country districts forming junior farmers' classes, in collaboration with the district agricultural societies. That work is not new; it has been done elsewhere, and extensively in England. The junior farmers' clubs serve a useful purpose in training young people to keep an interest in the land in country districts.

Mr. McDonald: They are admirable.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I think they are. This activity again is shown by an increase in the salaries. Vote, because the special officer engaged on that work was actually taken off ordinary class teaching to be put on to this job, and his place was taken by another teacher. That improvement also is reflected in an increase in salaries expenditure. Next we come to the provision that has been made for the education of deaf children.

Hon. N. Keenan: Rubella children?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Yes, though it is not confined only to rubella children. The rubellas are those children who are deaf because their mothers contracted German measles during pregnancy, but there are children deaf through meningitis and other causes. Fortunately for the rubella children, they have a varying amount of residual hearing, which can be developed. Many of the children deaf from causes other than rubella are stone-deaf and cannot be helped by the use of hearing aids. Except for New South Wales, where they have the benefit of the Acoustic Research Laboratory at the University of Sydney, we have done more in this State for the education of deaf children than has been done in any other State. I make that statement from my own observations and from what I have been told by the director of the Acoustic Research Laboratory in Sydney.

We have in operation in this State five centres. They are at Cottesloe, Victoria Park, Highgate, Boulder and Nedlands. These classes are staffed with teachers specially selected for the job. A teacher, to have any chance of success in this particular type of work, must be one having a mission. The person who regards teaching as just a job involving attendance at the school at 9 a.m. and knocking off at 3.30 p.m., would never

do well with a class of rubella children. One difficulty with these children is that when they first attend the classes they have to be taught discipline. They are really like savages and outlaws when they start there. They must be controlled and that is possible only with the greatest difficulty. So the matter of discipline presents a very real trouble for the teacher. That is what makes it so much harder for these children to be taught, and unless we have a teacher who regards his task as a mission, there is not much likelihood of his achieving any success with them.

Mr. Mann: Is the success achieved general?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Fortunately we have been able to find among our teachers a sufficient number with a mission to enable us to undertake this work with success. I visited the centre at Victoria Park the week before last and was amazed at the improvement effected in the children since I had been there a month or two previously.

Mr. McLarty: How many of these children are there?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Taking in the rubella children and others in this category, there are slightly more than 100.

Mr. Mann: Will they ever be able to take their places outside in after life?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Yes, they will; I say that without any hesitation whatever. I was amazed at the marked progress that had been made with the children at Victoria Park.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: Are these children dumb?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: They are dumb at the start but while I was there I actually heard some of them talking. The method adopted is to start off with lip reading. When the children gain knowledge in that direction, they then commence making sounds and, as I have indicated, I heard some of these children actually talking. That will indicate to members the progress that is being made at these centres. While I was at Victoria Park a parent arrived with her child, who was late for school. The teacher went to the door and spoke to them. The child answered her.

The lad then went into the classroom and took his place among the other children who were sitting on the floor. They made signs of recognition straightaway, and there was certainly nothing anti-social about that class.

I spoke to the parent and said "How do you think your boy is getting on?" It almost appeared that I had opened the floodgates because she told me very earnestly and in very few words that he was doing excellently and she added, "Why, he can talk!" That speaks volumes. The child in question was about seven years of age and had previously remained at home. He could not speak or understand anything apart from the signs made to him. After a few months in the class, he could speak—not with a large vocabulary but sufficiently well to be understood. It is perfectly certain that at his present rate of progress that child will be able to go to other schools later on and take his place in the normal classes, instead of being in a special class for deaf children. We will be able to put him into the first or second standard, equip him with hearing aids and then he will be able to learn just like a normal child, because we will have overcome his initial difficulty.

Respecting the teachers engaged in this work, I must say that they are so enthusiastic that quite unnecessarily, as I have told them, they have gone to the length of spending their own money either upon books dealing with subjects concerning their task or upon appliances that they consider would be of advantage to them in teaching the children. It is proposed, when hearing aids are made available through the Acoustic Research Laboratory in Sydney, to install these aids in the classrooms so that the progress may be continued.

Mr. McLarty: Will they be available for all children.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: No, a proportion of the children is completely deaf. The director of the Acoustic Research Laboratory was in Western Australia recently and through his kind offices we have been able to have most of the deaf measured for hearing loss. The unit used for measurement in that respect is the decibel and with the examination a child is shown as suffering from a 25 or 40 decibel loss of hearing, according as the investigation and examination disclose the deficiency. The examination was carried out most thoroughly

and I have had supplied to me the results of it, showing the name of each child and his or her hearing loss. There are very few of them—I refer to the rubella children—who are stone deaf, so a large proportion of them will obtain definite assistance through the use of these hearing aids. I have seen some of them in use in Sydney.

I attended a kindergarten at Pymont where I had the advantage of speaking to the parents as well as hearing the children talk. I was very much impressed by what I saw could be done there. The aids used are simply amplifiers; they are not a method of teaching at all. It is an aid to the teacher when the child is being taught to lip read and by the use of other methods, eventually enabling the child to talk. By the use of these appliances the child is able to round off his speech and improve the tonal qualities. It will be recognised, therefore, that there are very definite prospects for a large proportion of these children, a happier future for them than I would have dared to contemplate two or three years ago.

Mr. McLarty: Is there individual aid for each child?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Yes. In the kindergarten class—the first to which the children go—the aids are so arranged that they are placed around a crescent-shaped table facing various numbers. Each child knows his or her particular number and goes to the appliance with the appropriate number. One child may require amplification to the extent of three times, while another may require five or ten times the amplification. These appliances are properly calibrated and locked so that they cannot be altered, and remain at the fixed calibration unless necessary adjustments have to be made. The children take their turn at the table and receive their lessons from the teacher. When the children graduate from the kindergarten class, having been started off on the road towards improvement, they go to various separate classrooms and there are provided with individual desks with the hearing aids attached to them. Not all the children in that class, of course, will need the aids. There may perhaps be only one or two. With the aid of the appliances installed they will be able to follow the lessons like normal children.

Mr. McLarty: Is the Sydney department providing aids for adult people?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I cannot say; my knowledge is limited to the actual work that I saw at the Pymont kindergarten and to that undertaken at some of the schools where these hearing aids have been installed.

Mr. Doney: Can these appliances be adapted for adult use?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Yes. There is no difficulty about that whatever. The special advantage of these aids is that they have been designed by a man who, during the war, had a lot of experience in research into deafness amongst Army personnel caused through working in armoured vehicles. It became necessary to devise an appliance to enable those men to overcome their deafness and carry on their work. That research led to the production of these special hearing aids for rubella children.

The ear pieces have to be properly moulded. Any ill-fitting ear piece produces distortion which interferes seriously with the efficiency of the appliance. Therefore it is necessary to have special ear moulds made for the small ears of children so that the ear pieces may fit tightly and the distortion be reduced to a minimum. Shortly I expect to be able to use some of these aids in the schools. Up to date we have made progress without them, except at Victoria Park where the teacher has a number of amplifiers gathered from various sources, but they cannot be compared for efficiency with the type I saw in use in New South Wales. I have been advised that I shall receive some sets for experimental purposes shortly and, when they arrive, I shall have them installed in the classrooms and try them out under actual working conditions. If they prove to be successful—and I have little doubt that they will—I shall suggest that parents who can afford it should purchase hearing aids for the use of their children at home.

Hon. N. Keenan: What do they cost?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The present quote is about £40 with a running cost of approximately 10s. per week. Realising that this would be a very stiff impost on the average person, I have already taken steps to get some assistance.

Mr. McLarty: What do you mean by running costs, batteries?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Yes. One of the requirements of these amplifiers is that the battery shall always be up to strength; otherwise a child might have the appliance adjusted and not be hearing. No tampering with the appliance can be permitted; it is locked at a certain calibration. To give the maximum efficiency, the batteries must be kept up to strength and, to enable parents to be sure of this, a little testing appliance has to be provided. Thus it will merely be necessary to test the batteries and, if they are found to be not strong enough, they will have to be replaced. To keep the batteries in order would involve a running cost of 10s. per week.

Naturally I have been seeking for a way in which the cost could be considerably reduced. I hope eventually to be able to have the sets supplied for less than £40 and maintained for a smaller running cost than 10s. per week. The Oral Pre-School Group, a group of admirable persons, most of whom have deaf children of their own, has been giving close attention to this development in the teaching of deaf children. The group has been in communication with the Acoustics Research Laboratory and is contemplating the purchase of sets running into an aggregate cost of between £2,000 and £3,000. I am hopeful that these people will wait awhile, though I can appreciate their anxiety to get their children equipped with hearing aids. So keen are they that they would go as far as to mortgage their homes, if necessary, to raise the requisite money. I think it would be far sounder for them to see the children using the sets in the school first of all. One of the difficulties in dealing with a deaf child is that he is anti-social. He has developed a psychology that causes him to adopt an aggressive attitude towards other children and is difficult to control. Such a child would make short work of a hearing aid that he did not understand and I am afraid there would be a lot of destruction and consequent loss if any attempt were made to equip them before they were disciplined in the school.

Mr. Doney: They are always unduly suspicious of those around them.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: This disciplining of a deaf child does not

take long and afterwards he becomes quite different. Instead of acting like a savage, he becomes like an ordinary child, behaving himself in class and showing a completely changed disposition. I think it would be sounder in practice if those parents waited until we tried the sets out in schools and gave the children some experience of their use. Then when the money was expended to provide sets for use at home, there would be less likelihood of the money being wasted. I am pleased, and parents are pleased, with the progress that has already been made in this State, and I am satisfied that by this time next year we shall have a very bright picture to paint with regard to these children.

Whilst on the subject of deaf children I should mention that, in order that children in the country may also have the benefit of this training, the Government is in negotiation with the committee of the deaf school at Cottesloe with a view to taking over that institution, staffing it with its own teachers and having it equipped with hearing aids and other appliances so that children from the country may be kept in residence there and taught over a period until they are put upon the right track. Then it will be possible to equip a number of them with hearing aids and let them return to their homes and attend the normal classes in the country. This plan I hope to be able to put into operation at the beginning of next year, and I think negotiations will be completed this year for taking over the school at Cottesloe. The committee will probably continue to look after the residential side and provide amenities, while the Education Department will be completely responsible for the education of those deaf children. Previously the Government has not had full control and its assistance has been confined to the granting of an annual subsidy. Now we propose to go much further.

