

Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, 5th November, 1957.

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

QUESTIONS.

STATE HOUSING COMMISSION.

Resumptions from T. S. Plunkett, Cloverdale Area.

Mr. JAMIESON asked the Minister for Housing:

(1) How much land was resumed for housing purposes from the firm of T. S. Plunkett in the Cloverdale area in 1954?

(2) How much land was returned to this firm after subdividing and town planning by the State Housing Commission officers of this area?

(3) What was the cost to the State Housing Commission of—

- (a) planning;
- (b) subdividing;
- (c) road-building?

(4) What was the amount paid to the State Housing Commission for services carried out as in No. (3)?

(5) Are the returned building sites all part of the area originally resumed from the firm of T. S. Plunkett?

The MINISTER replied:

As these questions affect a business firm as well as a Government department, it is my intention to reply to the hon. member direct.

SUBIACO TREATMENT PLANT.

Effluent, Volume and Utilisation.

Mr. ROBERTS asked the Minister for Works:

(1) Is he aware that an average hourly rate of 300,000 gallons, equalling 2,628-million gallons per year, of effluent from the Subiaco treatment plant is discharged into the Indian Ocean?

(2) Is he aware that this quantity of discharge is approximately one-sixth, one-seventh and one-third of the present storage capacity of Mundaring Weir, Canning Dam and Wellington Weir, respectively?

(3) What acreage of land could be irrigated by this 2,628-million gallons of effluent?

(4) Is consideration being given to utilising this effluent, in the future, for irrigation purposes?

(5) If not, why not?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT (for the Minister for Works) replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Yes.

(3) Between 1,000-1,500 acres according to the type of soil, nature of crops and the water distribution system. Water is only required during summer months.

(4) No.

(5) Investigations on several occasions have shown such a scheme to be uneconomical and unsuitable.

SOUTH-WEST POLICE DISTRICT.

Appointment of Policewoman.

Mr. ROBERTS asked the Minister for Police:

(1) Has consideration been given to the appointment of a policewoman for the South-West police district?

(2) If so, what was the decision arrived at, and if an appointment is to be made, when will it become effective?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) It is anticipated that the woman constable will commence duty in Bunbury in approximately the middle of December next.

SUEZ ANZAC MEMORIAL.

Suggested Re-erection at Albany.

Mr. HALL asked the Minister for Lands:

(1) Has a request been received for dedication of any area of land at Albany for the purpose of re-erecting thereon the Anzac memorial from Suez?

(2) If not, will he undertake to give favourable consideration to such a request, when and if received?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) No request has been received by the Lands Department.

(2) If, and when, such a request is received, sympathetic consideration will be given to it.

FACTORIES AND SHOPS ACT.

(a) Employment of Labour and Holidays, Dongara.

Hon. D. BRAND asked the Minister for Labour:

In view of the provisions of Section 99 of the Factories and Shops Act, 1920-1956, what is meant by the following extract from a recent letter—Reference 5207/21—addressed by the Chief Inspector of Factories to a Dongara storekeeper:—

Irrespective of whether you employ labour or not, the weekly half holiday to be observed in Dongara is Saturday?

The MINISTER replied:

The Geraldton shop assistants' award is applicable within a 50-mile radius of Geraldton post office.

Under that award and in conjunction with Section 113 of the Factories and Shops Act the weekly half holiday is Saturday, and shops generally within that area observe the same weekly half holiday, whether persons are employed or not.

(b) Effect of Arbitration Court Award.

Hon. D. BRAND (without notice) asked the Minister for Labour:

Further to my question, in view of the fact that under certain legislation the people in an electoral district can hold a referendum as to the fixation of the half-day holiday, does it mean that such a provision has now been overruled by an award of the Arbitration Court applying to Geraldton?

The MINISTER replied:

From memory, there is provision in the Factories and Shops Act for the conducting of a poll in regard to the half holiday for shops, but as far as I am aware there has

been no poll taken for quite a number of years. It is laid down very clearly under Section 113 or Section 163 of that Act that an award of the Arbitration Court overrides the provisions in the Act. Therefore, if there is in existence an award of the court applying to shop assistants in Geraldton—that is, the industrial agreement between the Shop Assistants' Union and the employers—the effect of that award will extend 50 miles from the Geraldton post office. The award would override the provisions in the Factories and Shops Act, and that was the reason why it was indicated in the answer that the shopkeepers at Dongara, which is 40 miles from Geraldton and within the radius of 50 miles, would be obliged to close on Saturday afternoons.

RAILWAYS.

(a) Closure of Koorda-Mukinbudin and Kununoppin-Merredin Sections.

Mr. CORNELL asked the Minister representing the Minister for Railways:

In view of the considerable road works to be undertaken in the Koorda, Mt. Marshall and Mukinbudin districts by the Main Roads Department during the current financial year, are further rail closures contemplated, namely, the sections from Koorda to Mukinbudin and from Kununoppin to Merredin?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT replied:

No.

(b) Reopening of Lines for Wheat Season.

Hon. A. F. WATTS asked the Premier:

(1) Has he received a letter from the Farmers' Union of W.A. Inc., suggesting that in wheat-growing areas in which rail services have been suspended steps should be taken to provide trains for the carriage of wheat and superphosphate during the grain receipt period?

(2) Is it likely that this proposal, or any similar proposal, will be agreed to? If so, in what areas and on what terms?

(3) When would the period in respect of which the trains would be available commence, and when would it be expected to end?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT (for the Premier) replied:

The Farmers' Union has been advised that its proposal would be uneconomical for the Railway Department.

PARLIAMENTARY SESSION.

Closing Date and New Legislation.

Hon. D. BRAND (without notice) asked the Minister for Transport:

Does he think that we can finish the parliamentary session on the target date, the 21st November, when at this late hour notice has been given of nine new Bills?

Two of them are hardy annuals; but nevertheless highly contentious measures. In addition there is quite a lot of important legislation, such as the Long Service Leave Bill, still to be discussed. Is he of the opinion that it is fair to the Opposition because we are all anxious that the session shall not drag on? We must be given full opportunity of discussing all the legislation, and I would like him to give me some assurance that if any further Bills are to be introduced we will be given all the co-operation necessary by the Government to enable us to discuss it.

The MINISTER replied:

First of all, the time stated was a target, and I think the Premier still feels that it is possible for this session to conclude at approximately that date. Naturally, it will depend upon the amount of co-operation extended by the Opposition, and also Government supporters, as to what measure of progress will be made. So far as additional legislation is concerned, further to that of which notice was given this afternoon, it is not anticipated that many more Bills will be introduced—there may be one or two minor measures only.

Finally I shall endeavour to co-operate with the Opposition to meet, to some extent, the apparent desire of the Leader of the Opposition to reach the target date by sitting a little later this evening.

CHAMBERLAIN INDUSTRIES.

Cabinet Consideration of Committee's Report.

Mr. WILD (without notice) asked the Minister for Transport:

Has Cabinet met since the House sat on last Thursday; if so, has the parliamentary committee's report on Chamberlain Industries been discussed?

The MINISTER replied:

Cabinet met yesterday afternoon, but, owing to the absence of the Premier in the Eastern States in connection with civil defence matters, this report was not discussed.

FLOUR.

Rationing of Mills, etc.

Mr. COURT (without notice) asked the Minister for Agriculture:

In regard to flour rationing—

- (1) It is correct that local flour mills are on restricted flour production quotas?
- (2) Are the quotas applicable to both local consumption and export?
- (3) What is the basis of the quotas, and do they allow for seasonal movements in local consumption?
- (4) Are bakers on quotas?
- (5) Does he expect any shortage of local supply?

The MINISTER replied:

The hon. member made available this question today. I endeavoured to contact the most likely sources in the Commonwealth to obtain the correct answers and information. As in two instances the officers concerned were away, I ask for this question to be postponed.

BASIL MURRAY MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP FUND.

Trustees, Funds, Awards, etc.

Mr. ACKLAND (without notice) asked the Minister for Justice:

(1) Who are the present trustees appointed to administer the Basil Murray Co-operative Memorial Scholarship Fund?

(2) When was the fund first established?

(3) From what sources was the fund collected?

(4) What was the original sum collected and how is it invested?

(5) Have further funds been raised, and if so, from what source?

(6) How many boys have been awarded scholarships?

(7) What is the total amount expended by the trustees on behalf of the boys awarded scholarships?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Messrs. E. Thorley Loton, farmer, chairman of Westralian Farmers Co-operative Ltd. and the Co-operative Federation of W.A.

E. P. Roberts, farmer, chairman of Meckering Co-operative Co. Ltd. and member of executive council of the Co-operative Federation of W.A.

W. Blackwell, secretary, Co-operative Federation of W.A.

(2) Collections commenced in October, 1925. The covering Act was assented to in 1926.

(3) Collections were made through various country co-operative units, and ceased in 1929. Amounts collected totalled £1,203.

(4) All sums collected were invested in Westralian Farmers Co-op. Ltd. debentures.

(5) No further donations have since been made.

(6) The scholarship winners who attended Muresk Agricultural College in accordance with the fund were—W. Marsh, H. E. Martin and S. Fletcher. Grants paid were £630. That covered up to 1939. From then on the rules of scholarship were changed under amendment assented to on the 30th November, 1938. In 1939 the scholarship was awarded to Mr. R. Melvin for a period of five years to be trained in co-operative administration. Mr. Melvin, after three years' training, joined the forces and then resumed his training on his discharge for a further two years. The

grants awarded amounted to £194. Due to economic changes, we have found the fund too insignificant to attract attention.

(7) Is covered in the foregoing answers—total amount being £824. The balance of funds in hand is £2,932 and has reached this figure by the accretion of interest payments. The funds held are—

	£	s.	d.
Westralian Farmers Co-operative Ltd. debentures	2,470	0	0
Westralian Farmers Co-operative Ltd. shares	111	0	0
Short term loan	300	0	0
Deposit	51	8	1
	£2,932	8	1

Mr. Melvin is now a country co-operative manager.

UNIFORM BUILDING BY-LAWS.

Deliberations of Committee.

Mr. COURT (without notice) asked the Minister representing the Minister for Town Planning:

(1) Did the committee considering the uniform building by-laws finalise its deliberations at the meeting scheduled for 6.30 p.m. on Tuesday last?

(2) If so, when will their recommendations be known?

(3) If they did not finalise their deliberations, when do they expect to finish and their recommendations to be made known?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Action has now been taken for the necessary amendments to be submitted to the Executive Council.

(3) Answered by Nos. (1) and (2).

BILL—BASIL MURRAY CO-OPERATIVE MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP FUND ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 31st October.

MR. NALDER (Katanning) [4.48]: From the information given to us at the last sitting of this House with reference to the Bill before us, I felt that quite a number of members on this side would have no alternative but to vote against it, because here we have another example where individuals or firms require amendments to existing legislation and they try to get them by giving the Minister or those introducing the measure very little information. I am not blaming the Minister; I blame the people who supplied him with the information.

We were told practically nothing at all that would give us any indication as to why the Bill was brought before the House, except a broad outline. If this sort of legislation is to be introduced from time to time, individuals or firms who desire its passage should provide some information concerning it. Possibly the Minister thought that members on this side of the House had a full knowledge of the history of this scholarship, but they had very little information. On the facts that he gave to the House, we would have had no course to adopt but to oppose the measure because of the small amount of information provided.

However, several members on this side made investigations over the week-end; and from the information I have received, I feel sure the Bill is in the interests of those to whom the Minister referred. I think that we derived more information from the questions directed to the Minister by the member for Moore this afternoon than we obtained from the Minister's speech; and the information given was vital and such as we should possess.

From the Minister's comments, one would have been led to believe that the fund was of a very sizeable amount, because he talked about giving scholarships to farmers' sons to make them better farmers and also to sons of those interested in the co-operative movement—probably directors, even sons of staff members of the co-operative movement.

But though we would have been led to believe the fund was quite a substantial one, from the information we have been given this afternoon in reply to questions, we find that it is only very small; and I feel sure that whatever the authorities of the Co-operative Federation intend to do, under present-day money values, it would not amount to very much at all.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: What is the amount?

Mr. NALDER: It is £2,900; and very little has been spent since 1939. The history of this scholarship was briefly outlined by the Minister, but I would like to touch on it again because I think that the information I have will enable it to be more clearly understood by members. The original scheme was intended to perpetuate the memory of one who had done a great deal for the co-operative movement in Western Australia—Mr. Basil Murray. The money was collected by voluntary contributions from various sources—shareholders and others who were interested in the fund; and that amount was contributed in the first place with the idea of educating farmers' sons at the Muresk Agricultural College. The Minister told us this afternoon that four boys had been educated there—or received assistance in their education—between 1926 and 1938.

Amending legislation was brought before the House and passed during that period. From that time onwards the object of the fund was altered considerably, because it

was made possible for the trustees to spend the money in educating people in the co-operative movement. I think that possibly there was quite a departure from the original scheme. The information I have had given to me today is to the effect that there was little interest shown in the scheme because the fund was so small.

I understand that quite a bit of advertising was done with a view to inducing interested people to get in touch with the Co-operative Federation for the purpose of having their sons educated at Muresk. I presume that the fund would have provided only a small portion of the cost of education.

The Minister for Justice: It is an outstanding school to which to send a boy.

Mr. NALDER: The original principle was very good indeed, and I am sure it was highly commended by everyone. But the fund was so small that it was considered the advantage to be gained was not proportionate to the gain that could be derived from adding the money to other funds to assist in the education of the staff of, and others concerned in, the co-operative movement.

I gather that the purpose of the Bill is to assist in the training of staff and directors in the principles of co-operation, in business salesmanship, budgeting and stock control, and in regard to other practical aspects of business. I obtained information from one who has been interested in the co-operative movement for a good many years and who is manager of one of the country co-operative societies. In his office this morning he gave me a rough history of the scheme up to the present, and I am very much indebted to him for what he told me. I intend to pass the information on to the House; and as a result, I am sure members will be only too happy to assist the passage of the measure.

The co-operative societies in Western Australia contribute annually to the fund a percentage per £1 of their net profits. That sum is quite a reasonable one and the Co-operative Federation of Western Australia pools the money and uses it to pay the expenses of education of staff. It may pick one or two members of the staff of various societies and they come to Perth for a week of lectures given by eminent businessmen and leaders of various professions in the metropolitan area in order that they may become efficient in their particular line.

That is very commendable, and I am sure the outcome of this school will be of advantage to the co-operative movement. The idea of the amending legislation is to use the interest received from the money invested to assist the school in educating directors and staff members that any of the societies might choose from time to time, to come down to the school for attendance at the lectures to which I have referred.

Because of that information, I am quite happy to support the Bill, and I hope that the comments I made in the first place will be used to assist the House in passing this piece of legislation. We would not have felt it necessary to spend so much time as I have devoted to debating this measure had we been given full information in the first place, and I suggest to the Minister for Justice that if he is approached in future to introduce legislation of this sort, he will obtain full information. The answers to questions asked by the member for Moore this afternoon gave us information we required, and I am sure that every member will agree it is necessary that when we are to discuss any legislation of this nature, we should be given as much information as possible, so as to facilitate its passage through the House.

The Minister for Justice: That would not be enough.

Mr. NALDER: It would assist, as the Minister well knows. I support the second reading.

MR. ACKLAND (Moore) [5.1]: Members may wonder why I asked my set of questions this afternoon, but when the Minister resumed his seat last Thursday night it was my intention to oppose the Bill, because the information given to the House was such that I, as one of the earliest members of the co-operative movement in this State, felt hostile towards the measure.

I well remember early in this century, when the farming community was at a low ebb and when, with the object of reducing costs, the farmers formed a co-operative society. At that time it was the desire that members of the society should contribute £10 or £20, and many of them had to scrape the bottom of the barrel to find that much, in order to establish the society, the purpose of which was to act as a brake on the merchants of this State in the matter of costs.

Mr. Basil Murray played a prominent part in making the original society an effective working unit and I think it was through his efforts, more than those of anybody else, that it became firmly established. Although I have been a member of the co-operative movement since early in the century and have given it my loyal support, I am disappointed with the organisation today, because it has completely forgotten the objectives with which it originally set out.

I think it is a member of every organisation of merchants, distributors, machinery agents, wool agents, and so on in this State and charges exactly the same commission and costs for all its services and, except for the rebates which go back to the shareholders, in my opinion it is of no benefit to the members who deal with it. Were it not for the fact that I

have been associated with that organisation for so many years—it is hard to change one's practices—I would be loyal to it no longer.

In view of the information we have received, however, it is my intention to support the Bill. This legislation is a great departure from the original intention when the scholarship was established. I had no idea that so small a sum was invested originally and today it is only £2,900. If it were not for the fact that the co-operative societies themselves are contributing one farthing in the £ from their profits, as the member for Katanning said, it would not be able to function and give service.

Mr. Perkins: They are not contributing to this trust, but to a separate fund.

