

G. W. Stead, reporting in 1922, stated as to unimproved lands—

Your Commissioner was much impressed with the large area of apparently good land undeveloped and lying idle adjoining the present railway lines, and, from inquiries made, finds that a very large amount of it is held by private owners, possibly, in many instances, for higher values.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: What does the present Surveyor General say on the subject?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I have any quantity of matter to fall back upon, if necessary. If the present Surveyor General has reported adversely to the Closer Settlement Bill and the information is within the knowledge of Mr. Holmes, then in the interests of the State that gentleman should supply it.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: The Surveyor General is the head of the department, and you should have his views.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The information is not within my knowledge.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: I want to know what the Surveyor General has to say.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I have quoted from the report of the officer who actually made the inspection, and there can be no higher authority if he is competent and trustworthy.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott: He has been appointed acting Surveyor General since he made that report.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: If there were a report by the Surveyor General adverse to closer settlement, I would certainly have secured it and carefully studied it. I would not then have taken up so strong an attitude in favour of the Bill as I am endeavouring to do. The large area of land locked up close to railways operates to the disadvantage of the bona fide settler. He is carrying the speculator on his back by reason of so much land along existing lines being unutilised. Railway freights today are much higher than they would be if every landowner was doing his duty by the State. The revenue of the Railway Department also suffers. And the evil does not stop there: increased production of wealth is hindered by those who will not work their estates but are holding them for the higher values brought about simply by the industry of others. Everyone interested in Western Australia's progress should support the Bill, the passing of which will lead to much agricultural settlement, with all the beneficial effects which flow from such settlement. If the Bill aimed at confiscation, I could understand the opposition to it; but it does not aim at confiscation. It takes something away, but it gives back something adequate.

Hon. A. Lovekin: It gives more than it takes.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The measure has been sponsored by two Liberal

Governments, and this is the third time it has received the endorsement of members of another place. On all three occasions it was endorsed there by overwhelming majorities. I trust the Legislative Council will realise the importance of the measure, and pass it without any amendments that are likely to impair its usefulness.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	20
Noes	..	..	..	6
Majority for				14

#### AYES.

Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. W. H. Kitson
Hon. J. R. Brown	Hon. J. M. Macfarlane
Hon. A. Burvill	Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. T. Moore
Hon. J. Duffell	Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. J. Ewing	Hon. G. Potter
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. H. Seddon
Hon. E. H. Harris	Hon. F. E. S. Willmott
Hon. J. W. Hickey	Hon. H. J. Yelland
Hon. J. W. Kirwan	Hon. A. J. H. Saw
	(Teller.)

#### NOES.

Hon. J. Cornell	Hon. H. A. Stephenson
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. H. Stewart
Hon. A. Lovekin	Hon. J. J. Holmes
	(Teller.)

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

### BILL—INDUSTRIES ASSISTANCE ACT AMENDMENT.

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

House adjourned at 6.2 p.m.

## Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 30th October, 1924.

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

## LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motions by Mr. Wilson, leave for two weeks granted to Mr. Holman (Forrest) on the ground of urgent public business; and to Mr. Panton (Menzies) on the ground of urgent private business.

On motion by Mr. Richardson leave for one week granted to Mr. Stubbs (Wagin) on the ground of ill-health.

## BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

1. General Loan and Inscribed Stock Act Continuance.

Introduced by Minister for Lands.

2. Road Districts Act Amendment.

Introduced by Mr. Sampson.

## BILL—LAND AND INCOME TAX ASSESSMENT ACT AMENDMENT

Report of Committee adopted.

## BILL—INDUSTRIES ASSISTANCE ACT AMENDMENT.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

## ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1924-25.

*In Committee of Supply.*

Resumed from the previous day. Mr. Lutey in the Chair; Hon. S. W. Munsie (Honorary Minister) in charge of the Vote.

*Vote—Lunacy and Inebriates, £85,708 (partly considered):*

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I made an inquiry of the Minister yesterday in regard to the dentist. Can he tell us whether a dentist is to be appointed permanently.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: The resident dentist resigned in August and, owing to the financial stringency, it is not intended to appoint a permanent dentist this year.

Mr. Sampson: Will the Minister tell us how the dental work will be carried out?

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: The dental work will be carried out under the old conditions; that is to say, for certain subsidies duly qualified dentists will do the work specified by the doctors. In view of the fine work of the dentist who was there until August, it is not expected that there will be much to be done this year.

Mr. LAMBERT: That is not at all satisfactory. It is a crying shame that hundreds of patients in such an institution should be allowed to go without a dentist, and that the work should be dealt with haphazard. The Government should be urged to make every effort to secure a competent permanent dentist for this institution.

Mr. SAMPSON: In addition to the cutting out of the amount provided last year

for a dentist, there is a reduction of £340 in the provision for medical staff. It seems to me the position is a serious one. Medical treatment of the patients is of the first importance and so, too, is dental treatment. Under the Minister's proposal, instead of expert dental service being rendered to the unfortunate patients, it will be limited probably to the extraction of teeth. It is our duty as a Christian community to see that proper dental attention is given to all those patients requiring it. At the Hospital for the Insane there is a properly equipped surgery for carrying out the work. The need for a dentist was thoroughly recognised, and no reason has been advanced why one should not be appointed. In every well organised hospital of the kind there is a dental surgery. Is the Honorary Minister going to allow this necessary officer to be permanently removed?

Hon. S. W. Munsie: Such an officer will not be permanently removed.

Mr. SAMPSON: But the amount has been struck off the Estimates. Could not applications be called to fill the position?

Hon. S. W. Munsie: There is no money provided.

Mr. SAMPSON: Are we going to allow that state of affairs to continue?

The Minister for Lands: When you first called applications for the position there was no money available. Can we not do the same?

Mr. SAMPSON: If we have an assurance that applications will be invited I shall be satisfied. There are between 1,000 and 1,100 patients in the institution, and a dentist is sorely needed. Either a whole-time dentist should be appointed, or some arrangement should be made whereby those patients who require dental attention should receive it.

Mr. TAYLOR: I do not know whether we are discussing a dental surgeon for the institution, or a mechanical dentist. The medical men in the institution would order the necessary extractions if a patient were suffering pain. If it is intended that teeth shall be made in the hospital for the patients, no doubt a dental surgeon would be required. We can leave the matter in the hands of the Minister.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I am disappointed that such a valuable asset to the institution as a dentist, should have been removed. I hope it will be possible to restore the position.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: The Colonial Secretary is just as sympathetic towards patients as are members. Circumstances arose making it impossible for him to get another dentist when the vacancy occurred. If dental work is required at the institution, the Government will see that it is carried out. We have not provided on the Estimates for a full-time dental surgeon.

Mr. Sampson: Did you make any arrangements for one?

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: No, but if such a man is required, one will be appointed.

*Item, Managing Secretary, £180:*

Mr. SLEEMAN: I should like to know something about this item. I believe the institution is worse managed now than it was before a managing secretary was appointed. Surely the Inspector General of the Insane is capable of managing the hospital. It seems to me that a position has been found for this officer, who was formerly attached to the Implement Works. There is no need for a managing secretary there.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Our system of controlling the Hospital for the Insane is different from that which exists in the other States. In New South Wales, a manager is appointed to each institution in addition to a superintendent, while the Inspector General controls them all.

Mr. Taylor: How many patients are there in each hospital?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: About as many as there are here. The superintendent is responsible entirely for the health and condition of the patients. He is at the head of the institution, and is a medical man. He has nothing to do with the outside work. The manager looks after the outside work and the general management of the institution. In Victoria the officer is called a secretary and not a manager. The superintendent and secretary look after the outside work and the upkeep of the institution. In South Australia the officer is called a steward, not a secretary. Each of the two institutions also has a superintendent. The position in South Australia compares with that in this State. The Inspector General has not sufficient work in looking after the two institutions, so that he is appointed head of the Adelaide Hospital and Chairman of the Lunacy Board. All the responsibility for the management of the hospital is thrown upon the steward and the superintendent. In Western Australia we have had dual control. We have not known where the services of the Inspector General ended, and those of the superintendent began. It has been proved right through Australia that the medical men should give more attention to the patients and less to the management. I shall not refer to the various select committees and Royal Commissions that have inquired into our Lunacy Department beyond saying that they agreed that more attention used to be given by the professional men to administration and outside work than to the treatment and cure of the patients. Medical men are needed in these institutions only for the purpose of looking after the patients and experimenting in the matter of methods of cure. I hope that

when the new mental hospital has been built, an officer will be appointed for that express purpose. We should not look upon the patients as men who, once afflicted, should be banished for ever from human society. There has always been a secretary at Claremont, but in the past that officer had no power. The present system is new here, but doubtless it will eventually work satisfactorily. If the change of system results in the doctors spending four or five hours a day with the patients instead of 1½ hours, it will be a great advantage.

Mr. SAMPSON: Largely as the result of representations made by the present Minister for Lands upon his return from a visit to the Eastern States in connection with lunacy matters, and also as the result of the Royal Commission's recommendations, it was decided that a managing secretary should be appointed at Claremont. Surely the medical men have sufficient work to do in attending to the patients and rendering the medical service required. The appointment of the managing secretary should prove to be in the best interests of the patients and of the institution. It is based on a right principle.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: Some of the opposition seems to be to the individual, and not to the office.

Mr. Sleeman: That does not apply to me.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: I do not say it does; but if the cap fits the hon. member, he can wear it. I absolutely agree with having a business manager for an institution like that at Claremont. Formerly the medical officer of the institution had to devote more than half his time to business management, with the result that he did not devote to the patients the time that he should have given them. It is admitted by doctors themselves that they are not good business men and not good administrators. Whether the appointment which has been made is the right one, I am unable to say. The managing secretary has not held his position long enough for any of us to say whether he will prove a success or a failure.

Mr. Sampson: Let us give him a chance.

Mr. SLEEMAN: The Minister seemed to indicate that this was a personal matter with me.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: No.

Mr. SLEEMAN: The cap seemed intended to fit me.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: No.

Mr. SLEEMAN: If things do not alter during the next few months from what they have been since the managing secretary's appointment, I shall have something more to say. I do not know that it is the fault of the man; it may be the fault of the Government.

Mr. LAMBERT: It is always well to scrutinise an appointment which is given to

an excess officer. I do not know the capacity of this man to fill the position of managing secretary at Claremont. It is to be hoped, however, that in his new position he will not prove quite as unfortunate as he was in his connection with the State Implement Works. If the latter is any criterion of his managerial capacity, no great improvement is likely to result at Claremont. It is quite wrong for the Honorary Minister, who is nominally in charge of these Estimates, to think this is a personal matter. However, the fact remains that the appointment was not made until there was an excess officer; and it is competent for any member to ask why there should be a position created to absorb an excess officer.

The Minister for Lands: He was an accountant in the Public Works Department, and he had plenty of work.

Mr. LAMBERT: I do not think any of them show a great hoggishness for work.

Mr. Sampson: This job is no sinecure.

Mr. LAMBERT: The officer under discussion is totally unknown to me.

Mr. LATHAM: I am surprised to learn that an appointment to the Claremont institution was made from the State Implement Works. One would have thought that, particularly as a rise of salary was provided, somebody at least acquainted with the management of such institutions would have been appointed.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: Blame the previous Government.