We also propose to do something similar for the blind children in this State. Previously they have been taught by blind teachers, who have done excellent work, but we have long felt that sighted teachers should be provided for those children. Consequently, as soon as the necessary buildings can be erected, the department intends to provide a special school where blind children may receive their education. With regard to the education of the deaf and the blind, I propose to make the very greatest use of the

latest educational aids—amplifiers for the blind children and visual aids for the deaf.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: Is it not the other way round?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: No. We shall use the projector and the film, so that the various lessons which lend themselves admirably to instruction in this way can be depicted upon a screen. The deaf children will be able to see the lessons and read about them. That will quicken their senses and enable them to grasp more quickly the art of silent reading. This, in turn, will help them considerably in gaining the necessary knowledge to contribute towards their all-round education.

Mr. McLarty: How many blind children are there of school age?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I cannot tell the hon. member, but, fortunately, not nearly so many as deaf children. Returning to the rubella children, I wish again to mention that in the expansion of this education we have had to employ additional teachers, as it is undesirable to have too many children in a class. About a dozen children are really a handful for a teacher of deaf children. That has meant an increase in salaries. Therefore, if one looks at the salaries Vote, and notices all the money that is being paid to teachers as salaries while not knowing very much of what is being done, one gets an entirely erroneous idea of the situation.

The salaries Vote has been increased because of this special expenditure on additional teachers of rubella children. Members will notice that we have made provision for them all—the halt, the blind, the deaf and the normal children. There are crippled children in the hospitals, in their homes in the metropolitan area and in the country districts. In order that they may be educated as well as the normal children, we employ special teachers to visit the homes in the metropolitan area weekly and give instruction to the children in beds or in their chairs. These children are making excellent progress. At the Children's Hospital, where there is a number of such children, we have had a special teacher for some time. Members will probably know that quite an excellent new school is in course of erection at that hospital. It is nearly completed, and

is being constructed to give the maximum of sunlight and fresh air.

As I said, a special teacher has been selected to instruct those crippled children. It is not possible to provide a special school in the country districts or an itinerant teacher, for the reason that the crippled children are so very far apart. However, an attempt is being made to educate them by using the correspondence classes, and I can say that they are making quite good progress. There are 59 crippled and invalid children in metropolitan homes and 15 in the country. Apart from children who may be ill for a short space of time only, there are three crippled children in the Perth Hospital and three in the Fremantle hospital; but, of course, at the Children's Hospital there are children who may be there for a few months. They must get schooling while in hospital, and that is why a special school has been provided. Unfortunately, there are always enough children—it would be better if there were not—to provide ample work for the teacher.

Mr. Needham: Are they of school age?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Yes, mostly!

Mr. Needham: There is a teacher at the Lady Lawley Cottage.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I have not thought of that particular school, which I understand was closed during the war. I know that we did not have a teacher there some few months ago. All of these new branches of education which the department has undertaken mean increased expenditure, mostly in salaries, very little in other directions. That is why one gets a very wrong impression by referring only to the increases in salaries and saying that they do not mean very much, except to put a little more into the pay-envelopes of some of the teachers. That is wrong. What it actually means is that a large number of additional teachers have been provided for various branches of the department's work. Very considerable improvements have been effected in those branches. I wish to say a word or two about the contingencies Vote. The sum of £25,000 has been provided for maintenance allowances. These are usually termed "living-away-from-home allowances"

and are paid for various reasons. If a child wins a scholarship and is obliged to live away from home in order to take advantage of it, he is paid a living-away-from-home-allowance of £30.

Mr. Watts: Subject to certain conditions.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: No, subject to no conditions. If a child wins a scholarship and is obliged to live away from home in order to take advantage of it, the allowance of £30 is paid without any conditions whatever. There is no means test. That was abolished some time ago, as members are aware. It is not necessary to submit any return to the Taxation Department for this allowance, as was necessary formerly. In order to obtain the allowance, all that is necessary is to prove that a child who has won a scholarship must live away from home in order to take advantage of it.

Mr. McLarty: With the approval of the department, not at the parents' suggestion.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: That is obvious. There are only a certain number of high schools—at Bunbury, Albany, Kalgoorlie and Geraldton, in addition to the Modern School. If a child has to attend the high school at, say, Bunbury, Northam or Kalgoorlie, and in order to do so must live away from home, the allowance is paid. No proof is required; the child is eligible for the allowance. If a child living in the metropolitan area wins a scholarship and can attend the Modern School without living away from home, he gets travelling expenses up to £5 a year. That goes with the scholarship. Apart from those allowances, there are special living-away-from-home allowances which the Government has recently decided to grant, with a view to giving equality of opportunity, as far as is possible, to country children. Those allowances are paid to enable children, who cannot get schooling of the requisite standard in their home town, to proceed to a school elsewhere—not necessarily a high school. The scholarships are for children who are going to receive secondary education. I have had applications from a number of people who are dissatisfied with their local school, which is within quite easy reach, because it does not, they say, take certain subjects; and they want allowances to enable them to send their children to Perth to at-

tend one of the private schools, or one of the bigger State schools.

I have had to set a restriction on the living-away-from-home allowance in this connection. If we are ever to expect to raise the standard of education in country districts, we cannot keep encouraging children to leave the country and come to the city for education. So I have had to rule that where there is a school of Class IV or higher, a child has to attend that school and the allowance will not be paid to enable him to go elsewhere. If a school is of a class lower than Class IV—by which I mean a Class VII, VI or V school, a Class VII being a one-teacher school—I am prepared to grant the allowance to a child who wants post-primary education. The only reason for doing that is not to save money on the allowance but to try to build up the standard of education in the country so that we can make good our design of having equality right throughout. If we keep permitting all the children who are dissatisfied with country schools to come to the metropolitan area, we shall be enlarging the metropolitan schools, increasing the number, and improving their facilities at the expense of those children who are content to remain in the country. So I must take a stand and endeavour to improve education throughout the country.

Mr. Perkins: Do you not think it necessary to raise the standard in Class IV schools?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I am doing it. In order to see that children who attend Class IV schools—or those which are higher than Class IV—receive a good standard of education, special attention is being given to the staffing of those schools. The headmasters are being specially selected because of their efficiency, and the teachers are being specially selected. Where individual subjects are lacking—and they must be where there are small groups of children, because we cannot cover the large range of subjects necessary to provide for every subject required by some parent or other—we propose to supplement the work of the schools by providing special lessons in particular subjects from the correspondence classes. If a child living in a country district wants, for instance, to qualify to become an architect and needs instruction in geometry and mechanical

drawing—subjects not ordinarily taken in a country school—those subjects will be supplied to him, in addition to the others, by means of a specially designed correspondence course.

The whole scheme is intended to raise the standard of education in country districts to work in with our plan of consolidation—the gradual elimination of the smaller schools, and the consolidation of the children in certain centres with the consequent improvement that can be effected as a result of the greatly increased numbers. As I have said before, we contemplate using visual education very extensively. We propose to make use of the projector, which is a marvellous aid to teaching, but we cannot do that if we continue with a large number of very small schools. It is therefore necessary to put a brake on the number of children who want to live away from country districts, and to try to keep them in the country. A lot of parents on the one hand clamour for a country high school and on the other hand do everything they can to prevent its being established by sending their children away. Unless we have the children, we cannot provide these schools; so it is necessary to retain them in the country districts.

Maintenance allowances are expected to absorb £75,000 of the contingencies Vote. A sum of £15,000 has been provided for additions to bus contracts. Members will see from this that it is intended considerably to expand the number of bus services in operation, and to proceed with the scheme of consolidation. New equipment and desks are expected to cost £4,000, and an expenditure of £5,000 is proposed additional and incidental to expansions in technical and agricultural education. A very fine building is nearly complete at Denmark for the Denmark School of Agriculture, which works in collaboration with the Denmark farm under the Department of Agriculture. That building will effect a very great improvement in the facilities at the school, and will necessarily involve an increase in expenditure on special agricultural education. We propose also to establish a number of special consolidated schools, known as area schools, of the Tasmanian type, which have become so popular. A number of sites for these schools has been selected and I am hopeful there will be a commencement of the first of these schools before the end of this year, which, of course, does not give us very long and means that

a very quick start must be made. However, I am hoping that a beginning will be made before the year is out.

Mr. McLarty: Where?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Now the hon. member is asking me to tell him a secret! There is one point with regard to living-away-from-home allowances which escaped my memory, and which I think I should mention, and that is the decision of the Government to fill in what was previously a gap in this system; that is, to make special provision for those children who live too far from a school to be covered by the ordinary daily driving allowance and who are too few in number to warrant the establishment of a bus service. Occasionally we have difficulty because there are only four or five children, who are not sufficient to warrant the establishment of a full bus contract, but who live six or seven miles from a school, which is too far to expect them to walk or to bike. Hitherto, we have made no special provision for those children, other than the correspondence lessons. I have been concerned about the matter from time to time, recognising that those children have a very real claim to some special consideration; and the Government has now agreed that a subsidy will be provided for them at the same rate as the living-away-from-home allowance for those who leave home to attend a school.

In the district of the Leader of the Opposition, for instance, there are half-a-dozen children in one place for whom we could not cater with the ordinary bus service, and I believe it will be possible to meet their needs. I am having the matter examined by the district inspector. It is proposed to grant a subsidy of £15 per annum per child to enable the parents to make their own arrangements for the transport of the children concerned. This will not be the ordinary bus contract into which we enter at present, but two or three parents will be able to use the allowance to pay for the loss of time involved in running the children backwards and forwards to school each day. Already four groups have been approved for this subsidy, and others are under consideration. With the special subsidy, the living-away-from-home allowance, the bus services and the consolidation of schools, we can now say that we are providing completely for the education of the children.

I might also mention the itinerant teacher in the North-West. This man is being used, by way of experiment, to see whether the system is worthwhile, and I believe from reports that it is. He visits the homes of children being taught by correspondence, and helps them with their lessons and their parents with the supervision, and then passes on to the next station. He has been at work for some months and we have received excellent reports about him. The headmaster of the correspondence school says that there has been a considerable improvement in the standard of the work of these children since his appointment. Consideration will be given to employing more itinerant teachers to assist the children in their correspondence lessons.

