

an officer appointed with the approval of the Minister, and being a qualified practising accountant, be liable to make any contribution under this section towards the cost of any audit or be deemed, for the purposes of this section, to be concerned in any such audit."

This gives the Minister power to appoint a qualified accountant. The board would not then be liable for a portion of the cost under this clause. The intention of the clause is that the Minister may appoint an auditor to attend to three or four boards, but there is nothing to prevent the Minister from appointing an auditor to attend to one district.

The CHAIRMAN: I think the amendment is contingent upon the earlier amendment to strike out paragraph (b) of Clause 63.

Hon. A. THOMSON: If your ruling is correct, will not Clause 63 have to be re-committed, for it distinctly states that one auditor for each district shall be appointed by the Minister? If that is left in, there is no necessity for my amendment, and so I will withdraw it.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 73—Amendment of Section 341:

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I move an amendment—

That in Subclause 1 the words "twenty-one" be struck out and "sixty" inserted in lieu.

This alters the time of notice to be given of action from 21 days to 60 days. The reason for it is that those having claims will have the longer time in which to give notice. It is only a reasonable amendment.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: There is no need for the amendment, for if the hon. member will read on through the clause he will find a qualification to the effect that if a person is able to show he is not in a position to give notice earlier he can give a month's notice. What puzzles me is the paragraph which provides later on for one month's notice in writing being given to the board.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The 21 days' notice is in keeping with the Municipalities Act. There has been no trouble under that Act, but there has been trouble in this respect under the Road Board Act. The two Acts should be brought into conformity with each other.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: In a town there is plenty of opportunity for a man who has a claim against the local authority to lodge it within 21 days, but in remote parts such a facility does not exist. That is why I think it is advisable to make the notice 60 days instead of 21 days.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 74—Amendment of Section 252:

Hon. W. J. MANN: I have been requested to bring under the notice of members the fact that road boards look upon their rate books as a kind of land history of their districts. At times these old rate books have been of the greatest value and a good deal of store is set by them. They should not rank as items that can be destroyed, because they have not been used for upwards of seven years. I hope this clause will be struck out so that an opportunity may be given to preserve these rate books.

Clause put and negatived.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 10.37 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 8th November, 1932.

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

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1932-33.*In Committee of Supply.*

Resumed from the 3rd November; Mr. Richardson in the Chair.

Department of Public Works and Labour
(Hon. J. Lindsay, Minister).

Vote—Public Works and Buildings,
£22,182:

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. J. Lindsay—Mt. Marshall) [4.37]: This vote shows a slight increase over that of last year. Members will notice that although it amounts to a large sum, the great bulk of the items are transferred to various other votes and departments. Of the total expenditure, most of it is transferable to loan, because it relates to various loan undertakings. The total expenditure from revenue on the Public Works, Labour, and Water Supply Department last year was as follows:—

	£
Works and buildings	20,330
Labour	3,779
Goldfields Water Supply	108,973
Other hydraulic undertakings, including drainage and irrigation	21,617
Total	£154,699

In addition £540,399 was spent from loan funds and £38,360 from Government Property Trust Account. The total spent by the department last year was £733,458, and was distributed as follows:—Fremantle harbour, north wharf reconstruction, £33,107; Geraldton harbour works, £35,992; Geraldton water supply, improvements to catchment area, £6,020; Narrogin water supply, improvements to catchment area, £3,433; Canning stock route, completion, £5,163—

Mr. Marshall: How much are you spending on the Canning stock route now?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The work has been finished.

Mr. Marshall: I hope so. What is the total cost of the Canning stock route?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have not the figures. The amount on last year's Estimates was £5,163. Continuing the distribution of expenditure, Goldfields water supply, mains and branch mains, improvements and renovations accounted for £76,237; drainage and irrigation works, Harvey River diversion, £119,524; Harvey weir, construction of channels and drains,

£83,163; Wellington dam, £26,363; and Collie River irrigation channels, £42,644. The estimated expenditure this year from revenue and property trust account—expenditure from loan Estimates has yet to be dealt with—includes salaries amounting to £65,199 compared with £67,699 voted last year, while the actual expenditure was £64,868, an increase of approximately £300 this year. The salaries of all the officers are detailed in the revenue estimates, and the gross amount is rebated by transfers as follows:—Allocated to loan and property trust estimates, £33,675; Goldfields water supply, revenue section, £9,236, loan section £2,190; other hydraulic undertakings, revenue section, £2,410, loan section £7,817. Some of that money, amounting to £5,224, will be recovered from various sources. After allowing for all those items, the balance chargeable to works and buildings section of the estimates is £4,647. The total expenditure on salaries, excluding labour during the last three years, has been as follows:—

1929-30	£98,073
1930-31	£91,453
1931-32	£58,122

The total provision under the heading of works and buildings this year is £22,182, an increase of £1,852 compared with the actual expenditure last year. The estimates for the labour section include salaries £3,309 compared with £3,280 voted last year and an actual expenditure of £3,277. This branch is really a very small one, having a staff consisting of a chief inspector, six other inspectors and four clerks. Provision is made for contingencies—travelling expenses, railway fares and other office expenses—totalling £470, compared with £502 spent last year. The department deals with a fair number of activities, including for instance, country water supplies and Government Property Trust Account. I assume that as we are dealing only with the section of Public Works and Labour, I shall have to defer any remarks on the other activities until a later stage. The activities of the department have been restricted because of the limited amount of loan money available, but it has been the policy of the Government in the last year or two to put in hand only such works as would permit of the greater proportion of the expenditure being laid out in wages. Although we have been successful in doing that during the last two

years, to-day we are experiencing difficulty to find works that will employ 60 to 80 per cent. of labour as previously. More men than ever before are at present employed because works have been selected that would absorb the least possible amount for the purchase of material, and particularly with regard to material that has to be purchased from outside the State. There are considerably over 7,000 men employed on these departmental activities, but unfortunately the bulk of them are employed on part-time only. Part of the work, particularly the Harvey cut, will be completed by the 2nd December, unless rain prevents the work from being carried on.

Hon. P. Collier: Not completed altogether?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No. The Harvey cut is 14 miles in length and the seven miles at the sea end pass through coastal sand hills. Some of the cut is very deep, running to a depth of 50 feet. The seven miles at the other end is through loam and clay country. It has been the intention of the department all along to deal with that section with the use of the dragline elevator. It is expected that the work at the sea end of the cut will be finished not later than the 2nd December. In order that the men employed there shall have something to tide them over the Christmas holidays—I believe 85 men were dismissed to-day—each man has to receive sufficient full-time employment to carry him over, at the rate of 25s. 2d. a week, to the 3rd January. As the work continues, so the men will receive less full time work, because it will be getting closer to that date. Eventually 255 men will be employed on the drag-line work and also upon making bridges and culverts. I have dealt with the most important of the matters that I can place before the Committee, but should any other information be required, I shall be able to furnish it later on.

HON. A. McCALLUM (South Fremantle) [4.47]: There is not much scope for discussion on the Public Works Revenue Estimates. Most of the departmental activities are dealt with when the Loan Estimates are before us, and that is when the major discussion on those activities takes place. Last year the Leader of the Opposition raised the question of the expenditure of money on main roads. I understood an undertaking was given then

that an item would be placed on the revenue Estimates so that an opportunity would be provided for a general discussion. No such item appears on the Estimates, and it would seem that expenditure under that heading has been removed entirely from Parliamentary control. Does that mean that a huge sum of money is to be handed over to a member of the staff for expenditure, and Parliament is not to be consulted at all? The only item that appears on the Estimates relates to the salary of the Director of Works and Buildings, and even then only that portion of his salary that relates to public works. Actually, therefore, there is no item of expenditure provided so that Parliament may deal with any matters relating to main road expenditure at all. It is an extraordinary state of affairs. Large sums of money are to be expended without any reference to Parliament. I do not think that was intended. It was all right previously, because the State had to find a quota of the Commonwealth expenditure and naturally an item had to appear on the Estimates, which gave members an opportunity for a full dress debate.

The Minister for Works: There will be that opportunity on the Loan Estimates.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: But in the past the State had to provide, in accordance with the agreement entered into with the Commonwealth Government, a certain proportion of the main road funds from revenue. Not all of it was provided out of Loan funds. Thus there was a discussion, not only on the Loan phase of the work, but on the revenue side as well. Every member had a right to state his views and to criticise the manner in which money was being expended, particularly as it affected his own electorate. Irrespective of whether they have any complaints to voice or not, they have no such opportunity now. It appears to be entirely wrong, and I hope the position will be rectified. I understood it was to be done this year. I cannot say whether a definite undertaking was given that an item would be placed on the Estimates this year so that we might discuss matters relating to main roads expenditure, but I remember the point being raised and I was under the impression that the Premier promised he would find some way by which the Committee would be afforded an opportunity

to have the discussion I desire. As no item appears, we are debarred from discussing that phase altogether. I again raise the point and enter my protest. This is the second year this has happened and I certainly think Parliament should have some control over that expenditure. It is certainly wrong that expenditure of this description should be handed over to a civil servant without Parliament having any say regarding it. I know that under the existing law, works involving an expenditure of over a certain amount must be referred to the Minister for his approval, but Parliament is not considered in the matter at all. I trust the Minister will give us an assurance that we will have the desired opportunity on the Loan Estimates. The Minister dealt with certain items in respect of which he asserted savings had been made and he referred to the position of the Public Works Department and the Labour branch of that department. He omitted to point out that certain activities of the Labour branch had been transferred to other departments. For instance, the inspection of scaffolding has been taken away and placed under the control of the Chief Architect. Similarly the inspection of timber mills has been transferred to the Forests Department.

Miss Holman: And there is no inspection now.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: I suppose there is no inspection of scaffolding either.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: And some big buildings are being constructed.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: I know that the forest inspection staff has been materially decreased and I presume there is very little activity under that heading. There has been a tightening up and shortening of hands in connection with all the activities of that department. The Minister asserted that 7,000 men were employed by the two departments he dealt with. I do not suppose one of those men has been employed full time. It is impossible to find out just how many of them are getting anything like the basic wage. The payment is governed by the number of a man's family and the basis laid down is 7s. a week for each individual member of the family plus £1, which limits employees to a paltry amount.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: The maximum payment is only £3.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: Yes, and that is considerably under the basic wage. The mere quoting of the number of men employed signifies nothing. The Minister quoted the number of men who had been allowed full time in order to average up the position for the Christmas season and referred to the payment of 25s. a week. I presume that those men will have a very, very happy Christmas on so large an amount as 25s. a week, with which they are expected to keep their families! We are told that another 12,000 men are to be employed. I do not know how many men are to be put off but I think the Minister said that between 2,000 and 3,000 were to be dismissed.

The Minister for Works: About 1,400 at Stonehouse and Myalup.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: That refers to the two big jobs, but there are a number of other activities from which men are being put off.

The Minister for Works: That is in accordance with the usual practice.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: I was told that within the next few weeks 4,000 men would be finishing up.

The Minister for Works: No.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: I received that information from a reliable authority. Figures have been given to us of the number of men likely to be employed, but we know that they will include those at present in employment. Those men are to be employed by virtue of the fact that the Premier has been able to secure more money with which to finance operations. I do not know how many of the men who will be finishing up during the next week will be absorbed by the additional expenditure that has been referred to. Strictly speaking, the Loan Estimates will provide the opportunity to discuss that matter and we shall have a further opportunity to deal with it then. I wish to make it perfectly clear that when the Minister talked about the employment of 7,000 men, that did not indicate that all of them would be employed on full time. The Premier announced the other day that money had been found to provide part-time work for 12,000 men. As he has stated on previous occasions, if money were not provided, works would have to be shut down, and, in the circumstances, it is clear that the 12,000 men who are to be employed will include those at present in work. It does not mean the employment of 12,000 additional men. That should clearly be understood.

MR. MARSHALL (Murchison) [4.48]: I do not desire to delay the passage of the Estimates, but I am particularly concerned about the departmental activities from the standpoint that consideration has not been extended to the requirements of my electorate. Provision is made for water supplies at other centres, but some works that I desired attended to are not provided for. Some of the money that has been spent has represented an absolute and positive waste. That is the galling part of it. No one will deny that every penny spent on the Canning stock route represented so much absolute waste of hard cash.

Member: I agree.

MR. MARSHALL: There is no possibility of any member disagreeing.

The Minister for Railways: That is a strong statement.

MR. MARSHALL: Of course it is. This is not the first time I have made the statement.

The Minister for Railways: Not a small amount was involved, either.

MR. MARSHALL: That aggravates the position. I endeavoured, by way of interjection, to ascertain from the Minister for Works the total amount that had been spent on the reconditioning of the Canning stock route. If I may be permitted to make an estimate, I should say it cost between £20,000 and £28,000. It certainly cost over £15,000. Incidentally, it may by a miracle, have been slightly under £30,000. When this was first mooted, I, as a member of this Chamber, objected to it. We were sitting on the other side of the Chamber supporting the Government and I attacked it. We had to guide us men of experience who were not lacking in courage in informing the then Government of the actual position regarding the Canning stock route. Owing to the poor state of the country through which that stock route passes, and the insufficiency of the water supply in the wells along the route, it will not be possible to bring cattle down in sufficient numbers to make the stock route pay. That statement has been confirmed only recently by a drover who went over the stock route. He pointed out that there were some half dozen or more wells along the Canning stock route where 250 head of cattle could not be watered. Therefore, it would not be possible to undertake a long trip with a large number of cattle over that route. The pleuro

line also interferes with the passage of stock over the route. I would like to know from the Minister whether one station is served by the Canning stock route. At Wiluna the people are running the risk of being visited by an epidemic for want of a sufficient water supply. Hundreds of people there are now subjected to risk to their health because of an inadequate reticulation system. Yet, in face of facts such as these, we find the Government expending money upon the reconditioning of the Canning stock route, which experienced men were not backward in stating would be of no use when it was reconditioned. It is of no use now, and never will be of any use. The country for hundreds of miles is drift sand and would not feed a rat, much less bullocks. Had the stock route been placed further east, I understand that it would have traversed much better country, I have been so informed by men who know the country well. No one could have forecast that Wiluna would have grown to the extent it has, and we now find the reticulation system of that township is altogether inadequate. The people of Wiluna themselves are beginning to appreciate the fact that it is unhealthy to live in close proximity to the mine. Only recently some seven or eight business premises, besides some homes, had to be erected away from the mine, and the people naturally rushed to them in order to escape from the fumes and gases around the mine. Those people, of course, now want a water supply. The Minister for Mines knows that, because I approached him on the matter. I also approached the Minister for Water Supply with a request that he should put down larger piping. All we desired for a start was that the main should be increased.