Mr. LATHAM: What are the special qualifications of this officer?

The Minister for Lands: He is an accountant.

Mr. LATHAM: One would have expected a man with some other qualifications than those of an accountant to be appointed. But what are the man's special qualifications?

Mr. E. B. Johnston: Business capacity.

Mr. LATHAM: I hope the Minister will see that this officer is capable of conducting the business side of the institution as we would desire. He should be someone like the officer in charge of the Old Men's Home.

The Minister for Lands: He is not so good as you think.

Mr. LATHAM: He has given satisfaction.

The Minister for Lands: Not so much satisfaction as some people think.

Mr. LATHAM: I notice that this officer is to receive an increase in salary and other assistance as well, including quarters, fuel, light and produce free, and stores at contract rates.

The Minister for Lands: He is in receipt of the same salary as he was paid last year!

Mr. LATHAM: It seems to me rather strange to transfer an officer from the State Implement Works and place him in charge of the business at the Claremont Hospital for the Insane. Great care should be exercised in the selection of an officer for this work.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: This officer was previously in charge of the business side of the State Brickworks and of the State Implement Works. He is acknowledged to be a capable business manager. As to the transfer from the State Implement Works to the Claremont Asylum, that was a matter with which the Public Service Commissioner had to deal. He had to select a man of ability and if there was a man suitable for advancement in the service, he was entitled to the appointment.

*Item, Engineering Staff and Farm Manager, £3,200:*

Mr. SAMPSON: Has an increased area been acquired for the dairy herd?

Hon. S. W. Munsie: No, not that I know of.

Mr. SAMPSON: Some time ago it was decided to take over an additional area of land including a small swamp, so as to improve the facilities for depasturing the cattle. If nothing has been done, I trust the Minister will look into the matter.

*Item, Board of Visitors, Fees, £625:*

Mr. SAMPSON: I wish to pay a tribute to the members of the board. I have attended their meetings and have been impressed by their thorough, sympathetic, and capable examination of patients. I would like to see the duties and powers of the Board of Visitors properly defined. Paragraph (g) of Section 95 of the Lunacy Act refers to the powers of the board and provides that the board "may give instructions to the Inspector General as to the management of the institution, otherwise than in regard to the medical treatment of patients, but subject to regulations." This particular provision has given rise to considerable trouble in the past, for it is difficult to determine what is medical treatment. It is possible to say, for instance, that any action taken in respect of the patients is in the nature of medical treatment. Recently a patient was removed to Whitby on the recommendation of the board of visitors and later on that patient was refused his week-end leave. I am not in a position to say whether he should have been granted leave or not, but if it is competent for the board to recommend the transfer and that action does not conflict with paragraph (g), then it should be competent for the board to allow week-end leave.

Mr. Sleeman: Has it been refused by the board?

Mr. SAMPSON: The board members claim they have no jurisdiction. If the Minister controlling the Lunacy Department has in mind the necessity for amending the legislation, I suggest that Section 95 should be altered so as to properly define the powers and duties of the board of visitors.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: I do not control the Lunacy Department and do not know whether the Minister has taken this matter into consideration. I recognise the position

regarding the board of visitors. I believe the board have power to make recommendations for the release of patients, let alone to grant week-end leave. The difficulty is to get the board of visitors or any medical man to take the responsibility of making such recommendations. I have discussed this matter with members of the board and they say it is the duty of the medical officer at the institution to determine such matters.

Mr. SAMPSON: That is one reason why I think the powers of the board of visitors should be set out clearly. I hope the Government will deal with the matter.

Mr. MILLINGTON: I disagree with the member for Swan. We are badly in need of new blood on the board of visitors. I do not know how they were appointed. Although Labour is supposed to be represented, it is not.

Mr. Sampson: No special party is represented.

Mr. Hughes: There is no special party represented.

Mr. Latham: The sooner we leave politics out of this question the better!

Mr. MILLINGTON: Considering that the board is an appeal board for the employees, there should be someone on the board to whom they may look when matters affecting them are being considered. Apart from being a board of visitors, it is also an industrial board.

Mr. Sampson: Mrs. Casson represents Labour.

Mr. MILLINGTON: The members of the board are dominated by the doctor. I presume the other members have ideas, but they appear to be completely bluffed by the medical officer. It was proposed that a certain patient be granted an independent inquiry, and though the doctor could not explain why the inquiry should not be granted, he dominated and bluffed the board. Instead of the board receiving credit, I maintain if ever there was a board that required new blood, it is this one. As it is an industrial board, which is entirely wrong, there should be an accredited representative of the trade unions on it. However, there is none. It is non-political, which means it is highly political. It is totally representative of one side, and the employees have no possibility of getting proper consideration—I will not say justice—by those competent to deal with their affairs.

Mr. Taylor: You assume that justice is out of the question.

Mr. MILLINGTON: I refrained from referring to justice. The board has not the necessary knowledge to deal with matters from the point of view of the employees, such as they would have if there was a specialist on the board.

Mr. Sampson: There are two medical men on the board.

Mr. MILLINGTON: But one of them constitutes the board. Unless a member was able to convince the doctor, it was useless to put up a case. The rest of the board appeared to have no opinions at all. The question of whether a man should have his case heard by an independent board was not one solely for a medical man.

Mr. Sampson: That would be outside the jurisdiction of the board.

Mr. MILLINGTON: Had the board agreed to the proposal, the inquiry would have been granted, but the doctor was opposed to it, and consequently it was not granted. My complaint is that the board is dominated by one man and that new blood is required.

Mr. Sampson: Who is the man?

Mr. MILLINGTON: Dr. Birmingham.

The Minister for Lands: He is one of the best.

Mr. TAYLOR: I know nothing about the constitution or functions of the board, but I know the two medical men on it, Dr. Birmingham and Dr. McWhae.

Mr. Millington: I think Dr. McWhae was absent on the occasion to which I referred.

Mr. TAYLOR: I would be quite satisfied to go before those doctors on any charge; I know they would adjudicate fairly upon it. I do not think politics enters their heads. I am sorry the member for Leederville should have made the remarks he did. Mrs. Casson is a member of the board.

Mr. Hughes: Is she staunchly non-political, too?

Mr. TAYLOR: Members on the Government side will not charge her with being prejudiced against the workers. I think she would rather lean towards the working class. She has been prominent in the Labour movement. It is not necessary for the board to exhibit any political feeling in performing their functions, and I regret that the slightest suggestion should have been made that party politics or party feeling governs their actions. I hope the board will always be free from any political party feeling when dealing with the question brought before it.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: We should not allow party feeling to warp our judgment regarding the necessity for the board. I do not think the board has functioned in a manner advantageous to the State, or in such a way as to afford protection to the inmates. I have not heard anyone say that the board has rendered an actual service.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Yes, it has.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: No institution has received more concentrated adverse criticism than has the Hospital for the Insane. We have highly paid officers in charge of the institution; criticism is perpetual and persistent; in addition we are going to pay £625 per annum to a board of visitors, and we are justified in asking whether there is any need for the board of visitors. If we have the administration plus a buffer be-

tween Parliament and the administration, the buffer should be of some value. In actual practice we have not had any demonstration of its value. As a looker-on for some years, and after reading the reports, I am of opinion that the board has never come into the play. What is the use of it? It has not functioned in the time of stress. If the board does not function when public opinion is directed against the administration, it is not likely to function at any other time. It has not improved the administration.

Mr. Sampson: I am sure the Minister in charge will contradict that statement.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I rose because of the remark that someone should move to strike out the item, but I found the debate was being twisted from a general review of the advisableness—

The Minister for Lands: The board is statutory.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: That shows how dangerous it is to make the appointment of such a board statutory. It is not the first time that the necessity for the continuance of the board has been questioned, and we have been told it must be continued because it is provided for by statute. Evidently the statute needs to be altered, and the best way of conveying the opinion of members is by reducing the item. That will indicate to the Government the need for review. The review I want is the abolition of the board. I want the Minister to accept the responsibility for the administration of the institution. I do not want any buffers. When we try to establish a buffer between the people's representatives and the actual administration of such institutions, it is of no value. The buffer gets either the whole of the criticism or none at all. Had this not been a statutory item, I should have moved to strike out the whole amount. As I am assured it is a statutory item, in order to indicate that the board should be abolished as an expensive luxury, I move—

*That the item be reduced by £1.*

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: As a rule, a body of men doing their work properly are rarely criticised; those who do not do their work well are criticised. The board of visitors have carried out their duties well and no criticism has been levelled against them. The member for Guildford does not know what the board have done. For some years there were complaints in this Chamber and outside that the releasing of patients was entirely in the hands of one man. It was thought advisable that a competent board should be appointed to consider some of the cases. All medical men are not infallible. Since the board were established they have released a considerable number of patients, who otherwise would have still been in the institution.

Mr. Mann: And they have cared for them afterwards.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The system is worked on lines somewhat similar to those adopted in the Old Country, where friends appeal to the board in control for permission to be given the care of patients. It has worked well, and many who have been released have been known to be cured. That is one of the principal reasons why the board was appointed in this State. The need for the appointment of such a board was emphasised by the select committee of this House, of which I was chairman. Up to date the duties entrusted to the board have been carried out satisfactorily and there have been no complaints. Regarding one member of that board, Dr. Birmingham, I have known him for 30 years. He has travelled the world and made inquiries into lunacy matters. In this State he has given a great deal of time and consideration to the subject, and I think I am safe in saying that there is no medical man in Western Australia, practising his profession, who has such a profound knowledge of the question as has Dr. Birmingham. This medical gentleman has on many occasions, since he has been a member of the board, condemned the actions of the officers of the institution in respect of the treatment of the patients. Unfortunately, the board have no power to intervene. Dr. Birmingham would have appealed for more liberty for the patients but for the fact that it might have been thought that an attempt was being made to take away the full control of the institution from the officers in charge of it. A Royal Commission, with Dr. Jones, Inspector General of the Insane, in Victoria, as chairman, was appointed three years ago, and the conclusion arrived at was that the inmates at Claremont were treated as prisoners rather than as patients. Since that time the gardens around the institution have been more freely used by the patients. In connection with the industrial part of the establishment, prior to the appointment of the board, a committee or a special board existed and its duty was to consider the conditions under which the employees worked. It was, in fact, an appeal board consisting of a representative of the employees, a representative of the management, with a magistrate as chairman. That board dealt with the cases submitted to it, but it did not give satisfaction, and, if I mistake not, it was at the request of the employees themselves that the board of visitors was asked to undertake the duty of an appeal board.

Mr. Sleeman: The employees are asking for an appeal board now.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The board of visitors has power to hear appeals of employees, and do so at the request of the employees themselves. In respect to the releases that are recommended by the board, it is true that there are quite a number of patients now out of the institution who would have still been within its walls but for the board. A great responsibility is thrown on

the members of the board. They can only form an opinion on the information they receive from the medical officers and others at the institution. In addition, the board recognise the necessity for giving attention outside to those patients who might be recommended for relief, but who have no friends to look after them. It was then that what are known as after-care committees were appointed for the express purpose of attending to those unfortunate people who were without friends or relations. The duties of the board are such that I would not care to have to perform them. I have had many opportunities of visiting the Hospital for the Insane and therefore am in a position to judge. The members of the board are doing very good work in the direction of seeing that proper treatment is meted out to the patients.