Another matter of considerable importance, and one that marks a milestone in the development of education in this State, is that of the inauguration of the camp schools. It was intended that they should commence last month, but that was not possible because transport was not available. As a result, it is only now that they can be started. The Commonwealth Government was pleased to make available the quarantine buildings at Albany, and we have also got permission to occupy a very fine camp at Point Peron. These two camps can each provide ample accommodation for 100 children. A scheme has, therefore, been arranged by which children from various country schools, accompanied in some instances by their teachers and in others by the parents, will go either to Point Peron or to Albany, and remain for a period of about three weeks. While there, they will do their ordinary school work in addition to receiving instruction in swimming, and physical and cultural work.

I think five schools will be participating in the camp at Albany which has either started or will start next week. Admirable arrangements have been made with the parents and citizens' associations so as to make the scheme possible, and the Railway Department has co-operated by giving reduced fares to the children and the parents accompanying them. The parents who go to these school camps will have the opportunity of a holiday at the seaside, but they will have to make a financial contribution towards the cost of their food, and will have to assist in looking after the children and in

preparing the meals. The Education Department is providing the teachers and is paying their travelling expenses, and it will see that proper supervision is exercised. The enthusiasm that has already been displayed augurs well for the success of these camps. They will afford to children, who, hitherto, have not seen the sea, an opportunity of doing so, and we are reaching out to the remote schools to collect children to bring to these camps so that they can get the benefit of the association with other children and a sojourn at the seaside.

Mr. McDonald: For how long can the camps operate?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: For about six months, with the result that a large number of schools can be catered for. It was intended to bring down a group from Merredin for the first camp, but because we had to abandon the original arrangements the first groups selected had to be dropped out altogether. We had to commence from a roster that had been drawn up so that there would be no dislocation. It is hoped, however, that the schools that were dropped will be provided for at some later period in the year. Eventually most of the remote country schools will have the advantage of participating in this scheme which, I think members will agree, is an excellent one, and quite a new departure in education.

Mr. McDonald: Some adult education might be possible at the same time.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Yes. Because some parents will be accompanying the children, there will be an opportunity to do that, but we are attending to the children first. Before concluding, I want to refer to an important part of the educational programme, and that is the provision made for postwar training. This is a subject about which we have heard a good deal from time to time. There has been quite a lot of criticism, too, without justification, and I think I shall be able to show the Committee that an excellent job has been done in Western Australia. At the end of September, 8,680 ex-Service personnel were undergoing post-discharge training under the direction of the State Education Department. Of this number 1,996 were in full-time training, and 6,684 in part-time training.

These figures are in remarkable contrast with those at the beginning of the year when there was a total of 1,860 in training, made up of 270 in fulltime training, and 1,590 in part-time training. At the inception of the Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme, the State Government, at the request of the Prime Minister, agreed to place its technical educational facilities at the disposal of the Commonwealth for the purposes of the scheme. We also agreed that the Superintendent of Technical Education in this State would act as the State deputy for the Director of Industrial Training. This arrangement necessitated the appointment of additional staff, and an arrangement was made whereby the extra expense would be recouped by the Commonwealth. Under the advanced training scheme during the war, 9,000 men and women were given full-time training to meet the needs of the Armed Forces, the Commonwealth departments concerned with the production of war equipment and the maintenance of essential services. So that this work could be carried on effectively, it became necessary to establish new schools in certain districts. A unit was built at Midland Junction and another at Leederville. It is proposed to make further additions to the one at Leederville, and to build a unit at Collie so that the training can be extended to meet the needs of men, in country districts, who require it.

Some use has had to be made of buildings previously occupied by Army and R.A.A.F. personnel. These buildings have had to be altered, in some respects, but they are quite satisfactory and are being used to capacity. We still meet with ex-Service men who say they have been unable to get a place in the course that they wish to follow. That is true, but when we have regard to the number actually being trained it can be seen that we could not have been expected to do much more—if anything more—in view of the accommodation possessed by this State for that purpose. It is proposed to build additional schools at Kalgoorlie so that extra technical facilities may be provided there for the ex-Service men of the Goldfields. An enlargement of the Perth Technical College will be required to provide additional facilities, and plans have been drawn for that purpose, involving considerable expenditure. Provision is being made for

an extension of the work and for the proper training of those men who are looking for it.

It must be borne in mind, when giving consideration to these Estimates, that the expenditure indicated does not include the erection of buildings. Some people have the idea that though we spend £1,000,000 on education a lot of the money is absorbed in buildings, some of which cost £30,000 or £40,000, and it is said that that does not leave much for other items. As most members realise, the buildings are erected out of loan funds, and have nothing whatever to do with the expenditure indicated here. When one considers the size of the new school building at Lord-street, Mt. Lawley, one realises that to put up the requisite number of such buildings would involve an exceedingly large expenditure, which must be considered altogether apart from expenditure on salaries and incidentals. Although it is proposed to spend over £1,000,000 on salaries and incidentals for the expansion of the service, that does not mean any curtailment of the amount to be allocated for the erection of school buildings.

Many additional sites have been selected and plans have already been drawn for a large number of additional schools. Fortunately, in these days the opening of such new buildings is becoming a more frequent occurrence. New buildings were declared open by the Director of Education on Wednesday last in a northern suburb. On Saturday I will have the pleasure of declaring open some further new buildings, and they will be followed by others in various parts of the State. Despite the acute difficulty in providing housing we are able to build some schools, and the pace at which we can carry on such building will, I think, gradually increase. I hope that eventually we will be able to get down to the district of Katanning!

MR. NEEDHAM (Perth) [3.20]: After listening to the speech delivered by the Minister we cannot help being impressed by his earnestness and the informative nature of his address. I think the most impressive portion of his speech was the detailed account of the treatment of rubella children. It was disclosed that the maintenance of the hearing aid for a rubella child runs into something like 10s. per week. That will

be a considerable handicap to parents of rubella children on low income rates. The Minister has assured members that he is endeavouring to secure supplies of those hearing aids at a cost lower than £40 each. I sincerely hope he will be successful, because I think a rubella child is most difficult for parents to rear and educate, as well as being one of the greatest problems facing us in our educational system. I wonder whether either through our own Education Department, or with Commonwealth assistance, we might be able to assist those parents on lower incomes who are faced with the problem of rearing and educating rubella children.

I was pleased to hear the Minister's explanation of the sum allotted for increased salaries, and I admit that I was under the impression that, after deducting £936,000 odd from £1,143,540, there was not a considerable sum left to implement the various reforms that have been indicated by the Minister in recent times. I had in mind area schools, consolidated schools, visual education and so on. I was anxious to know how we were going fully to implement all those reforms on the balance left after salaries had been paid. Having heard the Minister, I feel sure that many of those reforms will be implemented. He has explained how we are to meet the cost of extra accommodation for children when the school-leaving age is raised to 15 years, and eventually to 16 years. He explained that the expense of providing the extra accommodation will be met from loan funds, and I presume that when the department is providing that accommodation it will keep in mind the fact that the time is not far distant when the school-leaving age will be further raised to 16 years, and that accommodation will be built accordingly. The position is not as difficult as I thought it might have been.

One phase to which the Minister did not refer was the question of pre-school children. The Kindergarten Union has before the Treasurer at present a request for extra financial assistance. No reply has yet been received, and I do not know exactly whether the Treasurer will be in a position to grant any additional financial assistance at the present time. For years past deputations have been taken from the Kindergarten Union to successive Treasurers urging the granting of additional financial assist-

ance to enable them to carry on their good work. With one or two exceptions no additional money has been forthcoming. I know it is not lack of sympathy on the part of the Education Department that has prevented the desired assistance being forthcoming, but rather lack of cash.

I hoped that while the Minister was speaking he would have informed the Committee as to the prospects of securing financial help from the Commonwealth Government to assist in the work of education in this State, and that he would have indicated the extent to which more aid could be forthcoming for the Kindergarten Union. That body desires to establish more schools and further to provide for the teachers undertaking kindergarten work receiving better salaries than in the past. On many occasions references have been made to the fact that the Commonwealth Government has been requested to assist in this work but so far nothing has been done. A little while ago I read an interesting account of what is happening overseas with regard to pre-school care of children. In a recent issue of "The West Australian" an interview was published with Miss Heather Lyon of Melbourne who was returning by the steamer "Orbita" after a stay of two years in the United States and some months in England and Sweden where she investigated the latest developments in pre-school care of children. It is quite worth while reading portion of the report appearing in the newspaper because the statements of Miss Lyon indicate that in this State and, for that matter, in Australia generally, we are a long way behind overseas countries in the development of the education of the pre-school child. The report states—

While in America, Miss Lyon graduated as B.Sc. in child development at the Columbia University, did clinic work in the same sphere at the Yale University with Drs. A. Gesell and F. Ilg, and also studied at the Merrill Palmer School, Detroit.

In the United States, she said, child development, as a subject, was tending more and more to become part of university courses and was no longer only an adjunct of the nursery school training.

That is an interesting development as compared with our system. There is something to be said for that idea, and when a child reaches the age of five years it should be taken in hand and assisted in its development. Further on, the report states—

There were few centres in the country devoted entirely to the training of nursery-school

workers. Nursery schools were far in advance of those in England or Australia; particularly so were those associated with colleges and universities, which had the benefit of the psychologists and psychiatrists on the instruction staffs.

From America, Miss Lyon said, she went to Sweden, where more was being done for children than in any other country that she visited. For instance, in Stockholm alone there were 40 playgrounds, each of which had a special section for the pre-school child under the direction of a trained supervisor.

That serves to show what can and should be done in these particular institutions. I realise that in this State the Education Department cannot at this juncture embark on work such as that in progress in the countries mentioned by Miss Lyon, but I trust the Government will persist with the request to the Commonwealth for assistance so that the work of the Kindergarten Union can be expanded. I do not know whether the Minister intends to reply to the debate but, if he does, I would like him to indicate what has been done regarding the approach to the Commonwealth Government for financial assistance and, perhaps, give some intimation as to the additional help that may be rendered to the Kindergarten Union.