Mr. ACKLAND: They are contributing to make it possible to give effect to this amendment. I asked my questions in a frame of mind antagonistic towards this legislation and, not from information given by the Minister but from that which we have had to drag out—I rang the parent organisation three times without receiving the information I required, but fortunately the member for Katanning was more successful in the country than I was at head office—it is my intention now to support the Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

BILL—STAMP ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 31st October.

HON. D. BRAND (Greenough) [5.1]: The Treasurer was very brief in introducing this taxing measure. Certainly he gave notice of his intention to introduce it when he brought down his Budget this year, but it is yet another measure imposing further taxation on the people—

The Minister for Transport: Almost like the Menzies diesel tax.

Hon. D. BRAND: Two wrongs do not make a right. The Minister was most vocal in his criticism of the Federal Government, during the last Federal election, on account of its taxation measures, and I think his party published an advertisement about "Taxes Raiders"; but now this sort of taxation has assumed an air of correctness and is quite in order, simply because his Government is imposing it.

The Minister for Transport: This is chicken feed.

Mr. BRAND: As members know, it takes pennies to make up pounds. This is not chicken feed because, according to the

figures given by the Treasurer, it will bring in £80,000 per annum and I think it will probably total £100,000 per annum in a full financial year. The Minister for Transport cannot get away from the fact that this is a measure to impose further taxation on the people of the State.

When introducing the Bill the Treasurer said it would be helpful when he was giving evidence before the Grants Commission because, if he could tell a story about imposing further taxation upon the people of the State, it might help to offset the possibility of a penalty when the grant to this State was being decided. I think the time has come when we should not have to do certain things just because the standard States, which may be socialistic or extravagant States, have done them.

This State may be a little bit more careful or may have more regard to the difficulties of its people and should be able to refuse to impose such a penalty just because the standard States have done so. I do not think the Grants Commission would work solely on that basis and I think the Treasurer added that comment just to boost his argument. If such a factor would influence the Grants Commission, I think that body is following the wrong lines—

Mr. Johnson: Haven't you read the Grants Commission's report?

Hon. D. BRAND: Not fully, like other members here. I am only stating what the Treasurer put before the House and I assume he had regard for what the Grants Commission has said in the past. In giving reasons why we should support the Bill, the Treasurer said the Government's expenses were increasing every day. We realise that, but we also recognise that by continual impositions of taxation and other increases in charges, we are contributing to that condition and are increasing costs to the people—

The Minister for Justice: I do not think there will be any outcry about this imposition.

Hon. D. BRAND: That is the approach of the Minister for Justice to a number of measures here; that they are small and insignificant, while, in fact, when we appreciate their full impact, we find it is much greater than he would lead us to believe.

The Minister for Justice: You would not begrudge the one penny.

Hon. D. BRAND: I do, because it represents a 50 per cent. increase on the present charge.

The Minister for Transport: Can we take it, then, that if, and when, you become head of the Government, you will repeal the measure?

Hon. D. BRAND: The Minister is seeking information that I cannot give. It could be that when we get there the Treasury will be in such a chaotic financial state

that we will have to consider such measures. In the meantime, it is the responsibility of the Government and members expect the Government to face up to it. We, on this side, believe the time has come to call a halt to the continual imposition of taxes and in this regard I feel that the measure is finicky and hardly worth while. We do not support the measure.

MR. JOHNSON (Leederville) [5.14]: I am interested to note that the Leader of the Opposition thinks that the £80,000 return forecast from this measure is finicky and not worth while. That is further evidence of his irresponsibility in the position in which he finds himself.

Mr. Court: I do not think he said that.

Mr. JOHNSON: He did not say he was irresponsible; but I say he is irresponsible. The Leader of the Opposition said that the tax was finicky and not worth while.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: What he should have said was that you were irresponsible.

Mr. Perkins: The Minister for Justice said what you have just quoted.

Mr. Court: He did not say that £80,000 was finicky.

Mr. JOHNSON: He said that the tax was not worth while, and if that is his attitude towards money, all well and good.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: The Minister for Transport said it was chicken feed.

Mr. JOHNSON: So it is in some ways. Further, the Leader of the Opposition made it clear that although he has a responsible position as Leader of Her Majesty's Opposition, he is not fully aware of the contents of past Grants Commission reports. Opposition leaders, and the senior member on the Opposition benches, have a very real place in Parliament. One of their functions is intelligent and informed criticism. That cannot be done in relation to taxes—and particularly in relation to taxes that are relative to the situation of the claimant States—unless the position is well understood. I am in the position of being a back bencher, and therefore I am not required to be particularly responsible.

Hon. D. Brand: You are training to be Treasurer.

Mr. JOHNSON: But I am in the position to criticise those who adopt an irresponsible attitude while in a position of responsibility, and it is in that light that I criticised the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: You would make a good Opposition man; there is no doubt about you!

Mr. JOHNSON: As any member of Parliament knows it is far easier, and far more enjoyable, to be a member of the Opposition, even if less useful.

The **SPEAKER:** I might point out to the hon. member that whether he will make a good Opposition member or not, is not the subject of the debate. We are considering a Bill to impose an extra 1d. stamp duty on cheques and I suggest the hon. member pursue that line of debate.

Mr. JOHNSON: I bow to your ruling, Mr. Speaker. The question of the stamp duty on cheques is one that must be considered against the background of the finance of the States, and of the Commonwealth. Because of the unfortunate fact that the people of the Commonwealth have elected a Government that does not believe in value remaining in the £—

Hon. D. Brand: That is absolutely stupid; and you talk about irresponsibility!

Mr. JOHNSON: We have an irresponsible Government in the Federal sphere.

Hon. D. Brand: What a judge you are!

Mr. JOHNSON: Value has drifted out of the £ to such an extent that the amount represented by the average cheque has increased, as compared with earlier times. The value of the average cheque has now very greatly increased. Admittedly there are larger numbers of cheques passing through the clearing houses, because of the increased volume of business done brought about by the increasing population, and the slight improvement in the standard of living, but the average cheque however is now drawn for larger amounts.

A serious study of the subject would reveal that the comparative value of stamp duty now as compared with the value at the time the last rise was made in this particular charge, indicates that an increase to 4d. or 5d. would be required to make it comparable. I think it is essential that this charge should be made. I would also like to point out that, in conjunction with this, there should be an increase in various other charges—for instance, in probate duty.

Hon. D. Brand: Would you say it is essential?

Mr. JOHNSON: Yes. If the Leader of the Opposition understood the manner in which the Grants Commission works, he would realise it is essential because if we did not make charges roughly comparable with those of the standard States, we would receive less than others.

Hon. D. Brand: That is not right.

Mr. JOHNSON: Although the Leader of the Opposition has no objection to increased taxation being applied by the Federal Government—which has a very large surplus—he does object to an increase in tax being imposed by a State Government, which is not in a position to create a surplus.

Hon. D. Brand: That is not correct. If that were true, it would be the same as your attitude; but my attitude is not that.

Mr. JOHNSON: I can only suggest that if the Leader of the Opposition were to read with some detachment, what he did say, he would appreciate that at least the tone of what he said was to the effect that it is all right for the Federal Government to increase taxes—they should not be criticised—but once the State Government enters the field of taxation, it is his duty to criticise. That is not a responsible attitude.

The requirements of the Grants Commission are such that if we are to receive the full grant we should have, or the most that we could obtain, then we must keep in line with the standard States in many ways. One of the other taxes that comes to mind is an increase in probate duty. Another item which I think ought to be increased very greatly is railway freights. However, I cannot discuss those matters now except to say they are necessary.

Hon. D. Brand: Do you think there should be an increase in probate duty?

Mr. JOHNSON: I think it is necessary, and if the Leader of the Opposition will read the report, he will see that it is implied that, although the choice is ours, if we do not get a better yield from our probate duty, we will in all probability suffer the penalty; in the same way as we are already suffering the penalty because the yield from our railway freights is less than that of the standard States, each of which has increased its freights during the period that we have not.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: What about hire-purchase?

Mr. JOHNSON: Accordingly, I support this legislation. Nobody is anxious to support whole-heartedly legislation that increases taxation. There is always some reserve. After all, I do draw a cheque myself about once a week and naturally I will have some slight resentment towards this impost in the first week or two after it applies; but I recognise the need for this tax and I am surprised at the attitude adopted by members of the Opposition.

HON. SIR ROSS McLARTY (Murray) [5.23]: I think it is about time we had a general look at these taxation proposals. It is also time that we tried to do something about reducing taxation rather than continuously increasing it. When it comes to getting more taxation out of the people the present Government has scraped the bottom of the barrel. Ever since it has been in office, the Government has been looking for ways and means to increase taxation and charges

generally. I think our present Government will quite easily have created a record in this direction.

It is most interesting to read what happened in 1931 when the Mitchell Government increased the duty on cheques from 1d. to 2d. The Leader of the Opposition at the time was the late Philip Collier and he was not at all enthusiastic about this tax. The late Mr. J. C. Willcock thought it was such a burden that he moved to reduce it from 2d. to 1½d. A division was called for and the Government of the day won. It is interesting to read what the late Mr. Troy had to say in this matter. He said, "I would hate to pay 5s. for a cheque book with 30 cheques in it." If members care to read what the Labour members of that day had to say about this matter, they will get a fair idea as to what their attitude was. It is interesting to compare it with the attitude they adopt today.

The Minister for Labour: The basic wage then was only £3 a week; now it is £13 12s. 9d.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I know all about the basic wage then and now. But all this increased taxation is leading to inflation, and we are getting it in large doses. Let us take the example of the man who lives in the country and who does his business by cheque. For a start there is an exchange rate of 6d. to be considered. On top of that there is 4d. postage, and now we propose to put a charge of 3d. on his cheque. His cost therefore will amount to 1s. 1d. on each cheque, no matter how small it is. To this, of course, could be added the cost of the receipt, which would be 3½d.

The Minister for Transport: You forget that Mr. Menzies increased that from 3½d. to 4d.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I know.

The Minister for Transport: You said it would be 3½d.; you are old-fashioned!

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I am talking about the cost of sending back a receipt; it will be 3½d.

The Minister for Transport: I can see the Scotsman in you coming out; you do not stick the flap of your envelope down!

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: If we take that 3½d. into consideration plus 1d. for a receipt, the total charge for a small cheque will be 1s. 5½d. The member for Leederville said something about the Grants Commission, and accused the Leader of the Opposition of being irresponsible. How much longer are we to be dragged at the heels of the Grants Commission? Let us assume that in New South Wales or one of the standard States, an iniquitous, or very high tax, is imposed. Does it necessarily mean that we must follow suit? If that is so, what is the good of us? We have often heard it said that government is finance,

and finance is government. Must we be directed by the Grants Commission as to what taxation we shall impose?

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: How do we get away from it?

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I cannot answer that under the present set-up. But the present system is undoubtedly leading to extravagance; there is no question about that. The more extravagance there is, the greater the amount of taxation that will have to be imposed both by the Commonwealth Government and the State Government.

The Minister for Transport: Could you quote a few examples of this extravagance?

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: It can be seen all around us, both in the Commonwealth and in the State fields. The hon. member has had examples quoted here time and again. Surely he is not trying to tell me that there is no extravagance either in the Commonwealth field or in that of the State!

The Minister for Transport: You point to one in the State.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: The list is as long as my arm.

The Minister for Transport: These generalities are all right, but they do not establish anything.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: There is no doubt that we can tighten up considerably in this direction.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: The Unfair Trading Commissioner, for one.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: While Governments find it so easy to get money by means of taxation, they will continue to impose these taxes, and if we sit here and continue to say "Yes" to every Government measure that is introduced to increase taxation, it will go on increasing them, because Governments will not only spend all they can get, but considerably more. The easier it is to get, the more they will spend. I think we should have a general look at the taxation position and not be Yes-men to every additional taxation proposal brought forward. Whilst this one might be classed as minor, we have had many of these minor taxes, and members must realise they will continue to get many more, because the Government will impose a new tax on everything that it can.

MR. PERKINS (Roe) [5.31]: I would also like to add my protest against this further taxation measure. While I think we realise it is a comparatively small increase compared with some other increases which this Government has imposed or is considering imposing, I still feel that we cannot let any of these increases pass without protest.

To begin with, I have very grave doubts as to whether forms of indirect taxation, such as taxes on cheque forms, are fair. Certainly the Government, when introducing this particular Bill, did not set out to make a case that this was a particularly fair form of taxation. The incidence will certainly hit firms or individuals who use cheques as a method of payment, as compared with purely cash transactions, very much harder, and I think we all realise that the modern development of cheques as a basis of payment for commodities is a very satisfactory one. It has much to commend it and is probably much safer than using currency; it is something which is desirable and should be encouraged. This tax, of course, places a further impost on any transactions that are settled by cheque.

I was very interested in what the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Murray had to say on the general question of increases in costs. It must disturb all of us who think about these increases and the extent to which Australia has been pricing herself out of international markets in recent years in regard to so many of her products. Although this is a comparatively small impost—

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Not a small percentage.

Mr. PERKINS: —It is adding one more burden in the total costs of industry. I believe there is a great responsibility on all Governments today to keep a very close check on their own costs and expenditure before coming to Parliament and asking for increases in taxation. The Minister for Transport has asked the member for Murray to quote concrete instances where waste is taking place in Government services.

None of us likes to be specific in these matters but I should think that the Minister for Transport would have an infinite number of instances available to him. I would quote the Midland Junction workshops, where there has been a great deal of waste going on, and I think there is every reason to believe, from the information coming to many of us, that that waste is continuing at the present time. I have no doubt that that information is available to Cabinet.

The Minister for Transport: Strangely enough, information came to Cabinet yesterday that they could do a better job, a quicker job and a cheaper job than any tenders received for a certain job—a large one, too.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: What was that?

Mr. PERKINS: I would be interested to have the Minister for Transport give us details of that particular transaction.

The Minister for Transport: It is a fact.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: What is?

Mr. PERKINS: It shows there has been some improvement there, but from the information that comes to many of us from people employed at the Midland workshops who have a detailed knowledge of the organisation there, it frankly amazes me that, if their costing system is anything like accurate, they can compete with even the least efficient industry in this State.

Hon. D. Brand: That is why they can quote competitive prices—could be.

Mr. PERKINS: If their costing system is not accurate, any sort of a cost figure can be arrived at, which may not be the slightest bit realistic.

The Minister for Transport: I think we will discuss this under the Railway Estimates.

Mr. PERKINS: If the Minister for Transport, who is in charge of the House at the moment, wants concrete instances where waste is occurring in Government services, and where there can be a considerable tightening up, all members of this House can quote him such concrete instances.

My point, Mr. Speaker, in speaking is to suggest to the Government that there is a great responsibility indeed on any Government in Australia at the present time to make a very close examination of its own expenditure before coming to Parliament asking for increased taxes or increased charges on any account. We have had a period of prosperity since the war, when there has been an almost uninterrupted rise in the real standard of living in Australia.

I believe that that position has possibly misled some people into thinking that there are no very great problems in store for us. I am of the opinion that if anything serious goes wrong with the wool industry and wool prices in the next few years, there are a great many people in Australia who are going to wake up almost next morning with a realisation that they have been living in a fool's paradise.

Member: Hear, hear!

Mr. PERKINS: The more we raise our own costs, the more difficult it is going to be for primary industries which are earning Australia's international exchange at the present time. We have seen one after the other of what might be described as the minor primary industries work themselves into the position where it is no longer possible for them to compete with their products in the markets of the world and a more limited range of our products is left to earn that international exchange.

Obviously, we must be worried about what the position could be for all of us if anything went wrong with the markets and the prices available for these key export products. That is why I feel that whenever these taxing measures are brought before Parliament, we should

voice our opinions on them, and I, for one, am very concerned at any suggested increase of taxation or Government charges while there is evidence of considerable waste in Government services.

Mr. Andrew: Tell Mr. Menzies that.

Mr. PERKINS: I hope all Governments will have a very close look indeed at the taxpayers' money which they are spending, in effect, as trustees for the people from whom they collect it. Governments fail to realise that they are trustees of the taxpayers' money, and in too many instances there is a marked variation between the way Governments and Government servants spend taxpayers' money as compared with how they would spend their own funds. Surely that must be the test as to whether expenditure is justified or not! I would like to add my protest against this legislation.

THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT
(Hon. H. E. Graham—East Perth) [541]: This is, indeed, a storm in a teacup. There are, of course, appropriate places where one can divest himself of his politics; street-corners, the Esplanade, public halls and that sort of place. There is no question, however—and I do not propose to pursue this any further—that the State of Western Australia as been caught up with the Menzies inflation. Everybody knows that the £ today is worth only about ten shillings as compared with what it was when the Menzies Government came into office.

Mr. Court: Haven't you had more than an equivalent reimbursement?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: That is approximately the position; therefore, whatever a person is paying on a fixed basis, he is, in fact, only paying approximately one-half of what he was paying then. Of course, all Government commitments have gone up with the general inflationary spiral and of necessity the Government must have a greater sum of money in order to do the same things. However, we know it is not only a question of doing the same things. There are constantly new calls on the Government, many of them promoted by members of the State Parliament; and there is, of course, no criticism of that.