Mr. HUGHES: I think there has been a misunderstanding in regard to the amendment submitted by the member for Guildford, respecting the deletion of the item. According to the Act it is not a statutory fee that is being paid to the board. The board, however, is statutory. Subsection 8 of Section 74 states:—

The members of the board shall receive out of moneys appropriated by Parliament such fees as may be prescribed by regulation.

Out of moneys appropriated by Parliament! If Parliament appropriates any money! That is what it means. There is no regulation under which the board can be given fees if Parliament does not appropriate the money. It is clear that if Parliament does not appropriate the £625 the board will not receive any fees.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Parliament will appropriate it.

Mr. HUGHES: I am going to support the amendment for the deletion of the item.

The CHAIRMAN: The amendment before the Committee is for a reduction and not for the deletion of the item.

Mr. HUGHES: Well, I will move that the item be deleted.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member can amend the amendment of the member for Guildford.

Mr. HUGHES: I suggest that the member for Guildford withdraw his amendment to enable me to move mine.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: If you want to go the lot I will not stand in your way. I will withdraw my amendment.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

Mr. HUGHES: I move an amendment—

*That the item be struck out.*

I have heard complaints about the personnel of the board. That section of the community with one line of thought has never been represented on the board. It is all right for the member for Mt. Margaret (Mr. Taylor)

to say that politics have never interfered in connection with the appointment of this board.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: And politics have not, either.

Mr. Lindsay: The Primary Producers' Association are not on it.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Not spoils to the victors surely!

Mr. HUGHES: It was always spoils to the victors with the hon. member. That is of no use to my party.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: On a point of order I ask that that remark be withdrawn.

The CHAIRMAN: I think it is merely an expression of opinion.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Very often opinions are expressed that are not true.

The CHAIRMAN: I do not think the hon. member is out of order.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Then he can say anything he likes in the House. I consider the remark was offensive.

Mr. Sampson: Distinctly offensive.

The CHAIRMAN: Does the Leader of the Opposition regard it as offensive?

The Minister for Agriculture: You provoked him and then you immediately take offence.

Mr. Richardson: Nothing of the sort.

The CHAIRMAN: I do not consider the remark offensive.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I understood that if a member made a remark that was considered offensive he was asked to withdraw it. I consider what he said offensive.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: It must not be understood—

Mr. Richardson: Is the Minister for Agriculture in order in setting out to make a speech?

The CHAIRMAN: The Minister is not in order. The member for East Perth may proceed.

Mr. HUGHES: I assure the Leader of the Opposition that I had no desire to be offensive. After 15 years in the civil service I think I can state what in my opinion does exist, and I speak with some personal knowledge of just what it is to be suspected of being a supporter of the Labour Party and to work in the civil service.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Anyhow, you got on very well.

Mr. HUGHES: I did not get that to which I was entitled. I would have got much less if one of your Ministers had had his way.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must keep to the point.

Mr. HUGHES: I have heard a good deal of complaint about the constitution of the board. The Labour Party have never had a representative on it. No representative of the Labour movement ever got on this or any similar board.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Well, you won't have me around at the Trades Hall when you are appointing a board.

Mr. HUGHES: I am not objecting to what the Leader of the Opposition did when in power. My quarrel is that this board was reappointed after the late Government knew that they had lost the confidence of the people. In common decency the late Government should have waited until the new Ministry took over office. For the late Government to reappoint the board was a violation of our constitutional system. As reasonable men and women, the members of the board should resign and leave it to the new Minister to reappoint them or to appoint their successors. I am protesting, not against anything the board has done, but against the violation of our constitutional rights.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The hon. member does not object to the amount placed on the Estimates, but merely to the method by which the board was appointed. It is the right board and the right sum of money, but the appointment of the board was made by the wrong Government. Was ever anything so ridiculous heard before?

Mr. Hughes: You always fix up your friends with appointments.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Of course it is of no use my protesting against such remarks. However, I have never made an appointment, except on suitability.

Mr. Hughes: You have appointed your own friends; there was the Attorney General.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I can understand that the member for East Perth might have friends not fit for appointment to responsible positions. The board were appointed in a perfectly constitutional way, so I do not see what the hon. member has to object to. He does not even seem to know for what purpose the board was appointed. It was appointed, not so much to look after the finances as to give the inmates an opportunity to approach somebody other than the officials of the institution, and to give the friends and relatives of the inmates some sense of security. The board was appointed on the recommendation of a select committee of this House. The most suitable people have been appointed. I do not know whether they all vote for the Nationalist Party or not. In any case, the political views of members of the board should not influence us in the making of provision for the board.

*Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.50 p.m.*

Mr. SAMPSON: I regret that the member for East Perth has moved to strike out the item. The board are sympathetic and

thorough and are doing good work. When I was Colonial Secretary I visited the hospital on various occasions, particularly when sports gatherings were being held, and I noticed that members of the board were always present, mingling with the patients and noting what was going on. That indicated a commendable enthusiasm for their duty. The board have many duties to perform. At least once a month they must visit the institution and inspect every part of it, see every patient, inspect and consider the orders and certificates relating to patients, and other things set out in Section 95 of the Act. The board are actuated by humanitarian motives and not by the desire to secure the fees. On one occasion the fees were paid to the after-care committee, on which are some representatives of the board.

Mr. Hughes: When did you reappoint them?

Mr. SAMPSON: I cannot answer off-hand.

Mr. Hughes: Was it before or after the elections?

Mr. SAMPSON: It is regrettable if this is to be made a political question. The only question is whether the board are essential and are doing their duty. I maintain they are. The board consist of Dr. Birmingham (Chairman), Dr. McWhae, Mr. Weir, Mr. Darbyshire, and Mrs. Casson. I have always regarded Mrs. Casson as a Labour representative.

Mr. Hughes: Do not try to put that over us.

Mr. SAMPSON: Certainly it should not enter into the question. She is a splendid worker on the board as well as on the after-care committee. I am informed that Mr. Weir has resigned. This will necessitate another appointment being made, and in making that appointment I feel sure the Government will do what is right and in the interests of the patients.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I quite understand that the after-care committee is doing valuable work and is necessary to cope with the special difficulties attending patients on their leaving the institution. That, however, is totally apart from the administration of the institution. The board of visitors is appointed directly in connection with the administration of the institution. I thought I made it clear that I was not concerned about the personnel of the board. I did not want to be informed of the qualifications of members of the board. The administration of the institution has received more concentrated adverse criticism than that of any other institution. The criticism has been consistent for years and during the whole time we have had the board of visitors. If the board was of any value from an administrative point of view, it would have proved of assistance to the administration and obviated the criticism



levelled against the institution. The board is evidently of no value. To secure reform it is better to have the administration concentrated as much as possible. The Inspector General should be responsible direct to the Minister, and the Minister in turn to Parliament.

The Minister for Lands: The members of the board of visitors are not buffers. They have nothing to do with the administration.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Then why have them there? I would not mind so much if the criticism had not demonstrated that the inmates had just cause to complain.

Mr. Latham: There have been no complaints in recent years.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: We have had Royal Commissions and there have been newspaper controversies in recent times, and the criticism has had reference to the inmates. I have read over and over again of the discontent of the staff.

Mr. Griffiths: A good deal of that was aroused in this Chamber.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: That strengthens my argument that discontent exists. If the members of the board have nothing to do with the administration, but are there to look after the interests of inmates and employees, they have failed. I cannot see that the board is necessary, and I am satisfied we should get better results—certainly we could not get worse—by abolishing the board. When £625 is involved, it is as well to effect economy. I could tell the Government many directions in which the £625 could be better expended.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Before the board was constituted, the great outcry in the Chamber was that the Inspector General was too autocratic, and that there was no appeal from his decisions; in short that he ruled the roost. The board of visitors was appointed as an appeal board in the event of trouble occurring. Useful work has been done by the board.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: And there has not been much criticism of it.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: No. A good deal of the alleged trouble with the staff originated in this Chamber. I do not understand all this feeling. If it is due to party spirit, I hope it will be cut out.

Mr. HUGHES: The Leader of the Opposition did not reply to my statement. I am not concerned about the conduct of the board or its personnel. A retiring Ministry ought to exercise certain decencies. It is not usual for a Ministry, when they know they have lost the confidence of the people, to make a number of appointments. The late Government, however, appointed these people, who were hostile to this side of the House, and were disliked by it. The member for Northam says he did not know what the political thoughts were of the people he had appointed. It is strange that all those who have been appointed to positions con-

nected with the service during the last seven or eight years were not opposed to the Government then in office. The member for Swan is talking humbug when he speaks of Mrs. Casson as a member of the Labour Party.

Mr. Taylor: Is she opposed to Labour?

Mr. HUGHES: I think she went the way of the hon. member in the hour of crisis.

Mr. Richardson: It was the hour of crisis for the Empire.

Mr. HUGHES: A lot of people remained here who talked about the Empire.

Mr. Taylor: I did not miss you.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. HUGHES: I was honest enough to say where I stood.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! That has nothing to do with the question before the Chair.

Mr. Davy: You took a military job.

Mr. HUGHES: That is untrue, and I ask for a withdrawal.

The CHAIRMAN: I did not hear the remark.

Mr. HUGHES: The hon. member has made a deliberately false statement.

Mr. Davy: I object to that.

Mr. HUGHES: He ought to be manly enough to withdraw it.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I did not hear it.

Mr. HUGHES: He said I had a military job. In saying that he has deliberately made a false statement.

Mr. Davy: I ask that that statement be withdrawn.

Mr. Mann: Quite right.

Mr. HUGHES: I ask the member for West Perth to withdraw his remark.

The CHAIRMAN: I ask you two withdraw what you said.

Mr. HUGHES: I am not prepared to allow the hon. member to make a false statement, and then claim the protection of the Chair.

The CHAIRMAN: I ask you to withdraw the statement that the member for West Perth has made a deliberately false statement. I consider that is offensive.

Mr. HUGHES: I withdraw the statement, but I ask the member for West Perth to withdraw the false statement he made concerning me.

Mr. Latham: You can contradict it. There is nothing objectionable about it.

Mr. HUGHES: It is untrue.

Mr. Davy: I accept that.

Mr. HUGHES: Then let the hon. member withdraw it.

Mr. Davy: If you say my statement is untrue I accept that.

Mr. Taylor: That is a withdrawal.

Mr. HUGHES: It is not a very manly one. I did expect him to be manly enough to withdraw the statement when he is told it is a mistake.

Mr. Davy: I have not made a mistake.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! We are dealing with the amendment.

Mr. HUGHES: I am sorry the hon. member has not the courage to tell the truth.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. HUGHES: If this item is struck out the board need not give up its work. The Committee ought to stand up for the rights of the incoming Government. There would have been a terrible outcry if the Labour Government, on relinquishing office, had fixed up all their friends.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I wish I could have fixed up all my friends. I would have provided an appointment for you.

Mr. HUGHES: The hon. member provided for a good many, all that he could.

The CHAIRMAN: I ask the hon. member to deal with the subject matter under discussion.

Mr. HUGHES: In common decency the retiring Ministry should not have usurped the functions of the incoming Government. They were so lacking in common decency as to appoint their own friends to this board, and the incoming Government should revoke the appointments. Parliament ought to show its disapproval of such conduct by striking out this item.