HON. N. KEENAN (Nedlands) [3.26]: I was glad to hear the Minister report the progress achieved in connection with the treatment and education of rubella children. That was a matter, of course, entirely outside the capacity of the educational system two years ago. It is satisfactory to note that with the advance of modern science and the development of new appliances, the difficulties have been largely overcome and today, as the Minister told the Committee, a very fair measure of success can be achieved in educating these children who owe their deafness entirely to the fact that, unfortunately, their mothers contracted German measles during their pregnancy. A large measure of assistance is rendered to the department with regard to these children, particularly in Nedlands, and I thought that the Minister might possibly have very justly recognised the enthusiasm and support available from a large number of volunteers in that suburb during the last four years. Prominent among them is Mr. Black who has spent all his spare time outside office hours in organising different small centres for the education of rubella children.

I accompanied the Minister on a visit to one of them about 18 months ago. That is, I appreciate, only a partial effort but I understand that today a movement is in hand to raise funds sufficient to provide for the children who, to the knowledge of those concerned, are living in the metropolitan district and to supply them with the necessary appliances. I do not think they would readily entertain any idea of delaying matters until the price of those appliances should fall. Their idea is that every day these children are becoming older, and some are already of an age at which it is difficult for them to start their education. They first have to learn to hear and then they are necessarily asked to start at the bottom of the ladder. So it is a matter of hurry and haste. Unless there is an early prospect of a reduction in the cost of these appliances I certainly should not care to urge delay, because the intention of the committee is that as soon as they receive the necessary funds they will endeavour to get the appliances required to provide these aids to hearing. Despite some drawbacks, we have to acknowledge having received consideration from the department, and particularly from the present Minister, and although I sit in opposition to the Minister on political issues, I am only too glad to admit with gratitude the value of his work in the cause of education generally. I congratulate him on being the first really live Minister for Education we have had.

The Minister for Education: That is a very great compliment.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I hope he will remain alive for a considerable number of days, if not years.

Mr. J. Hegney: You are not reflecting on yourself, are you?

Hon. N. KEENAN: Unquestionably I am. I do not pretend for a moment that I was able to bring to the task of administering the Education Department anything like the knowledge the present Minister possesses. I went to the department from the outside world. Of course, I learnt from the permanent staff what would be wise and what would be foolish, but that is about the length and breadth of the knowledge I had, whereas the present Minister has been closely associated with the department from the early years of his career. However, I do not think the Minis-

ter would wish to me to cause him to blush, and so I shall not offer any further remarks along those lines.

Having made those complimentary remarks, I have to criticise the department from one point of view. We have not found any signs of its recognising the fact that kindergartens are an absolute necessity in the modern education system. The kindergarten has this disadvantage that the school must be situated, not a mile or so from the home of the child, but practically within a few hundred yards. The children who attend the kindergarten are, of course, very young, and a quarter or half-a-mile would be the very limit of the distance they could travel. Again, in that very progressive part of the world known as Nedlands, we have three kindergarten centres and all of them are overcrowded.

In the kindergarten, as the Minister explained in regard to the rubella children, only small classes are possible. To have 30 children in a kindergarten would be unsatisfactory because they have not yet reached the age to understand what order in the full sense means, and they need very careful handling. So we limit our centres to 15, and I believe this number is accepted as being almost the limit. We require a great deal of financial assistance to carry on the kindergarten schools, and that assistance up to the present has been wholly voluntary at Nedlands, with the exception of a small sum of money received from the department. In the main, however, the expenditure has fallen upon the charitably-minded people living in that neighbourhood. There is no kindergarten in Hollywood, but we contemplate opening one there at an early date. There is none at Shenton Park, or towards the Loch-street end. We have provided kindergartens only in what might be described as the western side of the constituency.

Mr. J. Hegney: Have you buildings of your own?

Hon. N. KEENAN: We have the use of buildings, but we do not own them. For the Dalkeith centre, we use the tennis club building; for the Princess-road centre we use, by leave of the Methodist Church Trustees, portion of their building and grounds. In another part, a sum of about £800 has been raised towards a building, but the cost, for only a modest building,

is estimated at £1,600. If the financial problem were solved by the receipt of anything like a substantial grant from the Commonwealth, most of our difficulties would disappear. I know that the committee has plans for getting a trained staff. At present we have not a trained staff in the full sense of the word. We have people who have spent a few years or less in the training centre at West Perth, and a lady who, in spite of her years, has returned to the work in order to help us. If we had the requisite money, we could then obtain the services of a properly trained staff and a staff possessed of full vigour.

Mr. J. Hegney: Are the teachers paid?

Hon. N. KEENAN: They receive some pay, but very little; it is really not worth talking about. I point out to the Minister that, even with the schools we have at Nedlands, we are unable to accept all the children who should be attending. There are two children living at the end of the street called Fairway, towards the jetty, and they would have to walk a considerable distance to reach the Nedlands school, the only one they could attend. The headmaster, however, has told them he cannot accept them. One of those children is aged eight and the other six-and-a-half. The parents are anxious to have them educated, but are unable to send them to a school within reach of the children or within their own means. They are working people and cannot afford to send the children by other than public conveyance. There is no public conveyance unless they travelled by tram to Onslow-road and that is a journey they would not care to undertake.

I mention this case not because of any complaint on the part of the parents, who recognise that the school unfortunately is crowded out, but to emphasise that we cannot afford to slacken our efforts. We must not think that we have provided enough schools to cater for all the children who require to be educated. I admit that the constituency owes much to the department in the way of the erection of schools; it has been generously treated, but nevertheless there are instances of children being crowded out, even today. I do not ask the Minister to think that this is a complaint, because, as I stated a moment ago, the constituency has been generously treated. It is an illustration of the fact that the department cannot

not slacken for one moment in its efforts. If it does, then certain children in the State will come up from their childhood to maturity without having received the necessary benefits of school-teaching. Whilst I recognise all that has been done by the department, I must issue a note of warning that we cannot possibly remain satisfied; we must make more and more effort every year if we are to have—as we all hope—a State in which all our citizens will be fully educated.

MR. PERKINS (York) [3.51]: I, too, listened with very great interest to the Minister's account of the activities of his department and the projects which he has in view for the coming year. I am another who can say that I have been agreeably surprised at the progress which the department has been making and the enthusiasm which at least a large percentage of the staff are bringing to their work. It is inevitable that there will be some aspects of the department's policy with which some of us cannot wholly agree. I paid great attention to the Minister's explanation of the department's policy regarding the living-away-from-home allowances. In many country districts a certain amount of dissatisfaction exists, as I think the Minister knows, with the policy which he is following. The Minister states that he considers a Class IV school, with some small additional correspondence facilities, is a satisfactory medium for providing country children with education up to the junior standard. I do not know whether the Minister will go so far as to say that children taking their junior examination through such schools will gain an education equal to that of children who take their junior examination through some of the larger schools, particularly the schools in the metropolitan area. Whether or not the Minister believes that, I know some parents do not, and that is the reason for the measure of dissatisfaction to which I have referred.

I entirely agree with the Minister that the object should be to build the country schools up to the junior standard. The quicker he can push that policy along the better it will suit me and, I think, the vast majority of country people. But the point at issue is: Are the children who are being compelled to take their junior examination in the Class IV schools to be penalised until such time as the department is able to press

ahead and carry out this larger measure of its policy? I am not criticising the Government on the steps which the department has taken towards bringing the Class IV schools up to junior standard; but, so far as we can learn, some time will elapse before those schools can be raised to the level contemplated by the department. That being so, for a couple of years and perhaps longer, country people will continue to be dissatisfied because their children will be forced to take their junior examination through those schools, or be obliged to forgo the living-away-from-home allowance which is available to other children not living within a reasonable distance of Class IV schools and perhaps living right away in the bush altogether.

I hope when the Minister replies to the debate he will expound the department's policy in that regard a little further, because I assure him there is some heartburning among country people at being refused the living-away-from-home allowance for their children on the ground that they live adjacent to Class IV schools, whereas the parents desire to send them to a larger metropolitan school, whether it be a private or a Government school. That has some bearing on the question of consolidation. I have said before in this Chamber that I think the difficulties of providing satisfactory educational facilities in our country schools may in some cases be liable to increase rather than diminish. The density of population in many of our wheatgrowing districts has shown signs of decreasing, owing to the increase in mechanisation of the industry. Undoubtedly our country towns will show a big increase in population in the coming years; but in the country districts surrounding those towns there is the danger that the density of population may decrease rather than increase. At all events, we can say that it will not show any great increase. Therefore, the department will incur more expense in bringing the children into the large consolidated schools.

The problem varies from district to district, and I have no doubt the Minister could tell the Committee that it is more serious in the wheat areas than in the dairying areas, where naturally the density of population would be greater. Until the department can forge ahead with the policy of improving the standard of the school in the average country town, I am afraid there will

still be disinclination on the part of parents to agree to the closing of the small country schools, with the idea of consolidation at larger centres. I have said previously that I entirely agree with the policy of consolidation, which is the only way in which we can raise the standard of education in our country districts to a level approximating that in the metropolitan area. But we have to consider the problem from the point of view of the parents, who are inclined to ask: "Why should we agree to the closing down of a small country school where possibly one teacher is coping with 12 or 15 children and, if she is a competent teacher and suited to the work, giving the kiddies a really excellent education, in order to send them to a school in a larger country town where perhaps there may be four teachers and a couple of classes to each room, and where possibly 40 or 50 children are divided into two classes and under one teacher?"

One can easily understand that, unless the teachers in the larger country towns are extremely capable—much more capable than it is reasonable to expect—the teacher in the smaller country school coping with 12 or 15 children is often at an advantage compared with the teachers in the larger country towns.

The Minister for Education: Don't you believe it!

Mr. PERKINS: I am only going on the opinions which have been expressed to me by members of the Minister's own department. I do not set myself up as an authority on this subject, but we must take notice of the people who are dealing with the problem from day to day. At any rate, many parents hold the opinion that there is no advantage to be gained, and that is the reason for their disinclination to agree to the closing of small country schools with the idea of consolidation at larger centres. I believe the problem can be overcome very amicably and easily indeed once the department is able to get further ahead with its policy. As soon as the department can offer something at these larger country schools that the children cannot get in the smaller schools, those difficulties will disappear overnight. I know how hard it is for the Minister to press ahead with his building programme; but I believe that when greater facilities are provided in the country towns we shall find a marked change in the point of view

of the parents of children attending the smaller country schools.