I notice, however, that there is criticism of the Government when it seeks to achieve some economies. I recall last week—or was it the week before—a change in the administration of the State State Housing Commission that would save some thousands of pounds per year, and there was a resolution of protest. The closure of certain railway lines could effect economies; again resolutions of protest! Also economies both in the metropolitan area in connection with fares for school children and bus services for school children in country districts. At the present

moment a select committee is investigating in the country, and there were protests in the metropolitan area.

Mr. Wild: That protest about the State Housing Commission was in regard to an appointment you made; it had nothing to do with economy.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: They are only words to talk around the the proposition.

Mr. Wild: It was not words, it was action on your part—political action.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: The same as the cessation of railway services was action, according to the hon. member; and then all the qualifications in the world and so on in connection with these other matters. That is all in the spirit of the game of party politics; namely, that whichever way the Government goes about a matter, from the Opposition's point of view it is wrong. As I have already mentioned, because of the inflationary spiral, an increase in charges is necessary to meet the higher costs. Incidentally, the Labour Party is being consistent in this matter. From what the member for Murray told us, away back in the early 1930's, Labour, when in Opposition, sought to effect a 50 per cent. increase in the stamp charge of a cheque; and that is precisely what a Labour Government is doing at the moment.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: No, a 50 per cent. decrease.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: No. When the proposal was to increase the stamp charge from 1d. to 2d., the Labour opposition sought to make the increase a half-penny, which was a 50 per cent. increase; and that is precisely what is taking place now.

Mr. Court: You could look at it in another way and say that they tried to make a 25 per cent. decrease.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: No. We can only deal with the situation that is in existence. At present the amount is 2d. and the proposal is to increase it to 3d. which, as the Premier pointed out, is the ruling charge throughout the Commonwealth.

This is not a matter of the State being dragged at the heels of the other States by the Grants Commission, but a matter of plain commonsense. We are virtually appellants or supplicants and receive moneys at the expense of the other States, so we cannot expect to receive credits if we are inflicting upon our people a lesser burden, by way of taxation and charges, than is inflicted by the non-claimant States.

The Grants Commission does not tell us that we shall increase charges on items (a), (b) and (c) because those items are below the Australian standard, but naturally it must have some regard for the

overall position. What is the net result? The State is £80,000 out of pocket in a financial year because of the lower charge imposed on its own people, and also £80,000 out of pocket because we receive that much less from the Grants Commission.

So it appears that in many of these matters, whether we like it or not, for every penny we extract from our own people, we are subsidised one penny by the Commonwealth Government through the Grants Commission; that is, where our general charges are less than those ruling in the non-claimant States. The proposal is to raise a few score thousand pounds in a year. One would imagine, from the utterances of some members of the Opposition, that the heavens were about to fall. When, a few weeks ago, it was a matter of imposing upon the business fraternity and the public generally, a charge of several million pounds in connection with diesel fuel, I did not notice in here any motions of protest to be forwarded to the Commonwealth Government.

Hon. D. Brand: There was great protest, nevertheless.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: This was not the place for it.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: I am aware of motions being moved in the House by members opposite when there was a Federal Labour Government.

Mr. I. W. Manning: Are you going to reduce the licence fees on diesel vehicles?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: The peculiar part about the diesel question is that all the inquiries in the world, made to the Commonwealth in Canberra or at the Federal departments in Western Australia, cannot elicit any definite information as to how that tax is to be applied, and upon whom.

Hon. D. Brand: I think it is quite clear as to whom it is to apply.

The SPEAKER: Order! We are dealing with the Stamp Act at the moment.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: As is known, the Government is examining many of the avenues of its expenditure with a view to effecting reductions; and because of circumstances, it is compelled to seek other avenues of finance. We are not confronted with the situation which faces the Commonwealth. If incomes increase in this period of inflation, the Commonwealth automatically receives more income tax. But because of the rise in wages and incomes and charges generally, the State requires additional funds with which to meet its obligations. A small matter, such as £80,000, surely does not warrant all the excitement of which there has been evidence in the last hour or so! I hope and trust that Parliament will agree to this measure.

On motion by Hon. A. F. Watts, debate adjourned.

**BILL—UNFAIR TRADING AND PROFIT
CONTROL ACT CONTINUANCE
AND AMENDMENT.**

Order Discharged.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: I move—

That this Order of the Day be discharged from the notice paper.

Mr. Court: Have you worked out a worse one in its place?

The SPEAKER: Order!

Question put and passed.

BILL—HOUSING LOAN GUARANTEE.

In Committee.

Mr. Heal in the Chair; the Minister for Housing in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 and 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Interpretations:

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: Owing to the enthusiasm with which the measure has been received, notwithstanding my friends the Press, requests have been made to allow bodies other than the institutions outlined to participate in the scheme. Yesterday afternoon a gentleman called at my office and told me that he had received an offer of £100,000 from Victoria to invest under the terms of the Bill. So, I move an amendment—

That after the word "institution" where lastly appearing in line 3, page 2, the words ", body or person," be inserted.

Needless to state, and following on what I said the other evening, the Minister and the department will exercise greater interest and more care in regard to transactions undertaken by bodies and persons because they could be of a will-o'-the-wisp nature, whereas a reputable institution with a name to protect, and one that is anxious to continue in business for a number of years, has the prospect of losing the right to operate under the scheme, and that, in itself, I think is sufficient to ensure that such an organisation will play the game in every respect.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: I support the amendment which will save me the necessity of moving the first one I have on the notice paper, because the intention, as far as I can see, is precisely the same.

Amendment put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I move an amendment—

That after the word "instrument" in line 15, page 2, the words ", if any," be inserted.

A person and certain bodies, such as business firms, would not, or need not necessarily, have a constitution. This automatically follows on the previous amendment.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: I move an amendment—

That after the definition of "new house" the following definition be inserted:—

"sub-standard house" means a dwelling-house which is erected upon portion of land used for primary production and which, in the opinion of the local authority of the district wherein such dwelling-house is situate—

(a) is not in conformity with the building, health or other bylaws or standards of the local authority; or

(b) is of such a poor standard of comfort or convenience that it should be replaced by another.

For some time it has been my opinion that an effort should be made, in the housing benefit proposals, for those persons engaged in primary production, which I have attempted later to define, who have houses of a sub-standard nature—many of them because the people concerned started their development with limited capital and have been unable to provide decent living accommodation—to be entitled to receive the advantage of those proposals.

I have sought some reasonable way in the subsequent amendments to provide means whereby institutions, particularly as now defined in the Bill, might be able to assist in the provision of suitable dwellings where there are now only substandard premises on properties such as I have mentioned. This will at least provide a possibility of the benefit, contemplated by the Bill, being available to the persons I have mentioned; or, alternatively, it will give them some opportunity of having their cases considered; because at present they cannot be considered under any law or under the Bill, unless it is amended.

My amendment is not moved with any intention of making difficulties with regard to the measure or of submitting it to improper criticism. I seek only some way by which the people to whom I have referred may be able to receive consideration if the premises which they occupy are obviously, in the opinion of the local authority, entirely unsuitable for habitation. I can think of no better way of deciding whether they are unsuitable than by saying that they shall be unsuitable in the opinion of the local authority; and I would have confined this to being out of conformity with the building by-laws.

It is a well known fact that in some areas local authority building by-laws do not operate, and therefore there is only

the opinion of the local authority to be taken into account as to whether the standard of the dwellings which exist is sufficiently high, or whether they should be replaced by better ones.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I appreciate fully the motives and reasons for the amendment. Whilst being sympathetically disposed to what the hon. member seeks to achieve, I am afraid it is not possible under this Bill. This applies to housing schemes as such, and not to farms as such. A number of houses on farms are not a housing scheme. I am informed by valuers that a house on a farm has no value whatsoever. That may seem ludicrous when one envisages humble shacks on the one hand and palatial premises on the other. However, I am informed that the deciding factor is the productive capacity or potentiality, and that determines the value of the farm.

Mr. Court: I wish you could convince the probate authorities of that.

Mr. Nalder: The war service land settlement authorities do not agree with it.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: That may be so. But if there are two farms, and one has a house of a certain value, and the other of a different value, it makes no difference whatever. The test is, "How much is the house worth to anyone else?" Let us imagine a house built a few miles the other side of Hyden, under this scheme, and the farmer finds himself in difficulty. If he vacates the house and lives in the comfortable end of a barn, or a tent, how much is the house worth to the lender? Absolutely nothing.

In the metropolitan area the value of a house for demolition is practically nothing. The same would apply to a house in the country. Therefore there would be no security as regards such a dwelling; it has some value only because it is attached to, and is part of, the farm.

In order to assist those whom the Leader of the Country Party has in mind, I think they should be covered under a farm improvement scheme or something of that nature. I do not think it is relevant to this piece of legislation, and I expressed that opinion to the hon. member before I had discussed it with anyone else.

Since then I have had discussions with legal officers, officers of the State Housing Commission, and people outside the Government service, and they are unanimously of the opinion that it simply could not work, and should not appear as part of this legislation. I regret that that is so because I know from personal experience the circumstances under which many of these people are living. It is with a measure of reluctance that I ask the Committee to vote against this amendment.

Mr. WILD: I listened carefully to the Minister and I am sorry to hear that he has been advised, by those who know, that

it would be difficult to incorporate this amendment in the Bill. The Leader of the Country Party is a trained legal man, and I have no doubt that he is prepared to pit his brains against those of some other legal person.

The Minister for Housing: I am sorry that I have given the wrong impression. It could be placed in the Bill, but I was speaking from the point of view of workability.

Mr. WILD: I do not care where it is placed in the Bill, so long as it appears, because I know of no section of the community who have been left out on a limb, as regards housing schemes, as much as the people referred to by the Leader of the Country Party. I understand that the Minister's people were primary producers, and he would know the conditions under which they live. Women in country districts have for years had to rear their children under difficult conditions. We talk about sub-standard conditions; I would say that some of their conditions are sub-standard plus.

As the Minister will know, there are plenty of people in the country who want assistance under the war service homes scheme and, although they are eligible they cannot obtain that assistance because there is no provision for them. Therefore why should these people be excluded from obtaining assistance through insurance companies or banks? Surely something could be done for them! The Minister said that these houses could not be classed as part of a scheme; but I understand that the Bill provides for an overall scheme, and these people would be individual units within it. Finance will not necessarily be made available to builders who wish to build 10 or 20 houses. It will be up to the individual to approach the insurance company or the bank for the necessary finance.

It is time we did a little to help those in the country without whom we in the city would not be able to carry on. So I hope the Minister will have another look at the amendment and include it in the Bill somewhere.

Mr. NALDER: I support the amendment and I cannot understand why the Minister is opposed to it. If it is agreed to, it will enable those who live in the country to make arrangements with their banking institutions to take advantage of the legislation. All members know the conditions that apply in some country areas today. Only a few years ago there were quite a few people in the outer parts of the Wagin electorate who were, not because of their own choice but because of circumstances, living in homes which were very sub-standard.

They were trying to open up the country, and they had to cart their produce up to 60 miles because they had no railway. I

saw them living in houses in which super bags separated the rooms. Some were using tar drums flattened and nailed to white gum sticks to keep out the weather. This amendment will give those people an opportunity of providing decent houses.

The Minister for Housing: I don't think you understand the Bill.

Mr. NALDER: Of course, I understand it. We are hoping to give those in the country the same opportunity as the people in the city or country towns.

The Minister for Housing: They have it under the Bill.

Mr. NALDER: Then why not accept the amendment?

The Minister for Housing: For obvious reasons. If you sit down, I will tell you more specifically.

Mr. NALDER: We could have the position of a farmer owning a property three or four miles out of a fairly big country town, and he may be employing a man on the farm who is living under conditions far superior to those under which the farmer himself is living. The Minister said that the value of a property is not enhanced by the type of dwelling on the farm.

The Minister for Housing: That is what valuers tell me.

Mr. NALDER: Under the war service land settlement scheme, the allottee who was allotted the homestead block, on which there was a house valued at quite a few thousand pounds, had the value of that house included in the value of the property.

Mr. Potter: Did it make any difference to the price per acre?

Mr. NALDER: Yes. Where a property has an eight or nine-roomed house on it, it is valued at more than the adjoining property with a three or four-roomed house. People from the Eastern States who are interested in property always ask whether the farm has a building or a homestead on it. They want a property with a home worthy of the name. I hope the Minister will agree to the amendment.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: There appears to be a total misconception of this legislation, of this clause, of the amendments submitted and those foreshadowed by the Leader of the Country Party. There is nothing to stop a financial institution from making a loan to a farmer for the purpose of erecting a house. What I am suggesting is that it would be utterly impossible and foolish in the extreme to suggest that on a farming property, one half-acre should be excised and regarded as a separate proposition. That is no security unless it is tied up with the business venture.

I am not in a position to hazard a guess because under this legislation a lending institution will be free to follow its

customary procedure on a more generous basis, but those who have seen copies of the amendments I have distributed will realise there is provision for a second mortgage to be included under certain conditions. I am not sure on this point, but in that case it would be theoretically possible for a second mortgage to be granted to enable a home to be built on a farm. Again it would be tied up with the property as a whole.

The member for Roe interjected during the second reading debate and asked whether this arrangement would cover farming properties. I said that it might have more complications than he imagined, it being appreciated that if a person obtained £2,000 or £3,000 for the purpose of erecting a home on a farm, there would be a complication if he wanted more accommodation from the institution because it would necessitate the taking out of a second mortgage. From my knowledge of banks they are not very keen on doing that.

If we concentrate on the fact of a house being a house, then in country districts which are outside recognised townships and their proximity, it is unreasonable to suggest that there ought to be any arrangement of this nature. The weakness is that the lending institutions would have to make a decision, but the responsibility would fall on the Government for the guarantee. Suppose we take an exaggerated example of someone building a house on the Nullarbor Plain. There would be no doubt that a few thousands pounds would be spent and there would be a security in the house; but if that person left the house and it became unsalable, then as the Government had guaranteed the loan, nobody would be out of pocket. To a lesser extent that would be the position in respect of a house on a farming property.

The position is not resolved by eliminating half an acre from the farming property, because under those circumstances the house has little or no value. I say that knowingly, because I have had experience within the metropolitan area of selling a house as a cleared site; that is to say, a person submits a figure to demolish a house, and to take possession of the materials from that house. The owner would be lucky to get £200 for a brick or timber-framed house sold in that way. That applies in the heart of the city.

In a remote centre it is doubtful whether there will be any value, because the price received will be offset by the transport charges. For those reasons it would be ridiculous to discuss something which is as unworkable as this. In the case of a farmer whose property was not encumbered and who wanted to borrow money over a long period on easy repayment

terms, if the financial institution is prepared to make the loan there is no reason why this scheme should not apply. But it is not possible to go beyond that.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: I do not think that the Minister has a proper conception of this amendment. There might be cases where, as he says, it would be impracticable, but there is nothing in the amendments to compel the Treasurer to sign a guarantee. Let us imagine the case where a financial institution has advanced certain moneys for the development of a farm, but is not prepared to advance sufficient money to enable the erection of a decent home. What is there to prevent that institution from advancing the extra money on the guarantee of the Treasurer?

I suggest there is nothing to prevent that being done under this Bill, provided the amendments, or similar amendments to those I have proposed, are agreed to, because that institution would have its original mortgage over the whole of the property and it would have its other mortgage guaranteed by the Treasurer in respect of the whole or part of the money utilised for the erection of a house on that property also within this security. There would be no difficulty in that regard. It would complete the security over the whole property, a portion of which was guaranteed by the Treasurer in respect of the house, without which the guaranteeing institution would not have been prepared to lend the additional money sufficient to erect a house.

The reason for suggesting the next amendment relating to the half-acre with access to a public road was to identify the piece of land in respect of which the guarantee of the Treasurer might have been given to secure a mortgage. In that case there would obviously be no difficulty whatever because the institution would be able to make the additional finance available, which otherwise, under normal banking practice, it would not be prepared to make. In order to identify the particular area which was being dealt with in the farm and which would be covered by the Treasurer's guarantee, I have sought to define a practicable area on which the house could be built for that purpose.

We can go a bit further. A financial institution might have advanced money on the security of a farm but might not be prepared to go any further by advancing money sufficient to erect a house. Under the terms of this Bill, seeing that the Treasurer can lay down provisions in his instrument of guarantee to be agreed upon between the Minister and the approved institution, there could readily be provisions to enable any institution to advance money in respect of the house. The institution which had a mortgage on the farming property would be in a position to take a second mortgage of the area in which the house was being erected so as to have complete security in the property.

If the institution which had a lien on the farm did foreclose or call for a repayment of the money in question, it would have to take into consideration the liability which at that time might exist under the guarantee in respect of the house. So it is not impracticable by any means. A variety of cases can be envisaged where a satisfactory arrangement can be made, particularly on the lines I first mentioned. In that event, the value of the house would certainly not be nothing as the Minister suggests.