Mr. Latham: Would you ask them to work for nothing?

Mr. HUGHES: I ask them to resign, and right the wrong the late Government did.

Mr. Latham: They would be fools if they took any notice of you.

Mr. HUGHES: The board ought to resign now.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You have said that forty times.

Mr. HUGHES: The late Government had no right to appoint them. Most members of the board make their living in other ways, and should not require any additional fees. If they are so keen on the work they should do it for nothing.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It is a cowardly thing for any member to call upon this board to resign.

Mr. Hughes: It was a cowardly thing for you to appoint it.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: If the members of the board are unsuitable, that is a matter for the Government to deal with. Should those men who were appointed to the Railway Department by a National Government be called upon to resign because of that fact? Thousands of men were appointed by my Government who are connected with the Labour movement.

Mr. Hughes: But the plums were given after the election.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The suggestion is a ridiculous one. The hon. member has the grace to say that the members of this board are suitable.

Mr. Hughes: I am dealing with the action of your colleagues.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: He said they ought to go because they were appointed by a National Government.

Mr. Hughes: Which had lost the confidence of the people.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: We left office as soon as we knew the position. The Labour Government, however, held office for seven months after their defeat, and made appointments *à l'aveugle*.

Mr. Hughes: Which Labour Government?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The last one. It would be ridiculous to say that all those appointments had been made illegally. We have now had our lesson in decency from the hon. member. I do not know whether the board will appreciate the lesson. If they remember the teacher, I am afraid they will not take much notice of it. I hope if there is a division that only two members, the mover and the seconder of the amendment, will be found voting for it. We ought to show that the board has our confidence, and that we in no way endorse the statements that have been made against it.

Mr. TAYLOR: While formerly there was great disturbance and argument in the Press as to the Claremont institution, latterly there has been quiet. The board have never been criticised adversely. Surely the Minister controlling the department can be trusted. I am surprised that supporters of the Government have not confidence in their Government's administration during the last six months. I am acquainted with several members of the board, and know them to be capable of good and conscientious work.

Mr. HUGHES: I did not desire to discuss the board, but I must remind the last speaker that after an officer of the Claremont institution had been proved to have accepted frozen meat for fresh, and to have allowed that frozen meat to be paid for as fresh, thus defrauding both the Government and the helpless patients, and that after the officer in question had been dismissed—

The CHAIRMAN: Are the board concerned with that?

Mr. HUGHES: Certainly. The board held an inquiry and reinstated the officer. A select committee comprising members of both sides of this Chamber found the man guilty of such conduct, but the board of visitors reinstated him.

Mr. Sampson: What nonsense!

Mr. HUGHES: The board did that, and so there is a good case against the board. I strongly suspect that the Claremont meat scandal was made a political matter. The statutory functions of the board include the giving of instructions to the Inspector General as to the management of the institution, otherwise than in regard to the medical treatment of patients, but subject to regulations. It was the board's duty to give instructions to the Inspector General regarding this fraudulent officer. However, the board made no inquiry into the truth or otherwise of the allegations; they left that to be done by a select committee of this House. The board sent an insulting answer through the Minister; but the responsibility

in that regard lies with the Minister, who had no right to read the board's answer here. Further, the board are directed to make from time to time reports to the Minister concerning the management of the institution and the observance of the regulations for the welfare and conduct of the patients, and to make recommendations with regard to the management of the institution, the amendment of the regulations, and so on. Is it not an important question of management when the Government are paying the price of fresh meat for frozen and when the patients are being supplied with frozen meat instead of fresh? Moreover, the patients got offal in their gravy beef. The board of visitors sat as an appeal board and reinstated the officer. Such a board ought not to function longer.

Mr. Latham: When was this man reinstated?

Mr. HUGHES: I cannot give the exact date.

Mr. Latham: The new Minister must have reinstated him.

The Minister for Lands: The Minister had no power to do so. The board are an appeal board under the Act.

Mr. Mann: But the board could only recommend reinstatement; they could not actually reinstate.

Mr. HUGHES: I believe that when an official appeals to the board, the board's finding stands, and the Minister has no power to vary it.

Mr. Sampson: You don't charge the late Government with neglect, do you?

Mr. HUGHES: I do. Has the hon. member forgotten the charges made against him in relation to the Claremont meat scandal? The select committee found the hon. member guilty of neglect, and of misleading this House.

The CHAIRMAN: I think we are getting a little away from the board's functions.

Mr. HUGHES: It is all wrapped up in the select committee's findings.

The CHAIRMAN: We are on the board now, not on the select committee.

Mr. HUGHES: The reinstatement savoured very much of political influence.

Mr. Sampson: To whom did the recommendation for reinstatement go?

Mr. HUGHES: The members of the board were appointed unconstitutionally, and they ought to resign.

Mr. Latham: How unconstitutionally?

Mr. HUGHES: They were appointed by a Government that had lost the confidence of the people.

Mr. WITHERS: Before deciding how to vote on the amendment, will the Minister inform the Committee whether the board is necessary?

The Minister for Lands: We must have a board.

Mr. WITHERS: Will the striking out of the item mean the wiping out of the board? If there is any necessity for the

board, I do not know that we would be justified in taking any such action.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: I believe that provision for a board of visitors is essential in the interests of the institution and of the inmates. If the item is struck out, we may find some kind-hearted people who will carry out the duties of the board without remuneration.

Mr. Latham: But you would have no control over them.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: I question whether we would get the right sort of people to act on such a board, and also the desirability of having a board exercising the necessary functions under such conditions. Until it was decided to appoint the board, the general outcry was that the Inspector General was an autocrat who could do what he liked regarding patients or employees. The right of appeal under such circumstances meant an appeal from Cæsar to Cæsar. The Government of the day held that that was wrong in principle and appointed an official board of visitors who were constituted a board of appeal for all concerned.

The Minister for Lands: That was done on the recommendation of a select committee.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: That is so. If there was any blame attachable to the board regarding the reinstatement of the man who was dismissed from his employment at the Hospital for the Insane, equal blame attached to the Government for placing the board in an invidious position. What happened was that the select committee found that frozen meat had been delivered and accepted, instead of fresh meat. The select committee did not find anyone guilty, nor did they recommend the dismissal of anyone. That was not their business. They simply had to find whether frozen meat instead of fresh meat had been delivered at the institution. It was up to the Government to take action, and they did so. They sacked one man and then withdrew the notice of dismissal.

Mr. Sampson: Who did?

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: You did.

Mr. Sampson: You are wrong.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: I know I am right.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Is that on the file?

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: Yes. The Government withdrew the notice of dismissal and issued a fresh one under the Lunacy Act, thus giving the man the right of appeal to the board.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I suppose that was only a fair thing.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: It was not a fair thing to the board. That is what I take exception to. After all the adverse statements that had been made during the two months prior to that time, and bearing in mind that the board of visitors were ex-

pected to look after the general interests and management of the institution, was it reasonable to expect the board to say that the accusations against the man were correct? If those accusations were regarded as correct by the board, the members of that body must have admitted their own neglect. Of course they reinstated the man. In my opinion the Government were wrong in placing the board in such a position.

Mr. Teesdale: Then you support the member for East Perth?

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: No. I contend that if there was any blame attachable to the board, there was equal blame attachable to the Government.

Mr. Sampson: But the Act controlled the situation.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: No. You did what you should have done, but then withdrew the notice of dismissal and issued a fresh one.

Mr. Sampson: On the advice of the Crown Law Department.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: I have had advice on different occasions but if I thought I was right, I stuck to my decision. The Minister who did not adopt that attitude would not be fit for his position.

Mr. Taylor: Never mind who gives the advice, the Crown Law Department or anyone else!

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: Yes, unless a legal point was involved.

Mr. Sampson: And this was a legal point.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: If it is a matter for the application of ordinary common sense, I will use my own judgment. I hope the Committee will realise that a board of some description is essential. The member for Guildford said that the fact that there had been trouble at the institution all the time, proved that the board was useless. All the members of the board can do is to make recommendations and it is optional with the Minister as to whether those recommendations are carried out. The board have no power to enforce their recommendations.

Mr. SAMPSON. Regarding the alleged supply of frozen meat to the Claremont Hospital for the Insane—

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: There was no "alleged" about it.

Mr. SAMPSON: Yes, there was. On receipt of the report of the select committee, the Government took action and an employee at the Hospital for the Insane, and one at the Old Men's Home, were peremptorily dismissed. The Government also decided to blacklist the butcher who was said to have supplied the frozen meat. Some difficulty was experienced in arriving at a decision, partly because of the evidence submitted to the select committee. I referred to that matter in the House at the time, and pointed out that the evidence given by

Mr. Munsie, M.L.A., was of a contradictory nature. I described the evidence as very sloppy and unconvincing. The evidence was submitted to the Crown Law Department. We found we could not dismiss one man without dismissing the other, and as one man was protected by the Lunacy Act, which set out that his services could not be dispensed with without the right of appeal to the board, he was reinstated, together with the other man. Whether the decision regarding the butcher who was blacklisted was revoked, I cannot say.

Mr. Hughes: He is back again under another name.

Mr. SAMPSON: At any rate, the Crown Law Department expressed the opinion that the course I have indicated should be followed and that was done.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	6
Noes	..	..	..	30
Majority against				24

#### AYES.

Mr. Coverley	Mr. Marshall
Mr. Hughes	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Latham	Mr. W. D. Johnson
	(Teller.)

#### NOES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. McCallum
Mr. Barnard	Mr. Millington
Mr. Brown	Sir James Mitchell
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Munsie
Mr. Clydesdale	Mr. Richardson
Mr. Corboy	Mr. Sampson
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. J. H. Smith
Mr. Davy	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Teesdale
Mr. Heron	Mr. Troy
Mr. Kennedy	Mr. A. Wansbrough
Mr. Lambert	Mr. C. P. Wansbrough
Mr. Latham	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Lindsay	Mr. Withers
Mr. Mann	Mr. Wilson
	(Teller.)

Amendment thus negatived.

Vote put and passed.

Vote, Observatory, £1,587:

Mr. LAMBERT: The keeping up of an observatory is not a State function; rather is it for the National Government. Many people confuse the functions of the Observatory with those of the Meteorological Branch of the Commonwealth, a branch performing very useful service for the general community, as in the getting out of weather reports.

Mr. Taylor: They were not very accurate during show week.

Mr. LAMBERT: No, but generally speaking, the functions of that branch are very useful. In a young State like Western Aus-

tralia it is an anomaly to be maintaining an observatory when we cannot afford to appoint an agricultural chemist for the scientific guidance of our primary producers.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Why did we establish the Observatory?

Mr. LAMBERT: I do not know, but I am going to use every effort to see that the expenditure involved is discontinued.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You cannot disprove of the Observatory, so it is of no use trying.