It has been indicated to me by officers of the Minister's department that it may be necessary to use the big stick and force parents to agree at some later stage. But if greater facilities are provided, I think the end will be achieved more satisfactorily and there will be a feeling that a reasonable proposition has been submitted. In all these country towns, school buildings are overcrowded and in order to make a really good job of providing the type of school required it will be necessary to establish entirely new buildings. That is a major part of the problem. There is also the question of roads. The local authorities are all complaining that during the war their roads fell into disrepair through war-caused difficulties. They lost their plant and many of the men they had been accustomed to employ, and there has been a lag in road making.

On top of that, with this policy of consolidation of schools operating at the same time and school bus routes being provided for over many roads that are used for little other than school bus routes, an intolerable problem is being created for the local authorities. In some instances they are short of plant and would probably find it very difficult to put their roads in order even if they had the money. In other cases they say it is a financial problem and if they were suitably recompensed by the Government, which is responsible for this policy of consolidation, they could put the roads in reasonable order. I believe the Government will have to consider this question of giving some assistance to the local authorities in order to help them to construct roads which are being used mainly by school buses.

Mr. J. Hegney: That would not come out of the Education Vote.

Mr. PERKINS: It might not, but the Education Department will have to take some active interest in the matter and make recommendations to the Treasurer. That is the reason I raise the point on this Vote. I think it is a matter in which the Education Department should co-operate with the local authorities. One of the Minister's inspectors, Mr. Jeanes, recently instituted a policy of endeavouring to get each local authority to form a kind of parents and

citizens' central council on which the local authority would be represented, with the idea of co-ordinating the school bus routes running into a particular centre and perhaps into an adjoining centre. I believe that is a very sensible policy. It will be the means of keeping both the Education Department and the local authority informed as to changes in routes that may be contemplated and the state of roads in the area, and it will also keep the Education Department advised as to the suitability, from a road point of view, of running buses, and prevent it from looking at the matter as a purely geographical problem. That is a question I think the Minister should bear in mind; and if that action is not being followed in other inspectorial districts, I consider that steps should be taken to make it a State-wide policy.

The only other thing I desire to mention is the standard of school buses. We recently had laid on the Table the specifications for school buses that I understand the department is going to enforce in the near future. I hope it will be in the near future, too, because I think that wherever a new bus service is being established or whenever a new school bus is being purchased, this improved type should be required. If some standardisation were possible, I have little doubt that the increased cost would not be nearly as great as if it were left to all and sundry to obtain whatever vehicle was considered to be somewhere near the standard. The type of bus being used on many of the road services in the Eastern States would be admirably suited for this work and would comply approximately with these specifications. I understand that those buses that are built or obtained by the major bus companies in the Eastern States cost only about £1,000. I do not know whether the Minister has taken steps to discover what a bus complying with these specifications would cost in this State; but in any event, whatever it would cost, we should have an improved type for our school bus services.

Reference has been made to pre-school and adult education. On several occasions, I have heard the Minister say that until he is able adequately to provide for primary and secondary school education, he is not prepared to commit himself to pre-school and adult education to any great degree. We

must agree with him that that is the right policy to adopt until such time as we get primary and secondary school education up to a reasonable level. We should bear in mind that these two aspects of education are of vital importance. We have all been impressed with the work that the Kindergarten Union is doing. Members who have seen the Lady Gowrie Centre at Victoria Park must have been pleased with the work done there. There is a widespread demand for kindergarten services. In many country towns kindergartens of one sort or another are operating, and in a number of cases they are run by private persons. From what I hear the parents are very satisfied if any kindergarten is provided, but no doubt better work could be done if trained teachers and more money were available for the purpose.

I think that in this State we are doing about as much as is being done in any of the other States for adult education, but we have only scratched the surface of the subject. It is stupid to spend a lot of money and energy to provide kindergartens, and primary and secondary school education, and then forget entirely about the product of our educational system. There is a great work to be done by the various bodies interested in adult education, in rounding off our present system. I am a member of the Adult Education Board, and am well informed of what the board is doing. It from time to time receives quite a lot of publicity in the Press and it is being well supported by the people, but it is always short of funds. The total of the grants it receives from Government sources is well under £2,000 a year, and, as a result, it has to find most of its money from outside. If we are to extend this work and carry it on as it should be done, more money will have to be provided.

Progress reported.

BILL—WHEAT INDUSTRY STABILISATION.

In Committee.

Mr. Fox in the Chair; the Minister for Agriculture in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Definitions:

Mr. WATTS: I move an amendment—

That at the end of paragraph (b) of the definition of "wheat farm" the words "whether or not wheat has been previously grown thereon" be added.

According to the definition, unless wheat has been grown on such a farm it will not be possible to obtain a license for that farm. Even if there is only a reasonable doubt it should be speedily removed. I do not suggest that it is the intention to afford the committee an opportunity to refuse to license areas that either have not grown wheat during the period mentioned in the beginning of the definition, or that have not grown wheat at all, provided there are special circumstances indicating that a license should be granted. There would be special circumstances in the case of persons who have seen war service and are taking up land after the conclusion of that service. It is undesirable that the slightest doubt should remain as to the committee having discretion to grant these people a license. There are other cases where wheat has not been grown on land and it may be necessary to alter the crops to include wheat. It may be possible that, for the purpose of freshening up the soil, cereal crops will have to replace clover pastures.

While I am prepared to leave the matter of granting licenses to the discretion of the committee, provided the discretion is unbounded, I am not prepared to ham-string the committee at the start, as I believe the phraseology of this definition as it stands at present would do. I want to make the position clear to this Committee and those concerned in making applications in circumstances such as those to which I have referred, that there can be no obstruction to their obtaining licenses if they can satisfy the committee that special circumstances exist which warrant their being given licenses whether or no they have grown wheat, particularly between the dates mentioned, the last of which is no less than 5½ years ago. For those reasons, and to make the position clear, I have moved my amendment.

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

Clauses 3 to 7—agreed to.

Clause 8—Price to be paid for wheat:

Mr. WATTS: Before moving this amend-

ment, I desire to make a few preliminary remarks, because I think the implications of this clause—particularly as to Western Australia and the circumstances existing here at the present time—are so serious that they must be taken into the closest consideration by members of this Committee. In the existing circumstances, I would appeal to the Government not to proceed with this measure until steps have been taken to safeguard the interests of Western Australian wheatgrowers. I believe that if this Bill is passed in its present form, particularly with this clause therein, the wheatgrowers of this State, for this year in particular, are going to be let down—in view of what has transpired with the Australian wheat crop—and if the Government insists on proceeding with this measure in the present form, it will, in my opinion, have to take a substantial part of the responsibility for that letting-down. The original estimate of the Australian wheat crop this year was about 140,000,000 bushels, which left in the vicinity of 80,000,000 bushels for export.

As things have turned out, the estimate of the crop today is not more than 118,000,000 bushels, of which approximately 21,000,000 bushels will be needed for seed and feed, leaving a saleable margin of something like 96,000,000 bushels. Of that quantity, about 66,000,000 bushels will be needed for home consumption in Australia, and instead of leaving a balance of nearly 80,000,000 bushels, it will leave a balance of only 30,000,000 bushels, assuming there is not further deterioration in the crop estimate. The only part of the Australian crop that can produce a reasonable figure over all, in view of the determination regarding the home consumption price, is that which is available for export. I believe the estimates of what this crop was likely to produce to Australian growers were made on the basis of a crop of over 140,000,000 bushels and an exportable surplus of between 70,000,000 and 80,000,000 bushels, at least, at overseas prices, which at the moment are high and show no signs of deterioration, but rather to the contrary.

So, instead of having 70,000,000 or 80,000,000 bushels that can be exported at those high figures, it seems we are not likely to have more than 30,000,000 bushels for export, of which Western Aus-

tralia will have less than half. Therefore it seems that a substantial portion of the Western Australian crop will probably have to be used for maintenance of the people in the Eastern States. It will have to be sold at a figure that has been fixed by the Commonwealth Government at about 5s. 2d., on an f.o.r. port basis, and that, in comparison with the oversea export price which at present is about 13s. 6d. per bushel, as recently fixed by the Australian Wheat Board, will show the Western Australian growers that a great deal of their wheat is being sacrificed at a price that will hardly compensate them for the work of putting in and taking off the crop.

I will show, shortly, that when the total realisation at the approximate figures is taken into account, and allowance is made for the amount that will have to be paid under the Wheat Export Charges Act, 1946, to the stabilisation fund, instead of the wheatgrowers receiving from their marketable crop over all something over 7s. per bushel, as estimated, they will be lucky if they receive 5s. per bushel in respect of that crop. Consequently—particularly in regard to the wheatgrowers of Western Australia, with whom we are most concerned—the position will be disastrous. Taking the 66,000,000 bushels to be used for home consumption, and reducing the price to a siding basis, gives approximately 4s. per bushel and a total realisation of £13,200,000. Out of the 30,000,000-bushel balance which would be exportable, 5,000,000 bushels have been sold to New Zealand for 5s. 9d. per bushel. That is on record in the "Hansard" of the New Zealand Parliament, and has since been admitted in the Press of this Commonwealth. I have read the original copy of the "Hansard" of the New Zealand Parliament, and Mr. Sullivan, the Minister there holding the position equivalent to that of Minister for Agriculture, states categorically, and with some pride, that he has made an extraordinarily good arrangement for the people of New Zealand, with the Australian Government.

The Minister for Justice: Is that 5s. 9d. per bushel at siding?

Mr. WATTS: I believe it is on the f.o.r. basis, but I have been kind, because he did not say which it was in the report I read. I have put it down on the siding basis so as not to under-estimate the value and it

represents a total of £1,437,500 on that basis. We still have remaining 25,000,000 bushels available for export. The Australian Wheat Board has in recent days declared the price of wheat at 13s. 6d. a bushel for bulk wheat at all destinations east of the Persian Gulf, although there are quotations for other parts of the world that are very much higher. I believe contracts have been made with the Italian Government by certain countries other than Australia, for the sale of wheat at prices as high as 28s. a bushel, from which oversea freight of a very substantial character has, of course, to be deducted. I am taking the Australian Wheat Board figure of 13s. 6d. and I deduct 1s. 6d. to reduce it to the siding rate—which, I think, is a reasonable deduction to make—and that brings the figure down to 12s. per bushel.