I agree that if a £10,000 house were erected on a 500-acre property, from the point of view of any purchaser the house would not add £10,000 value to the property; therefore any person who erected a £10,000 house on such a property would be very foolish. There is no question that it would be extremely difficult to dispose of any farming property on which was built such a house. In other words, the presence of a house commensurate with the size of the property is a desirable asset.

The probate section of the State Treasury is well aware of that fact because under no circumstances does it not place a substantial value on the house, although admittedly, and following the argument I used a moment ago, there have been cases where it has not valued the house at what it would be worth in a township because nobody is prepared to pay £10,000 for a house on a farm which might be worth only £5,000 in itself; but he would certainly be prepared to pay a reasonable value for a habitable home on that property which was reasonably commensurate with the property itself, and in no circumstances would I suggest that the value of the house would be nil.

Taking these aspects into consideration, and bearing in mind that the Treasurer is not compelled to guarantee any loan, it is clear that all the circumstances could be taken into consideration. And if in the particular circumstances of the case there were such conditions that the whole proposal was impracticable, well and good; there could be no advances made. If, on the contrary, the circumstances were such that the same institution was concerned in both securities or, alternatively that agreement could be reached between the two institutions or persons concerned in the advances, it would not be impracticable, and steps could be taken to carry it into effect in a proportion of cases. I trust the Committee will agree to the amendment.

THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING: Would you indicate where the existing provisions will prevent a loan being made in the ordinary way and guaranteed?

Hon. A. F. WATTS: In my opinion, there not the faintest prospect of getting a loan guaranteed in respect of a house on farming property unless specific conditions are laid down for it, because the circumstances would be that neither the Treasurer nor the lending institution would be able to identify the security.

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

Ayes	17
Noes	24
Majority against	7

Ayes.

Mr. Ackland
Mr. Bovell
Mr. Brand
Mr. Court
Mr. Crommelin
Mr. Hutchinson
Mr. Mann
Mr. W. Manning
Sir Ross McLarty

Mr. Nalder
Mr. Owen
Mr. Perkins
Mr. Roberts
Mr. Thorn
Mr. Watts
Mr. Wild
Mr. I. Manning

(Teller.)

Noes.

Mr. Andrew
Mr. Brady
Mr. Evans
Mr. Gaffy
Mr. Graham
Mr. Hall
Mr. Heal
Mr. W. Hegney
Mr. Hoar
Mr. Jamieson
Mr. Johnson
Mr. Kelly

Mr. Lapham
Mr. Marshall
Mr. Norton
Mr. Nulsen
Mr. O'Brien
Mr. Potter
Mr. Rhatigan
Mr. Rodoreda
Mr. Sewell
Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Toms
Mr. May

(Teller.)

Pairs.

Ayes.

Mr. Hearman
Mr. Cornell
Mr. Grayden

Noes.

Mr. Hawke
Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Lawrence

Amendment thus negatived.

Clause, as previously amended, put and passed.

Clause 4—agreed to.

Clause 5—Power to approve institutions:

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I move an amendment—

That after the word "institution" in line 22, page 3, the words " , body or person," be inserted.

This is a consequential amendment.

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

Clause 6—Treasurer empowered to give guarantee:

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I move an amendment—

That after the word "paragraph" in line 11, page 7, the following new subclause be added:—

(4) The foregoing provisions of this section extend to any loan secured by second mortgage of a new house, but.

(a) only if the rate of interest payable under the second mortgage does not exceed the rate of interest payable under the first mortgage;

(b) only if the aggregate of the amounts secured by the first mortgage and the second mortgage does not exceed such of the respective

limits prescribed by paragraph (a), (b), or (c), of subsection (3) of this section as are applicable; and

(c) subject to the provisions of paragraphs (d), (e), and (f), of subsection (3) of this section.

This is designed to make it possible for second mortgages also to come within the ambit of the scheme. It should be appreciated that there is no real difference between a lending institution advancing £3,000 in respect of a house or there being two parties to it—one lending £2,000 and the other £1,000, making £3,000 in the aggregate. The only condition insisted on is that the rate of interest on the second mortgage shall not exceed the rate of interest on the first mortgage.

In that connection members will agree, I think, that the higher rate of interest for the second mortgage, which is invariably charged, is imposed because of the element of greater risk which is entailed in the person's being the second in the queue. But in this case there will be no risk whatsoever, as both will be guaranteed by the Government.

Hon. D. Brand: There would still be that difficulty in getting a second mortgage cover if the interest were the same.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: No. I am not saying this harshly, but it appears that the members of the Opposition are completely out of touch with the situation.

Hon. D. Brand: You put us in touch then.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I thought I had done so when replying to the second reading debate. This is being inserted following approaches made to me by one of the firms in town—builders and estate agents in a pretty big way—which felt that there was merit in the proposition and considered that it could do many thousands of pounds worth more business if the second mortgage arrangement came under the scheme and it could devote a greater proportion of its money to straight-out building activities while taking advantage of money from other people so far as second mortgage is concerned. So it will be seen immediately that, based on the manner in which that company works, it anticipates that this will be of definite value to it and no doubt to many other concerns that are in business in much the same way.

That is all there is in it. Any loans secured by way of second mortgage will be admitted if the interest rate does not exceed that payable under the first mortgage. It follows automatically, of course, that the aggregate of the two loans shall not exceed that laid down in the Bill in respect of which there is a greater percentage advanced than in cases where

there is no limit whatsoever. It is my hope that this will bring in additional capital and generally assist people to obtain homes.

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

Clauses 7 to 10—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

BILL—CATTLE TRESPASS FENCING AND IMPOUNDING ACT AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

Resumed from the 31st October. Mr. Moir in the Chair; the Minister for Health in charge of the Bill.

Clause 2—Section 30 amended:

The CHAIRMAN: Progress was reported on the clause to which an amendment had been moved by Hon. A. F. Watts to add a further subsection to stand as Subsection (4) as follows:—

Subsections (2) and (3) of this section shall apply only to municipal and road districts wholly or partly within the metropolitan area as defined under the Traffic Act, 1919-1956, and to townships outside that area.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I oppose the amendment, which would defeat the purposes of the Bill which was introduced in the interests of people in the country such as orchardists, poultry farmers, banana growers and others. I believe that the local authorities would have a thorough knowledge of the requirements of any part or particular part of their districts. I repeat that to confine the Bill to townships would defeat its purpose. The local authorities, generally speaking, are rational people who, without remuneration, do their best for the areas they represent, and I do not believe they would pass irrational by-laws. The Bill is subject to the Minister and any by-laws would be subject to Parliament.

Mr. Nalder: Can you give us any instances of what has occurred in country areas?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Yes, but I will leave that to the member for Gascoyne.

Hon. D. Brand: Is this Bill here as the result of appeals put forward by that hon. member?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: No, but as the result of appeals from people in various parts of the country. We have never had any sufficiently clear definition of a sufficient fence. The interpretation varies greatly in different areas and what is considered a sufficient fence in Norseman, for instance, might not be considered to be sufficient elsewhere. The Bill as it stands will give local authorities power to

make by-laws providing what shall constitute a sufficient fence in their districts or for any part of their districts.

The Bill will give local authorities power to confine their by-laws to townships if they so desire. I repeat that if the measure is limited to townships outside the metropolitan traffic area its main purposes will be defeated. Under the law at present a prosecution without any description of what is a sufficient fence is a difficult matter. Most of the banana growers in the Gascoyne electorate are outside any defined township and therefore would not be assisted by the amendment. The same applies to a great number of other people throughout the State for whose protection the Bill is designed.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: I do not want the Minister to think I am antagonistic towards that which he seeks to achieve, but I do not think the Bill will achieve it. I suggested to him, in an earlier stage of the debate, that he should call a conference of representative people and try to evolve something better than is contained in the Bill. In the meantime, as the situation in the metropolitan or urban districts appears to be more pressing, I suggested this as a temporary alternative.

The Minister for Health: I do not think you have any ulterior motive.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: The Minister and I understand each other fairly well up to that point. The problem facing him is that the magistrates do not know what is a sufficient fence and there is a conflict of opinion as to what constitutes a sufficient fence. I do not think the Bill will overcome that trouble. There are well over 100 local authorities in the State, and there is nothing in the Bill to compel them to make by-laws. If they do not, the position will remain as it is.

The local authorities have tremendous powers under existing legislation but a number of them have not made by-laws that they are empowered to make and that will be the position under this measure. In those areas where the local authority does not make the necessary by-laws, if an argument arises the magistrate will be no better off than he is now in regard to what is a sufficient fence and will have to rely, as he does now, on the provisions of the Cattle Trespass, Fencing and Impounding Act itself.

The Minister for Health: If necessary, the local authority would make by-laws.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: When would it be necessary—after the magistrate faced his problem or before? The chances are that the matter will never be considered by some local authorities until these magisterial difficulties have arisen, and perhaps not even then. If the Bill provided that all local authorities had to make these by-laws within 12 months or two years, I would withdraw my objection. There have been provisions in the Road Districts Act

or the Municipal Corporations Act for by-laws relating to hawkers, but even yet some local authorities have not made such by-laws, and that will be the position here. Some local authorities will not make by-laws.

I do not want to stop the Minister from doing this but I do not think he will achieve what he seeks. I do not wish to leave the situation where it is any longer than is desirable. The Minister cannot deny that there is a possibility that half the local authorities will make by-laws and half will not. This will not solve the problem but add to it, because it will place a magistrate in a most difficult position. In the course of his circuit he will find that some have by-laws and others have not, and the last stage will be worse than the first.

We must get an assurance from somewhere that these by-laws will be passed by all local authorities where this problem is at any time likely to arise, otherwise we will not be in a much better position under the Act than we are at present. I understand that in one of the other States an attempt has been made to set out the various types of fencing that could be acceptable to keep out great and small stock, etc.

This Bill will only achieve disuniformity. I can assure the Minister that I will not press my amendment on him. This matter must go wider and we must have an assurance that by-laws will be provided throughout the State. The Minister is relying on a hundred or more local authorities doing something which they might feel there is no point in doing. The problem will remain as it is now; indeed, I think it will get worse.

Mr. NORTON: While the amendment contained in the Bill is not all that we might wish for, it will bring relief to the closer settled areas and to the banana plantations in the North-West. Road boards will be given a chance to define a fence. There is no definition in the Act at the moment. In the past, concern has been felt by magistrates and justices in arbitrating on what is a sufficient fence, because where there is closer settlement in dry areas and where lush feed has been grown, nothing will keep out cattle, etc., no matter what the definition of a fence might be.

There must be some definition so that the owner of the land can put up a fence which could be classed as a reasonable fence. The local authorities would be the best judges of this and the owners of the land have their representatives on such authorities. In closer settled areas very few farmers carry stock but there is the odd one who does and perhaps does not feed them sufficiently. In such circumstances, it is impossible to prevent stock from breaking through the fences. This Bill will give some relief and I hope it will be agreed to.

Mr. W. A. MANNING: Would it not be possible to define the type of fence necessary for certain types of stock? If each local authority is to make its own definition, there will be a variety of wording and a variety of definitions. There will be no uniformity. If a suggestion could be made as to the by-laws which could cover different types of stock, etc., and the suggested definitions were accepted by the local authorities, then the magistrate would know whether a fence was sufficient or not. That would be better than leaving it open to each local authority to prepare its own by-laws.

Mr. CROMMELIN: The Act is clear. It gives the local authority the right to pick out certain areas in its district which need classification. For instance, there could be an area outside Narrogin where somebody was breeding turkeys which could be open to the attacks of stray dogs. It is reasonable to assume that the road board in Narrogin would fix a sufficient fence to give this man protection. If we take it away from the townsites, we shall prevent local authorities from aiding some portions of their districts.

I agree with the Leader of the Country Party when he suggests that no one is bound to make by-laws and that perhaps many of the local authorities will not. If I were breeding turkeys or something similar, I would go to the road board and seek a solution of my difficulty. The Bill is an improvement on the Act. I cannot imagine that the people in Carnarvon would not take action, and it would not be so necessary in the sheep country further on from Carnarvon. Surely if they were approached in this matter, the local authorities would do something to remedy the position and define for the people concerned what they considered a suitable fence!

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

BILL—NURSES REGISTRATION ACT AMENDMENT. (No. 2).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 31st October.

MR. ROSS HUTCHINSON (Cottesloe) [8.30]: This is indeed a little Bill as the Minister pointed out. I have made some inquiries in regard to the measure. The idea of incorporating the principal matron of the Public Health Department in the Nurses' Registration Board, and thus increasing the number from nine to ten, is excellent; it will enable the board to have the benefit of the wide experience of the matron. I contacted the Royal Australian Nursing Federation and through Matron

Ferguson was assured that the Bill was in every way excellent. I have very much pleasure in supporting the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

BILL—EDUCATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Message.

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

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. W. Hegney—Mt. Hawthorn) [8.34] in moving the second reading said: This Bill to amend the Education Act has been under the consideration of the senior officers of the Education Department, including the director himself. If members will compare the provisions in the Bill with the parent Act, they will see no great room for contention. I would explain briefly the main provisions of the measure. The first amendment proposes to change one word which will have a great amount of significance from a certain point of view. At present the Act provides for the appointment of compulsory officers, and it is proposed to change the name to welfare officers.

The most important provision relates to the school-leaving age. Members know that in 1943 an Act was passed to raise the school-leaving age to 15 years but it was not to take effect until the requisite proclamation was issued. It has not been issued on account of circumstances which confronted the various Governments since that day. The present Government has in mind the raising of the school-leaving age in two instalments. The advice given by the Crown Law Department is that if there is to be any increase in the school-leaving age it will be necessary to raise it to 15 years. This Bill has been introduced to permit the department, as circumstances permit, to raise the school-leaving age to any period between 14 and 15 years.

The anxiety of the Government is very great. It desires to increase the compulsory leaving age to 15 years. I give the House an assurance that when conditions are appropriate, a move will be made to increase the school-leaving age to 14½ years and it is hoped in the following year to 15 years. Whether the Government would be able to raise the leaving age to 15 years, I am not in the position to indicate now. All I can say is that the matter has been very closely considered by the department and by the Government.

A number of provisions in the Act require tidying up. At present the Minister may request the production of a certificate from the parent of a child who is absent from school without reasonable excuse. There is no authority to empower a welfare officer to request the production of a certificate, and the Bill proposes to extend that authority to any person delegated by the Minister.

Another section of the Act empowers a welfare officer to accost a child in the street, in a public hall or in a theatre during school hours. That is where his authority ends. Children, obviously absent from school without reasonable cause, have given false names and addresses to the welfare officer, who then has no further authority over them. The Bill will give the welfare officer the power to escort the child home to the parents, if, after accosting the child, he is satisfied that the child is absent from school without a reasonable excuse.

It is proposed to insert a provision that where a court is satisfied that a parent without reasonable excuse neglected to cause attendance of a child at school, it may, instead of imposing a penalty, refrain from recording a conviction if the parent gives security to secure regular attendance of the child at school.

There is another amendment which has been suggested to me as a result of experience by the welfare officers. The Act now reads—

Any person who causes a child of compulsory school leaving age to be employed in school hours commits an offence.

That is very clear. Any person who causes a child of compulsory school age, or below compulsory school-leaving age, to be employed during school hours commits an offence. It is proposed to include the words, "suffers or allows" because it has been found that while a parent did not cause the child to be employed, he has suffered or allowed the child to be employed during school hours. This amendment will tidy that matter up.

Mr. Bovell: Are there many instances of that happening?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I put a similar question to the Director of Education and he intimated to me that there had been a few cases. In regard to truancy, if members will look at the present Act they will see that reference is made to what is regarded as habitual truancy. There is no provision to cater for the child who "plays the wag"—members will understand that term better than truancy—half a day or a day in every week.

It is proposed to provide that where a child, without reasonable excuse, absents himself—though not constantly—he commits an act of truancy and can be dealt with under the provisions of the Act. On

complaint by a welfare officer, a truant child may be summoned under the Child Welfare Act and the parent may be required to attend. There is provision for the committal of a child to an institution in certain cases.

Under the present Act—I think it is Section 20—where a child is committed to an institution, the parent is required to pay the sum of 12s. per week towards his maintenance. That provision was inserted in the Act many years ago and it is proposed to increase the amount to the sum of £2 10s. to bring it into conformity with the provisions of the Child Welfare Act. Where a child has been committed to an institution for at least two months, the Minister or director may issue a certificate of conditional release and if the person to whom the custody of the child is granted, does not observe the conditions of release, the conditional order may be cancelled.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Can you tell me whether there is similar legislation on that particular point in the other States or other countries?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Does the hon. member mean in regard to the committal of a child?

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: To a child who is not an habitual truant.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I am not in a position to answer that question. All that I am aware of is that, as a result of experience, welfare officers found there are children who commit acts of truancy. They are not habitual truants, but they regularly absent themselves from school for a period of half a day or a day, and it is proposed to try to tighten up the position in that respect.