The Minister for Mines: There is plenty of water there.

MR. MARSHALL: Yes, if we can only get it for the people. The position now is that the people have to get their water by the old method of the bucket and rope. The climate at Wiluna is such that an abundance of water should be made available to the residents there.

The Minister for Mines: If it is available.

MR. MARSHALL: The point is there is no water available unless 100-gallon tanks are installed and the water is carted by the obsolete method. What I am complaining about now is that the Government have

spent £20,000 odd on the Canning stock route, which is not, and never will be, of any use, in preference to work of the character I have outlined. Another matter I desire to touch upon is the provision of a school at Wiluna. It was contemplated that we should erect one big school about halfway between the mine and the town; but unfortunately the depression visited us and what really happened was that we were given a sort of canary aviary, capable of accommodating some 50 or 60 children, but which has to suffice for 80 or 90. I do not know what provision has been made for further school accommodation at Wiluna; but I think it most unfair that Wiluna should be left without proper school accommodation. I am sure the Education Department have not been slow in asking the Works Department for the necessary money to provide school accommodation. It is a scandalous state of affairs that we should have to appeal for school accommodation. We require that accommodation at Wiluna urgently, as urgently as we require an adequate water supply. We find on the Estimates sums of money which we know have been absolutely wasted. We shall never get that money back again. It has been expended upon works which will not be of any value at all to this country. The Canning stock route may assist one station, one squatter, but that is all. The route is not an attractive one, nor will it be patronised by the people in the North. I only rose to complain bitterly about the expenditure of money on the Canning stock route, when, with half the amount, we could have secured school accommodation, with quarters for teachers, and a good water supply for Wiluna. Now the school children at Wiluna are crowded together in excessive numbers in a building too small to accommodate them. There are other items I wish to touch upon, but I can deal with them as we make progress with the departmental Estimates.

HON. J. C. WILLCOCK (Geraldton) [5.12]: I do not want to deal with the general expenditure of the department, but there is one matter that has come up in connection with my district during the past few days upon which I hope the Minister will be able to give some information. I thought I might be able to get that information by way of a question, but as the Vote is being dealt with, I thought I would ask for it now.

It is in connection with the Wycherina water supply. I understand that in carrying out some repair work to improve the Wycherina dam, it was necessary to let some of the water flow away. I am informed that at least 4 feet of water has been allowed to escape from the dam; that is 4 feet of water covering about 14 acres. That is a very considerable quantity of water indeed. Seeing that Geraldton is a place very much in need of improvement, I thought very good use could have been made of that water in Geraldton, even if it had been pumped there. It could have been utilised by the municipal council and by the residents of Geraldton for garden purposes. The people could have been charged the bare cost of pumping the water, which probably would not have been as great an expense as excess water. The municipal council at Geraldton are establishing gardens in various parts of the town. They are doing excellent work on comparatively small plots of ground. If they could get a plentiful supply of water at this stage and establish lawns and gardens, a considerable improvement would be effected to the town. Only the cost of water would prevent them from making ever so much more use of that water now being allowed to escape. I do not know whether the Minister would consider allowing that water to be pumped into Geraldton and disposed of at a cheap rate so that it might be used rather than wasted. I should like to know how much more water it may be necessary to allow to escape from the reservoir. Of course, by means of the excellent work done in the roofing of the dam we shall prevent a big quantity from evaporating, but the reservoir does not always fill, and perhaps in view of the quantity allowed to go to waste this season, it may not fill again for a year or 18 months. The bores there provide a good quality of water, but of course it is very different from rain water, of which we want to conserve as much as possible for the use of the people of the town. If the Minister would give us some information regarding that, it would probably allay a lot of fear, and if an arrangement could be made for a cheap rate of excess water the department would get some revenue out of it, at all events enough to pay the wages of the man pumping it. With the member for South Fremantle, I am sorry we have not had an opportunity to say something about main roads. I should like to ask what is the

position of the local authorities who in September last had not made any attempt to pay the percentage of traffic fees due by them. Also I should like to refer to what was said in the debate in September about the Geraldton municipality attempting to repudiate—that was the term used—their obligations. The arrangement that was made was known to the local authorities in the metropolitan area, and also to the road boards throughout the State, but those municipalities outside knew nothing of that arrangement, and when the retrospective tax on the license fees was put on the Geraldton municipality after they had spent the money to relieve unemployment, it was the first they knew of it. Now that the whole thing has been cleared up, those local authorities are not in the position of the municipalities and road boards to which the Minister referred the other day as not having met their obligations. I refute the statement of the member for Swan (Mr. Sampson) that the Geraldton Municipal Council desired to repudiate its obligations. All the municipal council did was to circularise the local authorities requesting them to resist what was thought by the council to be an unjust payment owing to its retrospective incidence.

MR. BROWN (Pingelly) [5.18]: I trust the Minister will do his best to accede to any applications made to him for special grants to country road boards. There are large numbers of unemployed in the country, many of them on sustenance work, and if they can be kept at work there it is much better than having them flocking to the towns. As to water supplies, I have no complaints from the country, where the system is very satisfactory, but in Pingelly we have a supply on which the department, I believe, is losing money. The people of that town have been paying 3s. in the pound water rate for the past 20 years, although many of them have never used a gallon of water from that service. I hope the Minister will allow a rate of 1s. 6d. to remain. If the 3s. rate has to be retained, it would be better to scrap the water supply and be done with it. The water rate in the metropolitan area is very heavy. In Perth and suburbs many shops and houses are empty, yet the water rate is exceedingly high. When people are not using the water it is hard that they should have to pay this excessive rate. Of course the money has to

be obtained because a considerable amount was expended on the water scheme in the first place, but I do appeal to the Minister to make the rate as low as he can. I wish to correct a statement I made when discussing the Main Roads Board. I said the Kulin Road Board were unable to collect their rates and, consequently, had to make arrangements with the Main Roads Board for time in which to pay their quota of the license fees. The Kulin Road Board are under the impression that I was speaking of license fees all the time. That was not so. I was referring to the general rate, which they were unable to collect. They tell me they were able to collect the whole of their license fees. As I say, I was speaking only of the general rate. I hope this explanation will satisfy them.

HON. J. CUNNINGHAM (Kalgoorlie) [5.22]: The Minister, when speaking of the Harvey drainage scheme, stated that the length of the main channel was 14 miles and surprised me by saying that the drag-line excavator would be used for excavating loam and clay. I understand that also refers to the laterite deposits that will be encountered in the channel. It seems strange that the drag-line excavator should be used on that work while the principal work it should be used for, the excavation of sand, will be done by hand labour. I am inclined to think the Minister has made a slight mistake. We are entitled to further information respecting the area that will be served as the result of this expenditure. Up to date we have no knowledge on that point. Also it would be interesting to know the rate that will be imposed on those people for drainage and for irrigation. I understand it is both a drainage and irrigation scheme, and that the Harvey drainage scheme is connected with the Collie River irrigation scheme. Last year £410,000 was earmarked for this work.

The Minister for Works: No, £210,000.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: We seem to have dropped £200,000 somewhere in the 12 months. Both schemes, I think, are connected in some way, for drainage areas and irrigation areas have been declared and drainage boards have been established, several of them comprising irrigation boards.

The Minister for Works: No.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: You would not establish two boards, drainage and irrigation, to operate in the same district. Many of the people who will be served are ignorant

of the fact that they will be called upon to pay rates. I have met some of the settlers and they appear to be under the impression that the whole of this construction work will be treated as a national undertaking and no charge will be made upon them. I hope we shall get some information from the Minister on the points I have raised.

MR. GRIFFITHS (Avon) [5.25]: I wish to draw the attention of the Minister to the Bates-street water main in Merredin. Whilst this will mean an expenditure of £100 on the part of the department, the local road board will contribute £130, and so to that extent the department can regard it as a reproductive work. It is hoped that the improved main will give something like a decent pressure in case of fire, and also will adequately supply the sports ground. At some time in the new year there will be 15 or 16 fire brigades assembling there for their annual demonstration, and a good pressure will be necessary. It means a good deal to the town, for there is bound to be a big influx of people to see the competitive work of the brigades which we who are interested in the work of amateur firemen wish to see encouraged. I hope the Minister will be able to find that £100, because it will mean a contribution of £130 by the local authority.

HON. M. F. TROY (Mt. Magnet) [5.28]: I am given to understand that the department proposes to build another road to the Yanchep Caves via Lake Pinjar, and that a large number of men will be employed on the work. Surveys are now being made of certain land out there, and there is more than a suggestion that the department proposes to build that road. I do not know whether there is any truth in it, but I would like an assurance from the Minister that it is not proposed to spend any more money on the road to the Yanchep Caves.

MR. HEGNEY (Middle Swan) [5.29]: I wish to refer to the water service at Swan View. The residents there have been trying to get an improved service and the matter has been put to the department from time to time, but invariably the answer is that no money is available. Some two years ago the size of the main was increased as it went down by the Blackboy camp. That certainly improved the position, but the water main from there across to Swan View is

only two inches to 2½ inches in diameter. There are several residents at Swan View.

The **CHAIRMAN**: I suggest that the hon. member bring this matter forward when we deal with water supplies.

Mr. HEGNEY: I wish to refer also to the Bayswater school ground. This matter has been before the department for some time, and plans have been prepared for an improvement to the grounds. Both the road board and the Parents and Citizens' Association have made representations on this question. There are close on 550 children attending the school, which is advancing rapidly. The playground, however, is altogether inadequate for the purpose. The school is on a hill and the grounds are practically on an incline. The children were unable to take part in the recent schools competition, because they have no cricket pitch. I understand that plans have been prepared by the Public Works Department for the reconstruction of the ground. The proposal is that the hill should be lowered, and the soil transferred across the street to another piece of ground where there is a hollow. It is estimated that the work will cost £300, but the opinion is now that it will not cost so much. A deputation recently waited on the unemployment board to see whether help could be derived from that quarter. The matter certainly requires the attention of the Minister.

MISS HOLMAN (Forrest) [5.32]: Many complaints have been made as to the manner in which operations are carried on at the irrigation works. What is the position of the settlers who have water supplies outside the irrigation schemes? Are they to be relieved of the cost of their present supplies, and will such schemes as the Brunswick be cut out? Will the settlers have to continue paying the £16 a year in water rates on the scheme? Men on sustenance are not at all satisfied with the way in which they are being treated. Men have to dig thick wet clay with shovels, which they have to scrape every time they use them. They have no forks, and are not receiving a fair rate of pay for the work they do. They cannot make sustenance or relief wages. I feel that the Minister is pressing these workers down as far as they can be pressed. If they complain about it they are given the sack, and are put off sustenance. They have to dig drains without any

proper levels. All they are given is the measurement in the first case, and at times they have been ordered to go back after the work has been finished. One man could earn only £4 in two weeks. I was informed that the workers there had been ordered to do more work on drains they had finished with. The conditions appertaining to the irrigation workers is very unsatisfactory and calls for investigation. I wish to voice my protest regarding the neglect of the Government in policing the Acts dealing with the conditions of workers. The Timber Workers' Act has been referred to. No wonder a considerable saving has been effected there, because there is now no inspection whatever. The two workmen's inspectors were relieved of their duties by the Government, and the Government inspector has been put in charge of sustenance workers. There is a certain amount of activity in the timber industry, quite enough to keep the inspector occupied in carrying out his duties. The Government seem to want to avoid policing any Act that provides for the protection of workers in industry. Through the discontinuance of this work they have endeavoured to render null and void any such Act of Parliament, and cause it to be regarded as a dead letter.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. J. Lindsay—Mt. Marshall—in reply) [5.36]: The Main Roads Act makes no provision for discussing road matters in Parliament. It never has done so. The Commissioner for Main Roads, with the approval of the Governor-in-Council, finds the requisite money. The Minister is only asked to approve of any amount over £1,000. That is the law. I have placed on the Table of the House the ordinary annual report which tells members what work has been done. I have no objection to the matter being discussed. Possibly the Estimates will have to be amended in some way to allow of a discussion upon these points. But there never has been any discussion on them, except in connection with the Loan Estimates. The Act provides that money appropriated by Parliament may be referred to, but no other discussion takes place. The member for South Fremantle said he understood that 4,000 men would shortly be placed on the labour market. That is not correct. Road work does absorb a considerable number

of men. We have 2,322 men working on roads to-day. These jobs are almost finished, but several new jobs are always about to be started. The particular gang referred to may have to come to Perth to finish up, but almost every day new road works are coming on. In the Myalup and Stonehouse camps there are at present 1,609 men. These are going off in batches. On the 8th November, 86 go off, and so on to the 2nd December. Out of the 1,609 men, 255 will be retained for the completion of the work. The member for Murchison spoke about the Canning stock route. This was started by the previous Government, and I had no option but to complete the work. It is not for me to say whether the carrying out of that work was right or wrong. The work was nearly completed when I assumed control of the Department. I think that 56 wells had been finished, and 15 more were required to complete the job. If we had stopped then the route would have been useless, so we found the money and completed the work right through. The member for Geraldton referred to the Wycherina water supply. The position there is unfortunate. This is the first time for many years that the dam has filled. We were not to know that this year would be one of heavy rain. In the summer there is always a scarcity of water in Geraldton. The department decided that the best way to overcome the difficulty was to cover the dam. In the summer the dam loses by evaporation 6ft. of water in a year. The engineers said that if the dam were covered, twice the amount of water would be made available. To do this work it was necessary to let some of the water out. If the year had been an ordinary one, this would not have been necessary, because the quantity of water would not have been there. A good deal of the roofing has been completed, but when it came to the middle portion of the dam it was necessary to reduce the depth of water. In order to overcome the difficulty of a shortage of water in the summer, we have sunk an extra well, from which it is hoped to draw sufficient to tide Geraldton over until next year. The dam was never fully completed. Because water got into it the work was stopped. There is a considerable area of soil which requires to be removed, and this work also is being done. When we started the job

we decided to go on with it, but it was necessary to draw a certain amount of water out of the dam.