Under the Commonwealth Wheat Export Charges Act of 1946 there has to be paid on every bushel of wheat exported, 50 per cent. of the difference between 5s. 2d. per bushel f.o.r. ports and the realised value of wheat. As I am working on a siding basis, which I am taking at approximately 4s., and the siding basis I have already referred to as 12s.—I am taking off 50 per cent. of the difference between 4s. and 12s., rather than the other figures—it means that we have 25,000,000 bushels at 12s., which is equal to £15,000,000, of which £5,000,000 has to be paid to the stabilisation fund, leaving only £10,000,000 available. These three total amounts I have stated aggregate £24,367,500 which is to cover the price of the total quantity of wheat amounting to 96,000,000 bushels. That works out at 5s. 2d. per bushel as against the world price of 12s. a bushel.

The Premier: Would not the Constitution Act apply in any case?

Mr. WATTS: I am not concerned about the Constitution Act just now. I am merely saying that in my opinion it is necessary for us to redraft this measure in the interests of Western Australia quite apart from the wheatgrowers of the other States in whom I have no direct interest. That is apart from the fact that the smaller the Australian wheat crop is, as I mentioned during my second reading speech, the worse the position that can arise, because if there is a small total crop, that does not minimise the home consumption quantity which is be-

ing disposed of at the price I have mentioned without any compensation. That is the basis of the argument, and I do not think it can be refuted. So the situation, as I see it, is that the maximum price likely to be received at sidings for wheat is about 5s. 2d. per bushel in the face of what could be obtained by Western Australian growers this year and probably next year, because there is no indication of any diminution in the oversea value of wheat nor of the accumulation of any surplus wheat elsewhere. In the circumstances, it would appear that this Bill should be withdrawn and the Commonwealth, as originally suggested by members on this side of the House, should be strongly approached to review the position in the light of changing circumstances or, alternatively, the State Government might even give consideration to setting up a Western Australian organisation to handle this business. I know there are immense legal difficulties in the way of that being done and that it might be undesirable, but it is worthy of investigation if only to furnish a basis on which negotiations could be carried out with the Commonwealth.

An investigation should be made to see if a better plan could be evolved. The present scheme is not even as good as when it was first promulgated, and we have no guarantee that at any future time it will be any better or even as good as at first proposed. I confess that I am today more concerned, if that were possible, than I was when the proposition was first placed before us. Some arguments could have been used in favour of it at that time, but those arguments have steadily weakened as the weeks have gone by until today the situation is such that if we proceed with this plan and allow it to become the law of the Commonwealth, to which we shall contribute, if we pass the Bill in its present form, not only shall we overlook what is obviously our duty further to investigate this matter in the interests of the wheatgrowers of Western Australia, but we shall also be contributing to a similarly unhappy state of affairs with regard to the wheatgrowers of our sister States.

It has to be remembered that should there be a diminution of the Australian crop there is a corresponding diminution in the returns to the farmers throughout Australia. That will be very apparent in certain parts of this State and very conspicu-

ous in New South Wales. Therefore, in view of the returns they will obtain from the diminished crop, while they may be financially satisfactory and enable them to carry on, they would be far better off if they secured a price anything like comparable with what could be obtained on the export basis. On the figures available under this proposal we cannot get away from the basic fact that it will not be profitable and may, and probably will in some cases, result in a measure of substantial loss. I am extremely hopeful that the Government will review the position, realising that wiser counsels should prevail in the changing circumstances and will be prepared to stop the further progress of this measure with the object of advancing some more suitable proposition to which we could heartily subscribe. It is obviously not just that one small section should be contributing to the welfare of the whole of the community unless the whole of the community is prepared to meet it half way, which is not being done in this case and which is all that I ask. If I cannot have the desire I have expressed put into effect, we must seek to put the Bill in such a position that further consideration is bound to be given to the price question.

This scheme embodies, in addition to the crop now coming off and future crops, the crop for the season 1945-46, concerning which many other legal questions arise inextricably associated with the provisions of Subsection (xxxi) of Section 51 of the Commonwealth Constitution Act, which sets out that when the Commonwealth acquires the property of any person or State it shall do so on just terms, and the determinations of the High Court in other matters do not indicate that the terms on which it is intended to dispose of the 1945-46 crop can be regarded as being based on just terms. I am prepared to abandon the amendment if I receive an agreement with what I said earlier as to the postponement of the measure; otherwise I move an amendment—

That at the end of the clause the following words be added:—“subject, however, to the provisions of Subsection (xxxi) of Section 51 of The Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act.”

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I make no claim to being thoroughly at home in dealing with legal phraseology, but I can see no point in the amendment other than

that it afforded a talking opportunity for the Leader of the Opposition. Surely any legislation enacted by this State must be subject to the Commonwealth Constitution Act! This being so, why pick out one clause and say it shall be subject to that Act? Because I hold this view, I see no point in specifically stating that this clause shall be subject to the Commonwealth Constitution Act. Therefore I oppose the amendment.

Mr. PERKINS: The question is much more complicated than the Minister appears to realise.

The Minister for Agriculture: Let us hear about it.

Mr. PERKINS: During the operation of the Australian Wheat Board, the Commonwealth acquired the wheat from growers under National Security Regulations, and those regulations could not over-ride the Constitution. This left the Commonwealth in the position of being bound by the relevant section of the Constitution providing for just terms. The Commonwealth works under a written Constitution and any law it may pass must not abrogate the right of citizens under the Constitution. The Commonwealth adopted the expedient of directing the Australian Wheat Board to do certain things. For instance it sold wheat to stock feeders within Australia and to New Zealand at less than the price that could have been obtained overseas. It was sold at a concession price.

The Minister for Agriculture: What effect will this amendment have?

Mr. PERKINS: Growers consider that so far they have not received what they are entitled to, taking into account the provision in the Constitution which provides for just terms.

The Minister for Agriculture: How will the amendment remedy that?

Mr. PERKINS: If the Bill be passed in its present form, the powers of the State will be invoked in addition to those of the Commonwealth. The powers of the Commonwealth are limited by the section of the Constitution providing for just terms, though it is not certain that the State's powers are so limited. If the clause be passed without the amendment, there is grave danger of its preventing the growers from taking action against the Commonwealth to recover the difference between the

price at which the Commonwealth directs the Australian Wheat Board to sell the wheat and the price at which it could be sold in the open market. If the Minister fully considered the amendment I do not think he would desire to risk putting our growers into such a position that the Commonwealth would be able to do something with the aid of the State which it cannot do under its own powers, and which the court might hold is unconstitutional. Court actions by individual wheatgrowers are pending to test this very point. What has been done in the past, I think, cannot be affected, though it may, but the Commonwealth proposes that, of the crop now being harvested, 30,000,000 bushels or more shall be used for flour for home consumption. The wheatgrowers have not much objection to that wheat being paid for at the home consumption price.

The Minister for Agriculture: Do you think there are some clauses of the Bill that are not covered by the Commonwealth Constitution Act?

Mr. PERKINS: Possibly there are. In addition, more than 30,000,000 bushels will be used for stock feed and other purposes. The flour tax legislation does not take cognisance of breakfast foods. If during the coming year the Commonwealth Government directs the Australian Wheat Board to sell for stockfeeders' use wheat at the home-consumption price of 5s. 2d. f.o.r. ports, the wheatgrowers of this State will consider—I have not the slightest doubt—that they are being defrauded of the difference between 5s. 2d. f.o.r. ports, and 13s. 6d., or more, f.o.r. ports, at which that wheat could be sold oversea. The wheatgrowers have no objection whatever to the Commonwealth using wheat for whatever purposes it thinks fit within Australia, but if it is sold at the concession prices the wheatgrowers are, in my opinion, entitled to ask that the difference should be made up to them from Commonwealth revenue. The danger is that if the Commonwealth has the State's powers to back it up, it might be able to do that without incurring the liability to the wheatgrowers that I have mentioned. If there is any danger of that happening, I consider we would be lacking in our duty as a Parliament representing the people of Western Australia if we did not do all in our power to protect the legal position.

Mr. WATTS: I have not much to add, except to remind the Minister that I raised the point, which has been explained again by the member for York, when I spoke on an amendment to the motion for the second reading of the Bill. The Minister did not reply. For that I did not blame him at the time, because it appeared to me that it would be difficult satisfactorily to deal with that particular problem, and others associated with it, at short notice. But at the conclusion of the second reading debate, the Minister did not take the opportunity to reply to what was said on the second reading or on the amendment, nor has he now made any response to the arguments I put forward dealing with the general question of prices. I therefore can only reach the conclusion that in the Minister's mind there is no satisfactory answer to those arguments and that he considers the least said the soonest mended.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The conclusions of the Leader of the Opposition are entirely erroneous. It is unnecessary to talk for hours to prove that one knows the answer to a problem. The amendment is entirely unnecessary, for the reason that any legislation which this Parliament enacts on this subject, or on any other, is subservient to the Australian Constitution. To select a special clause and try to tack an amendment to it and then express some doubt about its application, is in my opinion too silly. Of course, it served its purpose. It afforded the Leader of the Opposition the opportunity to deal with a set of affairs not in criticism of the Bill, but actually in criticism of the 1938 legislation fixing the home-consumption price for wheat. That is what the criticism is about and that is the situation which is not acceptable to the Leader of the Opposition and the member for York. To bring up all that matter on this Bill has no point at all.

Mr. Perkins: Stock feed has nothing to do with the 1938 legislation.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Has it not?

Mr. Doney: Has it?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes. The argument being used at present is that because there is a reduced quantity of wheat for export—a big proportion of which will be Western Australian wheat—a large quantity of Western Australian wheat will

be consumed for stock feed and other purposes, and the farmers will not receive that proportion of the price to which they are entitled compared with that paid to farmers in the other States. That is the argument.

Mr. Watts: Quite right, too!

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The argument has direct relationship to the 1938 legislation fixing the home-consumption price of wheat. It has nothing whatever to do with the Bill, which is a plan for the stabilisation of the industry under certain conditions. The amendment makes no difference whatever to the Bill, in my opinion.

Mr. WATTS: The Minister has still not addressed himself to the main subject-matter of the argument, which is the question of the price and the result of the diminution of the Australian crop, except in the sketchiest manner. He has chosen to deal more elaborately with the question of whether or no this proposal in regard to paragraph 31 of Section 51 of the Constitution Act ought to be included in the Bill or not. I say it ought to be in the Bill. I had hoped that the Minister would address himself to the question of whether the amendment in its present form, without additional words, would have the effect of making it impossible to create the stabilisation fund. It has occurred to me that additional words ought to be added in order that that position might be cleared up.