Those are the main provisions of the Bill. There are not many, and they have been considered by the Education Department. The welfare officers made suggestions in the light of their experience to the director, who, in turn, discussed the matter with me. As the result of consideration, it was decided to introduce these provisions which I have briefly explained. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. A. F. Watts, debate adjourned.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1957-58.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from the 24th October, Mr. Norton in the Chair.

Vote—Lands and Surveys, £736,856 (partly considered)—agreed to.

Vote—Rural and Industries Bank, £456,095:

Item, Salaries and allowances, etc., £381,000.

Mr. JAMIESON: I assume this item is that on which the Rural and Industries Bank has some bearing, and I would like to take this opportunity—

The CHAIRMAN: Are you speaking to Division 32, Item 1?

Mr. JAMIESON: Yes. I would like to take this opportunity of complimenting the commissioners of the bank on their achievements over the last several years, and as the Minister will not be in charge very much longer, I would like to commend him also. Since the savings bank has been conducted by the Rural and Industries Bank, I understand deposits therein have reached somewhere around £3,000,000 and further branches are being opened up all the time.

Might I suggest to the Minister, before he relinquishes his portfolio, that there are certain other areas where a State banking branch could be proceeded with. One area, where much banking seems to take place, is the Metropolitan Markets. I have not noticed whether there is an agency of the Rural and Industries Bank in that area. However, it is a place which is associated with industry and the rural industry and I think there would be quite a bit of business transacted there. I understand the Osborne Park branch seems to flourish and because of the business with growers, I suggest it should be possible to have a good agency in the metropolitan markets.

In my opinion, in order to have an effective way of dispersing finance in any State, it is necessary to have a respectable bank behind the Government, and this bank is now healthier and more respected by the public than it was previously. It has entered into quite a number of fields and people who have had transactions with it have, in the main, been quite satisfied with those governing its policy. That being so, it deserves the encouragement of this Chamber in the furthering of its activities.

Nothing can be better for a State than to have bank deposits reinvested in the State; and in the R. & I. Bank we have a reasonable guarantee that this will be done, whereas with the other banks it may or may not be done. I compliment the commissioners and the Minister on the achievements of the past few years.

When the Minister, at a later date, is in Europe and England he may see new and modern banking practices designed to attract customers that could be passed on to this State. The present system of having a modern bank is a custom-gathering idea. It is true that so far as the Government departments go, the R. & I. Bank has an advantage over other banks in obtaining finance.

It was suggested that all the propaganda put out from the bank from time to time should be along the line of indicating to

the public the necessity of employing people in the State and keeping the finance in Western Australia by using the R. & I. Bank to the greatest possible extent. If the Minister, when he leaves Western Australia, has a look at the modern practices in other countries for attracting custom, and supplies the information to the principals of the bank here, I feel that they will be able to encourage more patronage to this most essential piece of Government enterprise.

I leave it to the Minister to think over these remarks and take what action he can later when he is Agent General and sees anything of a banking nature which, in his opinion, would be of benefit to the R. & I. Bank.

Mr. BOVELL: I wish to comment on the R. & I. Bank and the increased expenditure for staff. If my arithmetic is correct, the total increase in the estimate for this year is £45,154, which is considerable. The increase is accounted for in the main in the item, clerks and typists, because the increase there is £44,197. This seems to be a remarkable increase for the item, and I desire the Minister to give an explanation for it.

As the Minister stated in his initial remarks, the bank comprises 38 branches and one head office in the State. To me the increase of £44,197 in one year is colossal. Increases in administrative costs can be alarming, and we should guard against any unnecessary increase. I could have understood this increase had it pertained to an extension of the bank's services because in the banking sphere it is necessary to establish new branches and sometimes the profit from them must be taken over a long period.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: To refer to the matter raised by the member for Vasse, I point out that the expenditure for the year ended the 30th June, 1957, under the heading of salaries, exceeds the estimate by some £14,946. This increase was caused by additional staff requirements, and increases in award margins and cost of living adjustments, which are all understandable.

I am informed that these factors will be more fully reflected in the 1957-58 financial year when the bank expects the salaries item to rise to £381,000. There is also a tremendous increase in incidental costs. The actual costs last year exceeded the estimate by £31,521 and this was brought about mainly by increased costs of printing and stationery, principally for the savings bank—these costs apply to the establishment of the new bank and its activities since being established—to increased rentals for old premises and rentals involved in two new branches, and to building operations necessary to meet staff requirements at the metropolitan branches.

They are the items which, added together, will approximate, I think, the amount of money which is worrying the member for Vasse. I am informed by the chairman of commissioners that they do not expect that some of the foregoing costs will recur during the current year, and they expect to live within their estimate of £125,000. I have no doubt that the expenses under this item are watched closely at all times. I have no reason to believe that any degree of waste or mismanagement creeps in at all. I agree with the hon. member that the salaries and incidental costs appear to be very high, but the explanation is as I have put forward.

Referring to the remarks of the member for Beeloo, I assure him that at all times the R. & I. Bank is open for new business, which it is most anxious to obtain. When we recall that it is only 12 years since it was established—back in 1945—and remember that during that comparatively short space of time it has opened not 38, but 40 branches in the State—the 40th branch will be opened on Thursday afternoon at Midland Junction—and has agency facilities in another 131 places, we will realise that the officers of the bank are very much alive to the need to spread their assistance as far as possible.

The question regarding the metropolitan markets had not occurred to me but I think the hon. member has raised an important point. I will have it investigated to see whether the matter is worth proceeding with. I believe the R. & I. Bank is one of the most progressive institutions in this State at the present day.

Mr. BOVELL: I am not satisfied with the great increase in relation to clerks and typists, in view of the decrease in the commissioners' expenses of £2,145. I find the increase alarming.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The hon. member will find, under these Estimates, that a reduction similar to that relating to the commissioners' expenditure applies in all cases. In the previous year the increase shown was purely owing to marginal adjustments which everyone received. I have no further detail regarding the increase for clerks, typists and incidentals, apart from what I have given.

Mr. Bovell: I cannot believe that the increase shown is required to meet marginal increases and I think the Minister should give the Committee details of the additional clerks and typists that have been found necessary.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: If the hon. member really requires it, I will secure the information for him.

Mr. Court: Most of the Estimates show the numbers in the column on the left.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That is so, but it has not been done in this instance, apparently.

Mr. Bovell: I hope the Minister will see that the information is supplied on future occasions.

Item, less estimated rebates, £50,000.

Mr. COURT: Can the Minister explain the figures shown under that item?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I have here a considerable amount of detail regarding it under the headings of "Salaries" and "Other Incidental Charges" and "Less Estimated Rebates"—

Mr. Court: It is the rebate item I was interested in.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I have no detailed information in regard to that.

Mr. Court: Is the £50,000 rebate just a rebate from the Commonwealth Government in respect of the savings bank and is it affected by the expanding operations of the bank?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: There is an arrangement between the Commonwealth and the State in regard to savings bank activity. The Commonwealth rebated to the State a certain sum each year for any alleged losses incurred as the result of the Commonwealth taking over the savings bank activities of the State. I am surprised that the amount is still included seeing that we now have a State savings bank and it has operated for about 18 months.

Mr. Court: I think the Treasurer said he would not be prejudiced in respect of this reimbursement.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That could account for its being included in these Estimates. I have no exact detail of what it represents, apart from what I have stated.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Agriculture, £744,557:

Item, Salaries and Allowances, etc., £406,090.

Mr. ROBERTS: I notice that the number of professional and technical officers and cadets has increased by seven, whereas the estimate of expenditure for 1957-58 is £299,754 as against an actual expenditure last year of £297,854—an actual increase of only £1,900 for seven additional officers. Can the Minister explain the reason for such a small estimated increase when seven additional officers are affected?

Point of Order.

Mr. Court: If the Minister replies to this item, will it preclude him from replying to the general debate?

The Chairman: We have passed the general debate.

Mr. Court: Cannot he speak in a general way on Division 33, if he so desires, in regard to the points members have put forward?

The Chairman: No; we are on individual items.

Mr. Court: Can he not speak in a general way before we get on to the items?

The Chairman: No, not under the Standing Orders.

Committee Resumed.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I am sorry about that because I made a number of notes which I hoped to deal with before we discussed the items. I thought each division was taken separately and the Minister would have the right of reply. As regards the point raised by the member for Bunbury, the same reply can be given as was given to the member for Vasse. Last year's expenditure included increased margins and allowances to all officers and staff in the Public Service. It was an inflated expenditure as a result of these marginal adjustments which were back-dated.

Mr. Roberts: But there is an increase of seven officers.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: What is wrong with that?

Mr. Roberts: The increase in expenditure is only £1,900.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes, but it would be greater if we deducted the marginal increases.

Mr. BOVELL: As regards salaries, I want to know whether the Minister has included anything for pasture improvement. This is a vital aspect of agricultural development, and I think as time goes by it will be necessary for more research to be made into it. Can the Minister give us some indication as to whether the department is alive to the need for research in this connection? Pasture improvement groups are being formed throughout the whole of the State, especially in the South-West Land Division, and some alarming features have been evident regarding the backward condition of pastures. Some of them are dying out altogether, and it is impossible to rejuvenate them.

I regret that the Minister did not reply to the general debate. It caused me great concern because many country members contributed to it and put in many hours of work. The Minister let it go by and I regret that he did not reply to the matters raised. These are the most important Estimates with which Parliament has to deal.

Mr. Ackland: The Minister could have found a way of getting over it.

Mr. BOVELL: Without agriculture, the State would not function, and we could not experience the reasonable standard of

living that every section of the community, workers included, now enjoy. If the general debate is to go unanswered, the Minister should be able to reply on this point. If there is no amount allowed for pasture improvement, I hope the Minister will take it up with the director to ensure that due attention is given to the employment of specialised officers to assist the pasture improvement groups, particularly in the South-West Land Division.

The CHAIRMAN: The Minister can speak on agriculture only on these Estimates. Under each division he can speak only on the subject dealt with.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I hardly think this is the right place to discuss pasture improvement.

Mr. Bovell: I cannot see anything about pasture improvement anywhere else.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: If the hon. member likes to look under the heading of "Contingencies" on the next page he will see all sorts of agricultural subjects listed which would enable him to enlarge upon the subject to his heart's desire. Officers of the department spend a great deal of their time, and a considerable amount of money obtained from the department's own resources as well as from the Commonwealth Government in assisting farmers to improve their holdings, particularly their pastures. Not only do they assist in the formation of pasture groups in various country districts, but they also attend fairly regularly the meetings of these groups whenever possible.

Farmers who rely upon their pastures are in close contact with officers of the department, who receive numerous letters from different parts of Western Australia praising and thanking them for their ready assistance at all times. After all, that is what the department is for—to assist farmers. I can assure the hon. member that if there is any difficulty in his electorate, it can be readily attended to by application to the department.

One member mentioned the dairy farm improvement scheme. That is one instance where the Government, through its departmental officers, has endeavoured to assist dairy farmers by rehabilitating backward areas, particularly in the heavily timbered parts of the State and in the wetter portions of it. Members know that we have recently contacted the Commonwealth Government with a view to instituting a Commonwealth-State scheme to assist the dairy farmers—who number in the vicinity of from 1,500 to 2,000—in the rehabilitation of their farms. I understand from Mr. McMahon that there is every prospect of his bringing this matter before his Cabinet today. It does not matter whether it is the Government that is concerned, or the departments of the Government that are concerned—particularly the Department of Agriculture—members will find a

readiness on everybody's part to do something to assist the man who obtains his living from the land.

When speaking to the debate on the Agriculture Vote, the member for Moore made some reference to the difficulties being experienced on the Inkpen estate. He said there were some 115 applicants for six blocks which were thrown open, whilst the establishment at Wundowie was wasting time cutting timber in scattered parts, including a water reserve, instead of concentrating on the land to be thrown open.

That is quite true. The hon. member raised the matter last year and I was in complete agreement with him, as I am now. I feel that such a practice should be terminated and that we should get on with the job of developing that area along the lines that we intend. I want to assure the hon. member that the matter is being taken up vigorously through the proper channels with a view to arriving at some systematic arrangement in order that we may have more land made available at a quicker rate.

Mr. Ackland: It must be far more expensive to do what they are at present doing.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I think it must be. The hon. member also referred to the necessity for obtaining a survey of the water potential. I endorse his views entirely, and in conversation with my colleague, the Minister for Mines, I find that he is having a good look at that matter. As members know, a geological section has been opened up under the control of the Minister for Mines for the express purpose of surveying such water potential with a view to tapping it.

The member for Blackwood referred to the progress that is being made—although very slight—in the Tone River area. He said that it did not appear to be moving very fast and added that there was a lot of land held up there. I have made a check of the position and I find that there is a committee appointed for the purpose of classifying the land. I think it is called the land utilisation committee and this committee will indicate in due course—and I hope in the near future—just what can be done with that land.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Is the Minister keeping to agriculture?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: If I am not in order in discussing this, Mr. Chairman, then the member for Vasse was not in order on touching on the matter of pastures. I merely want to mention it in passing to show that the matter is being closely watched.

I would now like to refer to the statement made by the member for Harvey with respect to a certain farmer in the Harvey area who was unfortunate enough

to be prosecuted for under-standard milk some little time ago. The hon. member said that neither the department nor the Minister had done anything at all; that his requests had been completely ignored; and he led the Committee to believe that no interest at all was being shown in any way in regard to this man. I promised to have the matter checked, and I have done so.

As a result, I find it is quite untrue to say that this man's approaches to the department have met with no response whatever. It is true to say that there have been officers from the Milk Board attending his property with a view to trying to assist him. All told, however, I would like to mention now that quite possibly his understandard milk was not caused so much as a result of low-quality cattle—and I know that was not the case—but more as a result of this man trading in cattle in fairly large numbers, and therefore not taking the necessary care in building up the quality of his remaining herd for butterfat purposes.

As soon as the letter that the hon. member referred to from this particular farmer was received, it was immediately sent on to the officers concerned—first of all to the Superintendent of Dairying for his advice on the 22nd August. A report was submitted on the 5th December, following which it was decided that further data be obtained from the Milk Board. This was the proper step to take because it is the Milk Board that controls activities of this kind, and not the Department of Agriculture.

The dairy cattle husbandry officer interviewed Mr. Stannard, the chairman of the Milk Board, and attached a report which was submitted to the director at a later date in September. After the receipt of those reports, we indicated that if it were necessary to send an officer of the Department of Agriculture to this farm at Harvey, it would certainly be done. I have since received a letter from this gentleman—only a matter of three or four days ago, at the end of last week—in which he mentioned many things, but in which he did not request that an officer from the department visit his farm.

In my reply, which was made almost immediately, I asked him if he needed this assistance and, if so, to apply for it. Accordingly, it will be seen that there was no justification whatever for the hon. member attempting to lead the Committee to believe that we completely ignored the position, and that there was nothing done about it. It was quite untrue in every respect.

The member for Dale made a very interesting speech in connection with the poultry industry, with particular reference to the egg situation. I want to say here and now that I think the poultry industry

is in a very parlous state. The majority of poultry producers are not very happily situated; and seeing that we have practically lost the English market—mainly because of the industry being heavily subsidised in the United Kingdom, it places us in the position where unless our poultry farmers are able to improve their technique in some way—I will not say prepared to do so because I am sure they would if they could—and to increase production; and, further, unless the overseas market improves, there will not be a very bright future for them.

At the last meeting of the Agricultural Council I brought up this subject and all the Ministers had a great deal to say on it. Because of the urgency of the situation, we passed a resolution urging the Commonwealth Government to treat the matter with all speed and to afford some assistance for the time being, not by way of subsidy, because that is a bad principle, but by way of a special grant for 12 months and no longer; not because we felt the industry could be rehabilitated as a result of that grant but because a number of the poultry farmers will have to find other occupations unless they can improve their production and efficiency or unless the overseas market improves.

Without one or the other of these two factors, the outlook is not hopeful. In those 12 months the poultry farmers who saw the writing on the wall would be able to make other arrangements. That was the idea but the proposal did not get very far.

I have other notes here relating purely to lands. I can assure the member for Vasse that he need not worry about the intention of the department to carry on its policy which has been in operation for many years; that is go out into the country districts and assist farmers in pasture development.

Mr. Bovell: The officers have been doing that.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: That is the departmental policy and the instructions given to the officers. I do not know of any case where people have banded together to form a pasture group with which the department has not been in close contact in establishing the pasture, or vitally connected with its advance.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I agree with the Minister when he says that officers of the Department of Agriculture have shown much enthusiasm in their work and have been very helpful to the farmers. At the same time much money has been wasted on certain activities undertaken by farmers. When plots of land have been made available to the department for experiments, it has accepted them and it has done the utmost to assist the farmers in carrying out research work.

