

Clause 25—Amendment of Section 48 of the principal Act:

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I move an amendment—

That the following be added to the clause:—“The following proviso is added to Section 48:—

‘Provided that nothing herein contained shall apply to any student or pupil at a university or technical college or school, or an apprentice in any trade who may attend at a factory for the purpose of gaining practical knowledge in connection with the working of any plant, process or machinery.’”

Students attending the Technical School to learn something about Diesel engines have to get a practical knowledge of its working, and this is the only way they can obtain such knowledge.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The amendment represents an innovation. The select committee was actuated by a desire to meet a suggestion made by Mr. Lynch, of the Technical School. Though there is no objection to the proviso, it is necessary to provide a definition of “school” and to exclude schools conducted by employers. An employer may establish what he calls a school, and the students of that school would be enabled to go to a factory and work quite irrespective of any apprenticeship conditions required by awards—work any hours for low wages, and perhaps for no wages at all. This is an innovation fraught with great danger and while I am not raising any strong opposition to the suggestion, we should apply to it necessary safeguards. I might quote an instance that occurred recently in the South-West. A boy was employed in a factory in excess of 44 hours and he was not allowed the weekly half-holiday and was required to work overtime. Proceedings were instituted against the employer and the defence was that the boy was a student and therefore was not an employee within the meaning of the Act. While the proviso is all right, we have to be careful that we do not allow it to be there in such a form that it can be utilised in a way that students would be employed for the profit of the employer and perhaps at the expense of some other young fellow who should be genuinely employed. It is another of those clauses in which the select committee should agree to the addition of a few words so as to provide the necessary protection. I move—

That further consideration of the clause be postponed.

Motion (postponement) put and passed.

Clause 26—Repeal of Section 52 of the principal Act and insertion of new section:

The CHAIRMAN: The recommendation of the select committee is that the clause be negatived.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I cannot agree with the finding of the select committee. The object of the clause is to prevent the formation of those partnerships to which I have referred so frequently, partnerships that evade the relationship of master and servant. It is by means of such partnerships that it is possible for the people concerned to get out of the restrictions in respect to working hours. The baking trade is prone to this kind of thing. At any rate, in view of the hour and the conditions under which members have been working we might at this stage report progress.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 10.6 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 23rd November, 1937.

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

BILL—TERMINAL GRAIN ELEVATORS.

Leave to Introduce.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. M. F. Troy—Mt. Magnet) [4.33]: I move—

That leave be given to introduce a Bill for an Act relating to Terminal Grain Elevators.

HON. W. D. JOHNSON (Guildford-Midland) [4.34]: I am going to take the unusual course of opposing leave to introduce this Bill. I do so because I am opposed to what I anticipate is the principle of the Bill. If I do not take this opportunity to oppose the principle, I will be accused of opposing the Bill, not because I object to the principle, but because of the details contained in the measure. If one becomes associated with the second reading debate, that debate very often, and generally does, loses sight of the principle in a mass of details, and in the mass of details one forgets that there are considerations and that one of those considerations is the question of the principle underlying the proposal. I am definitely opposed to board control or administrative control by a board, unless it is subject to review by Parliament through the Minister. It is abundantly clear, as I think I shall be able to prove, that the administration in some way is to be created in regard to further extensions and equipment at our ports. To make myself clear I ask the members to take back their minds to an occasion when leave was sought to introduce a Bill associated with the secession agitation. I pointed out then that there was no need for a Bill to fulfil all that the State could do in regard to secession, and I warned members that if they gave permission for a Bill to be introduced, then something exceptional was afoot and we were going beyond the usual course, that we were not going to use the machinery available to us, and were not going to follow the established practice of the Mother Parliament. I said, therefore, that I suspected that something extraordinary was required, and that the existing administrative rights or powers of the Government were not sufficient to give them authority to do what they desired to do. I was accused of having seen the Bill and therefore of knowing all about it. That was not true, but still it was said. My sole object then was to try to prevent Parliament becoming involved in something where we would get great argument in regard to details, but would forget altogether that we were departing from the usual practice in regard to the approach to the Old Country by way of petition. This is exactly the same thing that I am now opposing, and I am opposing it on exactly the same basis. We have the machinery and the authority to-day, and we are doing this kind of

thing every day in the week. Therefore, seeing that the Government is clothed with sufficient authority to-day but that it is going somewhere else to ask for legislative authority to do something, this is like the secession legislation. I suspect that something is going to be done that will afford a mass of discussion in regard to detail, but the principle of the thing will be forgotten. We all know what happened in regard to the secession legislation and the cost to this State. In this State, and particularly in regard to parliamentary control, we have a very comprehensive recognition of socialised administration. I know there are differences of opinion in regard to the control of certain activities by Parliament through its Ministers whereas in other parts of the world, and in other parts of Australia, these activities are controlled by boards that function on authority given by Parliament and are not in any way subject to review by Parliament, or to dictation by the Minister. They have full authority to raise money and full authority to spend it, and they have complete control of the administration. We have not followed that course, and I contend that ours is the soundest basis we could have for parliamentary government. The whole activity associated with the general development and services of the State should, in my opinion, be reviewed regularly by Parliament, or at all events should be open to that review, and Parliament should have control of the purse strings in regard to it. I am against anybody having authority to raise money, other than the authority of Parliament. Of course I am not now going to the extent of talking about municipal matters, where we have another form of government, but I am speaking of parliamentary control. As I say, in Western Australia we have an outstanding example of what can be done in the way of maintaining the authority of Parliament in connection with the various activities of the State. I think the early Governments of this State are to be commended—the system has been followed right up to the present time—in that the foundation laid in the early history of Western Australia has been maintained and expanded by the various Governments. To accept the Minister's proposal, we cannot do other than delegate the administration to some nominee, or delegated body. If that were not anticipated, if it were not intended, there would be no need for a Bill. The reason why leave

has been sought to introduce the Bill is because it is not proposed to follow the ordinary machinery of government, but it is proposed to get extended authority to go beyond that. Parliament may or may not be allowed to function under the proposed Bill in regard to the particular activity that is involved and covered by the Bill. The scope of the Bill does not concern me. If the House agrees to the introduction of the Bill, then of course the House can argue about the details of it. I am not going to be very much concerned about those details. I may not be here when those details come under discussion, and if I were here I would take very little part in the debate; because I detest this kind of administration, and I would never in any circumstances agree to a departure from our present established custom—which I will explain in a little more detail later. Therefore this is the only stage where I can speak as I feel from my convictions, and if the House be not satisfied they can get into argument in regard to the details of the measure. As I have already emphasised, it is not possible to anticipate that the existing administrative authority now functioning at the various ports can be continued under the proposed Bill. Therefore the existing authorities that are functioning at the various ports where wheat is received and shipped will have to be discontinued, or we are going to be saddled with an additional overhead. We cannot create any kind of organisation without some expense being associated with it. If you do scrap what you have got and replace it by something else, you will be creating two authorities to function where one authority is sufficient. Most of our wheat is shipped at Fremantle. This Bill has a definite connection with wheat. The Fremantle Harbour Trust functions with full authority from Parliament, and is directly in contact with the Government. A very fine practice prevails. The original Bill of 1902, long before the Labour Government became very active in respect to the affairs of administration in this State, was introduced for the purpose of creating the Fremantle Harbour Trust. No one reading that Bill can help admiring those in authority at that time. It is a wonderfully balanced administration. The State raises the money and the State conducts the particular activities with respect to the equipment, and the Trust simply takes everything over and administers everything, as

was intended it should be administered for the general service of the State. The Bunbury Harbour Board was established on somewhat similar lines. The two Acts are almost identical. The harbours at Fremantle and Bunbury are administered to the general satisfaction of the industries of the State that export and import, and the relationship between the workers and those associated with the administration is satisfactory. It can be said that we have revolts and differences of opinion, with the waterside workers. I ask the House in all fairness to compare the conditions over the last few years at Fremantle and Bunbury with the conditions in other parts of Australia.

The Minister for Lands: Of what conditions are you speaking?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The waterside conditions. Let members compare the industrial conditions with the conditions that have prevailed where we have boards in control. It is possible in this State to do things, and take a hand in regulating things to bring about the best understanding with respect to the workers and the administrators. Parliament can always handle that job more wisely than any other authority. Parliament does it well because the people are behind it. I do not say we always function as the people would desire, but whenever there is a difficulty of State the people invariably rely upon the Government to do the fair thing by all who are interested. The result is that the administration we have at our ports is a credit to those who provided it, and the wisdom of it has been demonstrated by our experience of it over a number of years. We have other boards. For economic reasons, and very wisely too, the outer ports of Geraldton and Albany are administered by the Railway Department. I assume that Esperance is also connected up with the railway authorities, or it may be the Harbour and Light Department. We know that the work that has been carried on at Geraldton and Albany has not caused this State any great anxiety. That is a clear indication that over the years, although there is no board in control, at those outer ports there is such an arrangement as has proved satisfactory in respect to wheat handling and wheat shipping. I believe the Bill will be associated with the raising of money, and that we will be told

that in order to get the amount of money required for terminal elevators for the bulk handling of wheat at ports, this can only be brought about by the establishment of some authority to raise it. If that were the proposal in the Bill, I would be just as strongly opposed to it as I am from the point of view I have already expressed. I have the strongest objection to any outside authority dictating the administrative methods to this State. We may be right or wrong, but we are going to be right or wrong on our own authority. We are not going to allow any outside authority to dictate. I would never agree to any body being created to raise money. To-day all the activities at the principal ports are made possible by loan funds raised by the State. Since the Fremantle Harbour Trust was created it has spent about one and one-third million pounds in port equipment. No Bill has ever been introduced for any of these activities. In one year the State produced 53,000,000 bushels of wheat. During that year there was a tremendous export from Fremantle in particular, and from the other ports. The Harbour Trust at Fremantle was clothed with power and with the necessary administrative authority and skill to handle that extraordinary volume of wheat. It had not long notice in which to prepare for that yield; nevertheless there was no disorganisation. There were complaints, but there always will be complaints where active bodies are functioning, especially where you have a great number of wheat shippers such as we had then. It is impossible to please everyone. Taking all the possibilities of difference into consideration, I say there was a wonderful response to that large production, and the Harbour Trust did its work nobly and well. In my opinion there is no difference with respect to the erection of the "A," "B," and "C" sheds. Each shed was constructed without any special Bill. The work was brought about by collaboration between the Harbour Trust and the Public Works Department. The Government raised the money, and simply put a line in the Loan Estimates. I do not know if there was any need to do that, but I think it has been the practice. In this way the equipment was provided. That practice has gone on and has been the practice at all the ports where it has been necessary to meet the increased develop-

ment going on in the State. Arrangements are made between the Harbour Trust and those who handle or ship wheat. The various port authorities have come to an understanding for the averaging of the price of handling wheat, and all the ports have been told so to adjust the general costs of handling and shipping as to enable those who do business—the merchants—to possess a full knowledge of this general understanding. When we had 33,000,000 bushels of wheat, that enormous volume was shipped away from Fremantle, Bunbury, Geraldton and Albany. The arrangements were complete. No one heard of any discussion in the House as to whether Fremantle should do the work a little cheaper than Bunbury did it, or whether Bunbury should do it a little cheaper than Albany did it. Everything was adjusted, and a complete understanding arrived at, evidently to the satisfaction of all concerned. Just as the Harbour Trust at Fremantle has equipped the harbour in respect to all other necessities, so can it do under this proposal. I do not know what is in the mind of the Government, but I imagine that it is an elevator at Fremantle to cost somewhere about £200,000. That is only a small amount compared with what the Harbour Trust has spent. Why single this out? Why say, "We want special legislative authority for this; we want to do the job in a special way; we do not want to use the ordinary machinery of government; we do not want the Harbour Trust to have anything to do with it; we are going to create some special thing to do this job to cost us £200,000." If the Harbour Trust had been handling shillings and had had to be put in charge of thousands of pounds, there might be some question as to whether the authority was strong enough to grapple with such a problem; but the Harbour Trust has done more than a job of this kind, and there is no grave problem about this. This is nothing greater than has already been faced with respect to the various equipments that have been provided. There is no need for a Bill of this kind. For that reason I suspect that something special is anticipated, and that the details in connection with that special effort will be such as I would never agree to, and would constitute a violation of all I stand for. I am of opinion that there are others associated with me who have no intention of agreeing to any weakening of the present administrative