Hon. J. C. Willecock: Could that water not be sent to Geraldton by pumping?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It would have to be taken straightaway out of the pipes.

Hon. J. C. Willecock: It is badly needed. Is not the other reservoir nearly completed?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I hardly think so. If it had been completed, it could have been filled up. I will make inquiries and ascertain the position. Reference has been made to local authorities and the amount of traffic fees they owe. I should like members to know how these local governing bodies are living up to their obligations. Some 53 of them have paid up the whole of their fees, but one has paid nothing and has made no provision to pay in the future. Thirty-five are paying off their arrears for 1929-30 by instalments. We have given them two or three years in which to pay up. For 1930-31 seven local governing bodies have made arrangements to pay by instalments, and for 1931-32 seven are also paying by instalments. Of the remainder 23 who were in arrears have made no arrangement with the department for payment. Geraldton is one of these.

Hon. J. C. Willecock: They said they had sent up a cheque for £100.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I got this statement to-day, showing the local governing bodies that were in arrears and had made no arrangements to pay. We are prepared to meet them in any way we can so long as they recognise their liability. In the case of Geraldton the percentage due to the Main Roads Board for 1929-30 was £139 10s. The payment made was £39 9s. 6d., and the remark made on the return is "No arrangement made for the future."

Hon. J. C. Willecock: They sent a cheque for £100 at the end of the month. That ought to be here now.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I feel it is not quite fair to the other local bodies that quite a number who are in a position to pay are not paying, and will not even agree to some compromise. Most boards have agreed to pay up to three years and if all would do that, well and good. I have

asked the Crown Law Department to give me an opinion on the matter. I do not think it is right that the others should get out of the payments. The member for Murchison (Mr. Marshall) spoke about the Wiluna water supply. My view is that local districts should provide their own water supply. They should form themselves into boards and borrow money. Wiluna has done so and there is now the power to borrow. In the past the Government have carried out this work, but I am trying to get all the water supplies transferred to water boards. The member for Pingelly (Mr. Brown) spoke about the Pingelly water supply. The figures are true revenue; a rate has been struck whether we collect it or not, and if the hon. member says there is a loss of £878 a year, the accumulated deficit is £6,138. I agree with the hon. member that the water supply is bad, but the department did reduce the rate. It is remarkable that when we take the accrued revenue for the year we find the deficit considerably more than the accrued revenue, and the total deficit over the period is £2,100,919. That has been found from Consolidated Revenue. When it comes to a question of buying pipes, it is then a matter of 80 per cent. of the cost being spent in material. In these times when so many men are out of work, we cannot go to that expense and provide money for wages also. The member for Kalgoorlie (Hon. J. Cunningham) dealt with the Harvey drainage question. In Harvey there are drainage and irrigation schemes and there is also what is known as the Harvey cut which is not an irrigation scheme. The Harvey River became silted and the water spread out but gradually soaked away. The cut will eventually drain 123,000 acres of land which is mostly under water; it is not intended to rate the area, but probably the Government will get some recompense when the land is drained and sold. The Harvey irrigation scheme is a different proposition altogether. There have been irrigation and drainage in Harvey for many years past, but the work was to an extent a failure. That irrigation was carried out to benefit the production of citrus fruits. Within the last three years the Harvey people have been keen on irrigation because they have changed their method of farming and have gone in more for pastures. Now with the aid of irrigation they can carry three times the number

of cows that they carried before. Hon. members have said that settlers have been perturbed over the Collie irrigation scheme. I should like to remind members that before any irrigation can be undertaken there must be a petition signed by at least 66 per cent. of the ratepayers. I know of no place where there was more agitation about this particular question than in the Collie area. A section of people produced a petition against the system and afterwards signed another petition in favour of it. The Collie irrigation scheme is no connection with the Harvey scheme but there are some people there opposed to it principally because they have large holdings, and also because they will have to adopt different methods to get the best results out of irrigation. As far as Collie is concerned, no rate will be charged for three years: after that the land will be rated. As a result of my investigations I believe that this will prove to be one of the best sources of expenditure, and eventually the population there will be increased fourfold. Regarding the Harvey cut, at the end towards the sea work extending over a million and a quarter yards has been done. All this is in sand. Some of the sand banks are 50 feet deep. In carrying out the work we have used light tramways, and horses and drays, and a large number of men has been engaged on the work. I say now that had it not been for the question of unemployment, the whole of the undertaking would have been carried out with dragline elevators. After all it has provided employment for quite a large number of men. When it comes to the land end there will be only seven miles to do, representing half a million yards to take out. My engineers advise that owing to the difference in the suction of the soil and where the sand has only to be shovelled out, it is not advisable to do that work by hand labour. The member for Avon (Mr. Griffiths) spoke about the Merredin main. Unfortunately my department looks at it from the point of view that if we spend any money shall we get any more revenue? This will not give any more revenue, but I still hope that the job will be done. Several members referred to the question of school grounds. The Public Works Department carries out the job, but I have to wait to be told to do it by the Education Department. We cannot do it, however, until money is available. The member for Forrest (Miss

Holman) mentioned the Brunswick scheme. There is a small scheme at Brunswick to-day where water is laid on for stock purposes. It naturally follows that when the irrigation scheme is laid down and water is running past the door, the people will not want the scheme, but they will be asked to pay for it. Mention has also been made of the alterations in the Labour Department. These alterations relate to timber inspectors, it being considered advisable that they should be transferred to the Forests Department. What is happening to-day I do not know. Reference was made to the Scaffolding Department. It is still there, but the point is that the department did return a reasonable profit. The Factories and Shops Department shows a loss and the question arose whether we should increase the charges under the Factories and Shops Act in order to make up the deficiency. It is my opinion that the department should pay for itself. The charges are low as compared with those in the other States. I think I have replied now to all the questions raised by members.

Item, Director of Works and Buildings, half salary recouped by Public Works Department to Main Roads Department, £582:

Hon. P. COLLIER: I do not know whether I would be in order, but I should like to discuss the question of expenditure on main roads a little further. I know that until the past two years, the whole of the proposed work for the year was placed before the House and there was on it the fullest discussion. It is unsatisfactory to know that whilst the programme of work will involve the employment of 2,000 men, as the Minister indicated, and that that may continue through the financial year, the House will not be afforded an opportunity of discussing the work. I hope the Minister will place a small item on the Loan Estimates so that the Opposition may be given the chance to discuss the programme for the year. The Minister will then be able to give us some information about the works it is intended to carry out during the present financial year. If the Minister will agree to provide the opportunity, the Committee, I am sure, will be satisfied.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I had the programme here, but before waiting for the Loan Estimates I can put up a proposal showing the works it is proposed to carry out during the remainder of the year. I

can lay that on the Table and will provide the opportunity to discuss it on the Loan Estimates.

Items 6-54, Salaries generally, £18,438:

Hon. P. COLLIER: I do not know whether the amount of salaries appearing opposite each officer's title includes the percentage reductions or whether the figures show the classified salary. The individual items are set out. For instance, there is the Engineer for Harbours and Rivers, £768, the Hydraulic Engineer, £768, and the Engineer for Water Supply, £682, and then included in the other 49 is one officer at £800, which is a greater salary than that of any of the three I have just mentioned. Is that £800 less the financial reduction? If so, it will bring the officer's salary down to an amount below those that I quoted at first. I do not know who the officer is, but he appears to hold a more important position than either of the three I have mentioned. If that is so, it is strange that he should be included in a bunch of 49. I notice that one officer receives £580 inclusive of a special allowance of £100 a year. What is the special allowance for? Ten other engineers receive £288 inclusive of a special allowance of £48 per annum. Doubtless there is some justification for it, but ten seems to be a large number to be in receipt of a special allowance of £48.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: In last year's Estimates the position was relatively the same. The officer on £800 has been advanced from £776, due to an increment. The special allowances would be paid to engineers away from home. Recently some alterations have been made in the department. For instance, the land resumption officer is now acting in charge of the local government office.

Hon. P. Collier: The officers I have mentioned are in the engineering branch.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am afraid I cannot explain the matter at the moment.

Hon. A. McCallum: What is the £800?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not know.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It is unusual to have an officer bunched in 49 and receiving a substantially higher salary than the three principal officers, who are the heads of various branches. I do not know whether there has

been a reclassification of individual members of the engineering staff. It is open to the Public Service Commissioner to reclassify any officer at any time considered necessary. In last year's Estimates the first of the group of officers was shown at a salary below that of the senior officers. I do not expect the Minister to be possessed of detailed information about every officer, but the one in question must be doing important work to be getting a higher salary than the other three. I do not know of any engineer superior to those three, except the Director of Works himself. It seems as if some officer has been fortunate. If that is so, he should be shown under a separate item, and not included with 48 others whose salaries range down to a comparatively low figure.

Item, Form 35, new appointments.

Mr. MARSHALL: How did it come about that the Government expended £702 under this item last year?

The Minister for Works: That was last year's expenditure.

Mr. MARSHALL: There was no vote last year, but in spite of that the Government spent £702.

The Minister for Works: Form 35 is something new to me.

Mr. MARSHALL: We are entitled to know how the taxpayers' money is to be expended, and the Government should not spend money without Parliament knowing of it, and without the Minister being able to give the reason.

The Minister for Lands: The item would represent transfers from the State Sawmills, etc.

Item, Rents for office accommodation, mining registrars' quarters, police quarters, pensioners' allowances in lieu of quarters, etc., £2,530.

Mr. PIESSE: The police quarters at Katanning are inadequate. In the good days plans were prepared for more up-to-date accommodation for police, lands, and other departments, but unfortunately it was not provided. It is proposed to make additions to the police quarters, and I hope immediate consideration will be given to the matter because, to have five men occupying an office 12 x 14 feet is unhealthy and efficiency is sacrificed.

Item, Perth Government House and Albany Government Cottage, incidental including maintenance of houses, outbuildings, drainage, furniture and fittings, china, glassware, etc., also fuel and light, water and sanitation, £330.

Mr. SLEEMAN: It is remarkable to find this item on the Estimates in view of the assurance that no Governor would be appointed this year. I understand that the Water Supply Department would not charge for water used.

The Minister for Lands: Yes, it would.

Mr. SLEEMAN: Then it is a matter of taking the money out of one pocket and putting it in the other. If there is to be nobody at Government House, little water will be used.

The Minister for Lands: We must keep the gardens going.

Mr. SLEEMAN: The money could be better spent than in providing china and glassware.

The Minister for Lands: We can guarantee it will not be spent on china and glassware this year.

Mr. SLEEMAN: To make sure that it will not be so spent, I move an amendment—

That the item be struck out.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Leader of the Opposition asked me one or two questions before the tea adjournment and I have since rung up the Under Secretary, who informs me that the amount of £800 was provided for the Chief Mechanical Engineer, Mr. Shaw. The other item relating to new appointments refers to a Treasury form that has to be filled in to show the new men who have been employed during the year. If an officer has to go on leave, or is sick, it is necessary to utilise the services of some other officer in his place and the item referred to covers that position. With regard to the vice-regal residence at Albany, for which £330 is provided, a caretaker is employed there but he does not receive any pay. We have to provide firewood, heating, sanitary service and water and effect minor repairs and renovations. The same applies in connection with Government House at Perth. Under the heading of minor repairs and renovations, at

both residences £95 was spent last year, while £235 was spent in providing firewood, heating, lighting, water and sanitary service, those two headings accounting for the total shown in the Estimates of £330.

Mr. SLEEMAN: It seems peculiar that the Government should employ a man at the Albany residence and pay him no wages.

The Minister for Lands: He merely lives in the house as a caretaker but works outside.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I object to these costs being charged against the Governor's establishment, particularly in view of the fact that some of this expenditure seemed to be covered under the earlier item relating to the Governor's establishment, and also in another item relating to recoups to the Metropolitan Water Supply. I do not think it is necessary to have a man employed at Albany, because the residence should be disposed of.

The Minister for Lands: You could not sell the property if you wanted to.

Mr. SLEEMAN: The Government could get rid of the property if they desired to do so. They could put Government House, Perth, to better use, particularly in view of the Premier's assurance that it is not likely that a Governor will be appointed this year. That means that there will not be one for several years.

The Minister for Lands: The Lieut.-Governor has offices there.

Mr. SLEEMAN: It is not necessary to maintain Government House for the private secretary or for the policeman on duty there.

Amendment put and negatived.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Labour, £3,779—agreed to.

This concluded the Estimates of the Minister for Public Works and Labour.

Department of Chief Secretary (Hon. C. F. Baxter, Minister).

Hon. C. G. Latham, Minister for Lands, in charge of the Estimates.

Vote—Chief Secretary, £12,573:

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. C. G. Latham—York) [7.36]: The Chief Secretary's department covers a number of social services.

Mr. Marshall: Do you still impose that charge on kangaroo skins?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That has been taken off. The Votes covered by the Chief Secretary's department include the following:—Chief Secretary, £12,573; Aborigines, £11,000; Fisheries, £3,407; Registry and Friendly Societies, £9,627; Gaols, £25,824; Harbour and Light and Jetties, £17,021; Lunacy and Inebriates, £89,270; and the Observatory, £1,409, making a total of £170,131. The Vote shows an increase, but that is largely due to the fact that less money is being collected by the Lunacy Department than formerly. The necessity for that arose because, in these days, people are not able to provide for patients in private institutions and are forced to send them to the Hospital for the Insane at Claremont. If hon. members desire any information, I will furnish it in respect of any items that may be mentioned. I do not think there is any necessity to indulge in a long speech in introducing the Estimates.

HON. J. CUNNINGHAM (Kalgoorlie) [7.38]: I understood the Minister to say that the decrease in revenue had arisen through the inability of relatives to pay for patients in the institution. Is there any legal obligation upon those people to make such contributions?

The Minister for Lands: Yes, as far as they can.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: What is that obligation?

The Minister for Lands: It is a charge against them that is recoverable in the ordinary way.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: If a man is on sustenance to-day and his father is in the institution, what is the position?