There are grounds for saying, as I think the Minister will agree, that the best terms might very easily be ruled to be the full export parity, in which case the fundamental of the stabilisation fund would fall to the ground. Unfortunately, I am not in the position to form a reliable opinion on that subject. I had hoped that the Minister would treat the Committee to a dissertation on it in the course of the last few minutes, but he has not done so. As regards the 1945-46 crop's share in this scheme, this particular amendment is of great value. I submitted it as a possibility which required the closest investigation by the law officers of the Crown in this State. I desire an amendment to be carried which will have the effect of preventing—to use the words of the member for York—the wheatgrowers of Western Australia from being defrauded of portion of that to which they are entitled. It was with that object that I moved the amendment, and I feel I was justified in

doing so. I have at least produced something from the Minister which no other contribution to this debate has been able to produce up to date, and that is some attempt at explaining his position. For the time being, I leave it at that.

Mr. PERKINS: The Minister made some reference to the 1938 flour tax legislation having something to do with this. It has only the sketchiest possible connection. That legislation merely provides that the wheat used as flour for human consumption within Australia shall be subject to the Act. That amount is only a little over 30,000,000 bushels of the total Australian crop. The balance of the crop has no connection with that Act. I think most of us on this side of the Chamber were entirely in accord with the passing of the 1938 legislation because it provided an Australian price for wheat, and that the Australian wheatgrower should obtain a reasonable price for that portion of his product used for human consumption in Australia. But the Act did not provide that any difference at all would be made to the price of wheat used for any other purposes. All the wheat used for stock feed, etc., until the Commonwealth Government introduced its policy of cheap wheat for stock during the war, was bought at export parity and the desire of the growers of this State is that they should receive export parity for that wheat used by stockfeeders now that the export parity is much higher than the human consumption price as fixed by the 1938 legislation.

The Minister for Agriculture: You want to make the stockfeeders buy wheat at export parity? Is that the position?

Mr. PERKINS: I did not say that. I said that the growers of Western Australia desire to receive export parity for their wheat.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: That is only saying it another way.

Mr. PERKINS: If it is the policy of the Commonwealth Government that wheat should be sold at lower prices to stockfeeders within Western Australia, the growers have no quarrel on that score; but what they do say is that if, as a result, they lose anything from 6s. to 7s. a bushel on each bushel so used, the difference should be made up from the Commonwealth's revenue and not

out of the pockets of the growers whence it came mostly during the war under the operations of the Australian Wheat Board.

Mr. McDONALD: From the point of view of the wheatgrower, his crop is divided into two parts. The first portion is that used for human consumption as flour, as to which, by existing legislation, he is to receive a certain fixed price, which has been in existence for some years. The wheatgrower, as I understand the position, accepts that that part of his wheat taken for flour for human consumption is to be paid for at 5s. 2d. a bushel. Then there is the other part which could be sold at world parity, and for that part he expects to get what he could get if he sold it at world parity, which today may be 12s. or 13s. a bushel. In the Commonwealth Act, there is a provision, confirmed by this Bill, that the grower, apart from the home consumption share of his crop, is to receive from the Australian Wheat Board in return for his wheat the proceeds received by the board for that wheat, leaving it to the board to sell that second part of his crop for any price it thinks fit. With regard to that second part, the Minister has been able, under National Security Regulations and can, under the present stabilisation scheme, sell it for 1s. a bushel, or 5s., or 10s., or for whatever he pleases, or the board can do so subject to the direction of the Minister.

The wheatfarmer naturally feels that if his wheat is taken compulsorily by the Australian Wheat Board, apart from the human consumption wheat, there should be some assurance that he will get for his product its real value. As he knows from past experience that his wheat has been sold at concession rates for many purposes, including dog-biscuits, he feels that he should have some guarantee in this scheme that when his wheat is sold it will be sold for its true value.

The CHAIRMAN: I hope the hon. member will tie up his remarks with the amendment, because he has not done so yet. This is a second reading debate. I have allowed a lot of latitude, but I want members to explain to the Committee how this amendment will affect the position.

Mr. McDONALD: This amendment deals specifically with that issue of price. The

whole object of this part of the measure is to fix the price which the farmer is to get for his wheat, apart from the home consumption wheat. The Leader of the Opposition seeks to take away from the Australian Wheat Board and the Commonwealth Minister power to sell the farmers' wheat for any price he likes, and seeks to impose on them an obligation to sell it for its real value as ascertained by the world market. It is necessary to apply the amendment to bring that about. Although the Federal Minister has sold wheat for what he pleased, we hold that is wrong, and that the Commonwealth has no power to sell for any figure except the actual value of the product. But the State can acquire and sell wheat, and pay for it at any price it pleases. In this respect it is not subject to the Australian Constitution. It can take farmers' wheat, which is worth 10s. on the export market, and say, "We will pay you 1s. for it," and sell it and put the balance into the Treasury. The amendment is necessary because the Bill proposes to use the sovereign powers of the State to make up the deficiency in those of the Commonwealth. But I think the amendment requires to be further amended because, if the Australian Wheat Board is to pay the farmer the full value of his wheat, according to export parity, there will be no money left to create and maintain a stabilisation fund. I move—

That the amendment be amended by adding the following words:—"and the deduction of the contribution of the grower to the Wheat Prices Stabilisation Fund."

That will simply ensure that while the grower is entitled to receive the full value of his wheat, the Commonwealth when paying him will be able to retain the grower's contribution to the stabilisation fund.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Is the amount of the contribution mentioned in the Commonwealth Bill?

Mr. McDONALD: Yes.

Mr. WATTS: I expressed some doubt on this matter, and after hearing the member for West Perth I am quite willing to support the amendment on the amendment.

Amendment on amendment put and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	14
Noes	24
	—
Majority against ..	10
	—

AYES.

Mr. Abbott
Mr. Brand
Mr. Hill
Mr. Keenan
Mr. Mann
Mr. McDonald
Mr. McLarty

Mr. North
Mr. Perkins
Mr. Seward
Mr. Shearn
Mr. Thorn
Mr. Watts
Mr. Doney

(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Coverley
Mr. Fox
Mr. Graham
Mr. J. Hegney
Mr. W. Hegney
Mr. Johnson
Mr. Kelly
Mr. Leahy
Mr. Marshall
Mr. Millington
Mr. Nerdham
Mr. Nulsen

Mr. Owen
Mr. Pantou
Mr. Read
Mr. Smith
Mr. Styanis
Mr. Teller
Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Triat
Mr. Willcock
Mr. Wilson
Mr. Wise
Mr. Cross

(Teller.)

PAIRS.

AYES.

Mr. Lealle
Mr. Stubbs
Mr. Willmott

NOES.

Mr. Hawke
Mr. Collier
Mr. Withers

Amendment on amendment thus negatived.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 9 to 12—agreed to.

Clause 13—Wheat Industry Stabilisation Committee:

Mr. WATTS: I do not think much of the method of appointing the committee. This clause provides that the committee shall consist of such persons as are appointed by the Minister. Now, he has, this session, introduced a number of measures involving committees of this type.

The Premier: Do you want a woman on this one?

Mr. WATTS: No. The Minister has been punctilious in every case in giving some indication as to the type and qualifications of a person to be appointed. The generalising in this case is not satisfactory. I cannot move for any proposition involving the election of persons, but I do propose, by way of testing the feeling of the Committee, to move the amendment standing in my name. I move an amendment—

That in line 1 of Subclause (2) the word "such" be struck out and the word "three" inserted in lieu.

I shall later nominate the type of person to be placed on the committee. I move this amendment without pledging myself to refuse to accept any other suggestion; because a better amendment might be moved. My main object is to determine the number on the committee and the type of persons to be members.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:

I cannot accept either this amendment or those that follow it. This committee is not similar to the boards appointed under legislation previously considered by this House. Those boards were charged with the responsibility of controlling production and organising marketing, subject to the approval of the Minister in certain cases. This committee is purely advisory. The Commonwealth Government is responsible for meeting any deficiency in the stabilisation fund and must see that wheat production is controlled.

Mr. Watts: This committee is to do more than advise.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:

The Commonwealth Government must be in a position to control absolutely the amount of wheat to be grown in Australia, having already entered into an agreement at Washington to observe certain restrictions should necessity arise. The State committee will advise the State Minister, who must do certain things on behalf of the Commonwealth Minister. If that committee could please itself what it did and decide what farmers and growers should be licensed or registered the Minister could not control acreage or guarantee to the Commonwealth Minister that the requirements of the scheme were being adhered to.

Mr. Doney: In the margin it is described as a stabilisation committee.

Mr. Watts: And it will issue licenses.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:

Yes, under the control and direction of the Minister.

Mr. Watts: That does not alter the fact that if you named the members they would still be under your direction.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:

The amendment proposes to set up a committee of three on which the Minister would have one representative, and to allow it to do what it likes. The taxpayers of the Commonwealth must find any deficiency in the stabilisation fund and there must be Gov-

ernment control over the production of the commodity, the price of which is to be guaranteed. The stabilisation proposals are based on the intention that the quantity of wheat to be produced shall be known and provided for. If the Leader of the Opposition is successful with his amendments the stabilisation plan will be impossible, and that may be what he has set out to accomplish. If the Minister thinks the committee is not large enough and sees other men whom he thinks it would be advisable to have on it, he must have power to appoint as many as he thinks will help the scheme. I oppose the amendment and I hope the Committee will not agree to it.

Mr. WATTS: The Minister suggests that because only one member of the committee would be nominated by him, under my proposal, and the other two by organisations interested in wheat growing, he would cease to have control over the committee. At this stage we are not discussing an amendment to remove any control that the clause in its present form gives him.

The Minister for Agriculture: Coming events cast their shadows before.