With the introduction of trace elements which have made such a great difference to farming methods in this State, better results would be obtained if farmers were more directly advised as to the elements to be used. I am not critical of the officers of the department. At all times they try to find out which trace elements are suitable for the various districts. With the enthusiasm shown for the use of these elements, some farmers advise the use of copper and zinc as being most successful if used once in every five years; other farmers advise that one should use potash; yet others advise the use of molybdenum which has been so successful in South Australia in the experiments conducted by the A.M.P. Society.

I have been told that the results achieved were largely due to the use of molybdenum. I do not know how much or for how long the trace elements should be used. I would like to find out. In respect of copper and zinc, once in every five years will be sufficient to give good results. From what I can gather from men engaged in this class of research work, it is agreed that once in five years is sufficient.

The member for Vasse referred to pastures dying out on certain lands, and unfortunately that is the case. On some land in my district it has been possible to establish a luxuriant growth of subterranean clover of the mid-season variety. On some lands it dies out and there is difficulty in restoring the pasture. Some years ago after the flood in February there was a prolific growth of clover and subterranean clover was brought back in huge quantities on land where it had practically disappeared. Today the farmer faces the problem that valuable grasses are dying out.

I know that the cause has been the intrusion of red mite and lucerne flea. While it is estimated that the elimination of the rabbit menace brought about by the introduction of myxomatosis resulted in greater production in Australia amounting to millions of pounds, the ravages of red mite and lucerne flea have inflicted the greatest damage on pastures, second only to that caused by the rabbits in the past. Through the use of certain sprays, science has been able to control the pest. When land was sprayed, the grasses have been restored. Pasture improvement groups have been very enthusiastic on the use of the sprays.

I am sure that many farmers in this State will make land available to the department for experimental purposes if it is desired. The Minister might say this was a very expensive business. I agree. I do not suggest that the cost for establishing these experimental plots should be wholly borne by the Department of Agriculture. The departmental officers supply advice and are doing their job. I feel it is up to the farmers to fence their blocks,

plant the different seeds that may be required, use the fertiliser which is suggested, and generally do their bit to keep down costs, which would be in their own interests because all this research work must considerably benefit them.

The Minister for Agriculture: We get quite a fair amount of co-operation from a lot of farmers.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I am sure that is the case. I find that farmers today realise they have to farm scientifically if they are to succeed. It is a matter of continuous research to know what to do and what is the best means of securing results. That is all I want to say, but once again I repeat that I appreciate the enthusiasm of the officers of the Department of Agriculture and the very good work they are doing. I am sure they will receive full co-operation from farmers throughout the State.

Mr. NALDER: I wish to speak to this particular item and desire to refer to the advice given by officers of the department in various parts of the State. I refer particularly to the Esperance area, the officers who are there and the advice they tendered to the Esperance Plains settlement scheme. I think it is only just 12 months since we were told in this Chamber of the benefit agriculture would receive in this State from the work of these people; what a boost agriculture would get in Western Australia and how much the State would benefit by it. I want to know, through you, Mr. Chairman, what advice was tendered these people and whether they were prepared to accept it or whether they ignored it.

For my part, I was amazed that we did not hear something about this matter under the Estimates, because I think if the advice of the Minister last year had been correct, we would have already seen a wonderful difference in the export—or leading up to the export—of primary produce from this area. We were told that within 12 months so much of the country was to be cleared and developed; it was to be stocked; pasture was to be put down; clover was to be sown and all the rest of it. However, lo and behold, this year we have not heard a word about it.

So important was this matter that in the Journal of Parliaments of the Commonwealth, in which details were given of the important things happening in the various States, this was rated as a No. 1 priority—on pages 413 and 414—and was the highlight of the activities in Western Australia. This year we have heard not a thing about it. What is the position? Has the place slid away into the Great Australian Bight? I hope, Mr. Chairman, you will allow me to mention this as a pointer as to what we can expect from this area so far as agriculture is concerned.

In a recent publication of "The West Australian," there appeared this heading: "Humpty Doo Rice Has a Setback." I only mention the heading because it said the whole scheme had been severely pruned. Are we to take it that the Esperance project has been severely pruned? Because in an article in "The Countryman" of last week, we find that one of the directors stated that the whole position has had to be reviewed; that the thousands of acres put down to pasture last year will have to be resown and that the clover put down over the whole of this area will have to be resown? How much money has been wasted? What has the district achieved from this all-out advertisement which has been given to it? I am sorry the hon. member representing the area is not here as he might be able to give us some assistance. We were given great hopes of this project and now expect to hear something about it.

The Minister for Agriculture: Why not write to the company? It does not come under my control.

Mr. NALDER: I expect the Minister for Agriculture to tell us something about it. We are entitled to hear something about it.

The Minister for Agriculture: It does not come under me.

Mr. NALDER: We are entitled to know what progress is being made.

The Minister for Agriculture: Why not write to the company?

Mr. NALDER: The Minister should be able to give us that information.

The Minister for Agriculture: Not necessarily; it does not come under my control.

Mr. NALDER: Last year, according to the Minister, it was one of the greatest projects in regard to agriculture to benefit this State.

The Minister for Agriculture: No doubt it will, too.

Mr. NALDER: Why not give us some progress reports?

The Minister for Agriculture: I do not know what is going on any more than you do.

Mr. NALDER: Why not?

The Minister for Agriculture: It does not come under me.

Mr. NALDER: That is this week's funny story.

The Minister for Agriculture: Of course it isn't!

Mr. NALDER: If the Minister for Agriculture is trying to sidestep this one and say it has nothing to do with him, who does it come under, the Minister for Police?

The Minister for Agriculture: Under the Chase Syndicate. You know that very well.

Mr. NALDER: I am amazed to hear the Minister reply in that strain. I should have thought he would have been the No. 1 person interested in this project and eager to tell this Committee what development is taking place. I believe that it is a pretty sorry story up to this stage. Just recently I had a talk with a very successful farmer who has a property at Esperance, and he went so far as to say that this company had done more to spoil the confidence and good name of the area than any one single factor. He considered the area had been put back because of the publicity given to it and the way in which these people had gone about it.

That brings me back to the first point I made: Has this company taken any advice from the district officers in that area as to the best way in which to develop this particular country? The Committee is entitled to know what has happened and whether these reports are correct. I think a considerable amount of money has been wasted because the advice of the people who have lived in the area over the years and of the Agriculture Department's officers has not been taken into account. If that is the case, what are we going to do in the future? Are we going to allow this sort of thing to happen in other parts of the State? Consideration should be given to the matter. If the advice of competent officers is not accepted, we should provide by Act of Parliament how development of this nature shall be carried out. These people, with their project, do more harm to the areas concerned than if they just spent their money wastefully.

There is another aspect of this item that I want to mention and this concerns pasture improvement. In the years gone by, in many parts of the State, farmers seeded a considerable acreage to lucerne, but because of the ravages of lucerne flea and red mite, this type of pasture was discontinued. Now, because of the control measures that have been introduced in recent years, another move is being made to sow down more areas to lucerne. I feel sure that any investigation or experiment in this regard by officers of the department, will be of considerable benefit to the State.

In the Eastern States, lucerne is an important factor in agriculture because it produces such a succulent pasture that is of considerable value in the long dry periods of the year, especially in areas that can be irrigated. There are, of course, natural areas that will grow lucerne without irrigation.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The member for Katanning has made a broad speech on the items of salaries and allowances, and I think he did pretty well. He is evidently alarmed about the progress made at Esperance. As I said by way of interjection, now that we have between the Government and the Chase Syndicate

an agreement that was ratified by Parliament, it is entirely the responsibility of the company to develop the land according to the agreement, and in no other way.

The agreement does not lay down the methods of agriculture that should be adopted; but to answer the hon. member more specifically, I point out that when the company first went to Esperance, we offered it all the facilities that were available at our research station which is only about 11 miles away. We have at that farm demonstrated over the years what can be done with the class of country there. We know that with proper pasture development, it will carry about three sheep per acre. Some farmers in the area are already carrying that number of sheep through following the advice of the department.

From what I can gather—although I want to say to the hon. member that I am not in any way in the confidence of the company—the syndicate was so anxious to sell the idea of Esperance development to people in America, and gain more capital for their development, that they hit upon the idea, in regard to the first 20,000 acres, of ploughing all the scrub country in green instead of following the practice that we adopt of rolling and burning and then developing the pasture.

In order to release the nitrogen which, under those conditions is generally locked up in the soil, the Chase Syndicate used the chemical called urea—I do not know whether it is much used in this State but in other countries it has been known for many years. This was done to gain 12 months on our normal methods in developing this class of land.

I have heard of reports—I have not seen them myself; probably the member for Eyre would be able to tell the member for Kataning more about this than I can—from the Director of Agriculture, in whom I have a lot of faith, and from others, that the germination is now pretty good. It did not look too good to start with, but it is believed that it has now successfully germinated and that the percentage is quite reasonable.

However, I can say to the hon. member that the department has offered its services in the best possible way to this company. Dr. Skoss originally took over the agricultural side of the development down there and he conceived the idea of trying to gain 12 months on the normal accepted practice. Dr. Moule, who is now in charge, has informed me personally—I have discussed the matter with him once or twice—that from now on the company will definitely follow the advice that will be given as a result of the experience that we have gained over the years at the research farm.

Mr. Nalder: It was that gentleman who stated recently in the Press that they would have to reseed quite a few thousand acres.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I did not see that, but it could be so. The germination was far better than was expected, and there is no reason to believe that the idea is not going to be successfully developed. From now on, the extra cost in regard to the 20,000 acres will soon be absorbed in the whole scheme; that is, if any portion has to be reseeded. It is pretty well certain that by following our practice the scheme will undoubtedly be the success we anticipated.

The CHAIRMAN: I remind members that the general discussion on this Estimate has been finished and that we are now on the item of salaries in Division 33.

Mr. BOVELL: I draw attention to the remuneration of the professional and technical officers, and cadets. The Minister did say at one time or another, I think, that the salaries and allowances of professional and technical officers had been increased so as to ensure that those officers would remain here and not go to the Eastern States. I notice that the Estimate this year provides for an increase of only £1,900 and that the increase of personnel is from 233 to 240. This means that an extra seven men will share £1,900.

The Minister for Transport: Last year's figure included a lot of back pay on account of delayed marginal adjustments.

Mr. BOVELL: I want an explanation and some further assurance from the Minister for Agriculture that we are not, as we were some years ago, losing our professional and technical officers to the other States.

The Minister for Agriculture: We are not any longer.

The Minister for Transport: There has been a change of Government since.

Mr. BOVELL: Does this item provide sufficient funds to ensure that these officers will be contented within the service of the department in Western Australia?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The information I have is that during 1956-57 there was a net increase in staff of 15. Last year's Estimates were for £402,836, which was not all expended, and there is an increase of something like £4,000 in the vote this year. When presenting the Estimates last year, it was hoped that difficulties in obtaining adequately qualified staff would be overcome; but that has not been achieved, and the qualified staff in several sections is at present below requirements. For the officers already engaged in the department, conditions and salary ranges have been brought closely into line with those elsewhere in the Commonwealth.

Mr. COURT: Under which item is the animal nutritional laboratory at Nedlands listed?

The Minister for Agriculture: It is not listed here.

Mr. COURT: There has been concern about the transfer of that laboratory, which is highly regarded for its work all over Australia and in other parts of the world—and particularly the work of its principal—to the concentrated area being established in South Perth. Can the Minister give an assurance that it will not be transferred or its work interrupted until the new location is fully equipped and established? There seems to be doubt as to whether this laboratory has a function in connection with the Medical School—a function which will be adversely affected by the transfer.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Work on the buildings at South Perth is proceeding well, and it is thought the first wing will be occupied by the middle of next year. I do not know whether the laboratories at Nedlands will be included in the first wing or the second. The principal is happy in his surroundings, with his modern equipment, and is reluctant to leave there. But in the interests of overall efficiency, and to assist in administration I am afraid the laboratory will have to be shifted to the main administrative buildings in due course—but not until the principal has a properly equipped establishment to go to.

Mr. Court: What is the connection between his work and the University and Medical School?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I do not know how they interlock, if at all.

Mr. Court: I believe there is some concern because his work is of value to the University and the ultimate development of the Medical School.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Under the policy of the department he will have to go to the new location.

Mr. Court: His laboratory is a separate unit.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: He will be suitably housed and will be supplied with the most modern equipment available, in the new buildings.

Mr. OWEN: Last year deaths were occurring among lambs in my district, and one was taken to the animal health laboratory. It was slaughtered and found to be infested with worms and a recommendation was made to treat the worms. However, the worms were not the primary cause of the trouble. Another specimen was taken to the laboratory, and it was suggested that there was a chemical deficiency, and part of the liver was sent to the Government Analyst for analysis. After waiting some weeks I rang the animal health laboratory several times, but the results of the analysis had not been recovered. In the meantime, 75 per cent. of the lambs in that small flock died.

Then people with experience of cobalt deficiency in other areas recommended cobalt treatment. That was done and the lambs responded. After a further couple of weeks I gave the facts to the animal health laboratory. Two days later a letter was received expressing gratification at the result of the treatment and advising that the lambs were apparently suffering from cobalt deficiency. That was about two months after the first animal had been taken to the laboratory. In the case of a big flock that delay would have had very serious results. I think that advice of results obtained at the laboratory in such cases should be speeded up.

The Minister for Agriculture: I will bring the matter to the notice of the department.

Mr. HALL: Having visited the Gordon Institute in Geelong I realised the disadvantages under which anyone desiring to follow the wool trade in this State is placed. If elementary training could be provided in this State, and if the Government could award scholarships, it would enable farmers' sons, textile workers and all concerned with the production of wool to further their knowledge. They would be able to study the manufacture of cloth as well as everything else connected with the production of wool. At the beginning of the 18th century the value of cotton exports to England was £20,000; whereas, in 1954, the production of wool and the manufacture of woollen goods involved the employment of more people than any other lines.

The trouble is that the people who handle the commodity know so little about it. We ought to stop to think and ask ourselves, "Just what is wool?" The chemical make-up of wool is quite complicated, and I think perhaps I should quote it for the information of members.

The CHAIRMAN: I think the hon. member is wandering from the subject of salaries.

Mr. HALL: No; it comes back to the subject of technical education.

The CHAIRMAN: It would want to.

Mr. HALL: The contents of wool are as follows:—carbon 50.5, hydrogen 7.3, nitrogen 17.6, and oxygen and sulphur 27.4. If people do not know what they are handling they do not know the wealth they have in their hands; and wool, in the hands of a fool, could be absolutely destroyed. If the sulphur content is destroyed, wool becomes paralysed and its elasticity is lost. So farmers' sons, and all those connected with the production of wool and its manufacture, should be educated on all aspects of the subject.

Item. General expenses of administration, £96,282:

Mr. I. W. MANNING: During the general debate on these Estimates I raised the subject of milk, and the need for some

additional investigation and research into the solids-not-fat problem. As an illustration of the complexity of the problem, I pointed out to the Minister one or two specific cases where dairymen were in difficulty, and in one case a man had been prosecuted. I claimed then that nothing had been done to assist him. The Minister, when speaking a moment ago, said that my claims were not justified, and that assistance had been given to this man both by the Milk Board and by the Department of Agriculture.

I stick to what I said originally—the officers of the Milk Board who went on to this man's property did so to check his dairy and test the milk. They did not go there to advise him on the problem of low solids-not-fat; or, if they did, they gave him no advice in that regard while there. Some two months ago this man wrote to the Director of Agriculture asking for advice, and he did not get any acknowledgment to his letter. As far as I am concerned, I was fully justified in making the statement I did. The Minister said that he did not believe the man had written to the department, and said that he would investigate it and see what happened. Judging from his remarks this evening, I think he has had a look and found the man did write to the department.

I am surprised that up to this stage the Minister has not touched on the subject. Nor has he indicated to us that he recognises the seriousness of the problem, and that some research and investigation is needed into what it is and how it can be overcome. I have already pointed out that 200 dairymen out of the 630 are experiencing this trouble, which indicates that it is a major one. On those grounds alone some immediate research is justified. The Minister has the facilities at the Wokalup research station, and research could be carried out by the department on the dairy herd which is there.

I was glad to hear the Minister say that he did not believe that in the case of the man prosecuted, the breed of animal was the trouble. He was told by the Milk Board that to overcome his problem he would have to sell his Friesian cows and replace them with Jerseys. The Minister also does not believe that that is the solution, and so we have made some progress. Perhaps the officers at the Wokalup research station could be persuaded to obtain a Friesian herd in place of the cows that they have at the moment.

It is generally believed that the problem is most likely to be found among Friesian cows because they are heavy producers. If the department could obtain a Friesian herd, officers at Wokalup would be able to study the effects of pasture and pasture management on the quality of the milk. If the problem is not concerned with the breed of the animal, it must have something to do with the feed. A good deal of knowledge is required on the subject to help the dairymen out of their difficulties.