control at the various ports. This control has been too long in operation and has been tested out under all kinds of conditions. We have had strike periods throughout Australia, and have had all kinds of difficulties to face. We went through the war period and all that was associated with it in the way of disorganisation. And yet this body was able to face up to all the difficulties. The Minister was kept fully posted with a complete knowledge of what was developing. He was ready to render advice and assistance, and was always available to Parliament for questioning. We must appreciate the strength of the existing organisation. We must not permit anyone to tinker with it, and to attempt anything new. I would not care if it were in conformity with modern conceptions of authority, but it is nothing of the kind. This idea of delegating authority is worn out. It is not now as generally used as in former days, but even in earlier times, fortunately for the people of the State, we were able to steer clear of difficulties of that description. I do not wish to say much more about this matter except to point out that if we agree to the introduction of the Bill, we will be assenting to the inauguration of a further authority to operate at Fremantle, Bunbury, Geraldton and Albany. I want the House to appreciate the fact that immediately we introduce the Bill and it reaches the second reading stage, all the argument will start with regard to matters of detail. The details of the measure may be acceptable to members sitting on the Opposition benches and, of course, they will be acceptable to the Government. There we will immediately have a majority of the members of this House. I do not want the proposal to reach that stage. This is a matter in connection with which we should not accept even that risk. In point of fact, we shall be taking a risk by agreeing to allow the Bill to be introduced. I would not mind taking that risk if the existing system of administration and control had proved inefficient or in any way incompetent or not big enough to grapple with work of this type. I have already pointed out that those responsible for administering the affairs of the Fremantle Harbour Trust and other authorities are quite capable of carrying out the work. In order to give members another illustration, the Government is really functioning in a way I would have them function under the conditions that obtain at Bunbury. Money was raised, and at Bun-

bury there has been installed the necessary plant—as it also should be established at Fremantle. That work has been carried out under Government control and direction. I do not say that I approve of all that has been done at Bunbury. I do not. I do not like the way the Government has carried out the work there. Tenders should have been called and the work done properly, but that is by the way. The Government elected to do the work as it has been carried out. Apart from that, I do not mind the details; it is the principle that appeals to me. The work was carried out in accordance with the general methods and practice we have adopted for years past, and was put in hand as other operations have been carried out at Bunbury and Fremantle before. Then when the work was completed, the Bunbury Harbour Trust and the Fremantle Harbour Trust, respectively, took over the installations and administered them without the necessity for creating any additional authorities. Look at the matter from whatever standpoint we will, there is no need for the Bill nor is there any justification for it, unless there is some other influence behind it from the standpoint of administration, some influence that will mean an interference with the type of administration that we have. I am proud of that administration; and I want to work in with the administration that we have. I do not want to create any other form of control in lieu. Then it may be said that matters will be delayed, that the Bill has not even yet been introduced, and that we cannot get on with bulk handling without the terminal elevators. We have got on without them so far, and this year, unfortunately, the harvest is not likely to be very heavy. We have carried on in the past and we can do so again.

Mr. Warner: But the facilities available will be better.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Possibly that will be so in some directions, but in other respects we have better facilities. If the method proposed is not available to it, the Government can go back to the Loan Council and submit to the members of that body that the board, or trust, or special control in regard to the harbour and the special creation of some authority to raise money for this work, does not fit in with the general practice in Western Australia, that it is not desirable to introduce methods of that description, and that the wish is to continue as in the past.

Then, instead of the amount of £350,000 that the Minister has mentioned on one or two occasions being raised by some authority that the Bill will create for that purpose, the Government itself should be given the right to raise the money. All we need is that the right be vested in the Government. I know there are difficulties with regard to the Loan Council, but the sooner we stand up to that body, the sooner we shall do our job. We cannot allow the Loan Council to dictate to us.

The Minister for Lands: You are really a humourist!

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Perhaps so, but if we did a little more standing up as the representatives of Western Australia, it would be better for the State. If we were to stand up more along the lines of what we see in Victoria—

Hon. C. G. Latham: There is a very good Government in power in Victoria.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: It is possible to see the changed attitude in Victoria following upon the change of Government. Instead of the old conservative idea of allowing the Loan Council, because it is some nationally created authority, to act beyond the general conception of what it was thought would be its powers, and to start interfering with the administrative details of State government, the Victorian Government has adopted a different attitude and has said to the Loan Council, "Hands off Victoria." The Government there informed the Loan Council that the State should be given the money and should be permitted to spend it in its own way. That is quite different from the point of view adopted elsewhere when the powers and policies of State Governments are interfered with in any way by the Loan Council.

The Minister for Lands: What did you refer to when you spoke about the new Government in Victoria?

Hon. C. G. Latham: He referred to the Country Party Government.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The Minister knows I referred to the Dunstan Government.

The Minister for Lands: What did that Government do?

Hon. C. G. Latham: Everything that was right.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The Victorian Government made it clear to the Loan Council that it did not want the Loan Council to interfere in any way with the general ad-

ministrative affairs of the Government in Victoria.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! What has that to do with the Bill?

Hon. P. Collier: Who told you that?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I read about it.

Hon. P. Collier: Read about it!

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I hope the member for Guildford-Midland will confine his remarks to the Bill.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I am showing that it is possible that the Loan Council is behind the idea that has resulted in the introduction of this Bill, and I am pointing out that the Loan Council must not dictate to this Parliament or call the tune with regard to State activities.

Hon. P. Collier: Did not Victoria establish a separate body for bulk handling?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: That State established a different body.

Hon. P. Collier: A separate body, wholly apart from the Government.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I do not know what was done.

Hon. P. Collier: Of course that was what was done.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I know the Victorian Government investigated bulk handling matters; but as to what was decided, I do not know.

Hon. P. Collier: They did the same thing with regard to the Loan Council as it is proposed to do here.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: If that is so, I shall—

Hon. P. Collier: That is their "Hands off" policy.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I thank the hon. member for giving me that point because he knows more than I do. That is the danger with regard to the Bill. I do not propose to allow the Loan Council to dictate in the slightest degree in matters of State administration. It has not been done before, and it will not be done now if I am able to stop it. Take as an illustration, the proposed metropolitan board of works. Outside pressure was brought to bear in an endeavour to influence the floating-off of various Government activities so as to make for reductions in the public debt. The object was to throw dust in the eyes of people outside Western Australia, as has been done in other parts of the Commonwealth. The idea was to float-off some of the liabilities of the State and vest them in separate boards. I will not stand

for that sort of thing. I hope it will never happen here. We have a wonderfully fine socialised system in this State, and it should not be interfered with to any extent. So long as my voice can be raised against anything of that description, I shall raise it to the utmost of my powers. The member for Boulder must know that the proposal to create a different body at Fremantle will involve unnecessary expense. That hon. member, in his former Ministerial capacity, has been associated as Treasurer with the work at Fremantle. He knows that he has never had at any time any anxiety with regard to that work, which is largely the same as is proposed under the Bill. Why seek to establish something separate or distinct? The Government can raise the necessary money. The reputation of the State has not been curtailed from the standpoint of reliability. We do not allow other people to dictate to us as to what we must do.

The Premier: Where can we get the money?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The Loan Council will authorise the raising of the money.

Mr. Marshall: Where did the Government get it for the East Perth power house extension?

Hon. C. G. Latham: Yes, that was one instance.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: If £350,000 is available, I do not care where it comes from. Those who will lend the money will prefer to lend it to the Government than to a board.

Mr. Marshall: Too right, they will.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: There has been something done at the Loan Council that we must not agree to. We are not pushed for time, as we were with regard to the East Perth power house. There is no immediate hurry about the matter. We can do all that is required and, therefore, there is no need for haste. We can go back to the Loan Council and secure their agreement to our functioning as we should, and as we have done in the past. The House should not grant authority for the introduction of the Bill. If we refuse that authority, it will save a lot of discussion and much time. Moreover, I do not think we will get anywhere. It is late in the session. The Bill will have to be passed by another place. There will be many things to be overcome, and we have not too much time to spare. In view of all the complications surrounding the matter,

some of which are formidable, the Government could well allow the matter to stand over for the time being. Let us get a better understanding of the position and, in the meantime, we can continue as we have carried on in the past. We can continue without disorganising or interfering with the work of any body that is already functioning. By that means there will be no misunderstanding created with anyone. The Harbour Trust will be able to continue as in the past, and, as I have pointed out, there is no need for a separate organisation. I have taken this action because I feel keenly about the matter. I hope nothing will be done at this stage. I hope the Government will allow the matter to stand over for the time being, and I trust the Government will appreciate that it would be as well, pending inquiry and investigation, to make further representations to the Loan Council.

HON. C. G. LATHAM (York) [5.15]: I have not the knowledge possessed by the member for Guildford-Midland (Hon. W. D. Johnson), so I do not propose to do anything that will prevent the Government from introducing the Bill. The member for Guildford-Midland has provided the House with a lot of information, but I cannot say how reliable it is. I agree with him that it does not require an Act of Parliament to allow the Government to raise £350,000. The Government has already that power from the Loan Council, so there is no necessity for the Bill. The Government can borrow where it likes. An Act of Parliament was not necessary to provide the funds required for the East Perth power house extension, nor yet for the purchase of the new State ship. Therefore it does not require any legislation for the Government to be able to borrow this money. I am anxious to see facilities provided at the ports and therefore am anxious to see the legislation introduced, but I agree that there is no necessity to appoint additional boards. I do not know whether there is a proposal in the Bill to introduce a board, but I hope there is not. The Government has all the power it requires, and has all the bodies necessary to handle these matters. We have the Fremantle Harbour Trust, the Bunbury Harbour Trust, the railways at Geraldton and at Albany. It will be a long time, I suppose, but if Esperance should require such facilities, those authorities can easily handle them. I object to these boards, the appointment

of which Governments will some day come to regret. It is delegating authority from Parliament. We appointed a board to control the Agricultural Bank. Several appointments were made. They may turn out all right or they may not. If they turn out all wrong we shall have to suffer them for seven years or pay their salaries. The shelving of responsibility by Ministers and the taking away of the power of Parliament is a wrong principle. I remember that the member for Boulder was once against the taking away of authority from Parliament in that way.

Mr. Marshall: He has changed.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I do not know that he has. He is sitting quietly. I would like to know his thoughts. In the old days he said that Parliament and Ministers should accept their responsibilities.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: I opposed the Agricultural Bank Board, remember.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I also remember that when those of us on this side of the House introduced a Bulk Handling Bill there was opposition from the member for Boulder. This Parliament has no control over the finances to-day. We may imagine we have, but we have not. We have delegated that authority to boards, Public Service Commissioners, and Arbitration Courts, and we have no control. We may control a certain amount, but we control very little. We have the Estimates submitted here, it is true.