Mr. WATTS: Undoubtedly, but having heard the Minister, I say that if it were agreed that the committee was to be appointed in the manner I have indicated, I would not proceed with the other amendment. If the Minister argues that because two members of the committee are not to be appointed by him, and that therefore he would cease to have control of the committee, at a stage when the words giving him control are still in the clause, I can only assume the very thing of which I was fearful when I proposed these amendments, that the Minister intends to place on the board "yes" men, with no minds of their own, which would be more disastrous to the industry than the proposal before the Committee at this stage.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I cannot allow that observation to pass without reply. When appointing an advisory committee one looks for brains and efficiency, not for "yes" men. Actually the Minister could do without the committee, and use departmental officers, who would not be "yes" men. He would direct them to do research and look for information, and would expect to get it from them. That is what the committee is for, to

do the things required of it by the Minister so that the scheme can function. Men who are bright, experienced and with knowledge of the industry are required, men who will be able to give the Minister the advice he wants. Men absolutely subservient to the Minister's will are not desired, nor is it contemplated that the men selected will not attempt to do anything unless they are aware that what is proposed coincides with the Minister's ideas. The members of this committee will be expected to say what they think and to tender advice, but in the final analysis it is the Minister and not the committee that will be responsible for the functioning of the scheme and for its proper working. I have no objection whatever to having the two persons the Leader of the Opposition has in mind as members of the committee—so long as I can appoint as many members as I like. I object to being limited to a committee of three and having members nominated for appointment by an outside body having no responsibility whatever to the Government or for the success of the scheme.

Mr. Doney: Will you tell the Leader of the Opposition the men he has in mind, because he may not know.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: He has indicated them in his amendment.

Mr. SEWARD: I cannot understand the Minister's attitude. There was considerable noise while he was speaking, but I understood the Minister to say that he wanted to appoint departmental officers to the committee.

The Minister for Agriculture: No, I did not say that.

Mr. SEWARD: In view of all the noise that was going on, that was all I could gather. If the Minister desires advice regarding the wheatgrowing industry and its problems, surely he could not do better than get that advice from men who are themselves growing wheat and who have had experience in the industry.

The Minister for Agriculture: I agree, and that is whence the Minister will probably get them.

Mr. SEWARD: But we are not legislating for the present Minister; there may be other Ministers.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: You want to legislate against him!

Mr. SEWARD: No, but we should provide that the Minister shall have advice based on the best information available.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: That is his job.

Mr. Watts: We might have the member for Guildford-Midland on the committee!

Mr. SEWARD: The Minister could not get better advice than from those engaged on the industrial side of the industry; they are the men who know about the marketing of wheat and about wheatgrowing in this State. The policy of the wheat board will be under the control of the Commonwealth Minister and under the Australian Wheat Board. The fact that the acreage under wheat in this State has decreased so much while it has increased to such a degree in the Eastern States is an aspect that must be kept before the Commonwealth Minister. Our interests must be preserved to see that our growers get their proper share of the wheat production of Australia. I cannot see any possible objection the Minister could have to the names being supplied to him as suggested. On all boards or committees set up by the Government the nominees have been drawn from the industries concerned. That applied to the hairdressing industry under the Bill we dealt with the other night. On the other hand, we know of instances where the Commonwealth Government has made appointments to which exception could be taken. For instance, a bootmaker from the middle of Australia was appointed as chairman of the Meat Board. That sort of thing would not happen in this State, but we know that formerly there was a producers' representative on the Fremantle Harbour Trust. We know, too, that 15 years of advocacy from this side of the House has not resulted in another representative of the primary producers being appointed in his place. That does not encourage us to rely upon the Government to appoint representatives from the wheat-growing industry in this instance.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 14 to 16—agreed to.

Clause 17—Registration of wheatgrowers:

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:

It is necessary to amend the clause in two places because of typographical errors. I move an amendment—

That in line 4 of paragraph (b) of Sub-clause (3), the word "milling" be struck out and the word "milky" inserted in lieu.

Amendment put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:

I move an amendment—

That in line 5 of paragraph (b) of Sub-clause (3) the word "or" be struck out and the word "on" inserted in lieu.

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

Clauses 18 to 21—agreed to.

New clause:

Mr. McDONALD: When speaking on the second reading I expressed the opinion that it would be very proper that the Bill should be referred to the growers as the people concerned, and said that since I have placed an amendment to that effect on the notice paper I had learnt that the South Australian Government had introduced a corresponding provision in the Bill it had placed before the House of Assembly so that the measure should not come into operation until a poll of growers had pronounced in favour of it. This afternoon I received a telegram from Adelaide indicating that the provision for a poll of registered wheatgrowers had been included in the Wheat Bill and that the measure had been passed by the House of Assembly on the 26th November. Therefore the South Australian House of Assembly has adopted this principle. It should not be necessary to enlarge upon the propriety and justice of taking a poll in a matter affecting retrospectively certain rights of growers in respect of the 1945-46 harvest and prospectively to take the proceeds of their labours and deal with them on the terms laid down in the stabilisation scheme.

The CHAIRMAN: Does the hon. member intend to move the new clause appearing in his name on the notice paper?

Mr. McDONALD: Yes. The new clause is worded in the precise terms of a similar provision in the South Australian Bill.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I must ask the hon. member to move his new clause, because otherwise there is nothing before the Chair.

Mr. McDONALD: I move—

That a new clause be inserted as follows:—

2. (1) The provisions of this Act, other than this section shall not come into operation unless a proclamation is made by the Governor fixing a day on which the Act shall come into operation.

(2) The Governor shall not make such a proclamation unless a ballot of wheatgrowers has been first held on the question whether this Act shall be brought into operation or not, and a majority of the votes validly cast at the ballot are in favour of bringing this Act into operation.

(3) The Chief Electoral Officer for the State appointed under the Electoral Act, 1907-1940, shall conduct a ballot such as mentioned in subsection (2) of this section, as soon after this Act receives the Royal Assent as he can conveniently do so.

(4) At the ballot every person who, under the National Security (Wheat Industry Stabilisation) Regulations of the Commonwealth, held a wheatgrower's license expiring on the first day of March, nineteen hundred and forty-six, or the first day of March, nineteen hundred and forty-seven, shall be entitled to vote.

(5) The Minister for Agriculture shall prepare and supply to the Returning Officer for the State a list containing the names of all persons entitled to vote as provided in Subsection (4) of this section.

The persons whose names appear on the said list and no others shall be entitled to vote at the ballot.

(6) The ballot shall be conducted by postal voting.

(7) Subject to this Act and the regulations the ballot shall be conducted in such manner as the Chief Electoral Officer for the State deems proper.

(8) The Governor may make regulations prescribing any matters necessary or convenient to be prescribed in connection with the ballot to be held under this section.

Under the new clause, if a majority approve of the measure, it will be proclaimed; otherwise it will not become law.

The CHAIRMAN: I rule the new clause out of order on the ground that the cost of holding a referendum to determine whether the Bill shall become operative would impose a charge upon the people, and for a private member to move that is contrary to the Constitution. This has been the practice of the Chamber for many years. Subsection (8) of Section 46 of the Constitution reads—

A vote, resolution, or Bill for the appropriation of revenue or moneys shall not be passed unless the purpose of the appropriation has in the same session been recommended by message of the Governor to the Legislative Assembly.

Standing Order 391 states—

It shall not be competent for a private member to move the House into a Committee of Supply, or of Ways and Means, nor into a Committee of the whole House, for imposing any tax, indent, or impost, nor shall it be competent for a private member in any such Committee to propose increases on the amounts proposed therein.

On those grounds, I rule the new clause out of order.

New clause ruled out.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: It might help if I announce at this stage that I am prepared to move for the insertion of the new clause. The Government would have included it in the first place had there been sufficient time to get the legislation passed and a poll taken without delaying the operation of the scheme, but it was recognised at a meeting of the Agricultural Council when this legislation was being considered that whatever was to be done must be done quickly, as the National Security Regulations would cease to operate at the end of the year and that there would then be a reversion to free selling. I am afraid that this will happen, because it is extremely unlikely that the legislation can be passed in time to prevent it. If South Australia had not included provision for a poll in its Bill, I would have been prepared to take the risk in order to obviate the hiatus that must occur.

The CHAIRMAN: I call the Minister's attention to the fact that there is no motion before the Chair.

New clause:

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I move—

That a new clause, to stand as Clause 2, in terms of that moved by the member for West Perth, be inserted.

The proposed new clause follows closely the wording of the South Australian provision. The South Australian Bill has not yet passed the Upper House, but I have been informed that the Council there will approve of it with the inclusion of this provision. No matter what we do now, the scheme must be held up until effect is given to the South Aus-

tralian measure, and so we might as well take advantage of the delay and have a poll of growers in this State. By providing for a poll, the growers may decide for themselves whether they want a stabilisation scheme on the terms set out in this measure and in Commonwealth legislation, so there is no argument against our passing the Bill. Some people who claim to speak for the growers oppose the Bill, while others who also claim to speak for the growers, favour it. In the circumstances, the best course is to let the growers decide for themselves whether or not they want this legislation. If this is done, there can be no argument afterwards. The Government is quite prepared to leave the matter to the decision of the growers.

The CHAIRMAN: I can accept the new clause, coming as it does from the Minister, because a Message has been received from the Lieut.-Governor recommending appropriation for the purposes of the Bill.

Mr. WATTS: I am pleased at this turn of events. I begin to feel that my protestations have not fallen on entirely deaf ears, because the effect must be that the scheme cannot be adopted unless we are assured that a majority of the growers desire it. If, after due consideration of all its implications, they do desire it, we shall be absolved from further responsibility. I feel that the protests made have produced a desirable effect, and am happy to support the new clause.

Mr. PERKINS: I express my gratification at the Minister's action, which will obviate

a lot of dissatisfaction that would have arisen had the growers not been consulted. If the growers do not like the Bill, they will have an opportunity to vote against it on the plebiscite. Possibly, that may be the means of getting the Commonwealth Government to reconsider its attitude.

Mr. McDONALD: I did not have the opportunity of saying so, Mr. Chairman, but I did intend, with very great respect indeed, to dissent from your ruling. I know this is not relevant, but I did not have the opportunity to say it before. While it is arguable in the defence of the rights of private members whether there has been a Message from the Governor—

The CHAIRMAN: I cannot allow the hon. member to discuss that question. He should have taken the opportunity before.

Mr. McDONALD: I bow to your ruling, Sir, but I did not have the opportunity, because the Minister rose. In the circumstances, the question of power to move the amendment is for the time being academic. The Minister has accepted the amendment and I have nothing further to say on the point at present.

New clause put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

House adjourned at 5.53 p.m.