Dairymen who are supplying milk below the 8.5 solids-not-fat content are liable to prosecution; and so I think that the department should carry out its investigation at the earliest possible moment. I also ask the Minister to make some comment on the problem and what the department is prepared to do to overcome it, and what assistance it is prepared to give to dairymen who are experiencing it.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I am fully aware—as, I am sure, are other members—that we get under-standard milk from time to time for no apparent reason. There is a different quality of milk produced in irrigated areas from that which is produced on the hillsides and there is a different quality produced in winter from that produced in summer. Nobody up till now has been able to find a solution to this, in spite of years of careful thought and study not only in Australia but also overseas.

I assure the member for Harvey that I took very seriously those remarks of his that I thought sensible. The matter is being investigated to see if it is necessary to open up another branch of research to endeavour to obviate in future what has happened to the gentleman the member for Harvey has mentioned. I do take exception, however, to the statement that neither the officers of the department nor the Minister were prepared to do anything about it.

Mr. I. W. Manning: I did not say that exactly.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I took down the hon. member's words verbatim. The last paragraph of a note from the Superintendent of Dairying says in effect that as they are under threat of prosecution by the Milk Board for producing sub-standard milk, and in view of the reference to the Milk Board, the letter should be forwarded to the Milk Board for information. He adds that with this additional information he would be prepared to arrange with the district officer to investigate this case.

The view of the Superintendent of Dairying was that he had little doubt that the present herd kept by this gentleman was developed from his dealing operations, rather than from an effort to procure a herd which would give milk of a satisfactory quality. There is a report from the dairy cattle husbandry officer, Mr. Needham—who it is hoped will go down to this farm—which says that the whole herd was sampled by the board on three occasions—namely, on the 15th September, 1954; on the 11th January, 1956; and again on the 27th February, 1956. It will be seen, therefore, that this man has not been ignored. His letter to me was very friendly, but he did not ask for assistance from the department. That being so, I have asked him if he wants

such assistance. But it was very wrong for the member for Harvey to speak as he did on this matter.

Mr. I. W. MANNING: From the file referred to by the Minister, it would seem that some effort was made by the department to look into this man's difficulty; but the statement made by the Director of Agriculture that the herd was largely made up from dealing is quite incorrect. I hope the Minister will visit this man's property, because he will see at once that those remarks were not true.

The Minister for Agriculture: You said the man had been ignored, and I have given you the dates of inspection.

Mr. I. W. MANNING: The other item I wish to touch on is the testing of whole-milk, and the authorities that do the testing. In the area south of Pinjarra it is done solely by the Milk Board; but where the milk comes into the metropolitan area in cans, it is tested by the Perth City Council and other authorities. The milk should be tested by one authority only, preferably by the Milk Board.

We find that in some cases the health authority has prosecuted for milk below an 8.5 standard, and the Milk Board was not prepared to prosecute. This angle should be investigated because it raises a number of difficulties in the handling, treatment, and retailing of milk. This testing has been done satisfactorily by the Milk Board south of Pinjarra, and it should also be done by that board north of that area.

Mr. ACKLAND: I am surprised to notice that Esperance is not mentioned in the list of research stations. I would refer to the research station at Wongan Hills where both the Agriculture and Education Departments have decided to co-operate in the establishment of an agriculture wing at the high school. I have been advised that these two departments have agreed to form this type of annexe at the high schools at Wyalkatchem and Morawa. I have no fault to find with that proposal.

I want to impress on the Minister that, arising from a deputation and from an inspection made on the spot, the proposal to establish an annexe to the junior high school at Wongan Hills will assist in development of light lands in this State.

There is very little new land of the type found adjacent to Wyalkatchem and Morawa available for selection; but there are many millions of acres of light land to be developed. For the assistance of the farmers who select such light land for development, the Department of Agriculture could establish, in co-operation with the Education Department, an agriculture annexe at the junior high school of the type found in Wongan Hills. I would like to hear the reaction of the Minister to this suggestion.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The hon. member is well aware that for a considerable time I have endeavoured to assist him along the lines he suggested. In regard to the annexe, it was felt that we might have established it at Wongan Hills or at the other two centres mentioned. Regarding an annexe with an agriculture bias to be attached to existing schools, the Department of Agriculture has already offered its services at the Wongan Hills research station by encouraging the students to take part in minor field days or by spending some time with the officers there to learn what takes place in research. That plan has not been actually commenced but an endeavour is being made to put it into action.

I am unable to say whether there will be any advantage in having an annexe to the school proper. This matter has been forwarded to the Minister for Education with my fullest support. I agree with the member for Moore that, if it is at all possible to establish the annexe, not only will the students be assisted considerably but also knowledge of land of that type will be acquired. I have been all in favour of this proposal, and I have not yet finished with it.

Item, Research Stations, £135,805.

Mr. MANN: I wish to refer to the Avondale research station which has been established in Beverley for many years. Two years ago we had a deputation to the Minister from Beverley consisting of five farmers, and he no doubt well remembers it. It put forward certain proposals in relation to this district. My farm is only a mile from the homestead at the research station. We felt that the area around Beverley, Brookton and westward is not a wheatgrowing area. It is pastoral land. We are trying to overcome the problem of infertility in ewes, and the research station is trying to do the same thing.

One other matter is the application of superphosphate to that land. I have top-dressed some of my land with half a bag of superphosphate for 20 years. We do not know whether to apply superphosphate every year or not. Further, there is the question of the use of trace elements. For two years I have used 100 tons of copper-zinc elements which cost about £18 per ton. One can imagine the high cost of applying these trace elements. It seems to be hit and miss. We are not sure whether we will not poison the stock by overdosing with copper and zinc trace elements. The correct usage of these elements appears to be in the dark. I have been informed by the manager of the Avondale research station that the department is making some progress in this direction.

I see that that station is still being used for experiments in the breeding of fat lambs. Today we know everything about that aspect. The member for Katanning

will agree that the tastes in this connection change like women's fashions in dresses and hats. Not so long ago, in the Smithfield Market in London, it was popular to supply the lamb from a Southdown ram and a Merino Leicester cross ewe. While I was at Smithfield on my visit I noticed that the long-shank type of lamb became popular. The English people now do not want a short lamb but prefer the lanky type. The use of the Avondale research station for breeding of fat lambs seems to be outmoded.

Passing from that to cattle of which there are a few at Avondale that can best be described as nondescript. It should run a good line of Aberdeen Angus or Shorthorns at the same time. Getting back to the question of pasture in this area, a tremendous improvement has been made in production. I was a soldier-settler in Avondale in the 1920's, and my first results consisted of 15 bales worth £250. From the same land today, with clover and top-dressing, I have taken more than 70 bales of wool.

I want to quote the case of one farmer who has 1,900 acres, of which 500 acres consist of barren hill land. This was used to graze the ewes before being brought down for lambing. That acreage carries 2,700 sheep and lambs, plus 200 head of Aberdeen-Angus cattle. That is the property of Mr. Williamson. It is a very good property. By intensive research at Avondale research station, not only the land around Brookton and Beverley but also a large part of the country held by the Forests Department as a reserve can be improved.

The Forests Department is jealous of its reserves in this district, which is ideal for establishing clover pastures. There are many thousands of acres of similar lands available but are held by the Forests Department but which could be used for farms as the quality of the timber there is such that it is unpayable to withhold the country from production. I appeal to the Minister for Agriculture to carry out more research into this type of land. I am afraid the director does not like the people of Beverley.

The Minister for Agriculture: That is not correct.

Mr. MANN: I am sure there is a very distinct feeling there.

The Minister for Agriculture: I would not say that.

Mr. MANN: I would say furthermore that Avondale had a bad history.

The Minister for Agriculture: You have spoiled your speech now.

Mr. MANN: Long before the present director's time there was a manager of Avondale who was completely uninterested and that has been a retarding factor on Avondale. We are prepared to meet

the Minister and the director and offer any help possible in the question of research. We would like to see the place brought up to date. There is no electric light. The conditions of the men employed there are not good and there is no septic tank. On a field day on contour planning, which was very interesting to all of us, a large crowd came from a long distance to see the level of contour work. They said to me, "Is this a vital research station?" and I replied, "Yes." They said, "There is not even a decent farm."

The Minister for Agriculture: I promise it will be investigated.

Mr. MANN: I hope it will be. This should be a show place; I do not mean an elaborate place, but a proper research farm. I understand a urine test was carried out on ewes and a two-hourly test was necessary. They had to have a motorcar with its lights on all night to take the test. If we want a good man on these places as manager, he is entitled to decency of life. The chap there came from Esperance and I believe he has put in his own lighting plant. I understand there are 13 research stations without electricity and septic tanks. These are basic requirements.

The wealth of Australia is in the soil and this season alone will have a big effect on Australian economy because of adverse conditions in the Eastern States. If what is in today's paper is true in regard to the exchange rate of the Bank of England, in which it was stated that the price of wool might decline within six months to a low level, that will certainly have an adverse effect on the economy of Australia. Yet people continue to demand higher wages, long-service leave and everything else! We think that Avondale is different from Wokalup and the research stations down south. I know we are short of young men for agricultural research work.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: The pay is not high enough.

Mr. MANN: We ask men to study veterinary science and this takes six years.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: It requires high qualifications.

Mr. MANN: The Public Service should agree to pay more to these highly technical officers, as Russia is apparently doing at the present time. I hope the Minister will make a further investigation in that regard.

The Minister for Agriculture: Do you think the farmers would co-operate by helping to share the cost?

Mr. MANN: I would not be surprised because for the Medical School and the cancer plant, money is coming in. I am prepared to discuss it with the people in that area.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Has the Government tried?

Mr. MANN: No attempt has been made. I will leave it to the Minister, but am interested from my own point of view because I am near the place and because it concerns the welfare of Western Australia. We believe that there should be a more intense system of pasture experiments. However, I will leave it to the Minister and hope that research will be undertaken.

The Minister for Agriculture: I will look at it.

Mr. MANN: If the Minister will look at the notes of the deputation which was attended by the two Lennards, Miles, Smith and myself, including Hon. Sir Charles Latham and Hon. L. C. Diver, he will find that in that discussion we intimated that we were prepared to help in any way possible and meet him or Mr. Baron Hay. There is a feeling in Beverley that the department is not keen about Beverley people.

The Minister for Agriculture: I won't have that.

Mr. MANN: I am not pulling my punches; the facts are there. I am a farmer; I live on the farm.

The Minister for Mines: Is the hon. member a fair sample?

Mr. MANN: I am not quite sure; I will leave it to the Minister.

Hon. D. BRAND: I think quite a fair sample. If it is the intention of the Minister to look at the conditions under which men are working and living on research stations, I would like him to look at the Chapman research station, which is made up of old buildings which require some reconstruction and renovation.

Item, Soil Conservation, £7,670.

Hon. D. BRAND: Under the heading of soil conservation, we see that in 1956-57 there was a vote of £7,270. Nearly £5,000 was spent. This year we have an estimate of £7,670, which is an increase of £2,700. Perhaps the Minister can explain why such an infinitesimal sum is set aside in respect of soil conservation in a State such as Western Australia. During our time as a Government, the late Garnet Wood took a very keen interest in this problem and I must give him full marks for the work done at that stage. Progress has been made, but at that time we realised the great demand made upon a few specialists was such that as money became available, more and more specialists and experts in soil conservation should be employed by the department, to the advantage of Western Australia.

I instance that in light land development alone in some areas in the Midland, farms have already been abandoned. There is a great danger of soil erosion from wind and I would think that the Minister and his department would be

well advised on that score alone, bearing in mind that a great deal of light land development is taking place, to give some special consideration to the problems which exist now. Once soil begins to drift, it creates an immense difficulty and costs a great sum of money to stem.

During our time, areas were declared under certain legislation whereby the Government became responsible for taking care of and enforcing regulations under which farmers were made to look after their properties and take the necessary action which would prevent erosion, rather than leave it to be cured at the expense of the State later on. One area was declared in the northern wheatbelt, I think; and I am wondering whether the Minister can say whether further progress has been made in other areas. The Minister might explain why there is such a small sum allotted for this important work.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I agree with the Leader of the Opposition that this is possibly one of the most important problems confronting us—maintaining the fertility of the soil. Once we allow that to go, everything is gone. Over the years the officers of the department, although few in number, have been doing quite a lot of useful work; but it was not until the last couple of years, when the principal officer of the soil conservation service spent a considerable period in South Africa and other places—

Mr. Mann: Is that Mr. Burvill?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes—that there has been any sort of defined policy. We can have a salt problem, and it is difficult to know what to do to get rid of it. Sometimes by planting certain deep-rooted plants, some good can be achieved; but it is a slow and tedious process. We have been hampered by two things. First, we have never been able to get sufficient officers to undertake the work; and, second, we have not always received the co-operation of the farmers.

Mr. Mann: You are receiving it now.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes. I know of plenty of instances in the past, where farmers would not even report the position because they were afraid it would destroy the value of their property; but I think that day has gone. The reason that we arranged to spend £7,000 in 1956-57, but did not spend it, was that we could not get the officers we anticipated getting. This year we are more fortunately circumstanced and are able to plan not only for the amount provided for last year, but for a slight increase on it; and we have every reason to believe that we will be able to expend the money.

This is far better than the position last year when there was about £3,000 unspent in the vote. The report I have is that it was not possible last year to provide the full service that had been planned, and

that increased expenditure this year is due to staff now being available to extend essential soil conservation services.

Mr. Mann: And it is not done free, because you charge £1 an hour.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes; but we have to provide on the Estimates the salaries as well as all the incidental costs. It does appear that there is an improvement; but even so, I am not satisfied. It is a big job, but this is as much as we can do.

Hon. D. Brand: Is the difficulty that you cannot obtain the necessary experts?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: That is one of the major difficulties, although the staff position has improved this year.

Mr. NALDER: I presume that salt erosion comes under this item. The fact that salt is showing up in so many areas is one of our big problems. Does the Minister know what experiments are still being conducted—I know that years ago some were carried out by the department—to see whether some means can be found to stay the salt problem?

Many acres of valuable land have gone out of production because salt has taken over. I make these remarks because recently a farmer gave me details of a small experiment he had made, which proved to be very satisfactory. He had taken the flow of water that came off the salt-affected country; and, with a deep plough behind a crawler tractor, he ran furrows to a depth of about 18 inches following the line of the land. He ploughed his furrows about 12 in. apart. The results he achieved were amazing. He found that quite a number of seeds that had been blown from other areas into these gutters started to grow, and that land that had previously been almost 100 per cent. affected with salt, started to produce some vegetation.

I was wondering whether the department had followed out any experiments that might be of advantage to farmers who are trying to bring pasture back to salt-affected land. It is important to experiment in an endeavour to get the natural grasses, or perhaps some imported grasses, to grow satisfactorily on this land.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I have no specific information on this question, but I do know that the department follows a policy which is not laid down to any definite plan. Wherever reports are received by the department, its officers go out and examine the area concerned and make a judgment on the spot as to what should be tried; and they will try again and again on the area. They may go somewhere else and recommend different treatment because of the circumstances. They are alive to all the things that the hon. member has mentioned. There is no doubt that some of the systems of control,

so far as ploughing is concerned, are tremendously important in soil conservation generally.

There is no set policy to say, "This is what we must do in all places." Our officers go out and judge each situation as they find it; and, in co-operation with the farmer concerned—this co-operation is readily given now—they are able to effect some improvement.

Item, Subsidies for purchase of bulls, etc., £100.

Mr. WILD: Can the Minister give any information on this item?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Individual farmers may receive up to £15 subsidy for the purchase of a bull, which must be nominated and passed by the Department of Agriculture before purchase. This scheme is not greatly availed of now, and this is a nominal figure to cover any isolated dealings during the year 1957-58.

Item, Research and control—fruit-fly, £9,700.

Mr. OWEN: The vote last year was £7,700, of which a small sum of £91 was unspent. This year the Estimate is £9,700. Last year the fruit-fly fund was about £17,500, and it showed a deficiency of £2,500, which is hard to reconcile with the £91 unspent under this item last year. Would the Minister also tell us whether the extra £2,000 in this year's Estimate will be spent on fruit-fly eradication or on the research side?

Orchardists have been requested to consider increased fees to build up the fruit-fly control fund, and we feel that the Government is a bit niggardly in not granting about £2,000 to the fund. A further point is that we do not think the salaries of officers engaged on other work should be charged to the fruit-fly fund.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: This includes payment to the fruit-fly eradication trust fund and subsidies for the voting scheme.

Item, weed control, Crown lands, £1,000.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: The amount allotted here seems to be very small in view of the huge area of Crown land in this State and the spread of certain noxious weeds such as Cape tulip. I take it this does not include railway reserves?

The Minister for Agriculture: No.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: Although the full amount was not spent last year, the sum seems very small.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: It must be sufficient, or more would be provided. Other departments meet their own costs in regard to noxious weeds. As the amount of the vote last year was not quite expended, the sum given must be sufficient.

Item, Assistance to agriculture, £2,260.

Mr. NALDER: Would the Minister tell us what this amount covers?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: It covers three or four miscellaneous items—experimental work in the West Kent area; contributions to the tractor testing centre at the Melbourne University; and subscriptions to the Commonwealth Agriculture Bureau, which compiles scientific publications; together with expenditure to be incurred in an attempt to establish linseed growing in this State.