The Minister for Lands: We cannot do anything with people in that position.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: But the officials of the Lunacy Department are sending out notices to people and harassing them although they know that the individuals to who they send them are in receipt of sustenance. The notices continue to be sent out and the debts are mounting up. It is worrying these people. I am not satisfied that there is any legal obligation upon them to pay, although there may be a moral obligation. Seeing that many of these people cannot afford to provide for their wives

and families, they should not be expected to pay the amounts for which accounts are sent to them. Are these amounts to be allowed to accumulate, and will the persons concerned be expected to liquidate them should they secure regular employment?

MR. SLEEMAN: (Fremantle) [7.40]: The time has arrived when the Lunacy Act should be placed in the melting pot, for amendments are certainly required. People are being squeezed to-day to their utmost, and provision should be made whereby people, who are unfortunate enough to have relatives in the Hospital for the Insane, should be relieved of the responsibility for payment towards the upkeep of the patients. In normal times no one in receipt of the basic wage should be expected to pay such amounts week in week out, because the patient in the institution is not like a patient at a hospital who is likely to leave the institution in a month or so. Unfortunately, the patients in the asylum are in many instances there for life and their relatives should not be expected to pay towards their upkeep indefinitely. We should determine just who should, and who should not, be required to make those payments. For my part, I would not mind if people who can well afford to do so were required to contribute something towards the upkeep of their relatives in the institution, but relief should be afforded those not so fortunately situated.

MR. McLARTY (Murray-Wellington) [7.43]: I hope the Minister will explain what is intended with reference to the institution at Whithy Falls. As a result of the Minister's visit some time ago, extensive improvements have been carried out and no doubt that work was fully justified. The property is capable of still greater improvement. It embraces some fine country and if properly worked, could provide for much of the requirements of the asylum at Claremont. Much of the land could be irrigated without difficulty and potatoes and other vegetables, fruit of different types, and other foodstuffs could be profitably grown there. The property could also be used extensively for dairying and it would make a considerable difference, if properly developed and managed, to the upkeep of the institution at Claremont. I notice that in the annual report of the Inspector-General, he refers

to the Claremont institution. In connection with Whitby, the report goes on to say that in that institution there are 33 patients of a harmless type who are doing very useful work. That property being so well situated, I should say it is ideal for the harmless type of patient, who can fill in his time and interest himself by doing useful work. I hope the Minister will tell the House what it is intended to do at Whitby in the future.

MR. MARSHALL (Murchison) [7.47]: It is wrong for the Government to pursue relatives of those who have the misfortune to be committed to the Claremont Asylum and other institutions of a like character. I agree that those relatives whose income is sufficiently large should be asked to subscribe something towards the support of very close relations who happen to be inmates of these institutions. There is a resident of Victoria Park, a young fellow and a member of a very large family, whose mother is an inmate of the Claremont Asylum. This young man learnt the trade of boot repairing. He attempted to start himself in that business, and to an extent succeeded, when the depression hit him. As he knows me, he always approaches me when he receives the ordinary circular which is very frequently sent to him by the secretary of the asylum requesting information as to his financial position and his ability to pay for his mother's maintenance at the institution. While I do not say the secretary coerces relatives to pay, he certainly does persevere. He is very persistent. However, he must know that there is no possible hope of this young man's financial position improving, and I respectfully suggest he is a little too persistent. The last time this lad came to me he threatened to throw himself into the Swan River because he was so badly affected by the continual receipt of these communications from the secretary of the asylum. I suggest that too much effort is made to endeavour to collect payments from people who cannot afford to make them, and who, as far as I can see, never will be able to afford to make them. This young man got married just before the depression. He has a family and, as I said, started a business. The depression hit him very severely indeed, but yet the letters arrive wanting to know if his financial position is improved. As a

matter of fact, it is getting much worse. In cases such as this, the maintenance of the inmates of the asylum is an obligation which the State should shoulder. It is wrong to be continually reminding people that they have relatives who are inmates of asylums. It is bad enough for a person to realise the fact himself, without being continually reminded of it in this way. The Government should see that those people are not persecuted, so to speak, in the future as they have been in the past. God knows the struggle to exist is bad enough without their being subjected to inquisitorial examinations as to their financial position, which in most cases is gradually getting worse.

HON. A. McCALLUM (South Fremantle) [7.50]: I would like the Minister to explain what the intention of the Government is in regard to the position of the superintendent of the Fremantle prison. I understand the present occupant has reached the retiring age, and that applications are being called for the position. I hope that those in the service will be given the opportunity of promotion. There is one instance where a previous Government imported a superintendent because they considered there was no one in the service capable of filling the post. I do not think anyone who is acquainted with what happened then will say that that is the case now. It was afterwards proved that an error had been made, that there were many capable men in the service. All sorts of rumours are current of the Government's intention to appoint someone from outside. I do not know if there is any truth in them. Our officers have had long experience and have given good service to the State, and I hope the Government will agree with the policy that those in the service shall be given preference when the appointment is made. I would also like to know from the Minister what the Government's policy is with respect to the Observatory. I understand negotiations have been proceeding for the Commonwealth to take over the Observatory. While I would be glad to learn of the success of those negotiations, I would be very sorry indeed if the Government transferred to the Commonwealth the beautiful site upon which the Observatory stands.

The Minister for Lands: The Government will not do that.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: I am glad to know that. The Commonwealth Government tried to get that site from us when we were in office, but we declined to consider their request. According to newspaper reports, the Commonwealth Government have agreed to take over all observatories and to keep two of them going, one on the eastern coast of Australia and one here. There are many sites around Perth which would be just as suitable, I am told, for this work.

The Minister for Lands: We have set aside a site in the hills for them.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: Have the Commonwealth Government agreed to that?

The Minister for Lands: No. The Commonwealth Government are not taking over the Observatory at the moment.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: I would like to hear from the Minister exactly what the position is. A mistake was made which we discovered quite by accident when we took over office. Without the consent of Parliament, it was arranged to transfer to the Commonwealth portion of that site. The Commonwealth Government fought very hard to secure the whole of it. I was a little anxious, seeing that they had agreed to take over the Observatory, that they would press for a transfer of the whole of the site, which undoubtedly is the pick of this city. However, I am glad to hear from the Minister that the Government are not agreeing to the transfer of the site. We have it on record that when the Germans came here to make observations they did not go to the hill tops: they went to Bayswater, alongside a swamp.

The Minister for Lands: Perhaps because they were closer to the city and could get more reliable information upon subjects they wanted to make inquiries about.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: I am not imputing ulterior motives to them at all. No one would gainsay that the Germans are as proficient in this work as any other nation. They came here in order to obtain certain particulars, but they did not find it necessary to go to high altitudes. The Germans are not singular in this respect, as that has been the case in many other parts of the world. If a site is set apart for the Commonwealth Government in the Darling Range, I will not object to that; but I certainly object to the Government transferring to the Commonwealth the present Observatory site.

Member: They might make a miniature Canberra of it.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: I rose to speak because of the Commonwealth persisting in their attitude that they would not take over the Observatory in this State unless the site upon which it was erected was transferred to them.

MR. SAMPSON (Swan) [7.55]: I am very much interested in the matter of the prison vote. I was sorry to hear of the rumour that an outsider was likely to be selected to fill the position of Superintendent of the gaol. I must admit, however, that I had not heard that rumour before, and I hope there is no foundation for it. For some time I was associated with the Fremantle prison and during that time I learned to appreciate very highly indeed the work of Mr. Badger, the Superintendent. He is a very capable man, full of human sympathy, and at the same time possessed of sound common sense. Mr. Badger is and always has been an officer upon whom the utmost reliance could be placed. I noticed that the prisoners had a very great regard for Mr. Badger, and I do not think any man could exert a better influence over prisoners than the present superintendent. Unfortunately, the years pass by and age comes on. To all appearances Mr. Badger is still a young man (he is certainly very vigorous) and I deeply regret the decision that has been arrived at in regard to his retirement. There is no doubt the State owes a great deal to him. Those who have passed through the Fremantle prison are particularly indebted to him. Mr. Badger was always most sympathetic and helpful in the establishment of the prison farm at Pardelup. His work there has been of the greatest value. Referring to the matter of his successor, I am aware that there are in the ranks of the officers men who are qualified to succeed Mr. Badger, but at the same time, as I have said, I am certain there is no one who can improve upon the manner in which he has discharged his duties. I desire to place on record my personal appreciation of Mr. Badger. I have a very great respect indeed for that gentleman because of his sound sense, his sympathy, his firmness and his character, all of which has been reflected in the altered attitude and altered outlook of many prisoners who have served sentences at Fremantle and elsewhere. In re-

gard to the Hospital for the Insane, I notice a very small sum has been provided for the upkeep of the buildings and I doubt whether it is wise that so small an amount should be allocated for that purpose. The actual figure is mentioned in the Estimates for the Works Department, but I do not think I am out of order in referring to it here. Apart from that, there is another matter, namely, monotony of diet at the Hospital for the Insane. I think we might very properly ask that an improvement be made in that respect. Some years ago it was customary at brief intervals to provide some fruit for the inmates. It was arranged that one of the inspectors of the Department of Agriculture would at a time of glut in the markets purchase supplies of fruit for those people. Of course it means some expense, but even at such a time as this I think that practice should be revived and maintained. I have been advised that the food is shockingly monotonous, that the cakes and scones previously supplied on Sundays are not now available. The fullest sympathy should be extended to those unfortunate inmates of the Hospital for the Insane, and I hope it will be possible for the Minister concerned to effect some improvement in the dietary.

MR. PIESSE (Katanning) [8.1]: I should like to know whether the Minister can inform us as to the intentions of the Government regarding the Carrolup settlement for natives and half-castes of the Great Southern district. Some years ago it was hoped to re-establish that native settlement on the Great Southern, but the opposition by the settlers was in strong evidence and so it was decided not to go on with the proposal to re-open it. But I remind the Government of the urgent necessity for doing something for those unfortunate people, numbering nearly 2,000 between Beverley and Albany.

The Minister for Lands: Not nearly so many as that.

Mr. PIESSE: Most of those people are workless and have to depend upon sustenance from the Aborigines Department. If there is one duty devolving upon the Government, it is the protection and care of the aborigines. I am not going to say the department have not done their best for them. for I have proof that they are cared for as well as possible. Through police agency

they are pretty well protected, and any cases brought under notice are promptly dealt with. But there are many young men, half castes and aborigines, who have no trades at their fingers' end and so are unable to get work in the agricultural districts; and while sustenance relief work has been provided for white people out of work, the aborigines are not eligible for that assistance, but have to depend entirely on the Aborigines Department. There is grave danger in not educating the half-castes. The full blooded aborigines are fast dying out, but the half-castes are increasing in number and unless there be laid down a definite policy of educating those people and teaching them some trade or useful work, we shall find within the next 10 or 20 years they will become a menace to and a charge upon the State. Notwithstanding the privations they have had to suffer during the last two years, most of those men have proved law-abiding and peaceful, but we do not know what will happen if they are allowed to roam about the bush quite uncontrolled. It is disconcerting in the extreme to find in the native camps that many of the women are almost white. Quite recently I was revolted to see an almost white woman married to an aboriginal. I have discussed this matter with the Protector of Aborigines, who tells me he has no control over the half-castes because they do not come within the definition of "aborigines." While he is anxious to segregate them, he cannot do so for want of funds. Since the Carrolup settlement, which was established for that purpose, was closed some years ago it is the duty of the Government to set up a similar settlement in some other part of the Great Southern. It would be wrong to send those natives away to another district where they would never be happy, but would pine for their own country where they were born. I hope the Minister will be able to tell us the Government are seriously considering this matter and are not prepared to leave it to the goodwill of the local people to undertake the care of the half-castes and look after them. The Government cannot too early embark upon another native settlement. Whatever the state of the finances, I say the money should be forthcoming for this purpose. If Western Australia has anything to be ashamed of, it is the way the aborigines have been treated

on the whole. There has been no definite policy laid down, and to a large extent the natives have been dealt with in haphazard fashion instead of their care being an obligation on the State.

MR. J. I. MANN (Beverley) [8.9]: In the Great Southern districts the half-caste question is becoming very serious. At Beverley and Brookton there are many families of half-castes and they are increasing rapidly with an average birth rate per family of six or seven.

Mr. Panton: What, per annum?

MR. J. I. MANN: No, it is not quite as bad as that. And unfortunately they are becoming whiter each year. Certainly it is a problem the Government will have to face. It has been said by medical men that with a fusion of the white race and the aboriginal race the children become whiter from generation to generation, and there is no throw-back. Certainly there should be a native settlement somewhere in the district, because at present they are all living on native rations, a pittance of tea, sugar and flour, and have developed the lazy habit of not hunting, as they do when in their wild state. They are without occupation and uneducated, and unless they are handled by a system of compounds or native settlements, so that they may occupy their time by earning their daily bread, we shall inevitably have serious trouble with them. On the question of the retirement of the Superintendent of the Fremantle Gaol, I hope the Government will be most careful in the selection of his successor. According to Mr. Badger's own evidence the number of real criminals in the Fremantle gaol is very small. He holds the theory that when a man has merely made a slip it is only right that endeavours should be used to set him back on the right path. Mr. Badger has done remarkable work in helping to bring those people back, and has played an important part in the settlement at Pardalup, where the men are much better off in the open air than they would be within the prison. I sincerely hope that before Mr. Badger is retired a thoroughly suitable man will be found to fill his place, and that Mr. Badger will be allowed to remain in office for some time in order that he might serve as a guide to his successor. We have heard to-night of the over-taxing of our

asylum. It is strange that we have not delved further into this question of insanity. One would imagine that in this age of science our medical men would have succeeded in putting a stop to the spread of lunacy, which is hereditary in so many families. The people of the world will have to realise that the day of sterilisation of the unsound must come. Some people regard it as a shocking subject. We endeavour to raise the standard of our farm stock as high as possible, but when it comes to humans we allow indiscriminate marriages of the unsound, and deplorably children are bred into the world with that unfortunate strain in them. The day must come when that problem will have to be faced. Most doctors agree as to that being the position. It is necessary to face that problem in order to save the enormous toll of the human race due to insanity. Such unfortunate people must be cared for and looked after, whether they have any hope of recovering their senses or not.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. C. G. Latham—York—in reply) [8.16]: Before the Hospital for the Insane can be made free to patients it will be necessary to alter the law. People who can afford to pay for their relatives to be kept there, should be made to pay. I do not know any people who have been harassed to the extent referred to by members.