Mr. LAMBERT: Nevertheless I am going to try. Some time ago the Perth Observatory was employed cataloguing the stars, a world-wide work shared by all the observatories. But after 11 years it was found that the telescope at the Perth Observatory had been focussed on a wrong area of the heavens, that the Perth Observatory had been cataloguing stars allocated to some other observatory. So the work done by our Observatory over a period of 11 years was useless. If the Perth Observatory is to be continued, it must be as a Federal responsibility. If the Observatory were discontinued to-morrow it would hurt nobody in Western Australia. I hope my remarks will appeal to the practical sense of members. We can better spend this £1,500 in getting some world-renowned agricultural or mining chemist who would be of some service to the State. The site is a beautiful one, and would lend itself to a bureau of agricultural information, which would grow in importance and necessity as the State advanced.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: I hope the Committee will not strike out this vote. Some years ago a similar motion was moved, and the member for Kanowna made an eloquent speech in favour of the retention of this institution. I am sure there are sufficient old members present to recollect that speech and leave the vote as it is. It should not be struck out because of the work the Observatory does in observing the tides along the coast of the North-West. No other institution in this State informs the shipping upon this matter. It has been of especial value to the State Shipping Service, and during the last year has saved them hundreds of pounds.

Mr. Hughes: To what does "arrears, £137" refer?

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: I have not the information.

Mr. LAMBERT: I am surprised at the opposition of the Honorary Minister to the striking out of this vote. Anyone who has the slightest regard for the finances of the State and realises the obligations of the Federal Government towards it, and how Western Australia is being starved and is having everything taken from it, must see the wisdom of striking out this vote. No other State in the Commonwealth is keeping up what is called, for the sake of respecta-

bility, an Observatory. The report concerning it would not do justice to a first standard child. It talks about giving children peeps through the telescope. And yet the Honorary Minister stresses the importance of the institution.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: I did not stress its importance from that point of view.

Mr. LAMBERT: It is absurd to say that shipping benefits by the information issued from the Observatory. The Government Astronomer was asked to catalogue a portion of the sky. He got astray with his telescope, and mixed up Mars with some other star. If we have any money to spend on scientific work, let us do something to assist those people in the backblocks who are trying to develop the State. The Observatory is a stupid and spectacular institution. Surely we can exist without its useless services. I thought the Treasurer had assured us that all such things would be cut out.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I do not consider this is a useless institution.

Mr. LAMBERT: It should be taken over by the Federal Government. No wonder this State gets a damn poor deal from the Commonwealth. It is sickening to hear members excusing the Federal people for not carrying out their functions. In being asked to pay for the maintenance of this institution, the people of the State are being robbed. It is of no use and should be abolished.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	28
Noes	..	..	..	5

Majority for .. 23

#### AYES.

Mr. Angwin	Sir James Mitchell
Mr. Barnard	Mr. Munzie
Mr. Brown	Mr. Richardson
Mr. Clydesdale	Mr. Sampson
Mr. Corboy	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Coverley	Mr. J. H. Smith
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Davy	Mr. Teesdale
Mr. Heron	Mr. Troy
Mr. Hughes	Mr. A. Wansbrough
Mr. Lamond	Mr. C. P. Wansbrough
Mr. Lindsay	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Mann	Mr. Wilson
Mr. Marshall	(Teller.)
Mr. Millington	

#### NOES.

Mr. Chesson	Mr. Withers
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Latham
Mr. Lambert	(Teller.)

Vote thus passed.

Votes—State Children and Outdoor Relief, £91,690; State Labour Bureau, £2,508—agreed to.

*Vote—Minister for Education, £592,894:*

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE (Honorary Minister) [9.2]: Every member realises that this is an ever-increasing vote. The net increase for the current year is some £12,000. The cost per head of population for actual school requirements is £1 11s. 4d., but when the amount spent by the Public Works Department in the building of schools is taken into consideration, together with the grants to the University, the School of Mines, and the Aborigines' School, the cost per head rises to £1 16s. Although the amount spent on education, £592,894, is an immense one for so small a population as that of Western Australia, still our cost per head of population is less than that of any other Australian State or any other British dominion. The reason for the comparatively high cost of our education system is largely the scattered nature of the population. The Education Department estimate that the expense to the community of maintaining small country schools averages about three times as much per pupil as the teaching of children in thickly populated centres, which mean large schools. The only new expenditure contemplated during the current year is the opening of new primary schools where the numbers of children justify that course, and the opening of the Albany High School, for which the building is just finished. It is not possible in the present state of the finances to provide for any expansion of continuation classes or technical schools, nor for any additional work in manual training and domestic science. The increase in expenditure is due mainly to the number of new schools opened. The salary item for primary schools shows an increase of £12,305 this year. On the group settlements 37 schools, serving 62 groups, are already open; and 26 more have been authorised. Apart from the additional expense occasioned by new schools, there is the additional expense due to decrease in the number of unclassified teachers. A staff with better qualifications means a staff with higher pay. Provision has to be made for training more teachers to meet the needs of the increased number of schools and scholars. This accounts for about £800. The opening of the Albany high school this year is responsible for an increase of about £2,400. The school of agriculture at Narrogin shows an increased expenditure of nearly £600, due to the larger number of students, and also due to the need for some new machinery. About two-thirds of the incidental vote for this school comes back in revenue from fees and from sale of produce. I am indeed pleased to observe the necessity for increased expenditure at the Narrogin school, since it shows conclusively that the school has justified itself, and that the young people of the country districts are taking an interest in it.

Mr. Latham: The only trouble is that the school is not big enough to meet the requirements.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: Probably not; but presently we shall get the agricultural college established, and then I hope the Narrogin school will be relieved by the transfer from it to the agricultural college of the older pupils. The salaried section of these Estimates show an increase of £14,918, whilst contingencies show a decrease of £2,572, leaving a nett increase of £12,000 in the total vote for this year. A Minister introducing the Education Vote could probably speak for hours on the usefulness of education, and on the many benefits to be derived from a perfect system of education. I do not intend to do that to-night. In conclusion, let me say that relatively to our population and the length of our existence as a self-governing community, we have reason to be proud of the education system of Western Australia. I believe that we are as up-to-date as any of the Eastern States, and that we are further advanced than many other countries, in point of education. I trust hon. members will receive these Estimates generously. Although the department find themselves unable to do all they would like to do during the current year, yet I do not doubt members are satisfied that the Minister controlling education is endeavouring to do everything possible for the advancement of our children. I submit the Estimates.

Mr. GRIFFITHS (York) [9.9]: To every member representing a country or a gold-fields or other outback district, this vote is one of deep concern. I have carefully read the latest report of the Education Department and am indeed pleased to note the improvement which has taken place in the training of teachers who are sent out to the country districts. When I was last in this Chamber, I repeatedly voiced a protest against the class of teacher sent into the country, on the score of such teacher's lack of training. Frequently the teacher had had only six months in the Training College at Claremont before being given charge of a school. The teachers who were given a course of 12 months or two years at the college were sent to the large schools in the city. I argued that those who had the longer period of training should be sent to country schools, and that their promotion should depend on the results they obtained there. The Director of Education now states that the difficulty is to find a sufficient number of teachers for the country districts. It appears that while the Training College turns out about 100 teachers annually, the losses by superannuation and resignation amount to about 132 annually. I observe that it is proposed to make arrangements this year to train three groups of short-course students, instead of two as formerly. Short courses in manual and domestic training are also desirable for teachers to be sent to country schools. The Director of Education points out the rapid growth of schools on group settlements. There appears to be a short-

age of teachers, and also a shortage of cash. I feel sure members representing districts that contain group settlements will not take umbrage when I say that other members from outback are always told that no money is available when they apply for additional school facilities. It is not right that other country districts should be starved for the sake of the group settlements.

The Minister for Lands: The children on group settlements are children just the same as those in any other part of the State.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: That is perfectly true. One member, I understand, is asking for 30 schools to be established on group settlements. The granting of schools in this wholesale fashion makes one wonder whether our outback country districts will get a fair deal. A pleasant feature of our educational system is the consolidation of schools, which I advocated here years ago. I am delighted to observe the success which has attended consolidation at, for example, Toodyay. In some districts consolidation has not proved a success, because it has been applied only in part. On the subject of consolidated schools, the Director, in his report, says—

These schools, which are very numerous in our large and sparsely-settled State, form one of the most difficult of the department's problems. They are necessarily very expensive. Each child in them costs the department far more than a city child, but it is difficult to secure as high a standard of education as is desired, when all subjects have to be taught to all classes by a single teacher.

The amalgamation of several small schools into one larger school will be an advantage if the numbers within a reasonable distance are sufficient to form a school that will require more than one teacher. Unfortunately, over the greater part of the country, these conditions do not exist. The distances are too great, and the houses too widely scattered, to make it possible to arrange to drive the children to a common centre.

Where there is a fairly large country school in existence, it is sometimes found possible to close a small school some miles away and to drive the children to a larger school. Driving contracts are now in existence for bringing children in to such centres as Toodyay, Donnybrook, Harvey, Mundijong and Wanneroo. Other proposals are now under consideration. There is often a good deal of reluctance to be overcome: many parents are unwilling at first to adopt the new scheme. The Parents and Citizens' Association in the larger centre has, in some instances, done excellent work in persuading the surrounding people of the advantages of the larger school. No doubt the number of these "consolidated" schools will grow year by year.

The idea of these consolidated schools has, I believe, been taken from a book in the

Parliamentary Library, entitled "The Brown Mouse," which refers to the success of this form of education. When speaking to the member for the province in which Toodyay is situated, I asked about the results from special rural schools, and was informed that Toodyay was a special rural school as well as a consolidated school. I personally saw the samples of work done at that school, and was delighted with them. In the Toodyay school I saw the realisation of an idea which I had advocated here. The select committee to which the Honorary Minister referred last night visited the Parkerville school, and saw something of the work being done there. I understand that a profitable sideline at Parkerville is the rearing of pigs. At Moora, Dongarra, and other country centres the parents and citizens' associations have arranged for special exhibitions of the work done by the various schools in the districts. In the United States and Canada the same sort of idea has been brought to fruition through the operation of boys' and girls' school clubs. These activities do not interfere with the education of the children because much of the work is done during playtime. I notice that the driving allowance, which is paid for transporting children to country schools, represents £11,000, which is a fairly large item. The allowance is to be reduced by 2d. per day. That appears to be a paltry amount. Is it intended to reduce the deficit by this means?

Hon. S. W. Munsie: It represents approximately £3,000 a year.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Merredin is growing rapidly and is an important railway centre. The residents there are asking for the establishment of a high school and they point out that the town is favourably situated for such a purpose.