Mr. Nalder: Do all the States contribute towards the tractor-testing centre?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes.

Item, Artificial insemination of cattle, £10,150.

Mr. WILD: I would like some information regarding this scheme. I am informed that the centre established last year has been reasonably successful. Is this activity subsidised by the Commonwealth?

Mr. I. W. MANNING: Will the Minister comment on the possible widespread effect of the bulls used at the Wokulup insemination centre, on the dairying industry, if it is found that the dams of these bulls could not reach the 8.5 solids-not-fat standard?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: This scheme has been enthusiastically received by farmers, with a surprising amount of co-operation throughout the South-West. The butterfat companies are co-operating by allowing us to use their freezing sections. The capital expenditure in connection with it is charged against the Commonwealth dairy branch, and the revenue from fees is expected to meet all operating costs this year. The fee charged is two guineas per service.

With regard to the query raised by the member for Harvey, I am unable to comment on his remarks at this stage; but, as I told him previously, his speech will be closely examined by the officers whose duty it is to consider such matters.

Hon. D. Brand: Are these bulls in fact paid for by the Commonwealth?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The capital expenditure in relation to the service comes out of the Commonwealth dairy grant.

Item, Eradication of codling moth, £13,605.

Mr. ROBERTS: The estimate this year shows a reduction of £10,109 on last year's expenditure. Can the Minister give us some details in regard to it?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Had the hon. member represented the electorate of Blackwood he would be delighted to know that the expenditure this year will be lower than last year because

it clearly indicates that this scourge is just about mastered. This year's activities will be carried out on the same scale—not necessarily over the same area but with the same intensity—as were last year's; and we confidently expect that the whole of the trouble will be cleaned up in this one year's operations.

Mr. Roberts: That is very good news.

Item—Poultry random sample testing, £2,250.

Mr. WILD: This item is shown for the first time; and in replying to the general debate, the Minister said that the only hope for the survival of the industry was greater efficiency. I have with me a report by the three officers who have recently returned from America; and they give some figures regarding the commercial poultry industry in the United States of America in 1956.

As a result of this random sample testing it is interesting to note that in America in 1925 the egg rate per hen was only 138 per annum, but now it has reached a figure of 231. In Western Australia the rate is about 180. There are a couple of other items in the report which are also interesting. The present officer in charge, Mr. Morris, has for some time been advocating more pullets and autumn production. This type of random sample testing bears out his theories. In America the autumn production in 1927 was 23 per cent., and it has now increased to 37 per cent.; while the number of pullets in 1927 was 48, and is now 79.

I would like the Minister to tell me whether it is not possible to allocate more money for this item. I have been down there and I have had a look at the work they are doing. To me it seems a small sum of money, particularly in view of the gigantic job they are attempting.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: This is an activity that does not require a great deal of money. The hon. member knows that the scheme was initiated through the Commonwealth extension grant, and it enables the value of chickens offered for sale to the industry to be determined; and the State is committed only for some small expenditure for wages.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—College of Agriculture, £54,146—agreed to.

Vote—Agriculture Protection Board, £30,996:

Item, Incidentals, £209,228.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I wish to discuss the control, prevention and eradication of noxious weeds, vermin, and so on. I would like to ask the Minister about the substantial and alarming increase in the ti tree moth in the metropolitan area. I believe that this vermin has done a great deal of damage not only in suburban gardens but also in market gardens in the

outer metropolitan area. I suppose that the increase in the population of this vermin is due to a great extent to the war that has been carried on against Argentine ants. No doubt in previous years they must have done a great deal towards clearing up the problem by eating the larvae of the moth.

Is any of the money allocated to be used in an endeavour to eradicate this vermin, or any other type of vermin which seems to have increased in number since the war on the Argentine ants commenced?

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I do not know much about this moth, and any eradication measures could not be paid for out of the Argentine ant money.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: I know that.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I will make some inquiries about it.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: I will ask a question on it.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I will contact the Agriculture Protection Board, although I have not heard much about it. If it is such a menace, I will ask the board to investigate the matter to see if something can be done about it.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Bush Fires Board, £13,314—agreed to.

Vote—Medical, £3,392,000.

THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH (Hon. E. Nulsen—Eyre) [11.30]: The estimated cost of operating the Medical Department this financial year is £3,392,000, compared with an expenditure of £3,007,575 in 1956-57. The shortage of trained nursing staff is still acute and every effort is being made to overcome this situation. As I have indicated in the past, there is no short-term solution to this problem. The shortage mainly affects country hospitals.

The bursary system for suitable girls who want to become nurses, which was introduced in 1955, is attracting more applicants, and as each bursar is required to serve where directed for a period of one or two years, depending upon the amount of the bursary, it is confidently expected that country hospitals will derive some benefit by 1960.

The department is continuing in its drive for the recruitment of nurses, including lectures in secondary schools in order to encourage girls to enter a nursing career. As far as funds have permitted, a programme of improvement of buildings and equipment has been undertaken in our hospitals. The new Royal Perth Hospital has been completed and approval given for two of the old wards to be remodelled, and this work is in progress. It is expected that the Perth Chest Hospital will open in the latter part of this financial year. This is financed from Commonwealth funds.

Major additions to the Wyndham district hospital have been completed whilst planning is in progress for other urgent work in the North-West, particularly additions to the Derby, Roebourne and Onslow hospitals. Other work which has been completed is as follows:—

Bunbury hospital—major additions, including a lift and a new mechanised laundry.

Pingelly hospital—new midwifery and theatre blocks and new kitchen.

Harvey hospital—new staff quarters.

Armada-Kelmscott hospital—New midwifery block, new laundry, rebuilding of kitchen.

Fremantle hospital—modernisation and mechanisation of laundry.

Pemberton hospital—major additions to midwifery section, new theatre and outpatients' department.

Hawthorn hospital—new nurses' quarters.

Devonleigh hospital, Cottesloe—additions, including new theatre and labour ward, new laundry and new kitchen block. Approval has been given for improvements to be carried out in the building which previously represented ward accommodation.

Donnybrook hospital—new theatre and labour ward block.

Boddington hospital—new midwifery block and new kitchen block.

The following work is well in hand:—

Fremantle hospital—major additions, including casualty and outpatients' department and new ward and a nurses' training school.

Manjimup hospital—new block containing both midwifery and female general beds, and a new operating theatre.

Williams hospital—major repairs and renovations.

Bridgetown hospital—new children's ward and x-ray and office facilities.

Tenders have been called for new nurses' quarters at the Corrigin hospital and for improvements to the Wongan Hills hospital. Tenders will also be called shortly for additions to the Moora and Kojonup hospitals, for a new laundry at Geraldton hospital, for improvements and nurses' quarters at Kellerberrin hospital, and for improvements to the Busselton hospital. It is also proposed to call soon for the earthworks required in connection with the new Albany regional hospital with a view to this work being completed during the summer months, and they are expected to be called not later than March, 1958, for the construction of the hospital.

I would now like to touch on homes. Our aged people's homes are performing a wonderful service in the community but,

despite the increased accommodation provided for them at Mt. Henry, where approximately 350 aged women are being looked after, it is inadequate to meet the demand for accommodation. At the Guildford women's home, Knutsford home for women, and Sunset men's home, a similar situation arises. The department's main concern is for the care and treatment of bed cases and senile cases, where relatives are unable to properly attend to their needs. Every avenue is being explored in an effort to assist in this direction.

Mr. Court: Does that mean they are going to increase the incidence of bed cases and senile cases for Sunset?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Where it is possible, that is the policy of the present Government. But it is a matter of finance.

Mr. Court: That is contrary to what you agreed some time ago, in regard to the encroachment taking place by the hospitalisation down there against the normal aged patients.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I am not quite certain on that point. We must still look after those chronically ill patients.

Mr. Court: If we are not careful, the place will become an infirmary instead of an aged men's retreat.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I will look into that matter and let the hon. member have the necessary information. At this stage I would like to mention the good work done by Mrs. Hummerston. She has worked very hard indeed in connection with the campaign regarding meals on wheels. It has been a great success, due mainly to her tireless efforts. Denominational organisations are to be congratulated with regard to the facilities they are providing for the aged.

With regard to the work of the Public Health Department, I point out that immunisation against poliomyelitis continues to be a major function of the department and is being carried out by four mobile units and at five stationary clinics in the country. In addition, there are a number of clinics in the metropolitan area, including one special clinic at the King Edward Memorial Hospital which caters exclusively for expectant mothers. Sixty per cent. of school children up to the age of 15 years have now received their third and final injection. It is estimated that all this group of children will have completed their immunisation by May, 1958.

The main activities of the Health Education Council during 1956-57 were the fly campaign and home safety. Included in the latter was the Corrigin project, which has created intense interest. For the 1957-58 year, a State-wide extension of the home safety campaign is to take place incorporating country and metropolitan areas, together with campaigns on food handling, flies and dental health. The first

branch of the Public Health Department laboratories to be established outside the metropolitan area has now been opened at Bunbury. The doctor in charge of this laboratory will make periodical visits to Busselton. It is anticipated that the value of this laboratory to the South-West districts will become apparent in the near future.

The school medical service has now been divided into three regions, with a doctor in charge of each region. Owing to the increase in the school population, several more doctors are needed to keep the medical examinations up to date. Home visiting was introduced in the country area for the first time this year—about 500 visits being made in the Albany township. Other towns will be visited in due course.

Eleven new infant health centres have been opened, and six more are under construction. The Government has assisted in financing the construction of all of these buildings. The infant health service carried out per medium of the "tea and sugar" train across the Nullarbor Plain to Port Augusta has been extended by utilising the return trip. In this way more mothers and young children are seen by the sisters. Six infant health sisters were given scholarships to enable them to do a 10-week pre-school course. All completed the course and passed the final examination. The number of children attending pre-school clinics is increasing each month.

The intensified efforts of the department have resulted in a considerable diminution in the incidence of trachoma. Certain parts of Western Australia, including that portion of the State south of the Kalgoorlie railway line, are now virtually trachoma free. There is still a lot of work to be done in the North-West and Kimberleys when seasonal conditions permit.

The school dental service, comprising 14 dentists, continues to carry out examination and treatment of school children free of charge. The service is understaffed and needs more dental officers. In addition, the Kimberleys are visited yearly by a dentist engaged by the Victorian section of the flying doctor service. This service is subsidised by the Department of Public Health and the Department of Native Welfare at the rate of £2,000 per annum. In isolated districts where no private dentists operate, the adult population may obtain treatment from school dentists if they wish, but in such cases they are required to pay fees to the dentist concerned.

Regarding tuberculosis, the first complete survey of the metropolitan area, started in 1954, was completed in March this year, and the second compulsory survey of the metropolitan area was commenced in July. At the same time, surveys of country districts, including many far-off centres, have been stepped up, and it is

hoped to complete the survey of this State as a whole during this financial year. The Perth chest hospital is nearing completion and should be occupied in this financial year.

Touching on mental health services, the development of these services to meet the needs of not only an expanding population but also more intensive methods of treatment, is an ever-growing necessity. Overcrowding of hospitals, particularly Claremont, and the increased number of admissions for treatment at Heathcote, are acute problems which can only be met by additional major accommodation.

Plans for the development of the new Guildford site are being considered and it is anticipated that a start on building will be made early in the next financial year. A new ward at the Whitby Falls farm hospital will be opened shortly.

Extensive alterations to modernise wards at Claremont are being carried out and will allow the opening of a reception hospital (Montrose House) to relieve the pressure on Heathcote. Further renovations of the old wards at Claremont are continuing and will greatly improve conditions for patients.

Loan funds have been made available for the replacement of the old main kitchen at Claremont and work is expected to be started during the current year. Roads which have long been in disrepair were recently reconstructed and bituminised at Claremont. Complete renovations, together with modernising of the kitchen, have been undertaken at Heathcote hospital, and the planned improvements of the nurses' quarters there should encourage recruitment of female staff.

The Havelock outpatients' clinic continues to provide a very valuable service not only in treatment but in limiting considerably the necessity for inpatient hospital admissions.

Regarding the Crown Law Department, the revenue expected to be derived from all sources, viz. probate, law courts, departmental—Crown Law, Land Titles and Public Trust Office—is estimated at £1,586,600 as compared with the actual revenue of £1,509,724 received during the year 1956-57. The estimate is £76,876 greater than the revenue received for the previous financial year.

The following statement shows the expected increases and decreases under the respective headings, when compared with the collections for that year:—

	Collections 1956-57 £	Estimate 1957-58 £	Increase £	Decrease £
Probate duty	1,010,642	1,050,000	39,358	—
Law Courts	294,222	320,000	25,778	—
Departmental—				
Crown Law	41,202	36,000	—	4,602
Land Titles	90,886	108,000	17,114	—
Public Trustee	72,772	72,000	—	772
	£1,509,724	£1,586,600	£82,250	£5,374

There is thus a net increase of £76,876.

With regard to probate duty, the estimate is £1,050,000. Last year's collections under this heading amounted to £1,010,642. This was £214,358 below the estimate for that period. The fall in revenue from this source is mainly due to smaller estates and decreased values.

In respect of law courts, the estimate is £320,000. Last year's collections were £294,222. The amount is dependent on activity in the courts and results to date indicate that the estimate will be attained. The increase in fees payable in the minor courts is expected to produce the additional amount.

The estimate of £36,600 for the Crown Law Department is £4,602 less than last year's collections. Details of the various items are as follows:—

	Collections 1956-57 £	Estimate 1957-58 £
Public Trust—unclaimed moneys	23,150	20,000
Local Court—unclaimed moneys	716	422
Bankruptcy—unclaimed moneys	782	—
Legal costs and services	8,911	9,700
Commonwealth Savings Bank commissions	1,819	1,800
State Housing Commission—Commissions	2,880	2,500
Bankruptcy Services	750	375
High Court—Services of State Officials	255	255
Taxation—Services of State officials	200	200
Supreme Court—unclaimed moneys	100	50
Companies Office—unclaimed moneys	763	40
Telephone Recoups from Officers	606	620
Sale of Confiscated Articles	39	150
Miscellaneous	831	488
	£41,202	£36,600

The lower estimate is mainly due to the lesser amounts to be received from unclaimed moneys held in estates handled by the Public Trustee. The amount of revenue from this and other unclaimed moneys is outside departmental control.

As regards the Land Titles Office, the estimate is £108,000. The estimated increase is due to higher scale of fees approved to operate from October, 1956. In connection with the Public Trust Office, the estimate is £72,000. Last year £72,772 was collected which was £6,772 above the estimate. The amount collected is dependent on the value and number of estates handled.

Progress reported.

RESOLUTION—STATE FORESTS.

Council's Message.

Message from the Council received and read notifying that it had concurred in the Assembly's resolution.

BILL—BILLS OF SALE ACT AMENDMENT.

Council's Message.

Message from the Council received and read notifying that it insisted on its amendments.

BILL—CHURCH OF ENGLAND SCHOOL LANDS ACT AMENDMENT.

Council's Amendments.

Schedule of four amendments made by the Council now considered.

In Committee.

Mr. Moir in the Chair; the Minister for Lands in charge of the Bill.

No. 1.

Clause 4, page 2, line 30—To delete the word "moneys" and substitute the words "proceeds, moneys, rents, issues and profits."

No. 2.

Clause 4, page 2, line 32—To delete the word "moneys" and substitute the words "proceeds, moneys, rents, issues, profits and interest."

No. 3.

Clause 4, page 6, line 10—To delete the word "moneys" and substitute the words "proceeds, moneys, rents, issues, profits and interest."

No. 4.

Clause 4, page 6, line 14—To delete the word "moneys" and substitute the words "proceeds, moneys, rents, issues, profits and interest."

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: When the Bill was before this Chamber, the member for Blackwood said he sought to make one or two amendments to it, because the Church of England authorities, after examining the Bill, said they thought it did not describe in detail certain aspects of their income to the extent which they desired. As members will remember it was referred in this form to the Legislative Council and the amendments now being considered are designed to give a better interpretation of "money" from an income point of view than is contained in the Bill. The proposal contained in these amendments is designed to make them read so that all income received by church authorities should be used in accordance with the terms of the Bill. There is no objection and I move—

That the amendments be agreed to.

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

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

House adjourned at 11.49 p.m.

Legislative Council

Wednesday, 6th November, 1957.

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

QUESTIONS.

SERPENTINE DAM PROJECT.

Cost of Opening Ceremony.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER asked the Chief Secretary:

(1) Is it a fact that 175,000 gallons of water was sprayed on five miles of road leading to the site of the main Serpentine Dam and pipe head dam for the purpose of laying the dust for the ceremony held on Friday last?

(2) How many men and trucks were used in the operation of watering the road?

(3) What was the cost of watering operations and the removal of all plant, tents, etc.?

(4) What was the cost of catering and all other incidental expenses in connection with the ceremony?

(5) To which Government department or fund was the cost debited?