Mr. Marshall: All we have is the right to authorise taxation.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Yes, all we have is the right to authorise the raising of money by taxation. I am anxious to see facilities provided at the ports, but the Government will have opposition from me in respect of the appointment of a board for which there is no necessity. There is a Bulk Handling Co-operative Company over which the Minister has statutory control. The harbour trust, which has always given satisfaction, has operated expensive facilities for loading wheat for a very long time and operated them successfully, and we have no right to fritter away public money in the appointment of boards. Much better use than that can be made of public money. I want the Minister to borrow £350,000, where he likes, at a rate of interest that will not saddle the people using the facilities with an unnecessary burden. That is all the interest I have

in it. I hope the advice tendered by the member for Guildford-Midland (Hon. W. D. Johnson) will be taken. The only thing I can see wrong is that there must be some necessity for this legislation because the Government can provide those facilities without the necessity for a Bill. All that is needed is to put £350,000 on the Estimates. All the necessary facilities are available at ports for handling bagged wheat to-day and they have operated satisfactorily. There have been differences between two branches of the trade unions, with which the farmers had nothing to do, but the farmers paid either by demurrage or by extra railway freights. This is not going to obviate that difficulty. The remarks of the member for Guildford-Midland are very timely indeed, but I do not propose to say to the Government, "You are not to introduce this Bill," because I want to see what is in it. But I warn the Government that I am not supporting the appointment of any board because we already have enough authority and we have no right to delegate powers from Parliament to boards and wrongly utilise public money.

Mr. Marshall: If money is to be spent, let Parliament have the spending of it.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. M. F. Troy—Mt. Magnet—in reply) [5.20]: I have no quarrel with the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition. He has put the position fairly and I admit he has not tried to side-step the issue. He has pointed out that his purpose is nothing but laudable and that he has no axe to grind. I cannot say that for the member for Guildford-Midland (Hon. W. D. Johnson). He was not even plausible in the speech he delivered and he deceived nobody. He does not know anything about the Bill. He has never seen it. He does not know the principles of it, yet he spoke for three-quarters of an hour during which he dragged in every possible matter which could have even the remotest relationship to the Bill. He hoped to get the votes of the members for Bunbury, Fremantle and Albany. I do not think he deceived anybody.

The Premier: Does he think he might get the vote of the member for Geraldton?

Mr. Marshall: The Minister will have many to vote against him if he goes on in this strain.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The interjections of the hon. member show his prejudice. I do not mind that. The member for Guildford-Midland has opposed the Bill and given reasons, but he wants this business done by someone else. He is not concerned about the Government doing it but with some other body with which he is personally associated.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: You know that is untrue. A man like you would be guilty of saying anything. That is a miserable insinuation. Only a coward would make it—or a mongrel.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The hon. member must withdraw that statement.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Very well. I will withdraw it, but it is irritating to have a charge of that kind made.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It is true, as the Leader of the Opposition stated, that a Bill for bulk handling was introduced in this House by his Government. He accused the member for Boulder (Hon. P. Collier) of voting against it. But it was not this Bill.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I did not say he voted against it.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The Leader of the Opposition referred to the member for Boulder having voted against the Bill he had introduced.

Hon. P. Collier: I voted not against the principle but against the composition of the Board.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It was not a Government board or a Government authority. I have nothing to say about the administration of the Fremantle Harbour Trust or of the Geraldton Trust or the Bunbury Harbour Trust. I have not heard any criticism and I suppose the administration has been good. But I have heard a lot of extraordinary talk about the Loan Council and what we might do there. We might make a good speech at the Loan Council but at that meeting the Government has only one vote against two votes by the Commonwealth and five votes from the other States. We have been told how successful the Victorian Government has been.

Hon. C. G. Latham: You have authority already to borrow money.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: At the last Loan Council meeting Victoria was

very aggrieved because it could not get what it wanted and the Victorian Government has been compelled to leave this work to boards. I do not deny that the relationship between the workers and the Fremantle Harbour Trust is good and may be better than that between the workers and any authority in any other State. But that is due to the fact that the Fremantle Waterside Workers' Union has escaped registration under the Commonwealth law.

Hon. C. G. Latham: We were in office when that law was passed.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No.

Hon. C. G. Latham: We were.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That may be. When the waterside workers' strike occurred a Labour Government was in office, whereas other Governments were party to volunteers going on the wharves.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: It was not the Government. It was the board. The Government was not allowed to function.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: If the member for Guildford-Midland wants to prevent the expenditure of £350,000, he must take the responsibility.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: I will take that responsibility.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: If this Government from its Loan resources was required to meet the situation it would not be able to do so. If we can get £350,000, we are entitled to get it provided the money is spent on reproductive works. If the hon. member wants to object to that—

Hon. W. D. Johnson: I will on the principle on which you are doing it, here or elsewhere.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: There is no violation of principle here. Any board appointed would be appointed by the Government and would be subject to Parliament. The matter cannot be evaded in that way. I cannot see any Goliath going from this or any other State to the Loan Council with a proposition and insisting upon its acceptance. Capable men have gone to the Loan Council from this State. The former Premier (Mr. Collier) had a great deal of knowledge of the Loan Council and a good deal of influence, but he never held a stick over other Premiers'

heads. We have to talk at the Loan Council to men who have seven votes to our one, and we cannot get away with an exhibition of heroics. Whether we like it or not we have given away our right to get money except through the Loan Council. We have to go, under duress, and not because we desire to do it. That is the only way we can get money.

Mr. Patrick: Forced by the Commonwealth Government.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes. At the last Loan Council meeting New South Wales got the greatest share of the money. And why? Because New South Wales has so many semi-governmental boards. Victoria, as I have stated, is very dissatisfied with the whole position. The Leader of the Opposition has adopted a perfectly reasonable attitude in that he has not opposed the principle of the Bill before it has been introduced. The House does not yet know what the Bill contains. When the member for Guildford-Midland says he is opposed to the Bill, he knows nothing about it. He has not been taken into the confidence of the Government.

Mr. Patrick: Still, your members when sitting in Opposition opposed motions for leave to introduce Bills.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Does the hon. member intend to continue repeating that? I have no personal predilection in the matter. I have an idea of what is best for the country and so has the Government, and we stick to that. As for there being opposition to the motion, I do not mind that; it does not injure me. The Government has a right to do that which is considered best for the country.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: And I have a right to oppose it.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: In introducing this Bill we are placing before the House proposals that we think are best for the people of the country, whether they be wheatgrowers, Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd., wheat merchants, shippers, or the men at the ports of Fremantle or Geraldton. I think the House is entitled to hear what the Bill contains before it proceeds to condemn the measure on something heard in the street.

Question put and passed.

Bill introduced and read a first time.

BILL—TIMBER INDUSTRY REGULATION ACT AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

Resumed from the 16th November. Mr. Sleeman in the Chair; the Minister for Employment in charge of the Bill.

Clause 2—Sawmills to be registered:

[Mr. Doust had moved to add to Subclause 1 of the proposed new Section 12A the following proviso:—"Provided further that every sawmill which complies with all the regulations under this Act for the time being in force shall be registered upon application being made in the prescribed form."]

Mr. DOUST: I ask leave to withdraw the amendment with a view to moving another in slightly different terms.

Leave granted.

Mr. DOUST: I move an amendment—

That the following proviso be added to Subclause 1 of the proposed new Section 12A:—"Provided further that the owner of every sawmill which complies with all the regulations under this Act for the time being in force shall be registered subject to application being made in the prescribed form."

The Forests Department desires to regulate the cutting of timber, particularly on Crown land. With that most members will agree. The majority of small mills, however, are cutting on private land. Those properties have been heavily cut over by sleeper-cutters, and the timber remaining is of poor quality. Timber values are high, and that alone enables the small mills to operate. The proviso will be of benefit to the small mills and will prevent any prohibition of their cutting on private land.

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

Clauses 3 to 5, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with an amendment.

BILL—EDUCATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 9th November.

HON. C. G. LATHAM (York) [5.39]: I consider that the only thing to commend the Bill to the House is that it happens to be the policy of the Government. The Bill contains nothing else to commend it in any way. Apart from the introduction of a new

system of administration to displace the Director by an under secretary, there are a few other amendments. Those amendments, of course, might be important, but they are of minor consequence in comparison with the principle to which I have referred. It is proposed to take the retrograde step of introducing into the Education Department an administrative head who has little or no knowledge at all of education, or at best very little, and consequently the proposal will set back the education system of this State many years. I should like to point out that this system of administration has been tried in other places and invariably they have reverted to an academic man as head of the system. I cannot understand what is the idea behind the introduction of this new idea. Looking back at the men who have occupied the position of Director in this State, I cannot see that there has been anything to complain about. If there has been any justifiable complaint, it was that we had not provided all the funds necessary to give effect to the system. Let me mention some of the men who have, with credit not only to themselves but to the State, controlled the destinies of education in Western Australia. Mr. Cyril Jackson was in charge at one time and later was appointed Director of the education system in London. Then we had Dr. Cecil Andrews, who everyone would claim was an outstanding educationist. Recently we had Mr. Klein as Director, and I think members will agree that he did his work wonderfully well. True, for a little while we had a Director whose health would not permit him to continue the work, but that sort of thing does not often happen, and when it does happen, there is a way to make the necessary change. If we go to the Eastern States we find men like Mr. Peter Board and Mr. Frank Tate, men who have brought the education system of Australia into prominence and made a great success of it. Why the Government should wish to set the hands of time back by adopting an obsolete system, I cannot understand. As I have said, there is nothing to commend it.

The Premier: He will have just as much scope.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: He will have no scope at all. He will probably be able to take charge of the teachers. But what is the under secretary to do? What will his job be? What is he to do that the secretary of the department does not do to-day? Let

us consider the administration of the Education Department. The Minister, in moving the second reading of the Bill, likened it to the Crown Law Department and the Works Department. It is totally different. There are more teachers employed in the Education Department than there are professional men in all the rest of the service. Therefore we can draw no comparison with the departments mentioned by the Minister, and if we do, it becomes very unfair to say that there is any similarity between them. There is none whatever.

Hon. P. Collier: The greater number of teachers shows the necessity for the Director to be dealing with the teachers alone and not with minor matters.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: What are the minor matters?

Hon. P. Collier: Dozens of them.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: He has nothing to do with the fixing of teachers' salaries. Ninety per cent. of the expenditure of the department is represented by salaries.

The Premier: He will have nothing to do with that.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: That is what I am contending.

The Premier: Neither has the Director anything to do with that expenditure.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The under secretary would have nothing to do with it. If it were necessary for the under secretary to take charge of that expenditure, the probability is that he would have a full-time job. But teachers' salaries are fixed by a board. The Director controls the curriculum of the schools; he controls the transfer of teachers and the establishment of schools. All that is his work. He is the man qualified to express an opinion whether a school in a certain centre is justified, not an under secretary.

The Premier: No, he is not.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I say he is.

The Premier: Why?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Because of his knowledge.

Hon. P. Collier: Should he go into the country and say whether a school was justified?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Let us consider what happens. He sends his junior officers to do that; in future he will send an inspector to the locality to inspect the class of children there. The report is submitted to the Director, and he is able to judge whether

the establishment of a school is justified. Therefore it naturally is his work. It always has been his work. He has done it for a long while, and done it systematically and effectively. But now we are to have an under secretary, and authority is to be delegated to him. Everything will have to go through the under secretary to the Director, and then from the Director to us. The only thing we are concerned about is that we shall have greater success with our educational facilities, and greater efficiency generally. That is the only aspect in which we should interest ourselves. Looking at our educational system and comparing it with the systems in other parts of the world, we see plainly that the only reason why our educational system is not still further advanced is that we have so many things to do and so little money to do them with. I for my part would like to see vocational training established here, but vocational training will not result from the appointment of an under secretary. Money is necessary for it. I would like to see more schools built, but this proposed change of system will not build them. The proposed system, I may add, has been tried time after time; and invariably an academic man has finally been placed in charge of our education system. That applies to every part of the world. Every other country, I dare say, spends more money on education than we do. The proposed system does not operate in any other part of the world. Always an educationist is in charge, and not a layman.