The Minister for Lands: I hope there will be no more high schools established until we can provide more primary schools.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: That is quite right. At the same time, if the Government could see their way clear to establish a special rural school at Merredin, it would be of advantage, particularly in view of the fact that we have a State farm there. Apparently nothing has been done regarding the extension of manual work. At Doodlakine and Kellerberrin manual training is carried out under great difficulties, seeing that the work is being done in the passages of the schools. Promises have been made that manual rooms will be erected, but nothing has been done. Requests made for small works of this description are met by the reply that no funds are available, yet one member has informed me that he intends asking for the establishment of 30 schools in his district. When one hears of such requests, one wonders whether adequate attention will be given to the needs of other country districts. I have often heard members making fun of the correspondence classes. I can assure the Committee that

those classes have proved beneficial to many families in the outer country districts, particularly in the isolated parts where no educational facilities are available. The annual report of the Education Department shows that these classes deal with three distinct groups of children. The first group consists of children living in isolated homes and unable to reach any school. These were the children for whom the classes were first established. The second group consists of children in small country schools who have passed through Class VI. and wish to remain at school for a year or two years more. The Director points out that it is very difficult for a single teacher in charge of all classes for infants upwards to give these advanced children adequate attention. The correspondence classes furnish fortnightly papers to them and thus enable those children, while still living at home, to obtain a more advanced education than was possible before. The third group consists of children who have left school but who wish to carry on their studies in some particular direction. There is no doubt the correspondence classes are doing excellent work. The Director of Education makes another point in his report to which the attention of the Committee may well be directed. He refers to the employment of school children and says—

There is urgent need of legislation which will prevent the improper employment of children of school age. It is useless to make education compulsory if children can be employed in such a way that their health is injured, and that they cannot gain the benefit that the schools should provide. During the year some shocking cases have been brought under the notice of the department. Until legislation is passed, it is impossible to take any effective action. One boy aged 12½ starts delivering papers every morning at 5.45, finishing his round about 8.15. He is naturally unfit for school. The medical officer states that his health is adversely affected. His father and elder brother are regularly employed in the Government service. Another boy, aged 13, rises every morning at 2 o'clock and starts work on a milk round, finishing about 7. After school he goes back to the dairy for another hour's work. It is found he is frequently unable to do any work at school and the teachers allow him to sleep in his desk. It is almost incredible that such gross ill-treatment of children should be legal in a civilised country.

The Minister for Lands: That is against the law now.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: These statements appear to be so startling that I consider it right to bring them before the notice of members. The Director proceeds—

In England no child under 12 may be employed at all. No child between 12 and 14 may be employed on a school day be-

fore school hours, nor on a non-school day before 6 a.m. or after 8 p.m. In the State of New York no child under 14 may be employed in any occupation whatever during any part of the school term, even on Saturdays or Sundays. Surely our children have a right to have their school days undisturbed by premature labour, imposed upon them for the sake of their earnings. The existing state of affairs is a scandal which ought to be removed.

The Director also refers to street trading by school children and says—

Another matter which urgently needs further legislation is street trading by children. This is recognised everywhere as demoralising and in many countries is absolutely illegal. In Western Australia it is illegal for children under 12; children over 12, whether boys or girls, may engage in street trading if they obtain a license. Licensing provisions in other parts of the world have proved a failure, and it cannot be said that they are successful here. The evidence of the demoralising tendency of street trading is so overwhelming that it ought to be made absolutely illegal for children up to the age of 18.

I wish to add my testimony to the fine work done by parents and citizens' associations throughout the State, not only in the country districts but in the cities. One great figure in this work is Mr. John Tucker of the Thomas-street school, who has just returned to Perth from England. The association in connection with that school has been an object lesson showing what can be done by a parents and citizens' association. The association at Buckland Hill is another good one.

The Minister for Lands: That is a very fine organisation.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: When passing a small country school on one occasion I noticed the children sitting in the sun. It was about 106 degrees in the shade and there was no shelter at all. I spoke to some of the parents and suggested the formation of a parents and citizens' association. They formed one and held a busy bee, in order to erect a shed for the children. Other improvements have been carried out since then. This is usually considered the children's age in connection with education, and wonderful facilities are provided for them. Considering the difficulties the Education Department has to contend with, great work is being carried out. I hope the Minister will be able to favourably consider the requests I have made this evening.

Mr. LINDSAY (Toodyay) [9.23]: This vote is an important one. It is large primarily because we have so many small schools in the country districts. When speaking on the Address-in-reply, I pointed out that every child should be afforded an opportunity to receive a primary education before we consider spending money on frills



and the provision of secondary, technical, or university education. We should provide that kind of education, and should not be told that money is not available. I endorse what the Minister said regarding the Narrogin farm school. I have had practical experience of the usefulness of that institution in affording youths an agricultural education. The school has been of benefit to farmers themselves because of the winter courses. I attended one course and gained much knowledge. It is a fine institution, and I hope the Minister will be able to extend those operations in the future. As to the education of country children, we have many small schools attended by from 10 to 20 pupils. Teachers who go to such schools have just left the Claremont Training College, and, where there are five or six classes to be dealt with, the children cannot get the assistance from those young teachers that is possible in the city schools. Having to travel considerable distances, the children are often tired when they get to school and tired when they get home. These disabilities are recognised by people who go into the country areas. They know that their children will suffer because of the absence of proper educational facilities. Notwithstanding what may be said regarding the correspondence classes, it is not always possible for mothers in the country areas to give the necessary assistance to their children to make that work advantageous. For my own part, I have had to bring my children to the city in order to give them a primary education. It is not available in my district. The education given to country children in the cities is not suitable for them in connection with their agricultural work. They require rural education. Because of these disabilities, many of our best settlers are leaving the country districts and coming to the towns in order to provide their children with an adequate education. A few years ago, when I was attending the Narrogin farm school, I put before the Director of Education a proposal which I considered would provide the solution of these difficulties. Later I heard Inspector Miles lecturing on rural education in America. He must have thought my proposition a good idea. My idea was that in certain selected country centres the Government should set up school hostels where children coming from beyond the three-mile radius could be accommodated. The immediate result would be larger schools and, consequently, a better class of education. Since nearly half our population are earning their living or intend to earn their living by agriculture, it is clear that the rural education provided for our children is not nearly as complete as it ought to be. We often hear it said that a great deal of money is being spent on education in Western Australia. Yet the report of the Director of Education shows that whereas in London the cost per child

in average attendance at primary schools is £14 3s. per annum, the cost in Western Australia is only £10 17s. 4d. It is very surprising to me. The inescapable inference is that we are not doing as much as we should for the education of our children.

The Minister for Lands: We can get over that by increased taxation.

Mr. LINDSAY: If I were in power, probably that course would be adopted. We require to see that our children are properly educated.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: And we are going a fair way towards that consummation.

Mr. LINDSAY: But not so far as other countries are going.

Mr. Teesdale: We may yet be going too far.

Mr. LINDSAY: The other day, in answer to questions, the Minister told us the driving allowance for children living beyond the three-mile radius had been reduced from 6d. to 4d., and that the reduced amount was considered adequate. The Minister gave us no reason for that opinion. Why should this driving allowance have been reduced? School children in the city are carried at a reduced fee on the trams, and school children living along a railway line are carried on the railway free. The driving allowance of 6d. has been in vogue for many years, and I am astounded that it should have been left for the Labour Government to reduce it from 6d. to 4d. I may be told that the system has been abused, that parents who can afford to do without the allowance are nevertheless drawing it. But in the first place the allowance was granted, not as a charity, but as a right.

The Minister for Mines: Who drove you to school as a boy?

Mr. LINDSAY: In my boyhood I did not go to school at all. However, that is not the point. The children living beyond the three-mile radius have just as much right to be educated as have those living in the city or those living along a railway. The allowance of 6d. has been paid by successive Governments for many years past, and I am very sorry the Labour Government should have seen fit to reduce it. The Director of Education in his report shows that 31 new schools were opened and staffed during 1923. I take it the increase in 1924 will not be less. The group settlements must have their schools; indeed they are being erected now. The necessary money must be found, for we cannot bring children out to this country and then deprive them of their education. Some country centres are deplorably neglected. I have here a letter, dated 14th September, 1922, notifying that the Minister had approved of a school at Muckebudden, and that the Works Department had been instructed to erect the school as early as possible. It is a sad commentary that that school has not yet been erected. Here is the explanation: The people at

that centre put up the necessary money and built a small agricultural hall. The immediate result was that they were penalised in respect of the school building, the Education Department setting up the school in the agricultural hall, a most unsuitable structure, especially during the winter months. The Director of Education in his report states that money will be provided to train teachers in rural education. I believe we have only just touched the fringe of our agricultural development. One of the things we require to attend to is the keeping of the agricultural population that we have. Just as soon as a man begins to get some return from his farm he sends his children to the city for better education, and it is not long before the parents themselves, in their anxiety for their children's welfare, follow them to the city and remain with them during their educational years. It will be good for the country districts and for the State as a whole if we can stop that sort of thing by providing improved education in country districts, such as would be possible under my scheme of school hostels. I put up the scheme to the Director of Education. His comment was, "Look at the trouble we should have with the domestics." But surely that could be easily overcome. We are not asking that our children should be boarded for nothing at these hostels, but merely that the department should recognise that children living beyond the three-mile limit have their incontestable rights to the best education that can be provided to fit them to live the rural life. I hope the Minister will consider this.

Mr. MANN (Perth) [9.40]: The Education Department is not giving to the question of mental defectives the attention that it deserves. Speaking on the Colonial Secretary's Estimates last night, the Minister referred to the Seaforth Home, whereupon the Minister for Lands interjected that if they were drawing that money they were doing very well. I at once concluded that the Minister for Lands was not fully seized of the work of that home. In company with the Honorary Minister, I visited that home some months ago and there watched the treatment of some 50 or 60 mental defectives. But there are scores of other mentally defective children who are not enjoying that treatment. A dull child placed in a school with smart children and unable to keep pace with them, gives up the struggle, with results disastrous to himself. The School Teachers' Association have discussed at their conferences the treatment of mental defectives and are fully alive to the seriousness of the position. I am sure the Honorary Minister, after his visit to the Seaforth Home, will realise the importance of extending the work being done there.

I have had considerable experience in this matter. I have seen children who have been born to different families, and one after another they have gone wrong. They were bound to go wrong for they were born with a hereditary disadvantage, and to an environment that added to that disadvantage. If they were given an opportunity of going into a school they would at least have their backward minds developed to the fullest possible extent. They would be taught to do something for their support in after years. I was surprised to learn from the doctor controlling our Hospital for the Insane, that frequently men and women go through life whose minds are never developed, and cannot be developed beyond that of a youth of 10 or 12. They only go through life when it is easy for them. When they strike trouble of any kind they go down. We who are gifted with a better thinking capacity, with broader minds, and greater ability, judge these others from our own point of view. We do not know the condition of their minds. We frequently hear it said when one member of a family has failed, "He had the same opportunity as the others." If we had an institution based on bigger and broader lines than the small place at Gosnells, those children who are making no response to their teaching, and with whom the teachers can do nothing, and who are a problem to their parents, could go there and be tested. The cause of their dulness could be ascertained, as well as the reason why they were unable to do as well as their brothers and sisters. When visiting the place some two weeks ago I went round with the psychologist, Mr. Hill. He said "What do you think of this boy? He is 14 years of age, but his mind has grown only to that of a youth of five. It is doubtful if it will ever develop beyond that of a boy of 10 or 12." The boy was bright enough in appearance.

The Minister for Lands: Was not this question dealt with under another vote last night?

Mr. MANN: No. In this case the teachers are being paid by the Education Department, and it is a credit to the department that that is so. The work that is being done is not sufficient, and the Department should give it more attention. If it does, the State will reap the benefit in after years.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: You will admit we are doing more than the previous Government did.

Mr. MANN: I do not know what they did. If there have been any sins of omission there is no reason why I should not bring this matter under notice.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: You ought to give the Government credit for starting it.

Mr. MANN: It was to the credit of the Government that they assisted in this small way, but it is only a drop in the ocean.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: It is something, although it is small.