Hon. J. Cunningham: I do.

The **MINISTER FOR LANDS**: There may be people who will not write to the department, and say what financial position they are in.

Hon. J. Cunningham: The department want people to write to them every week.

The **MINISTER FOR LANDS**: If the hon. member will give me the information disclosing that position, I will see that the practice is discontinued. I do not know of anything of that kind being done.

Hon. J. Cunningham: I do.

The **MINISTER FOR LANDS**: If it was thought that the relatives could pay, they would be called upon to pay. We write off tremendous sums every year. Last year less than one-third of what it cost to run the institution was collected.

Mr. Marshall: You were lucky to get that much.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Some people pay considerable sums to keep their relatives in the institution. An agreement is entered into, and if the relative says he will pay four or five guineas a week, he should do so. If there are any cases of harassing, we will make sure that the practice is discontinued, but we must collect all the revenue we can from those who are able to pay it.

Mr. Marshall: The average wage-earner cannot afford to pay.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I do not think many people of that sort are called upon to pay. We have had to write off £20,000 or £30,000, which is a lot of money. Because of the unfortunate financial position the people are facing, it is more difficult now to get them to meet their obligations. I do not want members to be worried by this sort of thing, and it is no pleasure to me to hear them. The member for Murray-Wellington asked what it was proposed to do with Whithy. That is a valuable piece of land, and we have not been getting the best use out of it in the past. It was hoped we would be able to provide some of our institutions with all the milk that was required. It is now thought that the land at Whithy can be put to better use by growing vegetables upon it. I can hardly believe the member for Swan desires to reflect upon the visiting committee which reports to this House quarterly. So far, no comments have been made concerning the feeding of the inmates of the institution.

Mr. Sampson: The Minister will find a reference to that in a recent report.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I do not think there is much reason to complain about the food supplies in these institutions. The question will, however, be brought under the notice of the controller, who ought to be the best judge of the position. He is not directed as to how he should feed his inmates. We believe in his being given a liberal supply of food and clothing. In the early part of the year a conference was held between Commonwealth and State Ministers with a view to seeing whether the overlapping in Observatory matters could not be prevented. It was thought that Australia did not require an observatory in each State, and that two would suffice. One was chosen for Canberra, and one was to go to some other part of Australia. Perth happened to

be the place selected. When it was found that new buildings would have to be erected, I think the authorities turned their attention elsewhere. The matter has been left to a committee for inquiry and report to the Federal Government. I agree this is a national and not a State matter, and it ought to be a responsibility of the Federal Government. I assure the member for South Fremantle that no arrangement that has been made provides for a transfer of our land. A block has been set aside near the National Park in the Darling Ranges. I think the reason why the Federal Government have not been anxious to take over the Observatory is because of the need for putting up new buildings. There is no need to fear that our land will be given away. From the point of view of Australia this State, because of its geographical situation, is more suitable for an observatory than any other part of the Commonwealth. With reference to the appointment of a superintendent of gaols, Mr. Badger has now reached the age of 66. He has, therefore, been retired, and applications are being invited to fill the position. I hope his successor will be as good a man as Mr. Badger. I cannot tell members who is likely to be appointed. The Government at present have no knowledge of any person who may be applying for the post. Applications will be invited very soon, and possibly members will have an opportunity of learning who the appointee is before we go into recess. I do not know whether the successor to Mr. Badger will be appointed from within the service or not. Whoever is appointed will find it difficult to follow Mr. Badger. He must have that sympathetic outlook which the previous holder of the position is credited with having, and must have power to discipline the community under him. I hope whatever appointment is made will be in the best interests of those who are confined to gaol. I resent the remarks made by the member for Katanning concerning the treatment meted out to aborigines. He said that Western Australia should be ashamed of itself. In no State of Australia are the natives better treated than they are in this State. Of course, it is difficult to control every white man who happens to be in the vicinity of natives living under natural conditions. Western Australians as a people have, however, played the game in respect to the treatment of this race. Under the Consti-

tution Act we are bound to provide for the aborigines, and we are doing so. The hon. member wants to know whether these people are to be housed in stone or brick buildings. Their nomadic instincts force them to go out of buildings. Even in the North the nurses in the hospitals have told me that a nigger would get out of bed in order to die on the floor. The natives do not like the housing conditions of our civilisation. It is difficult to lift these people from their natural surroundings and make them contented in artificial surroundings. I do not like a member to say that Western Australia ought to be ashamed of itself. As a fact, we have nothing to be ashamed of in our treatment of the aborigines. I have met them in the South-West. All they wanted was a school. They did not desire to be sent back to the places whence they came, but wished to be left free to live their nomadic lives. It is difficult to keep them in compounds. The hon. member said there were no means of education for them. Such means are provided at Quairading, where there are two sisters belonging to the Australian Inland Mission, who not only educate the children, but look after them when they are sick. The natives are happier in their humpy homes, or mia mias, than they are in any other dwellings. So far as we can, we are providing them with food and the necessary clothing. That is all we are called upon to do. It is no use the member for Katanning thinking we can buy land to be used as farms for these people. Our first duty is towards our own race.

Mr. Piesse: There is no place where you have yet been successful.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Even at the Moore River, the girls go back into the world and the same trouble occurs. I think it is a waste of time to attempt to tackle that problem when we have greater ones with regard to our own people. Nor do I know whether it is possible to prevent the half-caste population from increasing. There are very few aborigines in the South-West. I assure members that everything that can be done is being done in the matter.

Vote put and passed.

Votes—Aborigines, £11,000; Fisheries, £3,107; Registry of Friendly Societies, £9,627; Gaols, £25,521; Harbour and Light and Jetties, £17,021; Lunacy and Inebriates, £9,270; Observatories, £1,409; agreed to.

Vote—Education, £55,000:

Department of the Minister for Education
(Hon. T. A. L. Davy, Minister).

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION

(Hon. T. A. L. Davy—West Perth) [8.30]: On the subject of this vote there is no fresh ground to break; it is more or less a repetition of last year's Estimates. There may, however, be some matters to which hon. members may desire to refer and to which I shall be pleased to supply the necessary answers.

MR. CORBOY (Yilgarn-Coolgardie)

[8.31]: What I intend to say is not in the nature of criticism, but I should like to make a suggestion to the Minister with regard to the special training in physical culture that is given to the boys at the Perth Central School, a training that has resulted in that school winning on two occasions the Stewart shield, a trophy, competed for by every boys' school in the Commonwealth. The proposal I make is that the services of the instructors should be utilised to a greater extent than is done to-day. The position as I see it is that a wonderful system has been evolved for the physical training of our boys at that school, and a number of teachers now have had more than one year's experience of the system of training the lads. It is time now, having won the shield for two years—and incidentally I think they might also have won it in the year when they did not compete—that the instructors were distributed over a wider area. For instance, there are six important centres in the State and one could be sent to each centre, places like Kalgoorlie, Albany, Geraldton, Bunbury and so on. Those instructors, in turn, could train other teachers to carry on the fine work that has been done at the Perth Boys' School. The Minister is aware of but unfortunately it is all being done but unfortunately it is all being done at one school, and the children in other centres are entitled to the benefit of the knowledge that is being imparted in Perth. If the instructors were sent to six other centres, next year perhaps we would have 42 trained to carry on the work.

HON. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [S.35]: The expenditure last year and the estimated expenditure this year shows a considerable reduction as compared with the amount expended in the year 1929-30, no less a sum than £137,000. It is surprising that the Government have been able to make such a big reduction. When I was at the Treasury it was impressed upon me by everyone associated with the Education Department that the expenditure then was down to bedrock, although I am aware of the fact that over a period of years the expenditure had been increasing considerably. But now we have a very severe reduction over a period of two years. The practical closing of the Teachers' College has, I suppose, assisted to some extent, but the figures show that that amount is comparatively small. There has been a saving of several thousand pounds on technical education. I should like to know whether the Teachers' College is to remain closed for any considerable time, and if the waiting list of teachers is sufficient to supply the possible demands of the department during the next year or two, without there being any necessity for the Teachers' College to be opened again. I know, because of the requests made to me, and I suppose other hon. members have had similar requests, of a number of those who qualified at the Teachers' College, but who, unfortunately, are not able to secure appointments. I cannot say from personal knowledge that primary education in the remoter parts of the State has suffered because of the large reductions that have been effected in this department. If that were the case we should hear of it. It may be considered also that the time is inopportune to raise the question of the leaving age for children. Having gone into the matter myself while I was in office, I know, of course, that to raise the leaving age by even one year will involve a considerable increase in expenditure because of the added accommodation that would be required for the greater number of children who would continue at school after arriving at the age of 14. I suppose it is to-day, as it was in the past, a question of finance, and I suggest that the Minister might possibly make a commencement, even if the policy were not applied all over the State. The commencement could be made in some centres where the accom-

modation is already sufficient to meet the requirements of the greater number of children that would continue at school. There are many who may not agree with me, but I should prefer to see a year cut off the commencement age and added to the leaving age. I do not think the child would suffer at all by the commencing age being made seven instead of six, which is the compulsory age at present. Experience has shown that the child does not commence its work very seriously at the age of six, but beginning at the age of seven it rapidly overhauls the progress made by those children who began at six years.

Mr. Corboy: The school age could be made from seven to fifteen years.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I would prefer seven to 15 than six to 14, as at present. A study of the education systems of the world shows that Australia generally—perhaps I should speak for Western Australia—is far more backward regarding compulsory education than any other country of the world, that is, as far as the compulsory age is concerned. In many of the countries of Europe the age is compulsory up to 16 and even 17, and in many of the States of America the compulsory age is 16, and in some instances above 16.

Miss Holman: It is even 18 years in some States.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes. I know from personal experience that the child's brain really begins to develop at 14, and that is the year in which a youth imbibes more knowledge than at any other period. I know that in the last year I was at school I learnt more in that one year than I did in all the other years. It is at that time that a child's brain is sufficiently developed to understand what is being taught, whereas in the earlier years knowledge is mostly mechanically acquired and quickly forgotten. I should very much like to see the age altered to 17, although I know just now it is a question of finance. If, however, a start could be made where the expense would not be big, then it should be made, more particularly remembering that in these days there are no openings for children who leave school at the age of 14. In the unfortunate position that exists throughout Australia to-day there are 40,000 children leaving school every year. Just picture what will be the fate of those 40,000 children that will leave school next month for good, with no pos-

sible avenue of employment awaiting them. They will simply be thrown on the labour market, as it were, into a world that does not seem to want them or even made provision to receive them. I know the Education Department does not turn children out at the age of 14; they are not forced to leave school at that age. They may stay as long as they like. At the same time we know that children, especially boys, at the age of 14 are disinclined to continue at school so long as they know it is not compulsory for them to remain after 14, and it will assist the parents very much if it is possible to keep the children there after 14. I hope it may be possible to do something so that we may get into step with nearly every other progressive country in the world.

MR. PARKER (North-East Fremantle) [8.43]: I regret there is no item on the Estimates to cover the cost of educating the deaf and dumb children. The institution that looks after those children is hard pressed for money and finds it difficult to keep going. The children are well cared for, and are extremely well instructed, but the difficulty is finance. People do not now subscribe as they did in the past, and the hospital tax is always thrown in the teeth of those who seek subscriptions. Certain people seem to think that institutions like the one in question come within the purview of the hospitals tax, which is not the case.

Mr. Corboy: The same thing applies to the blind children.

Mr. PARKER: Exactly. The education of deaf and dumb children is a matter which requires very careful attention, and those who impart instruction have to be specially qualified teachers. It certainly is wonderful what is done for the children. A child goes there at the age of six and first has to be taught that it has a name and what the name is.

The CHAIRMAN: I think the hon. member should have discussed that under Miscellaneous Services, benevolent grant to Deaf and Dumb Institution.

Mr. PARKER: It is true that a grant is made for the general upkeep of the institution under that item, but I should like to see an item on the Estimates next year for the department to take over the education of those children. The law of the country provides that all children between the ages of six and 14 shall attend school. Ob-

viously a parent cannot send a deaf and dumb child to a State school. For one thing the Education Department have not the facilities to teach such a child, and further it would be impossible for such a child to attend. I should like to see the department take over the cost of the education of the deaf and dumb children.

HON. A. McCALLUM (South Fremantle) [8.47]: I join with the Leader of the Opposition in expressing fear at the amount of the reduction in this vote, and I hope that no matter what economies are forced upon the Government, the education of the young will be the last to be substantially cut. All the indications point to the fact that the struggle for existence will be keener in the future than it has been in the past, not only amongst individuals but amongst nations. It will be not only the individual who is best equipped mentally that will have the best chance, but the nation whose people have their mental faculties most highly developed, not only by primary education but by technical education, will be the nation to outstrip the others. With the stressful times ahead, it should be the last resort of the Government to effect economies by reducing the opportunities for education. Enormous cuts have been made, totalling £137,672, equal to 19.9 per cent. I do not know that any Government department has suffered a heavier cut. The Education Department is a non-revenue-producing department, and it is the kind of expenditure with which the State cannot afford to be parsimonious. I have been endeavouring to ascertain just where the savings have been effected.

The Minister for Education: Under the Financial Emergency Act, reduction of teachers' salaries.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: Is that all?

The Minister for Education: Practically all.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: There have been other cuts. The Training College has been closed, and that shows there has not been expansion to provide outlets for teachers. New schools are not being opened.

Mr. Hegney: The continuation classes have been closed.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: Yes. I felt disappointed when the Minister uttered hardly half a dozen words in introducing his Estimates.

Mr. Kenneally: His experiences of explaining lately have not been too happy.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: There is no activity more important than education; there is no greater responsibility on the Government than the education of the people. Other nations are not restricting education; they are extending it. The leaving age in most countries has been raised during recent years. I do not suppose there is any other nation to compare with Germany for the technical instruction imparted, and I think the leaving age there is higher than in most other countries. The leaving age in Germany has certainly been raised, and the facilities for imparting technical education have been extended. If Australia is to have a future and is to be able to meet the competition of the world, our people must be highly equipped mentally. If they have not that knowledge, they cannot expect to win through. The old days of blustering through and trusting to luck have gone. Science is applied in almost every walk of life. There never was a time when science was applied to industry to the extent that it is to-day, and in no country is science likely to help development so much as in Australia. Take gold-mining: some people consider that the increase in the price of gold has been the main factor in assisting the industry. No doubt it has helped, but I venture to say the latest scientific inventions have done as much as if not more than the increased price of gold to put the industry on a more satisfactory footing. The agricultural industry is in a bad way. That is not common to Australia; it applies the world over, and we must have the best scientific knowledge applied to agriculture if the future of the country is to be assured.