Mr. Patrick: It applies to every State in Australia.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: While I see nothing wrong in the Government trying a new system, I have to point out that this is not a new scheme. It has been tried in other parts of the world, and invariably they have gone back to placing a professional man at the head of the service. Again, this service is one of the most important we render to the people. We should provide facilities for educating every child so that it will be a better citizen.

The Premier: That is the job of the Director.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Yes, and now we are asked to play about with it. We are told not to profit by the experience of other countries or by our own previous experience. We know very well that there must be friction between an under secretary and the Director. Invariably I have found

in the service that where a professional man seeks to assert himself, there is friction between him and the administrative head. We have been highly fortunate in our Public Service. In the Public Works Department we had an excellent Under Secretary in Mr. Munt, who has recently retired. He, however, did not have in his department the number of professional men that an Under Secretary for Education would have. Again, see the diversity of interests an Under Secretary for Works has to control. That is not work for a professional man. For instance, an engineer would not know anything about local government. The Public Works Department also includes architecture, water supply, and many other sub-departments. The Minister for Works would not think of putting in a director of works as head of that department. He would be making a grave mistake in doing so. The same remarks apply to the Chief Secretary's Department. The Minister for Education said we had an Under Secretary for Health. We have an Under Secretary for the Chief Secretary's Department, which is made up of numerous sub-departments, including, for example, lunacy and care of the aged. There is no similarity between the Chief Secretary's Department and the Education Department. Again, the Crown Law Department covers a diversity of interests. There are many professional men in it, but they have different duties. Therefore we do not want a lawyer in charge of the Crown Law Department. If we had a lawyer as head of it, the administration would probably not be as good as it is. The duty of the Director of Education is to see that the best possible teaching is provided. That is to-day 98 per cent. of the work of the department, I should say, even under existing conditions. The ten per cent. of expenditure that goes in minor things does not cause the head of the department any concern at all. Merely a few school requirements have to be bought; and that is, I believe, the exclusive work of a lady in the department. All the work of the Director of Education is professional work. His duty is not only to see that the children are looked after, but also to keep abreast of new systems of education as they come along. One would think that the whole of the work was left to one man—the Director. He has not to do the lot.

He has a chief inspector and other inspectors, and headmasters to assist him. All he has to do is to organise. We must always bear in mind the point I previously mentioned—the best possible education for the children. If the Director organises along those lines, it will be his duty to select the expert officers of the department. That would not be done by the Under Secretary, surely! The Bill proposes a retrograde step. In fact, it proposes the biggest blunder, if I may say so, that has been made by the present Government.

The Premier: This is not a blunder. It is a reform.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: It will not be a blunder, because we shall protect the Government against itself. After all, we are here sometimes to protect the Government. All I can suppose is that the Minister for Education, who is very youthful, has thought to himself, "I have to do something during my term of office that will be outstanding." The Minister has made a mistake in that respect. This Bill is one of the mistakes of youth. In a little while he will see his error and regret what he is doing. He knows very well that our educational system, having due regard to the expenditure on it, is an excellent system. I have here figures relating to the cost of educating children throughout the world, and I can declare that the expenditure per child here is less than it is anywhere else. I listened to some of the education experts who were here recently, telling us what South Africa is doing in the way of education. South Africa is a very wealthy country indeed compared with Western Australia. It has not the developmental work to do that we are doing. We have developed this State on semi-socialistic lines.

The Premier: My word, yes!

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: In other countries the people's money is not poured into agriculture, or the construction of railways and harbours, and consequently those other countries have more revenue available. I venture to say that the Minister is making a grave mistake. If he desires this alteration, he should state whether it is possible to raise additional money for the purpose. If additional money is available, still I do not say that I should support him, because I consider the people are sufficiently taxed already.

The Premier: This is not a question of taxation.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I am looking at the reason, not at the method.

The Premier: You cannot have listened to the Minister's second-reading speech.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I did listen, but I heard no definite reason whatever. I read the speech afterwards, so that I am well informed regarding it. The Bill is a colossal blunder; and I caution the Minister, and the Premier too, to leave well alone. I am desirous that effect should be given to some of the minor amendments proposed, but because of the sacrifice of the children which the Bill involves I am compelled to oppose the second reading. That is not sobstuff.

Hon. P. Collier: It is sobstuff.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The member for Boulder (Hon. P. Collier) is getting back to his old self and putting up some of that hearty bluff of his. The most important aspect of the life of our community that Parliament has to deal with is the education of our children. Here we have a man, the Director, at the head of affairs and responsible for educating the children. And his responsibility is not only as regards the State system, but also as regards private schools. He has to ensure thorough inspection of private schools also, in order to see that the standard of education is maintained there. If the proposal in the Bill were so desirable, would not the City of London and the County Councils have adopted this method?

Mr. Cross: Their system of education is entirely different from ours.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: They have inspectors of schools. The only reason that makes it impracticable to institute a comparison with them is that they spend a great deal more on education than we do here. Take the City of London. If an under secretary was justified anywhere, an under secretary would be justified there.

The Minister for Mines: How much does the Government of Great Britain contribute towards education in the City of London?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The Minister would be surprised if I told him the exact figure. I doubt whether he would believe it if I mentioned it to him.

The Minister for Mines: How much does the British Government contribute?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Nothing. All the money is provided from city rates. Now,

the City of London happens to be a great deal wealthier than this State is. I heard the member for Guildford-Midland (Hon. W. D. Johnson) giving credit to the men who laid the foundation of the laws of this State. I agree with the hon. member that the foundation was laid very well indeed. I do not say that those men of past times were infallible, but they did pass some excellent laws. Forty years ago Western Australia tried the educational system proposed in the Bill, and the legislators of those days discovered that they had made a mistake and reverted to placing an educationist in charge of the department. It is not a question of expenditure of money, because that is already absorbed in other directions. The expenditure is determined by the Minister himself and by the board that fixes salaries. Here it is a question of education only. That is the Director's duty, and he does not want any layman to interfere with him. He does not want agitating memoranda and files passing to and fro, causing him to waste his time in hunting up authorities and notes for an under secretary. I have been closely associated with the education system of Western Australia for 18 years. It was not my practice to worry the Director of Education if I wanted some trivial thing. In that case I saw his secretary. The department has always had highly efficient secretaries. Mr. Miller was an outstanding man; and he was followed by a man equally qualified, Mr. Hillary, whom the Government has seen fit to place in a higher position in London. The present occupant of the office is thoroughly competent. If Ministers desire to give him an increase in salary, they can use their authority, if there is authority for such a thing as that. They can very well say to him, "We will give you an increase in salary," but if they give him the status of under secretary, he will want a great deal more authority than he has at present. We had better leave well alone. There has been very little cause indeed for finding fault with our educational system. About 17 years ago a Royal Commission was appointed to inquire into the system, Mr. Peter Board coming over from New South Wales for the purpose. I have an idea that Mr. Angwin was associated with him on the Royal Commission.

The Premier: That Royal Commission dealt more particularly with technical education.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I think Mr. Colebatch was a member of the Commission, though I am not sure. At any rate Mr. Board came over here and found no fault whatever with the system. I do not know whether a Labour Government was in power at the time. The Minister is aware that we were able to draw to the service in the State the best men from the Eastern States whenever we required them. Dr. Cecil Andrews was regarded as an outstanding educationist and he rendered good service to the State. The two things required for the man in England is that he must have a University degree and teaching and administrative experience.

The Premier: Where will he get administrative experience?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The headmaster of a school acquires administrative experience. I will guarantee that the headmaster of the East Victoria Park school would be regarded as being possessed of administrative knowledge. Look at the number of teachers he has under him. That is the administrative ability I want, not the administrative ability that is needed for looking after office files or determining whether 3d. stamps should be put on envelopes instead of 1d. stamps, or whether the right type of lead pencils is being used. Real administrative work lies in the control and the effective placing of teachers. That is the big work. Canada, South Africa, the United States, and other parts of Australia demand that officers in control of education must possess university degrees and teaching and administrative experience. I understood the Minister to say that he desired to economise, but he never told us in which way he will be able to do so by carrying out the proposed alterations. I fail to see how he can do it. I have told members repeatedly that there can be little economy in the Education Department because we have no control over its funds. We have already handed over control by Act of Parliament to someone else. In the annual report of the Education Department for 1936, on page 31, we notice that the salaries of officers and teachers absorb 91.9 per cent. of the total expenditure on education, while 3.9 per cent. is expended on exhibitions, scholarships and driving allowances, and the remaining 4.2 per cent. includes stock, furniture, apparatus and incidentals. Exhibitions and scholarships must come directly under the control of the head of the Education Department.

Driving allowances are governed by regulation, and if a teacher says that a child has driven three miles to school then of course payment has to be made. We are giving to the under secretary control that he should not have, and to me it seems the greatest farce that was ever perpetrated. The salaries of teachers and officers are fixed and cannot be altered by a person in control of the department. The Education Department differs from any other Government department in that it consists almost entirely of teachers, over 2,000 of them, with about 30 clerical officers. The under secretary's job would be limited to the control of a small clerical staff. I fail to understand in what way the under secretary is going to assist the educational system. The proposal points only to a deterioration; it cannot point to anything else. I cannot see how it can affect the finances or how the change will make any more money available for educational facilities. The Minister knows that to-day the great question is vocational training; but we have taken away from the youth the right to be apprenticed, and the right to be articulated. We have taken away that right by law and provided no substitute. Who is best qualified to attend to all these matters? In other Government departments there are many distinct divisions with a preponderance of clerical officers. The organisation and administration of those departments differ materially from the operations associated with the Education Department. There are more professional officers in the Education Department than in all the other departments combined. There are nearly 2,500 fully or partly trained professional men and only 32 clerical officers. In other words over 98 per cent. of the staff of the Education Department is represented by professional officers, and yet we are going to appoint an Under Secretary to control the remaining 2 per cent. I repeat there is no justification for it. Only in the Public Works Department do we find that 46 per cent. of the staff comprise the professional section and 54 per cent. the clerical section. In the Crown Law Department there is a central office and the Supreme Court deals with civil actions. Then there are the officers of the Solicitor General, Probate Division, Official Trustee, Electoral, Land Titles, Local Court management, Companies, etc. Of course there

could not be a professional man over all those because his knowledge would require to be so extensive that he would need a staff of departmental heads. When an under secretary is in charge of those officers he is in charge of the administrative staff, and he sees that there is no conflict. Turning to the Public Works Department we have the Under Secretary, the Local Government branch, Land Resumption branch, Country Water Supply branch, and Drafting, Architectural and Town Planning branches. It will be seen that the interests there are varied, and there is no doubt about it that the Under Secretary does not interfere with the professional heads of the branches. He has, however, co-ordinated all the services. The characteristics of those departments are totally different from those of the Education Department. It is a most remarkable thing when we have a Public Service Commissioner telling us to-day that the sooner we get academic men into the service the better it will be, that we should find the Government desirous of appointing a layman as head of the Education Department. The Public Service Commissioner is demanding a university education for our young people, and yet it is proposed to instal a layman in charge of the most important branch of the service. There is nothing so important in the State as the Education Department. I can hardly believe that there is any necessity for an amendment to the compulsory sections. By some of the amendments it is suggested that if a father takes a boy deliberately from school it shall be a punishable offence. I do not think there are many such instances.