Mr. MANN: On the last occasion when I visited the place I went with a party. We saw lads of 10 or 12 whose minds were not developed beyond those of children of four or five, and they cannot be developed to any great extent. The psychologist said that one lad of 14 had been studied for two years. It had been found impossible to teach him the alphabet, but after two years it was found that he had a capacity for wood-carving. The teachers concentrated on this talent, and have been able to teach the boy enough arithmetic to enable him to make a calculation and take up the calling of wood-carving. They have taken one boy after another and treated them in the best way they could. I wish to read the opinion of medical men who have made a life study of this matter, to make my point:—

At a conference of medical men held in London recently, Dr. William Potts said that the number of mentally defective persons in England and Wales, apart from lunatics, was estimated at 149,600, of whom it was calculated that 665 were in urgent need of provision being made for them in their own or the public interest. All mental defectives who were at large were a potential danger, and in proportion as modern industry became more complicated, their opportunities for wrong-doing increased. He was confident that the public would welcome a thorough preliminary medical examination in order to determine the extent to which an offender was a deliberate wrong-doer or the victim of his environment.

As greater skill was required, and the earning of a living became more difficult, their problems increased.

Dr. Gibbons said that it was never known for two mentally defective individuals to become the parents of a normal child. One could be reasonably certain by the time a defective child reached the age of 16 years how much benefit it could obtain from treatment by segregation and so forth. If there was no indication that such a child could ever be regarded as normal or as approaching normal, steps ought to be taken to prevent it from ever becoming a parent.

At the meeting held in Melbourne of medical men and others dealing with the subject, the following motion was carried:—

That in the interests of feeble minded children themselves, and in the interests of their parents and the community, the establishment of a home or colony where they might be cared for, trained, and scientifically studied, is desirable.

At the last conference of the School Teachers' Union of Western Australia, Mr. McLean said:—

Of the various States, New South Wales and Victoria appeared to be the only two which are working on a definite system

with regard to mental defects, Tasmania is taking steps to deal with these unfortunates, which will give her a foremost place in this branch of educational reform. With reference to our own State, I suppose that matters could be more unsatisfactory than they are. The first essential, it seems to me, in dealing with this class of children, is that the conditions must be such as to win the whole-hearted approbation and co-operation of the parents. If a stigma is attached to sending a child to a school of this description, the venture is doomed before it starts. I have no wish to criticise the noble and self-sacrificing efforts of the Salvation Army, and I have nothing but whole-hearted admiration for their work in social amelioration, but it is a thousand pities that the only school for mentally deficient children should be associated with that of one for delinquent children. The flaw is a fundamental and fatal one. I am not of course criticising the work carried on in the school, I believe it is exceptionally good, but I condemn the whole system as a make shift, and one which in any case only touches the fringe of a difficult problem.

I hope the Minister will give more attention to this branch of education, so that dull and backward boys and girls may have their minds developed to the utmost capacity, and have the handicap they are carrying lightened as far as possible. If this can be done, there will be fewer people in our prisons, and fewer inmates in our asylums for the insane and other corrective homes. Our object should be to assist mental defectives to earn their own living, failing which they will be at a disadvantage to themselves as well as to the State. I commend this phase of the education system to the Minister.

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH (Beverley) [9.55]: I congratulate the Government on their attitude towards the establishment of consolidated schools, but I hope their operations will not be confined entirely to the towns. The principle could be applied in many country centres. I wish to voice a protest against the cheeseparing method adopted in reducing the driving allowances. It is regrettable that this Government should have brought about a reduction in this direction, and curtailed a privilege that has been enjoyed by country districts for many years. The driving allowance has been of benefit, not only to the farming community, but it has proved a boon in many parts of the State. The total cost of the allowance last year was £11,000. The saving, I understand, will be in the vicinity of £3,500. The Minister did not say there had been a saving in other branches of the Department, but I take it a saving is being effected by this particular reduction. This is another instance of the manner in which the Government are hitting at the country districts.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: A good deal of the saving is accounted for by the fact that consolidated schools are doing the work for less than the cost of the driving allowance. I do not say that a great saving is effected, but this does represent a saving in the driving allowance.

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: Other schools in the remote parts of the country districts will have to suffer because of this.

Mr. Taylor: The Government should use motor cars for the children.

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: The Director of Education should establish more of these consolidated schools. This is more or less of an experiment, but I know it has proved a success in my district. The Director should also turn his attention to the provision of quarters for country teachers. Whilst my district has been deprived in this respect, group centres and others are receiving the benefit of a considerable amount of expenditure in this direction.

Mr. Latham: It is not so in many of the groups.

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: It is so in quite a number. One locality should not be at a disadvantage because of another. The Director holds that every locality should take full advantage of the system of correspondence classes. These do not always meet the ease. Very often the parents have no time to devote to the matter. Unless there is an efficient teacher or supervisor to conduct the classes, the children do not get any benefit from them. I protest strongly against the attitude of the Director.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: In refusing to build quarters?

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: Yes.

The Minister for Lands: In some of the group settlements there are no buildings.

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: I am referring to my own district. I feel very sore about the matter. The Government are whitening away some of the privileges we have enjoyed in the past. By the reduction of the driving allowances an injustice has been created in many cases, and I hope the Minister will look well into the matter.

Mr. BROWN (Pingelly) [10.1]: I endorse the remarks of the member for Toodyay. The increase of some £12,000 in the vote shows that the present Government are seized of the necessity for doing everything possible to advance the education of our children. In the country districts there are many educational disabilities and hardships which should be looked to by the Director of Education. In one town in my electorate the old school building is fit to hold only half the children requiring education. In consequence several classes are held in a hall about half a mile distant from the school itself. The construction of a new school building was authorised months ago, but has not yet been started. I am told the reason is lack of funds; but I do not know that Western Australia is so bankrupt as

to be unable to provide a school building where it is urgently needed. Our education system I regard as the finest in Australia. All visitors tell us that our curriculum is the most advanced in Australia. The children attending the school at Pingelly are being instructed in a manner equal to anything that can be found in the city. Possibly there may be some frills, and perhaps the three "Rs" are not taught as thoroughly as they were in former days. The system of scholarships is a good one. Small schools conducted by one teacher are not called upon to face so high a standard as larger schools in the competition for scholarships. However, the children attending a school with two or three teachers are required to pass the higher standard for a scholarship. In my opinion, all country children should be on the same footing in that respect. I am glad to say that a good many scholarships are won by country children. But what is to be the end of the holders of those scholarships I do not know. Generally the holder is seized with a desire to become a teacher, particularly if the holder is a girl. I feel strongly about the reduction of the driving allowance. From a place called Moorambine, five or six miles out of Pingelly, children are driven seven or eight miles to school at Pingelly. The average salary of the male teacher being £217 10s., it is evident that there is a considerable saving to the department, thanks to these children being driven to school at Pingelly instead of being taught at Moorambine. The driving allowance is 6d. per day, or 2s. 6d. per week, and amounts to £75 a year. Thus the saving to the department is about £150. Now the department are reducing the driving allowance from 6d. to 4d. For my part I would rather increase it to 1s. The system of consolidated schools is all right, but it will not work in every district, because some of the schools are too isolated and the cost of transport of the children would be too heavy. Moreover, the children would have to journey three or four miles to the spot where the car would meet them, and they would have to tie their horses up all day. We have so many girls trying to become teachers that there will never be a dearth in the teaching profession. Wherever there are eight or ten children, a teacher should be supplied. Nowadays none of us likes to see an uneducated person, and therefore I am glad of the increase of £12,000 in the vote.

Mr. LATHAM (York) [10.8]: I must join in the protest against the reduction of the driving allowance. A little while ago it was proposed to reduce the teaching staff in the city by cutting out the swimming teacher, but the proposal caused such an outcry that the teacher was retained. Yet in places where there is great difficulty in reaching a school the Government have reduced the driving allowance by a paltry 2d. The reduction will be felt not by the farm-

ers but by men who have gone out clearing and have taken their wives and children with them.

Mr. Teesdale: That is all right, but how about subsidising people who have thousands a year?

Mr. LATHAM: In this matter there should be discrimination. The teacher should be able to advise the Education Department whether parents are able to provide the necessary driving facilities.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: I would not like to be in the position of a teacher who had reported in favour of discriminating against a particular parent.

Mr. LATHAM: But the teacher should be able to send a confidential report to the department.

Mr. Teesdale: The possession of a £500 or £600 motor car would be a sufficient indication.

Mr. LATHAM: The country teachers know all about the position of parents. But why cut down the allowance by 2d.?

Mr. Taylor: Why make a noise about the reduction if it is paltry?

Hon. S. W. Munsie: The reduction was made on the recommendation of the Director of Education, by way of effecting economy.

Mr. LATHAM: If the Director got out into the country a little more, he would have a better idea of things there than he can obtain while sitting in an office chair. However, I do not wish to condemn the Government in respect of their education policy. There are some branches of education on which the department may well be congratulated. One is the school of agriculture at Narrogin. The State builds secondary schools and high schools at such places as Albany; but if half of the money so expended had been devoted to putting up a decent building for the Narrogin school of agriculture, the benefit would have been much greater. It is the technical education children get that is so beneficial to them. During the past two years I have had an opportunity of watching the development of the Narrogin school of agriculture, and I must compliment the principal on the way he is turning out boys with a thorough knowledge of what is required to make a success of farming life. The number of applicants for admission to the school warrants the providing of additional accommodation. Those who think that the establishment of an agricultural college will do away with the need for increased accommodation at Narrogin are mistaken. The elementary education he gets at that school will fit a boy for admission to the agricultural college. It should be a condition of entry into the agricultural college that a boy had first passed through an elementary agricultural school. The Narrogin school of agriculture represents the system of education which enables children to learn under rural conditions. I have come in contact with country parents who sent their children to city schools in order that they might receive a

higher education than that obtainable locally; and those parents all tell me that it is very difficult afterwards to induce the children to return to country life. We do not want to get country children interested in city life, because this State, having regard to its total population, already has too many people in its urban districts. I cannot agree with the member for Pingelly in rejoicing at the increase of this vote by £12,000. Every year I have been in this House the vote has been exceeded, and I dare say it will be exceeded this year. In view of the numbers of our people, we are spending a tremendous amount on education. I fully understand that in other parts of the world there are privileges, say the provision of books, which must be taken into account when expenditure on education is estimated. At the same time, while we are getting value for the services rendered, I must agree with the vote, unless I can show where it can be reduced. We cannot afford to neglect the education of our children, and so long as we do that along the right lines, we cannot go wrong.