The Minister for Agriculture: We will be worse off without it.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: Yes. I notice that a young Western Australian has returned from abroad, and has been given an opportunity in the Minister's department, where he is likely to accomplish great things. We have the youth and the brains, and there is scope here for applied science that many other countries do not possess. I regard the figures with anxiety, and my fear is increased by the casual manner in which the Minister introduced his Estimates.

The Minister for Education: There was no change.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: Surely the position called for some explanation. I believe the department is well-staffed and well-controlled, and the children have proved their worth when given an opportunity. To limit the expenditure on education is a serious matter. Since the teachers' college has been closed, we are entitled to know what the outlook for the future is. There must be a fair percentage of the teachers reaching the retiring age each year. The population of the State has decreased a little since the Government took office, but I do not know that the decrease has been marked. We should know whether the department is assured of a supply of teachers to meet all demands ahead, and whether the Government propose that the teachers' college shall remain closed. I am anxious to know what is proposed regarding the building of a high school at Fremantle. Such a school has been projected for years, and I believe it was next on the list to be constructed. A magnificent site has been reserved for this school. There is no high school in the district, and I understand that a high school at Fremantle was intended to serve the district, from Claremont down. The question of enlarging schools at the Perth end has been discussed and the children of Fremantle have to travel to Perth. It would be sounder to build the Fremantle school than to make additions to the Perth schools. Children could then receive their education in their own town, and the long journey from Fremantle to Perth could be saved. The Government have the land and it is merely a question of erecting the building. Some time ago I dropped a hint regarding a small matter, but it has not been acted on. The Government are spending a large sum of money on sustenance, paying men to work for the local authorities. The school grounds are in a shocking condition. Why cannot those men be employed to put the school grounds in order. There are school grounds in my district that are not safe for the children to play on. Some have big limestone boulders projecting and others are of loose sand. While the Government pay men to do work that would otherwise be undertaken by the local authorities, this work on their own property is neglected. In some instances a small expenditure would be required for material, but I venture to say there was

never such an opportunity to get the work done economically. When times improve the Government will have to find the money for the material and pay wages in addition. Now it simply means that the Government will have to find the materials only because they are already paying the necessary money to the local authorities. I know there are other schools in adjoining electorates that require similar attention and I do not think there is one in my electorate that is not in a like position. For that reason, the men on sustenance could be employed as I suggest with considerable advantage.

MR. H. W. MANN (Perth) [9.1]: The Leader of the Opposition mentioned that 40,000 children were leaving the schools of Australia every year. Hitherto a large percentage of those were absorbed in industry in the metropolitan areas. Those avenues are now closed to the lads. Two years ago I waited with others as a deputation on the member for Nedlands (Hon. N. Keenan), who was then Minister for Education, and requested him to make provision whereby boys and girls could be kept at school for another year. He pointed out that the necessary accommodation was not available and that while a large number of children left the schools each year, there was just as large a number who joined the schools annually. He said it was as necessary to bring in the younger children as it was to find accommodation for the elder ones who were then leaving school. James-street school is overcrowded, and cottages on the opposite side of the street have been in use for a considerable time.

The Minister for Education: They have been used for more than ten years.

Mr. H. W. MANN: And they are overcrowded now.

The Minister for Education: That is not correct.

Mr. H. W. MANN: It is, but that is not the point I wish to make. We find that secondary industries cannot absorb the boys who leave school each year and that emphasises the fact that the one avenue open to them for employment is that connected with various forms of primary production. The only means of education for the boys under that heading that is mentioned in the Estimates is the Narrogin State Farm School, at which a limited number only can be dealt

with. I suggest to the Minister that he should consider taking over the State farm at Avondale for a similar purpose. I do not know how much money would be required to make the farm suitable to deal with the education of our lads, but I think that farm could be developed on a greater scale than the Narrogin farm school so that a number of boys could learn something about primary production.

Mr. Griffiths: In order to grow more wheat at a loss.

Mr. H. W. MANN: That will not always be the position. If we are as capable as foreign countries, we must be able to grow wheat in competition with them. The only avenue by which the State can progress is by way of primary production of commodities that we can sell overseas. We cannot sell boots, blankets, or suits of clothes overseas, but we can sell our meat, wool, wheat, butter and fruit outside the Commonwealth. Irrespective of whether we will grow wheat at a loss or not, we must make advances in our primary production in order to maintain our trade with the nations of the world. We must be able to produce our commodities under conditions that will enable us to compete with foreign nations. As to the question of producing at a loss now, I am not prepared to argue that matter at the moment, but I do suggest that the Government should give consideration to the necessity for making provision for lads now leaving school to learn something about primary production. I should say that at least 75 per cent. of the lads of Australia, particularly those resident in Western Australia, must look to primary production for their future. I know that is not a very popular gospel to preach, but it is none the less true. We have reached the peak of employment in our secondary industries. We cannot produce under that heading in a manner that enables us to compete overseas, and our factories are at the top of their production in coping with the requirements of the local market.

Mr. Kenneally: People have not got the money with which to purchase goods; that is the trouble.

Mr. H. W. MANN: I do not know whether that is so, but I recollect that a Royal Commission was appointed in South Australia to ascertain the reason why the secondary industries in that State were not as successful as those operating in Victoria. The

Royal Commission took evidence in Victoria and I remember reading the assertion made by a boot manufacturer who said that there were enough boot factories in Collingwood to make in six months, working full time, all the boots Australia would require throughout the year. With that fact in mind, I am more than ever convinced that it is to primary production that we must look for the future of Western Australia. Therefore I contend that it is the responsibility of the Government to make provision for the education of our youths in matters relating to primary production. Although the Narrogin Farm school is the only applicable item in the Estimates, I notice that the provision is a reducing one.

The Minister for Education: There is an increase of £1 this year.

Mr. H. W. MANN: The reduction was from £3,343 to £1,789 and now the Estimate for this year is £1,790. While the Government may be justified in reducing expenditure in many directions, there can be no justification for any reduction under the heading to which I have drawn attention. If members were to look about them, they would see scores of lads between 15 and 17 years of age standing about in the streets, in billiard rooms and elsewhere.

Hon. P. Collier: And in our police courts and children's courts.

Mr. Hegney: And selling crossword puzzle coupons

Hon. H. W. MANN: I know lads who left school two years ago and for many months searched for employment. They have given it up and are broken hearted. They know there is no chance of finding work.

Mr. Kenneally: And the Government seek to solve the problem by making men who are employed, work longer hours.

Hon. H. W. MANN: I am not dealing with that point. I hope the Minister will consider making some provision for the lads receiving education in matters relating to primary production, because it is along those lines only that Western Australia will progress.

MR. GRIFFITHS (Avon) [9.19]: I listened with interest to the remarks of the member for Perth regarding the necessity for education in matters relating to primary production. I do not know whether he had in mind something about the sugar industry.

for that appears to be the one form of primary production in which the Federal Government are interested and which they are willing to encourage. That was emphasised in the telegraphic news that appeared in the "Daily News" this evening. Our wheat-growers are in a most unfortunate position and yet the Federal Government are prepared to extend lavish assistance along the lines that have been indicated recently. We are often told that primary production will be the salvation of the country and all I can say is I trust the present wretched condition of affairs will not continue much longer. The item dealing with primary and central schools, etc., accounts for more than two-thirds of the reduction of the Vote and possibly the Minister will give us some further explanation when he replies to the debate. I wish to refer to the work of the country schools and the necessity for improving the accommodation available. I have a request before the Minister at present that I hope will be attended to in due course. Although a room was added to the Merredin school, with the increase of between 30 and 40 children the accommodation will be overtaxed when the next term commences. I greatly appreciate the activities of the department in connection with rural education and the correspondence classes. Those who attended the recent Royal Show must have been delighted at the excellent exhibition of work done by the country children, which tended to bear out the statements of the member for South Fremantle (Hon. A. McCallum) regarding the ability and talent that was apparent amongst our young people. One of our young men is now at Aberystwyth and I believe he will follow in the footsteps of Dr. Teakle and will exercise great influence in future in regard to fodder crops and grasses. Twelve months ago I accompanied Mr. Clubb to the South-West and the Yammah we inspected the work of the school children. The "Daily News" aptly referred to them as "the ten-year-old farmers of the State." Wonderful work was being carried out by the children. The standard of work compared favourably with those of surrounding schools and they have the cream record for the district. These boys discovered faults in separators and so saved the farmers a lot of money. They were little fellows 11½ and 12 years of age testing milk in front of the as-

sembled crowd. They were followed by the expert, who certified that their work was correct. I mention these few details, because I can see that the development which is taking place in these country schools in the South-West will make for the salvation of that part of the State. Young boys and girls are growing up and getting the atmosphere of the place, so to speak, and they will succeed where their fathers and mothers failed because of lack of practical experience. I express my appreciation of the correspondence classes and the rural school work. I think a little money might be found for the purchase of seeds and such like things to encourage these country schools, because I understand that from the sale of the products of the schools they can almost pay their own way.

MISS HOLMAN (Forrest) [9.17]: In common with members on this side of the House, I am very sorry to note the big reduction in the Education vote. I feel it is poor economy to deprive the young people of the State of the chance of getting a better education. I am sorry to note that provision is not made for the re-opening of the Teachers' Training College and of the continuation classes. It is a retrograde step to close the continuation classes. It really does away with the opportunity for lads in daily work to continue their education in the way they could do when the continuation classes were being carried on. I would like to see some provision made for an increase in the school leaving age. It is true, as the Leader of the Opposition has said, that we are among the most backward countries in the world so far as the school leaving age is concerned. I do not think there is a country in the world with a lower school leaving age than we have, and there are few of them as low. As regards the school leaving age, I think the only other country with which we can be compared is equatorial Africa. That is the only other country I can find where the school leaving age is 14 years. The leaving age should be higher for another reason, because under the Shops and Factories Act girls cannot be employed in shops and factories until they attain the age of 15 years; consequently, there is a gap between the age of 14 and 15 years that could very

well be filled by compulsory attendance at school. In the timber districts of the South-West there is nothing whatever for the children to do when they leave school at the age of 14 years. Very often the school teachers are kind enough to give extra tuition to children over the age of 14 years. Occasionally some of the scholars carry on with the correspondence classes and enter for the junior University examination. However, more often than not those children have nothing whatever to do. There is no work for them to do in the timber districts, and if they could go to school until they were 15 years old it would make them better fitted to meet life's difficulties afterwards. The ability shown by children in the country schools in manual work is remarkable. I was waiting for the hon. member who last spoke to mention a mill school that he visited which showed some remarkable results in manual work. In that particular school the boys had even made their own desks. They made single desks with seats for the bigger children. The desks had a drawer in which to place books, and the seat was quite comfortable. In that school the shelves also had been made by the boys. They had also made some Christmas toys, while some beautiful work had been done by the girls. The teacher had also tried to cater for one young child who was very interested in wireless. In addition, there were very many other avenues in which the ability of the children had been developed. In other schools, different kinds of work have been carried on. At a recent show in Brunswick I saw samples of beaten tin work, made out of a piece of kerosene tin with a hammer and a piece of wood with a nail on it. Very good imitations of copper work were made, with the exception of the colour, of course. From these plaster casts were made of birds, horses' heads, and other things. There is a great deal of talent among the children in the country, and it can be developed still further if they are kept at school until they reach 15 years. In another one of the mill centres that I could quote, the children made walking sticks and other articles out of wood. I desire to make a complaint about the desks which are provided in many of the country schools. They are old-fashioned, long, small desks, and are not at all suitable for growing children. I mentioned that at the Argyle

school the boys had made their own desks, and I do not blame them. I have seen some of those small desks in which the children are so cramped that their knees are almost touching their chins. In the Holyoake school there were some good desks a few years ago, but I believe they have since been sent to another school. Children are not given a proper chance to develop if suitable seating accommodation is not provided for them in school. It should be remembered that they have to spend many hours sitting at the desks and that children have softer bones than grown-up people and are liable to get curvature of the spine and incur other ills and ailments through not having proper seating accommodation. I would like to see the department make a bigger effort to cater for schools for sustenance camps. At present we have an abnormal condition with regard to the unemployed people of the State. Many people are now living at sustenance camps, because a man on sustenance simply cannot afford to pay rent for two homes. Therefore, we have the spectacle of several children at these camps, with no provision made for their schooling. I had occasion some little time ago to make a request for a school at the irrigation works near Brunswick. It was not altogether the fault of the Education Department that the school was not provided. That department informed me that if I could get a guarantee that the camp would remain in existence for 12 months, they would erect a portable school. The Education Department then inquired from the Works Department where the camp was situated and were informed that it was non-existent. It was in July last that I asked for the school and although the camp is still there, it will be broken up in another two months. Therefore, those children have been without schooling for six months. By to-day's mail I got another request for a school from the sustenance workers at the Wellington dam at Penrith. There are 20 to 25 children there. I was informed that a correspondence course had been tried, but it was not a success, the reason given being that the correspondence lessons take up a good deal of the parents' time, which cannot always be spared. The correspondence classes, as the previous speaker has said, are a wonderful institution. They are achieving really marvellous results; but there are some cases where they are not altogether success-

ful. For instance, some children at a dairy farm were taking the correspondence course, but the father and mother could not supervise the work because they had to attend to the milking of cows both in the morning and evening. There is another case where the correspondence course was tried and did not prove quite a success, according to my informant. I believe the policy of the department is not to erect portable schools at sustenance camps unless there is a likelihood of their remaining in existence for 12 months or so. I want to congratulate the teachers on the very fine work they are doing in the schools, but I would ask the Minister if he intends to take any notice of Dr. Heller's remarks about our buildings being so far behind the times.

The Minister for Education: Behind what they are in New York.