Mr. Hegney: I came across one the other day.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: It could only happen in the hon. member's electorate. Of course if there should be one such instance it should be prevented. Then again there is provision in the Bill that the Minister may in the interests of family life excuse a boy from attendance. Whilst I want to see that a boy or girl shall get the best education possible I am aware that even some members in this House have never received the benefit of even a fourth class education. All the same they are not a disgrace to the community. While we may keep a boy at school for the required period, that does not say that that will give him a finished education. At the same time we must make available the necessary facilities. There is another pro-

vision by which it is proposed that the Minister shall take authority to compel children to receive medical attention. We have in the past attempted to do that, and invariably we have found one or two obstacles in the way. I agree of course that every person who can afford to pay for the medical attention given to children should be compelled to pay. It is no use keeping "C" class children as such when it is possible to make "A" class children of them. I came across obstacles whilst I was administering the Health Department, but generally speaking it is desirable that medical examination of children should take place. It is idle to say that parents cannot afford to pay.

The Minister for Health: Can you quote an instance where medical attention has been denied when it has been shown to be required?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I am not complaining that that has not been done, but I do intend to tell the Minister that there are instances in the country where children should have attention, and that the reason why they do not get it is because their parents cannot afford to send them away from the district in which they reside.

The Minister for Health: They never made application.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I am told that the Child Welfare Department is very generous in this respect.

The Minister for Health: I received an application recently for assistance, and inquiries having been made it was found that the father had over £2,000 invested in bonds. Yet he wanted the Health Department to pay for medical attention for his children.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Then if I know the Minister I am satisfied that that parent did not get any help. If I had my way I would not compel parents to have their children treated as they are to be treated.

Mr. Sleeman: And you would have my support.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I know that some doctors will not allow their own children to be vaccinated. My children were never vaccinated, although the law in this State provides that they shall be vaccinated.

The Premier: There is such a thing as conscientious objection.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I was vaccinated compulsorily, and I suppose you, Mr. Speaker, were also vaccinated with perhaps painful results.

Hon. P. Collier: I always thought there was something wrong with you, although I am not blaming altogether the vaccination.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: At any rate I was never vaccinated with the Labour bug.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Before tea I was dealing with the clause providing that the children should receive medical attention. I hope I have not been over liberal in my conception of what that actually means. One fear I have is that in which I agree with the Minister that minor physical defects or sickness that might turn a "C" class boy into an "A" class man. I agree that we should give it very serious consideration. But in dealing with injections, vaccinations and that sort of thing, I feel sure they cannot be used as a means to an end. We do not know what is ahead of us. Some doctors are keen on this method of preventing diseases, and while I am not too sure that they are invariably effective, I am anxious that we should not allow doctors to use the education law for that purpose. I point out to the Minister two things: one is that if I know of anything where the annual report of the Public Service Commissioner might apply, it is to our educational system. He definitely sets out that we should have the best trained men for our service. With that I agree, but also I say that we should turn our attention to the professional side of it. Probably the professional work done for the Government is the most important work of all. It is well enough to lay truly the foundation of a bridge or of a concrete dam construction, but it is much more important that we should lay truly the foundation of the education of our children. And I know that this can best be done by having the best men at the head of our school system. Usually they are picked out for the position for their qualifications and training. I remember that we tried this proposal 40 years ago, when Mr. Cyril Jackson was Director of Education in this State. He left the service because of the change-over in the system. His qualifications were certainly good, because he got a most important position in London. He was right in his opinion of the change-over here, for the new system was not long under trial before we went back to the old system. We cannot afford to make a mistake in our educational system, and I hope the Minister will agree to leave well alone.

This is something like the case in the military or the naval department. It would be most extraordinary to find an under secretary in charge of either the one or the other. We select the best professional men for that purpose and we ought to stick to the best professional men for our educational system. I hope we shall hear nothing more of this Bill. The Minister would be well advised not to proceed with it. It is not going to give any satisfaction to the parents of the children. The Minister said it was a question, not of the parents, but of the children. However, the parents are just as much interested in the children as is the Minister, and the Bill is giving serious concern to the parents. Once you miss a day's training you can never make it up to the child. So I hope the Bill will be left at the bottom of the Notice Paper and that it will have the decent burial it deserves. If the Minister brings in a Bill comprising the minor amendments I will support it, but in this Bill we have that exceedingly important clause which puts an under secretary instead of the Director in charge of the department, so I must oppose it.

MR. NEEDHAM (Perth) [7.35]: I listened with a great deal of interest to the Minister when he was moving the second reading of the Bill. Whilst I realise that he himself might to be convinced of the necessity for the proposed change in the system, I find myself in the unusual role, after about four years in this House, of agreeing with much that the Leader of the Opposition has said.

Mr. Thorn: That is not much.

Mr. NEEDHAM: The "much" is that he intends to oppose the second reading, and that is where I find myself also. Still, I do not agree with the Leader of the Opposition when he says that the Bill represents the biggest blunder the Government has made.

Mr. Styants: He said the only blunder.

Mr. NEEDHAM: I do not agree that the Government has made any blunder. During the four years this Government has been in power it has not made a single blunder that I know of. But in regard to the Bill I say that the Minister and the Government can be charged with having made an error of judgment.

Hon. C. G. Latham: What is that?

Mr. NEEDHAM: You would not call that a blunder.

Hon. C. G. Latham: It sounds very much the same.

Mr. NEEDHAM: However, the importance of the measure is so great that I do not feel inclined to give a silent vote upon it. There are many people interested in this measure. There is the child himself, the boy and the girl that have to be educated, and then there are the parents. The Minister mentioned his own responsibility. I realise his responsibility and also the responsibility of the Government of which he is a member. But at the same time I realise my own responsibility as a member of this House which is as to whether or not I could give a vote to changing the existing system. The Bill as a whole suggests some reforms in certain directions. The only clause in the measure to which I take objection is Clause 4, which provides that the Director of Education shall be supplanted by an under secretary. The Minister in the course of his speech asked this question: Was it fair, he asked, for the professional head to be worried about administrative matters? The Minister might in turn be asked would it be fair for the administrative head to be worried about professional matters. The Minister went further and said that other departments had under secretaries. He enumerated the Departments of Health, of Law, of Agriculture and of Works. I have yet to learn that it is because there is an under secretary at the head of each of those departments that the department has been a success. I cannot see any analogy between the Education Department and the other departments named by the Minister. I realise in the first place that those other departments must depend upon the men that are their officers, and the class of education they received before entering a department. The Education Department has to supply those other departments with the education required. There is a big difference between the work of those several departments and that of the Education Department. The teacher for the time being takes the place of the parents. The parent, realising his or her responsibility will rightly endeavour to give a child a proper training. I think the future of that child, who is to be a citizen of this country, largely depends upon the home training. To my mind it is the first and most important stage. But of course the

parent necessarily must hand over the child for certain hours of the day and certain days of the week to the men and women who are teachers in our Education Department. And those teachers have to develop the training of the child in every way so that the child will eventually become a useful citizen of this State. That is the sphere where I see the difference between the Education Department and the other departments, and that is the reason why I think it would be wrong to appoint an under secretary and give him the control that the Bill proposes to give him. Again, I point out what was mentioned by the Leader of the Opposition, namely that there are other parts of the world where this proposed new system has been tried and has failed. The Minister made no complaint about our educational system; as a matter of fact, he praised it. I do not know of anyone who can complain of the educational system in this State. From a material point of view, I think our educational system would compare favourably with any in the world. That being so, the proposal contained in the Bill is, to my mind, inconceivable. The Minister did not suggest that the appointment of an under secretary to the Education Department would improve the standard of education. He admitted there would be no economy. I am at a loss to understand why the departure from the usual practice is suggested. It may be there are times when under the present system the Minister has not direct control of the money expended by the Education Department. It may be that the Estimates are drafted without consultation with him. If that is so, the system can be altered without a Bill of this kind. There is another danger, namely the danger of conflict between the under secretary and the Director. That is a phase of the Bill about which I am very much concerned. The under secretary may look to the financial part of the business all the time, whilst the Director is looking to the advancement of education. Whilst I admit we are spending a fair amount of money on our education system I think we ought to be able to spend more. We cannot spend too much on the education of our children in every way. I cannot see any argument that has been advanced by the Minister to suggest to me that I should support this measure. As has been said, in South Africa, Canada and the United States

there are highly educated men with teaching experience at the head of their respective Education Departments. In this State we can claim to have the largest education area in the world. If there are any larger, I do not know of them. Because of the vast extent of the area over which the Director has control, naturally an increased expense is incurred, and also a greater responsibility. If there was no other feature, that question of area should be sufficient to deter the Government from implementing legislation of this nature. The Leader of the Opposition referred to the Police Department. I know of no intention to appoint an under secretary for police. At the head of that department is a professional man who has been through the mill, one who has made a good job of the administration. If the principle is right for a man to be at the head of the Police Department, a man who has graduated through the ranks, who knows the police business from the bottom rung of the ladder to the top, it is more important still that we should have at the head of our education system a man who knows the teaching profession in every aspect. There is danger of an under secretary becoming simply a departmental instead of an educational man, one who may be looking at the pounds, shillings and pence all the time irrespective of what that may mean to this country in the matter of education. When the Minister introduced the Bill I was somewhat in doubt as to what I would do. I have since given the matter much consideration. I have come to the conclusion that to adopt the system suggested in the Bill, appoint an under secretary, a man without the proper teaching qualifications and experience, would be a retrograde step and not a forward one. For these reasons I shall oppose the Bill.

MR. DONEY (Williams - Narrogin) [7.50]: I am wholly at one with the Leader of the Opposition when he characterises this Bill as a serious blunder. I, too, listened attentively to what the Minister had to say in introducing it. My opinion was, when he sat down, that he was not entitled to succeed in his attempt to foist an under secretary upon the Education Department. I felt that the Minister had been wasting time, that there was so little good in the Bill that it could not hope to succeed. I have a certain amount of sympathy with the Minister, who is in a quandary. Many times in the

past he has complimented the department upon the excellence of its work, whereas now, unfortunately, for him, he is able to justify the introduction of this Bill only by regarding that same work as defective. The Minister's speech was not convincing. He was required to prove several things, *inter alia*, to prove that the present system of control was defective. He would also have to prove that the proposed change would remedy the defects. I think the House will agree that he did not prove either. In the absence of that proof, it is plain that the Minister is not entitled to succeed with his Bill. The Minister had nothing to say about the important question of the cost of this innovation. The Education Vote will need to be substantially augmented if this proposal goes through. I would ask the Minister whether there is any money available for this new expenditure. I hope he will remember to give us that information. Whatever he may say, I know that the House could certainly find many more profitable avenues in which to use the money than in the manner suggested. Country members, and probably city members too, are constantly asking for £5 or £10 for some school necessity or other useful purpose, but almost on every occasion we are told that no money is available. Despite this fact, we know that some two years ago, when the Government was stricken in poverty, the Treasurer was able to find about £68,000 for the East Perth Girls' School. Since then we hear the amount was increased to £82,000. This blunder, if it becomes one, is likely to be just as costly. One blunder of that kind is enough.

Hon. P. Collier: Do you regard the East Perth Girls' School as a blunder?

Mr. DONEY: I call it a blunder because it has cost £82,000 to accommodate 600 children. I worked out a sum when speaking on the Education Estimates to show that this meant a cost of £137 per child, whereas in country schools the corresponding charge was £8.

The Minister for Mines: It will stand as a monument to the man who put the school there.

Hon. P. Collier: Your only objection is that it is in Perth, and not in your electorate. Do you not want the girls educated?