Mr. WITHERS (Bunbury) [10.16]: I wish to emphasise the necessity for the extension of educational facilities to the smaller centres in the country districts. I have always been an advocate of additional educational facilities, but I am afraid there is a fair amount of frill in connection with our high schools. We should provide a better ground-work and educate the child up to a certain standard that will enable him to leave school and earn his living with the advantage of a good general education. At Bunbury the manual class was transferred from the senior school to the high school, thus depriving the boys of the fifth standard of manual training. There is ample accommodation for a manual class at the senior school, and I trust the Minister will be able to provide the necessary funds to enable that class to be reopened. The seventh standard was transferred from the senior school to the high school, and that has proved detrimental to boys and girls whose parents cannot afford to give their children the higher education. I have two girls attending the high school, and their progress while they have been there has been much slower than when they attended the senior school. The master at a small school seven miles out of town is able to teach children up to the eighth standard, and those children are receiving a good general education. No commercial training is provided for the children at the high school, but at that small school seven miles out of town education of that description is provided. The result is that children who have attended that school leave with a better equipment than many who leave the senior or high school. I have to bring under the notice of the Minister necessary works in connection with some of the smaller schools in my electorate. They are badly in

need of attention. For over 10 years the school at Waterloo has been conducted in the agricultural hall. As the hall is frequently used for dances, it is always in a higgledy-piggledy state. The residents have made application for the erection of a school and the Minister informed me that we would have to wait until the Loan Estimates were introduced. I hope the necessary provision will be made for that work. At Paradise the small school is a disgrace to the department. It has canvas sides and the weather beats in, so that the children have to crowd on one side of the building to avoid getting wet. Water runs across the floor in winter and that is not good for the children. The department has promised to provide a new school, and I wish to remind the Minister of that fact, so that the work will not be overlooked when the Loan Estimates are framed. At the infants' school at Bunbury a shelter shed is required. During the winter months there is no protection for the children, and I hope that work will be attended to. I would like the Minister to consider the possibility of providing a consolidated school in my electorate for the convenience of the residents in the outer districts. I would also like to see amounts provided for domestic science and manual training classes at the senior school at Bunbury.

Mr. SLEEMAN (Fremantle) [10.22]: Some references have been made to the large amount provided for educational purposes. Money is never wasted on education, provided the system is satisfactory. I hope that during the coming year provision will be made for the establishment of a high school at Fremantle. The departmental report shows that the attendances at the high schools already established are as follows:—Northam, 169; Bunbury 155; Albany, 106; and Geraldton, 71. If a high school were established at Fremantle it would relieve the congestion at the existing schools. Boys from the suburbs often have to wait for some time before they can be admitted to the Fremantle Boys' School. I understand the department has a drill inspector whose duty it is to go round the schools inspecting the drilling of the children. I regard the drill inspector as so much frill, and money could be saved by doing away with that officer. It is the function of the Commonwealth Government to look after training of this description, and anything necessary regarding drill at school can be attended to by the head master. Referring to the medical examination of children, the report of the Education Department contains the following:—

Of the children examined about 20 per cent. needed medical attention, and their parents were advised to secure it. The advice is followed in about half the number of cases; in the other half it is disregarded. Dental treatment is recommended for about 30 per cent. of the

children examined, but it appears that the advice is not taken in three cases out of four. Nearly 1,000 children have been treated without charge in the dental clinic in Perth, which is doing most valuable work. About 15 per cent. of those examined are passed as quite satisfactory. The remainder, apart from those recommended for medical or dental treatment require home attention, the most frequent troubles being either the results of malnutrition, or neglect of personal hygiene. It is gratifying to note that the medical inspectors, as well as the district inspectors, report that personal hygiene generally is improving. The daily parade that is now common in the schools is having its effect in a higher standard of cleanliness, and in securing that each child has a handkerchief, a mug, and a towel. The country schools are not yet properly provided for. The additional medical officer, who was to have been supplied last year, has not yet been appointed. Such an addition is most urgently needed, and would enable a great improvement to be effected, though even then we should be far from having a completely satisfactory system of medical inspection.

In my opinion the medical inspection at the present time is a farce. Doctors send home notes intimating that the children's teeth require attention, whereas the parents have not the money necessary for that to be done. The result is that no notice is taken of the medical inspection. It would be better for the Government to refrain from appointing another medical officer and instead to appoint a dentist to look after the children's teeth. It is useless sending notes from doctors to parents who cannot afford to incur this expenditure.

Mr. TAYLOR (Mt. Margaret) [10.28]: The member for Fremantle (Mr. Sleeman) made a strong point regarding medical inspection. While it may require some expenditure to get the teeth of children attended to, I have no objection to medical officers advising parents about the condition of their children's teeth. On the other hand, I do not agree with the publication in the Press of reports regarding the large proportion of children suffering from vermin in the head. Little money is required to keep the heads of children clean. It is disgusting to publish particulars regarding the shocking condition the doctors say so many children's heads are in to-day. It is also unwise to publish such details. We should not cast a stigma upon a large section of the community who do pay attention to their children's heads. Those details should not be spread broadcast in the Press. I believe it was stated that 60 per cent. of the children in the metropolitan area who had been examined were suffering from pedi-

culosis. The parents ought to be brought up and dealt with. Then there would be no need for the publicity.

Mr. HUGHES (East Perth) [10.30]: Recently positions in the Education Department were filled without any public notification that they were vacant. Teachers were brought from the Eastern States, while local teachers with the necessary qualifications did not even know of the vacancies. I do not want any special preference for local teachers, but certainly they should have an opportunity to apply for any vacancy. If the Eastern States' man has better qualifications, by all means give him the job, but if the local man has equal qualifications, the job should be for him.

Mr. Latham: All things being equal, the local man should be preferred.

Mr. HUGHES: There was a senior position in the Training College vacant, but none of the local teachers knew of it until an Eastern States' man was appointed. It should be made a hard and fast rule that all vacancies be duly advertised.

Mr. A. WANSBROUGH (Albany) [10.33]: I congratulate the Minister upon the increased vote, for I believe that money spent on education is money well spent. I commend the Minister on his amalgamation of country schools, and I hope that principle will be extended, for it has given good results. Like the member for Toodyay (Mr. Lindsay) I feel a little alarmed at the reduction of the driving allowance. It will affect country people very much. I am thankful to the Minister for his consideration in building schools at the group settlements. I hope it will not be long before all necessary group settlement schools are completed. Applications have been called for the position of caretaker at the Albany High School, and it is laid down that applicants shall have a special knowledge of gardening. In my view the caretaker will have quite enough to do in keeping the school in order without displaying any knowledge of gardening. The salary is £4 weekly, less house rent 15s. That is not sufficient.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: Is it not in accordance with the award?

Mr. A. WANSBROUGH: I do not know what the award is, but I am convinced that the amount is not sufficient. I commend the Minister on his attitude towards the parents and citizens' associations, for they have done exceedingly good work.

Mr. MARSHALL (Murchison) [10.35]: The member for York (Mr. Latham) complains of the increase in the Vote, notwithstanding which he enlarges on the educational requirements of country districts. If

he were sincerely representing a country district he would not take exception to the increase in the Vote. Personally, I wish the increase were greater than it is, for then the people in the country might look forward to proper educational facilities. The increase in this Vote is the most healthy sign the State can boast of. I agree with the member for Toodyay (Mr. Lindsay), that the education imparted in country districts should take on a slightly different form.

Mr. Latham: What form?

Mr. MARSHALL: A form devised to teach the children something of the scientific side of land development.

Mr. Latham: I advocated that.

Mr. MARSHALL: But the hon. member objects to providing the necessary money.

Mr. Latham: By how much was the Vote exceeded last year?

Mr. MARSHALL: Even if we exceeded the Vote by £50,000 it would be no more than this country should spend on education, particularly in the rural areas and out-back districts.

Mr. Taylor: Do you think we are getting value for the money we are expending?

Mr. MARSHALL: Yes.

Mr. Taylor: Then you have no quarrel.

Mr. MARSHALL: No. I am sorry we cannot afford to give a better system of education for the children in the remote centres. The only grievance I have to voice appertains to the Wiluna school, which I visited recently. This school was destroyed by a severe gale some months ago. Unfortunately enough building material was left for it to be reconstructed out of the debris. It is a pity the whole building was not completely destroyed. The school is a small one, and the only redeeming feature about it is the height of the walls. Wiluna is the furthest inland town of any consequence in the State, and it is also one of the hottest. The walls of the building should be slung on hinges so that in the hot weather they can be lifted up. At present the children have to be taken outside under the shade of some peppercorn trees. It is not easy to teach children when everything that is going on around them tends to distract their attention. The fittings of the school are disgraceful. The lockers and cupboards are composed of boxes that have carried merchandise to Wiluna, over a distance of hundreds of miles. The accommodation for the personal effects of the children is also bad. There is very little that is clean or up to date about the school. The whole building is a disgrace and requires immediate attention. Dual seats should be installed and better fittings and more ventilation provided. I also protest against the reduction in the driving allowances. My sympathy goes out to the parents who can ill afford to be deprived of this privilege.

Mr. HERON (Leonora) [10.42]: The Minister for Works has received a report concerning the Wiluna school, and I know

he will deal with it. I was sorry to hear the Honorary Minister say that no more continuation or technical schools would be opened during the current year. I hope he did not mean the financial year. A continuation school was started some years ago in Gwalia, but since the great fire there several of the parents and children have gone away. That continuation school and manual training class served not only Gwalia but Leonora. Quite enough children are there now to warrant a continuation school being established. The regulations require, I think, a minimum of 50 pupils for a continuation class. We have only 25. However, the building is there, together with all necessary appliances. The Education Department estimate that the continuation class would cost £100 a year. The Treasurer said he could not find the money, and so the Minister for Education has been unable to re-open the class. However, if it is not re-opened in the first quarter of the approaching year, I shall be on the Minister's doorstep again. The re-opening was recommended by the Director of Education. The local people hold that the cost would not be so much as £100, because the teachers in the technical section work on the mines and are prepared to give their services free, if necessary, in order that the children of the district may get the benefit of the tuition. Both Gwalia and Leonora would be advantaged by the re-opening of the class. The parents and citizens' associations are doing good work towards improving and brightening the school building and grounds. No Government can afford to discourage the people who go outback and open up the State. If those people cannot get adequate educational facilities for their children, they are bound to remove to the metropolitan area; and that is most undesirable from the State's point of view.

Progress reported.

*House adjourned at 10.45 p.m.*

## Legislative Council,

*Tuesday, 4th November, 1924.*

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

### SELECT COMMITTEE—METROPOLITAN WATER SUPPLY, SEWERAGE AND DRAINAGE DEPARTMENT.

#### *Extension of Time.*

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: In asking for further time in which to bring up the committee's report, I have been directed by the committee to make the following statement:—

1. The evidence so far submitted to your committee shows:—(a) that the proposed dam at Churchman's Brook, if constructed on the lines of the existing design, may not provide the stability which is essential in a work of this character. (b) that the estimated cost for so small a supply as will average 2,000,000 gallons per day must be economically oppressive to the people of the metropolitan area. (c) that the water from the bores at Osborne Park is highly unsatisfactory, and, it is doubtful whether the proposed method of filtration will prove effective by reason of the fact that, during the heavy summer draughts, insufficient time will be available for the process of aeration and treatment. (d) that the data supplied in the last annual report of the Goldfields Water Supply undertaking shows a surplus available over and above the maximum draw-off for goldfields and agricultural districts' requirements.

2. The committee, therefore, suggests for the immediate consideration of the Government:—(a) the stoppage of all further expenditure in respect to the Churchman's Brook scheme (except as to the investigation work which has already been put in hand by the Engineer-in-Chief) until the construction work and the economic effects can be further considered. (b) that the Osborne Park bores be not further used as a source of supply, at least until such time as an efficient and adequate means of treatment can be devised. (c) that to supplement the supply in the immediate future, the large pipes already purchased for conveying the Churchman's Brook water to Perth be