Miss HOLMAN: Behind what they should be. I do not want to labour the question. I have placed one case before the Minister, that of the Argyle school. Then there is the case of the Girls' Central School. More accommodation is required there and the building should be brought up to date. We cannot say we have free education when it is necessary for the scholars to buy so many books. I am continually receiving complaints from mothers who have to buy their children new books at the beginning of each year. Very often the books are changed and a new set has to be bought if the child goes to a new school. I had a complaint the other day from one mother who said she had to pay 15s. at the beginning of this year for books for her boy, aged 10 years. That particular mother is in a home where her husband has not had full-time work for some years. Probably next year, when the boy goes into a new class, she will have to buy more books and the other books will, to a certain extent, be wasted. The Government should try to do something in the way of providing books for the children. We cannot say we have free education while so much money has to be spent by the parents on books. Again, the Government should make provision for mentally defective children. The teachers have large classes of 50 and 60 children to handle, and occasionally there are in the school mentally defective children who hamper the progress of the rest of the class. The teachers cannot give the neces-

sary individual attention to those defective children, and consequently they are neglected and no provision is made for them. Only the other day I came across a child 16 years of age who works quite well but cannot read or write or even tell the time, because the teacher had not been able to give her individual attention. The two schools we have for mentally backward boys show what can be done under individual attention, but unfortunately we have no such school for backward girls. Far from complimenting the Government on the decrease in their expenditure, I deplore it and would like to see the vote increased.

MR. HEGNEY (Middle Swan) [9.32]: Earlier in the evening I brought under the notice of the Minister for Works the condition of the Bayswater school ground. I understand the money has to be provided by the Education Department for the necessary improvements, the Works Department merely carrying out the job. The Minister for Education is aware of the condition of the Bayswater school ground, which is altogether unsuitable as a playground. That ground cannot be improved unless the hill is lowered and the depression filled up. The boys cannot enter the cricket competition with the other schools, because they have no suitable playground. The amount required to improve the ground is not large and, as the member for South Fremantle said, if instead of putting the sustenance men in that locality on road work, where they displace many municipal workers, they were put on to the improving of the school ground, that improvement would not cost nearly so much. The numbers at the school are increasing at the rate of 50 per annum, the present attendance being about 550. Recently we asked the unemployment board to make a sum available for the purpose of improving that ground. The Director of Education was favourable to the project, but the Treasury replied that it would cost too much to shift the latrines. I might tell the Minister that the local road board are concerned over the condition of those latrines and have referred the matter to the Public Health authorities. Some of the children attending that school come from a distance of beyond three miles. Petitions have been submitted to the department for the establishment of a school at North Bayswater, and Mr. Clubb

is now giving consideration to that proposal. Such a school would be attended by 43 children between the ages of six and 14, and so it would help to relieve the congestion at the main school. I hope the Minister will give consideration to these questions.

MR. MILLINGTON (Mt. Hawthorn) [9.40]: There are two matters I wish to bring under the notice of the Minister, one being the Scarborough school. The local people have provided a suitable block of land. With the summer coming on, the children of the district have increased considerably, and it is anticipated that Scarborough will have a fairly permanent population, exceeding that of City Beach. With the better road facilities, and the spending of a considerable sum on improving the beach at Scarborough, naturally the permanent residents are increasing. What is wanted there is a cheap school building, but a good staff. I believe the Minister is sympathetic and will manage to find the money with which to erect a small school there. The other matter is the provision of a school at Wembley. The difficulty lies in the selection of a site. The local association object to the site on offer out on the endowment land, and I think the Minister holds that it is not a suitable one. There are two other sites, both of them convenient. One is on offer for about £1,500. Very little cash would be required, the seller agreeing to take Government bonds for the balance. Considering that the site is a mile and a half west from the Leederville school, it will serve the new settlers at Herdsman's Lake and any other settlement in Wembley. I hope it will be possible during the coming year to see an infants' school at Scarborough and a school site definitely secured in the Wembley district.

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. T. A. L. Davy—West Perth—in reply) [9.43]: I appreciate the fair manner in which members have spoken on this vote, but I can only imagine they have not examined the Estimates very carefully for I feel sure that anybody who listened to the remarks to-night would conclude that there had been a substantial reduction in those Estimates. Actually there is an increase for this year as against last year of £5,885.

Mr. Kenneally: The Leader of the Opposition did not confine himself to this year.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I am not talking about the Leader of the Opposition; I am talking about the general criticism by members opposite.

Miss Holman: I particularly mentioned 1929-30 as against this year.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The general impression created in my mind, and I venture to say in the minds of other listeners, was that there was a substantial decrease in the vote, whereas actually there is a net increase of £5,885. These Estimates deal only with the revenue and expenditure for the current financial year.

Miss Holman: Then why publish the figures that are on page 89?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The hon. member has been long enough here to know the difference between the information conveyed on a page and the Estimates of revenue and expenditure.

Miss Holman: I was dealing with the reduction.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The Estimates for the current year show an increase over those of the previous year. There is a substantial reduction in expenditure as compared with the year ended June 30, 1930. A vast proportion of that reduction represents the financial emergency reduction in wages and salaries paid out. There is nothing new in this year's Estimates compared with last year's. That is why I did not think it necessary to make any introductory remarks to-night. The Leader of the Opposition asked how long the Teachers' College would remain closed. I am not prepared to answer that question. I am by no means satisfied that the college is necessary. It is possible that the University, plus the practical training that can be obtained in the State schools, will be sufficient to ensure completely skilled teachers for our schools. I have not gone into the question thoroughly, and there may be an aspect, different from that, which can be put forward. At the moment I am not prepared to say how long the Teachers' College shall remain closed. I am advised by the permanent heads of the departments that we still have a number of trained teachers available to replace the ordinary diminutions in the number of the teaching staff. One factor which has made that possible is that the marriage rate during the past two years has substantially decreased. Most of the vacancies that occur are due to retire-

ments and marriages. The latter probably accounts for more vacancies than the retirements do, but sensible people have not got married to the same extent in these times.

Mr. Kenneally: They find they cannot do it on 25s. 2d. a week.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I suppose not. The Leader of the Opposition suggested we might raise the compulsory leaving age, and compensate that from the financial point of view by an increase in the commencing age. I must say there is considerable sense in that suggestion. One would have to be advised by experts, and then carefully consider the matter, to see how important the first year or year and a half of the child's education is when it goes to school at 5½ as is the case now. I suspect that the first year, or year and half of a child's schooling, is not of much significance when it reaches the age of 13. The child who goes to school at 5½ is probably no better advanced when it reaches the age of 12 or 13 than the child who goes to school at 6 or 6½. In a city like London, the earlier a child can be got into school the better, because frequently it is taken away from evil home influences. The influence of the school is better than that of the home, and the younger it is possible to catch the child the better for it under such conditions. That does not apply to Australia in the main. The suggestion of the Leader of the Opposition is worthy of considerable respect. With regard to the leaving age I agree that from the education point of view the years after 14 are perhaps more profitable than the years before. Accompanying the encouragement of the child to continue his education from 14 to 15, 16 or 17, we must see to it that the laws and practice of the country do not cut the child off from avenues of employment owing to his seeking a better education. If we are to encourage people to educate their children to a later age, we must be able to guarantee them that this will not harm them economically.

Hon. P. Collier: It would not harm them up to 15, but it would after that age.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: It might. Actually I doubt whether the imposition of compulsion on children going to school after 14 until they reach the age of 15 would make much difference financially to the department. We are not

in the dark ages when parents exploit their children at the first moment and send them to work. There is the education available without any argument for any child, not only up to the age of 15, but up to 16 and 17, and continuously up to the age when a degree is taken at the University. I should imagine that a vast majority of our people are very keen on their children being educated. The compulsory side ought not to make any substantial difference.

Miss Holman: These facilities are not available in the country.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: They are.

Miss Holman: They are not; the teachers could not cope with older children.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: No child has ever been discouraged, nor has any complaint been made because it has reached the age of 14.

Miss Holman: The teachers could not cope with them. They have so much to do and so many classes to attend to in country schools.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: To what schools does the hon. member refer.

Miss Holman: To mill schools, where the teacher has several classes and cannot give the time to children over 14 and 15, and carry them on to the University.

Mr. Corboy: We have schools where the children range from infants up to the seventh standard.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: That is unavoidable. If there are 10 children in a school, we cannot afford to have three teachers for it in a little community like ours. The 10 children may range from 5½ to 15 or 16 years of age. Compulsion will not make any difference in that case. If we raised the compulsory age to-morrow, that would not involve any capacity to appoint two teachers to look after 10 children any more than it does now.

Miss Holman: There would be more than 10 children.

Hon. P. Collier: It might do so in a school where they reached the limit that one teacher could cope with.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: That might happen in some cases. I will undertake that we will not offer the slight-

est discouragement to any child who wants to stay at school over the age of 14.

Mr. Corboy: Even though it involved the appointment of another teacher.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: No. Compulsion would not make any difference to that. It is the duty of the department at present to accept children over 14 just as much as it is to accept them under that age. The law does not say to a parent "You must send your child to school until he is 15." But the department is ready to cope with that situation. We desire the child to go on. I have said to people who have asked me what to do with their children when they leave school because they cannot find a job for them, "The best thing you can do is to continue the child's education." The department desires them to do so, and will meet the necessities as best they can.

Miss Holman: With extra teachers?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: With anything that is necessary. If we amended the Education Act to-morrow raising the compulsory age, it would not make the slightest difference to our attitude. We want children to go on being educated, and go to our schools up to the last possible moment, even up to the ages of 15 or 16. I trust I have convinced members, and I believe I have convinced thousands of people outside, that I am in favour of education all the time. I am on the side of the educationist. I have been abused for being on that side by certain persons who take up a different attitude. I want members to take the same view that I do. I do believe in education, but I do not think it has been the wild success that was hoped for it 50 or 60 years ago. I recognise that it is essential, that it is just, and that we should extend it as far as we possibly can.

Mr. Wansbrough: I understand that lessons for older children are sent from the head office, and that it is not the duty of the teacher to supply such lessons.

Miss Holman: Correspondence lessons may be sent out.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: That is an entirely different proposition.

Mr. Wansbrough: If a boy decides to continue at school the lessons, I understand, are provided by the department.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: That is another matter. The hon. member

has in mind the situation that arose at Katanning, where there were a number of boys over the age of 14 who were formed into a special class because they were studying for their leaving certificate. Normally those children would go to a high school and nearly all of them are over 14. Many of the children in our secondary schools are over the age of 14. Naturally we cannot afford to have a high school in every town and the high school which serves Katanning is at Albany in the hon. member's constituency. There was some difficulty there because the headmaster, a most admirable officer, formed a special leaving class for boys. However, he was told to call it a mystery class and that would be all right. I should say that a majority of the children that go to high schools are over the age of 14. I am aware that there are some children in the country schools who are assisted by the headmaster to take their junior.

Miss Holman: That might happen where there are tiny schools with eight children.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: No, fifty, sixty or seventy children. The member for South Fremantle addressed himself to the vote generally, but I am not complaining about his remarks. I shall certainly resist any attempt to impair the efficiency of the department, although where there appears to be a possibility of reducing expenditure without impairing efficiency it should be done.

Mr. Kennelly: The vote has been cut £140,000 in a couple of years.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: If the hon. member examines the vote he will find that the emergency cut was mainly responsible. It was all done last year. This year we are showing an increase of £5,855. The hon. member should not gauge the efficiency of the department by the amount it costs.

Mr. Kennelly: The labourer is worthy of his hire.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The labourer, by which I suppose the hon. member means the teacher, has been no worse treated than any other employee of the Government. I know that teachers are not as highly recognised financially as they deserve, but I should like to see them remunerated far more highly. As far as reduction goes they have been put on the same plane as all other State employees. The member for South Fremantle mentioned

the Fremantle High School and the school grounds. Those matters will be noticed and attention given to them. The member for Perth talked of the James-street school and its overcrowding. There are more children there than there should be, but it is to be remembered that overcrowding there has been going on for many years. He also mentioned that children were being taught in two cottages opposite the school. When I first became Minister for Education I was surprised to find that was the case, but I was still more surprised when I discovered that those cottages had been occupied for the same purpose for more than ten years. It is a little harsh that I should be abused because they were being occupied when I became Minister for Education, remembering that they had been occupied during what we called the boom years. The head master told me the cottages were perfectly healthy and the efficiency of the teachers to carry on classwork there was not impaired in any way.

Miss Holman: There are no playgrounds.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: It has always been the same there, but it has to be remembered that in no big city in the world where a school is practically in the middle of the city can adequate playgrounds be provided. Within fairly easy reach of the James-street school there are quite a number of public reserves in which the children are able to get their exercise. I agree, however, that in this respect we have been shortsighted in the past. Go to a place like Mandurah where, until recently, there were thousands of acres lying idle. Yet we find a school ground was purchased there no bigger than perhaps this Chamber. We should make up our minds in the future that we should never provide a block of ground for a school of not less than five and for preference ten acres. I think Mr. Drew when Minister for Education laid down the policy of five acres, but I should like to increase it to ten acres. The member for Perth also raised the question of the Narrogin farm school and suggested we should encourage the boys to go there. Every boy that goes to the Narrogin farm school, as things are at present, has to pay something between £30 and £40 a year and he costs the Government about £240 a year.

Mr. Doney: They have a full complement of boys there already.

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The hon. member's suggestion is not one by which we can relieve the position at all. With regard to agricultural education the department are doing pretty well. The department has in Mr. Rogers an advisory teacher whose duty it is to supervise the agricultural activities of the children. I should like every hon. member to have a look at Yammah. I have not been there myself, but I have seen the result of the children's work. I have, however, seen the work at other schools which I know is not as good as that carried out at Yammah, and we know generally what giving to the children an agricultural complex is doing. The member for Forrest raised a point about which I am sorry she has not seen me. That is the question of schools at some of the sustenance camps.

Miss Holman: I wrote to the department.

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I confess the matter did not come before me until this evening. I should like to discuss it with the hon. member to see whether it would not be possible to fix up a temporary school. It is an important thing for the child if it should miss six months or a year at school at certain stages of its life. I should like to know where this has happened.

Miss Holman: I will bring all the correspondence along with me to-morrow.