Mr. DONEY: If it was in Boulder, the principle would be the same. The point mentioned by the hon. member is an

absurd one. I stand for progress in the matter of education, and I agree that the Minister does and that we all do. This proposal, however, does not spell progress. It means only a change, something different but not something better. The Minister drew an analogy between the Public Works Department and the Education Department. He was not justified in doing so. The structure of the two departments is entirely dissimilar. He might more properly have drawn an analogy between the Police Department and the Education Department. Each of those departments concerns itself with one activity and no more. In charge of those activities are gentlemen who are acknowledged experts. The Public Works Department—and to much the same extent the Medical and other departments which have been mentioned—comprises an aggregation of smaller departments. No one professional man could properly control all those departments. In such a department some co-ordinated authority is desirable. In the case of the Education and Police Departments, where there is only one form of activity, there is really nothing to co-ordinate. There is very little to administer than the Commissioner of Police or the Director of Education, respectively, would be required to learn. The officers in charge probably know everything already. Probably the same method of promotion will prevail for some years to come in the Education Department. The last two Directors, I suggest, knew all the administrative work that was necessary long before they were promoted. They were promoted by more or less slow degrees, and they had imbibed the necessary knowledge concerning the administration on the way up. To regard the administrative side of the Director's duties as a drag or encumbrance, as something that is fatal to the Director's professional control, is to ignore certain facts concerning the inner workings of the department that should be known to pretty well every member. The Leader of the Opposition mentioned the names of successive Directors. Did not Sir Cyril Jackson, Mr. Cecil Andrews, and Mr. Klein succeed splendidly? I have always imagined that it was conceded by anyone having any knowledge whatever of the Education Department that those three men did, in fact, secure 100 per cent. success in connection with their endeavours, yet it seems now to be suggested by the Minister in charge of the Bill that those Directors failed

because of the undue pressure of the administrative side of their functions. If the Minister does not hold that view, then he has no right to introduce a Bill such as that which we are discussing. I feel it quite correct to say that administrative duties account for not more than 5 per cent. or 10 per cent. at the outside of the Director's time. Members know that the real administrator for many years past has been the secretary of the department, and I am one who believes, and so, I think, will most members believe, that Mr. Miller, Mr. Hannah, and Mr. Hillary dealt with their administrative work particularly well. It may be that there have been faults in administration, but I certainly have not heard of them. Had those faults been very material, we would have heard something about them before now. Despite absence of room for criticism, it would seem that the Minister regards the position at present as being so critical as to justify him in turning a smooth-running department upside down with the object of reconstructing it upon the experimental basis set out in the Bill. I consider it obvious, too, that the secretaries of the Education Department know their work all the better, and do their work all the better, because they have been schooled in the ways and means of their profession, but the Minister would have us believe that in some strange way the officer who has been schooled in the history, methods and requirements of what we may call Department "A" is better fitted to administer Department "B" than the man who has been similarly schooled in Department "B." With all due respect to the Minister, I cannot think that he has convinced members by reasoning of that description. I am wholeheartedly with him in any crusade that he may indulge in with the idea of securing an even spread of modern education in the country and in the city, but I certainly cannot see that the provisions of this Bill will assist at all in that direction. The Minister's explanation during his second reading speech of the status of the Director under the new scheme was certainly not in keeping with the provisions of the Bill. According to the Press report, the Minister said, "Some fears had been expressed that the appointment of an under secretary would reduce the status of the professional head and generally that the professional side of the department would be made to suffer." He then went on to say that the

Government had no intention of reducing the status of the professional head, yet the Bill, as members will have noticed, sets out that the Under Secretary shall be the permanent head. If that means anything at all, and I suppose it is intended to, it means that the Director, a man of 60 years of age, is to be subordinated to a young man of about, say, 40 years of age, whose appointment the Minister foreshadowed the other night. One most amazing part of the Minister's speech was that, following upon the explanation I have referred to, he said that he considered an appointment of that description would promote harmony. I am sure I do not know whether the Minister was serious when he arrived at that deduction.

The Minister for Education: I did not mention anything about age.

Mr. DONEY: That is so, but the Minister did say that the appointment would promote harmony. I do not think he impressed any member with that reasoning, and I do not suppose the Minister himself believed that it would. Perhaps it would be kind not to comment any further on that matter. In conclusion, I am in accord with the opinions expressed by the two previous speakers. I do not think the Bill has any chance whatever of succeeding, principally because it does not deserve to succeed.

MR. NULSEN (Kanowna) [8.7]: I oppose the Bill. The Minister and Cabinet as a whole understood from the first intimation of this move that I was in opposition to the proposed alteration in the administrative control of the Education Department. I considered from the beginning that it would represent a retrograde step, and I still hold that view. The Minister, in his second reading speech, said the Government had no intention of reducing the status of the professional head, and yet, in the Public Service Commissioner's report, which was Tabled about the 10th November, the Commissioner points out that the Director will be retained—but at a lower classification. The Minister claims that has nothing to do with him, but I think it is an intimation that the Director will be reduced in status, either by the fact of his having someone superior to him or his having to go to another officer with regard to administrative matters, which leads one to that impression. The office of the chief inspector will be abolished and, if that implies anything to me, it is that the Director will be substituted for the chief

inspector. I do not think there is any doubt about that. In his report, the Public Service Commissioner went on to say that an under secretary would be appointed to take charge of the administration of the Education Department, together with a Director and chief clerk. It seems to me that those three officers will replace the Director, the chief inspector and the secretary. In those circumstances, there will be no numerical alteration, but merely a change in personnel. I am quite sure that the Minister is sincere in his effort. He really believes that the alteration will give greater efficiency. As a matter of fact, he claims support from the experience of the Government in other departments. It was pointed out clearly by the Leader of the Opposition that the positions are not analogous. I do not know how the Minister hopes to convince members on that point. I do not know how, in view of the small community we have in Western Australia, he will be able to convince members that a layman with office experience only will be an efficient administrator, in view of the fact that such a procedure is opposed by all English-speaking countries. England, Scotland, Canada, South Africa, and every State in Australia take good care to have professional men at the head of their education departments. Apparently those responsible for the control of educational matters in the United States of America also adopt the same procedure. Not very long ago I read a report setting out that, in one part of the United States, an experiment was made by placing a business man in charge of the local Education Department. It was not long before there was a reversion to the old system of having a professional man as Director, because education in that State seemed to be on the down grade instead of on the up grade. It seems to me to be expecting us to place too great a measure of confidence and faith in the Minister and in Cabinet for us to accept an unsupported proposal as against the practice of countries having a much wider experience. I have sought, and obtained, all the information possible on this question, because I wish to be fair. Although I have always been in opposition to any alteration in the administration of the Education Department, I wish to deal with the matter fairly, but I must confess that I have not been able to find any English-speaking part of the world—I have not delved into the position in

foreign countries—where there is not a professional man at the head of the Education Department. In the infancy of Western Australia, our schools were under the control of an under secretary, and it was not until Mr. Cyril Jackson, who was a highly qualified professional man, was placed at the head of our Education Department that it advanced. Mr. Jackson was succeeded by another eminent educationist in Dr. Cecil Andrews, who also proved to be an efficient administrator. It seems to me that the truth is that we are victims of an inferiority complex that was set up during the depression, in the course of the years of which we appeared to undermine the authority of those placed in charge of the Education Department. I refer particularly to the two most recent Directors. It seems to me that they were in strait-jackets and were subordinated, more or less, to the Under Treasurer. In consequence, neither had any latitude or scope enabling him to carry on the educational requirements of the State efficiently, in accordance with his ideas of administration. We have become accustomed to that procedure, and it would be very unwise indeed to set up a permanent institution along those lines of economy. The Minister now wants calmly to put a layman in control permanently to administer the Education Department of the State. It looks to me like putting the souls of our children under a reactionary element. Is there any member of this House who would agree to put his business, whether it be a warehouse or any other form of commercial activity, under the control of a man with only office experience? I care not what experience he may have had, whether it be in the Civil Service, a bank or a commercial office, I say that most certainly he is not qualified. The Minister painted a rosy picture of the possibilities and opportunities of the director if he were not encumbered with the administration of the department by the appointment of an under secretary to take administrative control. I do not think he would be released very much. It would be a serious step so far as education of the children is concerned for the director to be subject to an Under Secretary. It has been said that professional educationists are not competent administrators. I am not referring to the Minister's remarks, but I have heard that said. I find on inquiry that that is wrong. We have had many competent directors of education who

have been able administrators, and there is nothing that the Minister has said to convince me to the contrary. The Minister has not mentioned a particular director, but I think it is to be inferred from the Bill that directors are not regarded as being efficient administrators.

Hon. P. Collier: I have known some directors who have been hopeless administrators. I speak from actual experience.

Mr. NULSEN: I have also known hopeless managers of businesses. That applies in every walk of life. Failures will be found. I do not say that every director is going to be an efficient administrator, but if he does not do his job we have the remedy. If he is not efficient we can get someone who will be.

Hon. P. Collier: As an educationist he might be at the top of the tree, and as an administrator at the bottom.

Mr. NULSEN: If anything is wanting to confirm my opinion it is the annual report of the Public Service Commissioner.

Hon. P. Collier: Nobody takes any notice of it.

Mr. NULSEN: Nobody can deny his contention that the educational qualifications of those in the Civil Service are not up to standard.

Hon. P. Collier: His own are not too high.

Mr. NULSEN: Probably he only had the Junior University certificate which is passed at 15 or 16 years of age. There should be sufficient provision for people when leaving school to carry on their education. When children obtain the leaving certificate and leave school they are only opening the door to the world. At the University a good deal is learned, but in this multiversant House we learn much more still. It has been stated that those who join the Civil Service find it difficult at times to pass an elementary examination in book-keeping. I do not know whether it would be wise, without casting any reflections at all, to expect a man of that qualification to take charge of the educational system of this State. Even the Public Service Commissioner is advocating the holding of a leaving certificate as a qualification for entering the service. It has also been stressed that the expenditure of £700,000 on education is a large amount. That has been mentioned in the report of the Public Service Commissioner. It is erroneous. To get a proper figure it should be spread over the

whole State. A small amount per capita is expended in comparison with other places. I suppose we have a greater territory over which schools are spread than has any other part of the world; yet the expenditure on education only works out at 30s. per head. That is very low. South Africa is spending twice as much per child, and other countries are spending much more on education facilities. They are much more generous elsewhere in the equipment of libraries. In Great Britain the amount expended is enormous. I know that the Government is doing everything possible and that its goodwill is with the people. I know that the obstacle is finance, but we have a great leeway to make up in order to get on the same educational basis as other countries. In South Africa the leaving age, according to province, is 15 and 16. Our leaving age is only 14. In the United States the leaving age is much higher. Great Britain recently raised the leaving age to 15. In Switzerland, according to canton, the age is 15 or 16. Furthermore Denmark has reduced the sizes of the classes in schools. I have heard it said by many teachers that the classes here are too big. We cannot expect too much sympathy in this respect from a layman, especially an under secretary, because essentially he is the buffer between the department and the Minister and in consequence his one outlook would be economy. There is no comparison to be made between the equipment in schools in Western Australia and elsewhere, and if we are going to have an under secretary, the progress of the children is going to be further retarded. It is essential that the responsible head chosen should be a man of learning and ability who has been brought up in that particular sphere; otherwise he could not have a real sympathy which would enable him to advance the education of the citizens of the State. Such a man should not only have a high knowledge and excellent professional qualifications, but he should also have an interest in the education of the whole of the citizens of Western Australia, and we cannot expect a layman to have that. We should hesitate before making any alteration in the administration of this important department. The Minister gave a fine amplification of economy. He said that it was not only expense but other conditions such as those of time