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The hon. member also referred to remarks by Dr. Heller with regard to the state of the buildings. I understand that Dr. Heller is an officer of the Education Department of a portion of New York, and with all due respect to him I do not think it is fair for him to draw comparisons between what we can do in Western Australia and what they are able to do in New York. New York on a tiny patch of land has a population of something like 9,000,000 people.

Mr. Corboy: More than all Australia.

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Yes. Western Australia, with an area one-third of the size of the whole of the United States, has a population of 400,000 people. We are inclined to be impatient, and perhaps it is a divine impatience, to see things better, but we cannot hope to have things as up to date nor can we expect to have the expensive equipment to be found in New York. If a comparison were

made with an American town of 400,000 inhabitants, I venture to say it would be found to be very much more backward than we are. Another point dealt with by the member for Forrest was the question of very large classes. Figures supplied by the department show what in only 1 per cent. of our schools have we an enrolment that approaches between 55 and 60 in one class.

Miss Holman: That is double what it should be.

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: May be. Probably it would be ideal to have a teacher with no more than ten scholars.

Miss Holman: Thirty is supposed to be an ideal number.

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Supposed by whom? It is a matter of opinion.

Miss Holman: By all the University professors.

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: It is very easy to sit in a University chair and say what ought to be done.

Mr. Kenneally: But the Minister would not say that 50 or 60 scholars is a reasonable number for one teacher.

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I think it is too many, but in only one per cent. of the schools does that happen. In 83 per cent. of our schools the classes number 50 and under. I made inquiries some time ago as to what happened in the denominational schools, and I was informed, to my surprise, that the standard classes in one church school are substantially more than that, and it is considered possible to get efficiency. I am not differing from the hon. member that we have some classes that are too large, but the position is not nearly so bad as has been suggested, and the worst of them are not worse than the normal state of affairs in some of the denominational schools. I am informed by the Director of Education that in every other State in Australia the regulations have had to be departed from during the period of depression. When in the Eastern States recently, he saw classes of over 55 at work in both Victoria and New South Wales. I am not saying that such a number is desirable.

Mr. Corboy: God help the kiddies!

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Everyone needs help from the Deity, but

I am assured by the heads of the department that every child in Western Australia is provided with a seat and a teacher, and that no child has lost any education as the result of overcrowding.

Mr. Corboy: They are not being taught.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I say they are being taught.

Miss Holman: Teachers cannot look after the homework when they have such large classes.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I am not defending the large class, but I say that overcrowding is very little prevalent. There is not nearly the amount of overcrowding that is alleged. I know about the Bayswater school mentioned by the member for Middle Swan (Mr. Hegney.) It is an extraordinarily difficult ground. The school should never have been built in that position and it will cost a lot of money to put it right. I cannot promise anything.

Mr. Corboy: Cannot you do what was done at Maylands by the member for that district?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I cannot; the problem is different. If the hon. member was aware of the position he would realise that.

Mr. Corboy: I know both schools intimately, and Maylands was much worse than is Bayswater.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I did not see it when it was much worse. At present, the position is difficult and would involve considerable expenditure. I am very keen to have the grounds made as good as possible, and if I had had the money the Bayswater problem would have been dealt with. I have had to apportion the little money available in what appeared to be the most urgent directions. The member for Mt. Hawthorn (Mr. Millington) mentioned Scarborough to me. At Scarborough I understand the title is now definitely in the name of the Government. I was communicated with by one person out there recently, and am in touch with the position. Regarding Wembley, that is a matter that I have in hand also. I think I have answered all the points raised by members.

Mr. Corboy: The question of the dissemination of physical culture knowledge should be worth dealing with.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Yes. It has been a remarkable perform-

ance, and not the least interesting feature of the work is the experiment of the development of boys under direct sunlight and without direct sunlight.

Mr. Corboy: It is worth while mentioning the work of Mr. Skipworth.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Yes; with the extraordinarily limited facilities, the school has done amazingly well. It has been said, and rightly so, that there are no proper grounds to the Perth Boys' School. Yet, with the extraordinarily limited space, Mr. Chandler and his staff, of whom Mr. Skipworth is one of the foremost, have produced a particularly well trained team of boys.

Mr. Corboy: No, not a team, but the whole school. Every boy must join in.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: That is so.

Item, Director of Education and Under-Secretary, £884.

Mr. CORBOY: Will the Minister have that knowledge gained from the experiments at the Perth Boys' School disseminated throughout the State?

The Minister for Education: That is a matter I shall have to discuss.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Will the Minister do all he can to remedy the classroom shortage at Merredin for the coming year?

The Minister for Education: Yes.

Item, Caretakers and cleaners, £1,375.

Mr. SLEEMAN: The item shows a small increase. I understand that a deputation waited on the Minister some time ago. Do the Government intend to pay for the Christmas holiday time, or do what was done last year? The employees include widows supporting families, and are the poorest paid in the department, and I hope the Minister will see that they are not penalised.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I have been in touch with the secretary of the union representing the caretakers and cleaners, and we have reached an agreement to increase the payment to most of those employees. I would rather not make a definite statement to-night, but I am hoping to finalise the matter within the next two or three days.

Vote put and passed.

Progress reported.

BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

1. Health Act Amendment.
 2. Marriage Act Amendment.
- Received from the Council.

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

Returned from the Council with an amendment.

BILL—PEARLING ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 2nd November.

MR. COVERLEY (Kimberley) [10.31]: The introduction of the Bill was requested by a majority of those interested in the pearling industry for the purpose of exercising greater control. Like other primary industries, pearl fishing has suffered a decline both as regards price and the demand for shell produced during the last few years, owing to the fluctuations of the market. The production of pearl shell has been greater than the consumption owing primarily to the financial depression. In fact, the industry has been hit rather more detrimentally than other industries because it cannot be regarded as a necessity, and naturally, in such times as the present, its products are not used to the same extent as formerly. The Bill embodies two principles. The first relates to the control of output and the second to a restriction of the area to be fished over. The reason for the restriction of output, as the Minister explained, is to save to the industry the markets overseas. There are two reasons why the second principle should apply, one is that it is necessary for the purpose of supplying the best quality of mother-of-pearl shell available. The shell fished in King's Sound, off Broome, is of much better quality than that raised anywhere else in the world.

Mr. H. W. Mann: Is it superior to Thursday Island shell?

Mr. COVERLEY: It commands £10 a ton more than the shell fished at Thursday Island, Port Hedland, Onslow and Shark Bay.

Mr. H. W. Mann: Does that depend upon the purpose of which the shell is used?

Mr. COVERLEY: No. It is on account of the difference in quality and size. The shell fished at Carnarvon and Thursday Island is known as chicken shell.

Mr. Piesse: Fewer pearls are recovered.

Mr. COVERLEY: The market for pearls is practically non est and pearls have depreciated in value by quite 50 per cent. That means to say that a pearl that would bring £1,000 some years ago would be hard to sell to-day at £500. It is not a matter of pearls so much as of pearl shell, upon which the industry depends for its existence to-day.

Mr. H. W. Mann: For what purposes is the shell used now?

Hon. J. C. Willcock: For buttons.

Mr. COVERLEY: It is used for many purposes, including buttons, knife handles, cutlery and so forth. Now a method of spraying it on motor cars has been developed by Girder & Co. of America, who have invented the new process. As I have pointed out, the Broome shell commands £10 a ton more than the shell fished at other centres and the reason for that is that the Broome shell is clearer, larger and thicker. If inferior shell is used for buttons, as soon as the four holes are put through it, the shell usually breaks because it is so much more brittle.

The Minister for Railways: We produce pearl shell but we never find pearl buttons worn in Perth.

Mr. COVERLEY: That is very true. Fashions change and pearl buttons have gone out of use. The fair sex wear fewer buttons nowadays than they did a few years ago.

The Minister for Railways: They still use buttons but they are not made of pearl shell.

Mr. COVERLEY: The American firm have decided to engage in propaganda in America and elsewhere with a view to bringing pearl buttons into fashion again. If that result is achieved, it will give a big impetus to the industry and if we can get the necessary legislative protection and assistance it will afford a chance to place the industry on a substantial footing.

Mr. Kennecally: A new slogan—"Use more pearl shell."

Mr. COVERLEY: Yes, and that should apply particularly to the womenfolk, who should be encouraged to use pearl buttons.

The Bill is essentially one for the Committee stage and probably other phases will be explained then. Pearl shell is also fished at Thursday Island and Darwin, but the shell there is of an inferior type and can be fished in greater quantities than the Broome shell. The shell at Thursday Island and Darwin is also procurable in more shallow water. Parliament has passed legislation of various descriptions for the purpose of protecting farmers and others and those associated with the pearling industry are anxious to secure assistance in the same direction. We want the market to be catered for under the most suitable conditions and it is recognised that the shell fished in Broome waters is the best in the world. All that we ask is that the output shall be restricted to six tons per boat for the season, because that will represent the limit to which the American firm can take supplies.

Mr. H. W. Mann: Do you also restrict the number of boats licensed to fish?

Mr. COVERLEY: No, that has not been suggested. There are 89 boats licensed in Broome and, with the exception of 17 owners, they are all prepared to sign a contract with the American company limiting themselves to an output of 400 tons of shell for the season. The 17 who have not agreed to the contract have been allowed to fish as much as they like during the season and sell their shell on the open market. The American company will provide for 400 tons only and naturally that will be reduced by the quantity that will be fished by the 17 boats I have referred to. That phase has to be taken into consideration. The Bill will impose the restriction of 6 tons upon them. The pearlers concerned have their reasons for not agreeing to participate in the Girder contract and they object to the monopoly. Rightly or wrongly, the Bill does not apply any restriction to them except that they are to be restricted to six tons per boat. The main reasons why the 17 pearlers have not participated in the contract is that they desire to be allowed to trade freely where they like. They agree with the principle of restricting the output but do not agree to the monopolistic phase. It is recognised that while a boat will be engaged in getting the six tons in the season, it is also competent for the same boat, under the same man power, to fish much more in other waters such as Onslow and that is another phase that should receive consideration. I trust Parliament will

agree to the Bill, in order to control the industry. Already we have legislated in many other directions and, for instance, we passed a Brands Act the object of which was to maintain the fair average quality of wheat sold overseas by our producers.

The Minister for Agriculture: That was passed in the interests of honesty.

Mr. COVERLEY: The Minister may say that was the purpose of the measure, but I understand it was for the purpose of maintaining the good name of Western Australia's wheat. Had that not been so, I would not have voted for the Bill. I thank the Minister for bringing the Bill forward because it is very important that it should be passed as quickly as possible to enable the pearlers to know just where they stand when signing off and on their crews, and the renewing of their contracts by the end of the year.

MR. CHURCH (Roebourne) [10.46]: I agree with what the member for Kimberley said about the necessity for the Bill. The Bill contains only two clauses, one to restrict the output of the shell and the other to restrict the area over which the boats can take shell. The hon. member also stated that the pearlers were anxious to have a restriction of the area, although the restriction of shell did not matter to them at all. I object to the restriction of the area, but not to the restriction of shell, because each boat is licensed, and I may tell the hon. member that no more boats can be licensed than the number that is licensed to-day. If the area is not restricted, the boats can come down the coast as far as Onslow, Exmouth Gulf, Hedland and Cossock. I suggest that it would be wiser to restrict the number of boat licenses granted and to restrict the amount of shell to be taken, but on no account restrict the area, because the pearlers would say, "We cannot shell in those waters, so will stop here," viz., the Broome area. As far as the quality of the shell is concerned, there is a difference in the value between the Broome shell and the shell further south, that is, from Port Hedland down. But it is quite small now, I should say the difference being £8 to £15 per ton. I should say there would be more shell obtainable per boat in the southern waters than there would be around Broome. At the same time, they get extra value

there for the shell. It is no use saying that pearls are of no value to-day. I think they are of great value. I repeat that the shell should not be restricted to any particular area. The Government can control the whole of the pearl shell by saying, "You shall take so much and no more." If a man has five boats, as the member for Kimberley said, he can fish six tons per boat, but he can only get six tons if he has only one boat. I urge the House to look at it in that light. I am sure there is no desire to make any invidious distinction. I support the second reading of the Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

House adjourned at 10.51 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 9th November, 1932.

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

ASSENT TO BILLS.

Message received from the Lieut.-Governor notifying assent to the following Bills:—

- 1, East Perth Cemeteries.
- 2, Supply Bill (No. 2).
- 3, State Trading Concerns Act Amendment (No. 1).

BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

- 1, Financial Emergency Act Amendment.
Introduced by Hon. J. J. Holmes.
- 2, Electoral Act Amendment (No. 2).
Introduced by Hon. J. Cornell.

BILL—FINANCIAL EMERGENCY TAX ASSESSMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. J. J. HOLMES (North) [4.40]: First of all I want to explain that I moved the adjournment of the debate yesterday, not with the object of holding up the business, for I am more anxious to get on with this Bill than with any other, but with two objects in view; one that I was not quite ready to go on and nobody else appeared to be ready, and in the second place the atmosphere was so electrical as the result of the speech by Mr. Williams that I thought we had better get on to some other subject. I would say that from a Labour point of view Mr. Williams so polluted the atmosphere that the Labour people wish the speech had never been made. For yesterday we had Mr. Williams championing the cause of the Lang plan and repudiation, and revelling in the fact that he was so completely in accord with such a hero as Mr. Lang; and simultaneously we had Mr. Moore, another member of the Labour Party, repudiating any suggestion that he would have or could have anything to do with Mr. Lang. So now presumably there is a split in the party. I am not surprised at Mr. Moore, knowing as I do that he resented any association with a policy savouring of repudiation. When the Labour Party stood for honesty they were a power in the land. But we know that the great party has been white-anted, that parasites have crept into it, putting personal gain before the interests either of the State or of the Commonwealth. Hence the party is beginning to crumble. Mr. Drew I look upon as one of the old school, one of nature's gentlemen as we all know, and I can say honestly that my sympathy went out to him the other day when he, I think reluctantly, put up a case in opposition to the Bill.

Hon. J. M. Drew: Not at all.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: Mr. Drew's difficulty was that he knew something had to be done and that the only honest way was to make provision to meet our liabilities. But he has one eye on the Treasury bench—I do not wish to be misunderstood in this—and the position he may be compelled to occupy in the near future. He would then have to face the problems that we are trying to face now. When the tide turns Mr. Drew will re-