and energy which should be taken into consideration. Perhaps those were not quite the words but that is what he meant. I find on looking up the Public Service Commissioner's report that the only amplification he makes is one of expense. That is all he has in view. I am afraid that if we were to have an under secretary he would have the same outlook as the Public Service Commissioner. Not long ago I was talking to a school teacher who said it was unfair that the teachers should have to carry out their work with practically nothing. He mentioned text books particularly, and said that children were poring year after year over the same books. That seems to be rather hard. It takes away the whole zest of those children who leave school to better themselves later by reading. The more one goes into the question the more one feels that the usefulness of a layman in administering this essential department is questionable. The innate powers of children should be drawn out and the only way for their powers to be developed is for greater facilities to be provided than has been the case in the past. I have the greatest sympathy for the Government and for the Minister. I know they are doing their best. I know that it is not lack of goodwill but of finance which is the obstacle. However, if an under secretary supersedes the director the latter will lose his incentive to do the best which should be done for the children. I suppose every organisation has some influence on Parliament. The Primary Producers' Association influences a few of the members on the other side of the House. The Wheat-growers' Union has an influence. The teachers at their last congress were unanimous in opposing an alteration in the administration of the department. It seems that in not heeding their point of view we are getting away from the principles of democracy. We are not democratic in defying the whole of the members of an organisation, saying, "You do not know what you are talking about," and then doing something contrary to their judgment. That is what we are now proposing to do. I have the greatest sympathy for the teachers because I think their union is a fine organisation. Nobody can say they are not all learned people, that they do not know what they are talking about and that they are all aspiring to be directors. The

majority has no axe to grind and we should take heed of the decision of the last congress. Economy will be taken into consideration by an under secretary but he will consider the matter only from a monetary point of view. There is no doubt that the greater proportion of the annual expenditure of over £700,000 is for salaries. The actual percentage is 91. Under four per cent. of the money is spent on exhibitions, scholarships and driving allowances, and a little of over four per cent. covers purchases of stock, furniture and incidentals. Where is economy to be practised?

Mr. Doney: You have only one per cent. wherein economy could be exercised.

Mr. NULSEN: It is impossible to economise on the present vote. If possible the vote should be increased in the interests of the future of the State and we should grant more latitude. The previous Government closed the Teachers' Training College on the ground of economy.

Hon. C. G. Latham: That was not the only reason. We had a superabundance of teachers at the time.

Mr. NULSEN: I have been told differently. Their action in closing the college has created a deal of leeway in the training of teachers.

Hon. C. G. Latham: The number of marriages fell tremendously during that period.

Mr. NULSEN: I understand the college was closed on the ground of economy.

Hon. C. G. Latham: It took three years for the present Government to re-open the college. The State had a surplus of teachers.

Mr. NULSEN: I have learnt on good authority that the closing of that college did not help the State at all.

Hon. C. G. Latham: The closing down of such a school could hardly be helpful.

Hon. P. Collier: A very reactionary proposal.

Hon. C. G. Latham: And carried on under your leadership.

Mr. NULSEN: Consideration should be given to the size of school classes. I do not know what the Minister will have to say about it, but a number of teachers maintain that if they are to get efficiency the size of classes should be reduced. Vocational training is a matter that should receive consideration. We should have a permanent psychologist. There should be a regular medical inspection of the school children.

The Premier: And the department should have the moon and the sun and everything else.

Mr. NULSEN: To provide what I have enumerated might be financially impossible, but if the Minister is going to place an under secretary in charge of the department, his one object will be to effect economies. The under secretary would really be the buffer between the Minister and the department.

The Premier: Economy, but not meanness.

Mr. NULSEN: We have been practising economy because we have not provided the facilities that are necessary.

The Premier: We have given almost more than the State could afford.

Mr. NULSEN: And yet we are far behind the other States.

The Premier: When we have about 150 years of settlement behind us, we will be in a better position to do all those things.

Mr. NULSEN: I do not know about that.

The Premier: But I do.

Mr. NULSEN: The Premier infers that we cannot afford to spend more money on the department. I say we cannot afford not to spend the money on the department.

The Premier: That is all right if you have the money.

Mr. NULSEN: The lowering of the grade—there is not the slightest doubt that is what will occur—will not be helpful. For these reasons I am opposing the Bill. I do not think there is any question about the efficiency of the administration by professional heads. We had Mr. Cyril Jackson and Dr. Cecil Andrews who proved very efficient in giving high class administration.

Mr. Doney: And Mr. Klein, no less.

Hon. P. Collier: Who gave those men a certificate for high-class administration? It is a tale that has got around.

Mr. NULSEN: Mr. Cyril Jackson afterwards occupied a very high position in England.

Hon. C. G. Latham: The highest in the British Empire.

Hon. P. Collier: No one in this State remembers anything at all about him.

Hon. C. G. Latham: The member for Boulder remembers him.

The Premier: He did not do enough work to get a halo.

Mr. NULSEN: I was speaking to a member who told me quite a lot about Mr. Cyril Jackson.

Hon. P. Collier: He had only heard it.

Mr. Sampson: There is no doubt about the quality of Mr. Klein's work.

Mr. NULSEN: The two directors in recent years were really placed in a strait-jacket. We did not treat them fairly because they were subordinate to the Under Treasurer. Without money what could they do?

The Premier: Subordinate not to the Under Treasurer, but to the Treasurer.

Mr. NULSEN: I said to the Under Treasurer because the director had to go to the Treasury to get every little thing required.

Mr. Doney: So did the head of every other department.

The Premier: We increased his Vote by £50,000 or £60,000 each year. If that is not generosity, I do not know what is.

Mr. NULSEN: I am not blaming the Government; I know how short of money the State has been. Still, I have had some experience of the difficulty. I wanted a few chairs for a school in my district. The Minister was quite in sympathy with me and eventually I got them, but we were more or less subordinate to the Under Treasurer and until he said "Yes," we could not get them.

Hon. P. Collier: The Under Treasurer was subordinate to the Treasurer.

Mr. NULSEN: I had not much hope of getting that small want supplied by the Treasurer.

The Premier: Some of them wanted a motor car and have not got it yet.

Mr. NULSEN: I do not wish to occupy the time of the House longer. I urge the Government further to consider their decision to alter the administration of the department and make additional investigations. As a member sitting behind the Government, I feel that I should support the Government wherever possible, but I cannot support this Bill. I must vote with those members who intend to oppose the measure.

On motion by Mr. Wilson, debate adjourned.

BILL—HIRE PURCHASE AGREEMENTS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 18th November.

MR. WATTS (Katanning) [8.38]: I propose to support the second reading of the Bill because it has some advantages, as mentioned by the Minister. It proposes to in-

crease the time of 21 days after repossession, which is allowed to a hirer or purchaser of goods within which to make a claim for an account of the value of the goods, to a period of three months. While I recognise the necessity for an increase in the time, because there are instances when 21 days is obviously too short, a period of three months, I think, is not required. It seems to me that after a period of three months had elapsed the chances are that the circumstances in regard to the chattels repossessed would to an extent have been lost sight of by both parties. Therefore, while extending the period, it might be advisable not to extend it for three months. Procrastination is sometimes prevalent in human nature, and if we made the period six months, there would probably still be people who would delay until the end of that time. As I have said, 21 days is scarcely long enough in certain cases, but the necessities, I believe, would be met by an extension to six or eight weeks.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Why is 21 days not long enough?

Mr. WATTS: I am prepared to agree that it would be long enough in some cases, but where people are located a long way from a centre where they could get advice, a longer period should be granted. It might be necessary to consult with somebody who understood the value of the chattel as compared with the amount of the debt, and if the person concerned was a fair distance from a large settlement—there are many such places where chattels are repossessed—it might be inconvenient to go to the town to obtain the information within 21 days and also to make the claim within that period. That is the reason why I suggest there should be an increase in the period, though I think three months would be too much. The second part of the Bill contains a provision that a copy of Section 5 of the Act shall be served on the purchaser or hirer of goods when repossessed, presumably in order that he may be acquainted with the proceedings under Section 5. I do not see the necessity for giving the vendor a period of seven days after repossession before he need serve a copy of the section on the purchaser. The time to serve the notice on the purchaser is surely the time of repossession. I can imagine no sufficient reason why seven days should be allowed to elapse between the date of taking possession and the date on

which the notice should be served. If the notice is to fulfil the purpose that I presume is intended, it should be served on the purchaser immediately. There are very few cases where a chattel is repossessed without the knowledge of a purchaser, and very few cases where a chattel is repossessed without the person or some adult member of the family being present. In Committee I propose to move an amendment to provide that the notice shall be served at the time of taking possession of the chattel. On the question of serving a copy of the relevant section of the Act on the purchaser at the time of repossession, I regret that the Minister has not seen fit to proceed a little further. I believe we should consider some statutory provision as to the terms of hire purchase agreements. As the years go on we find that these agreements are constantly being added to and varied in form, so that they are gradually getting further and further away from the original form of a hire purchase agreement. There is one matter that frequently comes under my notice in regard to hire purchase agreements and that is the provision relating to the right of the hirer to return the chattel at his own cost to the owner. In the early days of hire purchase agreements a chattel was hired at a weekly or monthly rent, and if the weekly or monthly rent were paid sufficiently long to extinguish the purchase price, the chattel became the property of the hirer, but the agreement also provided that the hirer was at liberty to return the chattel to the owner provided the instalments of rent then due were paid, and there was no further liability. As the years have gone by, that has been changed. We find now that agreements provide that this power of returning the chattel to the owner shall not be available unless a fixed portion of the total hire has been paid. Documents are daily—I might almost say—coming forward almost in the nature of contracts of sale and purporting to be contracts of hire-purchase. If this principle is extended much further, before long it will be necessary, as a preliminary to returning a chattel to the owner and thereby relieving oneself of the obligation to pay any further instalments, to have paid seven-eighths or fifteen-sixteenths of the purchase price. This would, in effect, prevent the agreement from being a hire-purchase agreement and practically make it a contract of sale. There are other items which could be

raised in connection with the average form of hire-purchase agreements and which should receive the attention of Parliament. It is apparent that the terms of hire-purchase agreements are being extended in a manner which was not intended by those who framed the original agreement. Perhaps it is necessary that Parliament should lay down some form or forms of hire-purchase agreements—I say “forms” because of the variety of articles disposed of by such agreements—so that the position of hiring with an option of purchase as originally intended may be preserved. I regret that there is nothing of that kind in the Bill. So far as the measure goes, it is, practically speaking, harmless; and I am quite prepared to support it subject to the amendments I have indicated.

MR. McDONALD (West Perth) [8.47]: I support the second reading of the Bill because of the innovation which requires a notice to be served on the hirer upon repossession showing what his rights are, for his protection. I have known cases where hired chattels have been retaken in consequence of default, and the people concerned have been quite unaware that they are entitled to demand an account in order to determine how they stand as to the payments they have made and the value the chattel may have in the hands of the owner who has retaken it. It will therefore be a distinct advantage and protection to the hirer that he should have some knowledge of what his rights are in those circumstances. I agree with the member for Katanning (Mr. Watts) that the time of three months within which the hirer may demand an account is too long. The present period of 21 days is quite a considerable period, when once we have a provision made that at the time of retaking the hirer shall be informed of his right to demand an account. While we wish to protect the hirer, we do not want to place the owner in too difficult a position. In many cases he wants to get ahead and close the transaction. It may be that his half-yearly accounts have to be made up or that his income tax returns have to be prepared, and three months seems to me a very lengthy period within which the transaction is to remain uncompleted. If we extend the time at all, 28 days should be sufficient in view of the provision by which

the hirer is to be given specific notice of his rights. Like the member for Katanning, I consider that some clauses of the Bill may be worthy of reconsideration in the Committee stage.

MR. BOYLE (Avon) [8.50]: I support the second reading. The only fault I have to find with the Bill is that it does not go far enough. The whole system of hire-purchase agreements has been a public scandal. It was not till the amendment Act of 1931 that the hirer had his equity in the implement or machine recognised at all. The provision of a period of 21 days, I know from actual experience in a different sphere, was unworkable. The machine or implement was repossessed by the vendor, and 21 days would pass rapidly in remote localities. The suggestion of the member for West Perth (Mr. McDonald) that the period should be 28 days, merely amounts to begging the question—without offence to the hon. member—because 28 days is very little more than 21. I agree with the member for Katanning (Mr. Watts) that three months is perhaps too long a period. However, the whole question of hire-purchase agreements should be brought before Parliament for reconsideration. It is a system that should have little or no place in the commercial life of the State. Even prior to the Act being amended, we had instances of machines on which only £20 or £30 remained to be paid being repossessed. In the Katanning district a machine that had cost £200 ultimately realised close on £800 by process of repossession and re-sales. Clause 5 of the Bill does give the hirer some say in the matter. His title to the machine or implement to-day is largely nullified by the short period of three weeks. I commend the Minister for bringing in the Bill, even though his proposal is a period of three months. I would like to see that period reduced in Committee. I would also like recognition of the necessity for immediate notice on repossession. The factors in the hire-purchase agreement at present are altogether against the hirer.

HON. C. G. LATHAM (York) [8.53]: I read very carefully the report of Mr. Moseley, who was appointed a Royal Commissioner to inquire into the moneylending business. I endeavoured to discover Mr. Moseley's reason for suggesting the amend-

ments contained in this Bill. He appears to have looked at the matter purely from the standpoint of the city hirer, and referred more particularly to furniture and musical instruments obtained under hire-purchase agreements. Mr. Moseley was vague also regarding the period of 21 days. He has not definitely said that he recommends the extension which the Bill proposes. He merely stated that his attention had been drawn to the fact that 21 days was insufficient time. If the period is extended to three months, as proposed by the Bill, the amendment may cut both ways. It will mean that the person whose machinery has been repossessed will have to wait so much longer for a settlement, whereas he may be anxious to obtain another machine and the amount of money he is entitled to have refunded may amount to the deposit required by another firm. It is not always a question of payments overdue that causes machinery to be repossessed. Sometimes the cause is a breach of warranty, when instead of taking the case to court the purchaser asks the firm to repossess. In those circumstances he will want the matter dealt with as speedily as possible. I have read the principal Act carefully; in fact, I was one of those responsible for its introduction, and I then gave consideration to fixing a longer period than 21 days. In ultimately fixing 21 days, we considered that a man who had his machinery repossessed would have sufficient time to decide whether he would ask for a statement of accounts, which is all that he needs to do. He has merely to write to the firm saying "I want a valuation made of that machine." I have given this matter serious thought from the farmer's point of view. I sincerely hope that the proposed amendment will not do an injury to a man who has had his machinery repossessed. I agree with the member for Katanning (Mr. Watts) as to the amendment requiring that notice shall be served on the hirer immediately upon repossession, so that his rights under the principal Act may be protected. I first thought it would be a good idea to have the relevant section included in the agreement. When the parent Act was before this Chamber, I suggested that it would be wise to have a standard agreement. As the member for Katanning has said, that is the best way to deal with this business. If there were a standard agreement, it should contain a statement of the hirer's remedy under the

Act. However, I realise that it is not only a question of future hire purchase agreements, but that hire purchase agreements now in existence should receive some consideration. The person who goes to take possession of the hired goods should there and then supply the hirer with a copy of Section 5 of the Act, and not leave it until seven days afterwards. Some of these persons would be difficult to locate after a lapse of seven days. Reverting to the period of 21 days, I know of an instance in my own district where machines were repossessed and an adjoining farmer was willing to take them over. In fact, he wanted them urgently because he was about to seed his ground. If the period were extended to three months, the probabilities are that machines would be held up. I hope serious consideration will be given to the disadvantages as well as the advantages of extending the period. Mr. Moseley was vague and indefinite as to his reasons for making that recommendation. He seems to have made it because somebody said to him that the period of 21 days was insufficient. From other aspects I see no advantage in the amendment. I should think that a person whose hired goods had been repossessed would be anxious to have a settlement as speedily as possible. I repeat, it is simply a matter of writing to the firm saying, "I want a statement of accounts from you." I hope we shall not make a mistake in regard to this legislation.

THE MINISTER FOR JUSTICE (Hon. F. C. L. Smith—Brown Hill-Ivanhoe in reply) [9.0]: I point out to the Leader of the Opposition that the legislation provides that the purchaser may within 21 days demand an account. It is proposed to alter that to three months. That will not prevent him making the demand within a day of the instrument or chattel being repossessed.

Hon. C. G. Latham: It will mean that the goods will have to be held up.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: The advantage to the purchaser will be that he can demand an account much later, but there is nothing to prevent him demanding an account from the vendor the day after. At any rate, I am not wedded to the period of three months. The Royal Commissioner did not set out any specific time, but he did definitely recommend that the time of 21 days should be extended.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Not definitely.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Yes. If we do extend the time, it is not worth while extending it to 28 days from 21 days. I agree with the member for Katanning that probably two months would be a fair proposition. With respect to the vendor, who has to give to the purchaser a copy of Section 5 so that he will know his rights under that section, it does seem to me that some time should be allowed, and that seven days is a reasonable period within which to give to the purchaser a copy of the provision.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Why not deliver it to him when taking possession of the goods?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I suppose in certain circumstances the purchaser may not be there when the repossession takes place. It might not be convenient for the vendor at the particular moment to hand to the purchaser a copy of Section 5, and we are providing for a penalty in this case of £20. There is almost a possibility of a dispute arising if we say that immediately on repossession the vendor shall hand to the purchaser a copy of Section 5 so that he shall know his rights under the Bill. The question will arise what "immediately" or "forthwith" means. So I think we should provide a reasonable time, and seven days seems reasonable. I would not mind making it five days; it is only an arbitrary figure, after all.

Hon. C. G. Latham: He would have a copy on hand.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Yes, but we must look at the matter from a practical point of view. It is giving a definite advantage to the purchaser to include this provision. Probably the member for Avon is right in saying that the Bill does not go far enough. The remarks of the member for Katanning with regard to hire-purchase contracts may have some substance, but the Bill only seeks to try to bring about the recommendation made by the Royal Commissioner, and it deals with Section 5 only. That section deals with the proceedings upon the vendor repossessing the chattels.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Sleeman in the Chair; the Minister for Justice in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Amendment of Section 5 of the principal Act:

Mr. WATTS: I move an amendment—

That in line 3 of paragraph (a) "three" be struck out and "two" inserted in lieu.

In some cases, 21 days is sufficient time, but my experience in country districts is that the purchaser first of all wants to satisfy himself that there is some chance of his getting a return from the chattel that has been repossessed. He has a fair idea of his liability, but only a slight idea of the value of the chattel. He would first of all make inquiry as to what the value of the chattel is likely to be before going to the trouble of asking for an account; so it is an advantage to increase the time, though not an advantage to increase it to the extent set out in the Bill.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I have no objection to the amendment. After all, three months is purely arbitrary, and the probability is that two months would be quite sufficient time for the purchaser to demand an account.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: This is what the Royal Commissioner said in his report on this subject:—

Dealing with hire-purchase transactions, I recommend that an amendment to the Hire Purchase Agreement Act, 1931, be made to provide that in cases of repossession of goods a notice shall be served by the owner on the hirer setting out the provisions of the Act which enable the hirer to demand an account and, if necessary, to have such account reviewed by a magistrate.

That was what made me say that he was indefinite about it. Then he goes on further to say—

I also recommend, in order to provide for cases in which the same goods have been repossessed on more than one occasion for non-payment of instalments, that it be made clear in the Act that the hirer may apply to the court for relief within 12 months from the date of the last act of repossession.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. WATTS: I move an amendment—

That in lines 6 and 7 of paragraph (b) the words "within seven days after" be struck out, and the words "at the time of" inserted in lieu.

I contend, notwithstanding the remarks of the Minister, that the proper time for the delivery of this notice to the purchaser is the time of the taking of possession of the chattels by the vendor. The Minister men-

tioned the fact that the purchaser might not be present at the time. That can easily be overcome by providing, as I said, that a copy of Section 5 of the Act could be handed to an adult person at the place of residence, and that would overcome the difficulty.

Mr. McDONALD: It seems to me that the period of seven days for the serving of a copy of the provisions of the section on the purchaser should be retained. It might not be possible to find the purchaser at the time, although that difficulty might be overcome by the further amendment the hon. member proposes to submit. It might happen that an employee might forget to serve a copy of the provisions of the section, and he should be allowed an interval in which to make the omission good. We should give some protection, not only to the hirer but also to the vendor in the conduct of the business, and so I oppose the amendment.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I wish to point out to the Minister what might happen if a person repossessed the furniture in a house. Would not the occupier of the premises have to go into rooms? Then the vendor has to ascertain where that man has gone. This is particularly inserted by Mr. Moseley because of advances to be made for furniture.

The Minister for Justice: The principle is the same.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: No, the vendor or his agent has to enter the house to repossess the furniture. I contend that the proper time for him to serve the notice is when he goes in to take the furniture. No doubt that is what Mr. Moseley intended. He did not provide for seven days' notice. Only if the house is locked could the vendor not enter and repossess the furniture. At present the vendor must give seven days' notice of repossession or pay a penalty of £20. I would allow the vendor to serve notice when he goes along to repossess. It must be a personal service, and if it is not given the vendor is liable to a penalty of £20. Of course the vendor cannot take away the furniture unless the hirer is there to receive the service of notice. I hope the Minister will agree to the amendment.

Mr. WATTS: It is not often the member for West Perth waxes eloquent on a somewhat futile argument. He suggests that the agent of the vendor goes down to take possession of some chattel and when he gets back confesses that he forgot to serve the notice. Even in that unlikely instance the

employer would have to accept the responsibility. When the chattel is out in the country and the vendor is in Perth sometimes the hirer is not aware that the chattel has been repossessed. On the other hand I have heard of an instance in which the vendor went to a farm to repossess some machinery, but when he got there he found the hirer was absent and the gates were padlocked.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Under the amendment that would be unfair to the vendor, for since the hirer of the machine was not present when the vendor went to repossess it the vendor would have to wait until the hirer returned. If that principle obtained, all that the hirer would have to do to avert repossession would be continually to dodge the vendor. I think the seven days' notice is very necessary and, in addition, is reasonable. There is nothing against the principle of serving a notice when the vendor is taking repossession.

Mr. McDONALD: I find that the point of service of notice is covered by Section 1 of the Interpretation Act.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause as previously amended agreed to.

Clause 3, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with an amendment.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1937-38.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from the 18th November, Mr. Sleeman in the Chair.

Vote—Unemployment Relief and State Labour Bureau, £68,727 (partly considered):

MRS. CARDELL-OLIVER (Subiaco) [9.27]: Listening to the excellent speech delivered by the Minister the other evening, one would have thought that Western Australia was the best State in the world for the unemployed. The Minister quoted for our edification some wonderful facts, but although those facts were very interesting I felt they were not quite correct. The Minister told us that the 35s., the 42s., and the 49s. men would receive a certain amount of extra work. I am sure all members were pleased to hear that, but I felt that also the 28s. men, the 21s. men and the 14s. men should have similar encouragement. I also feel that something should be done for a man

who has more than five children. Only the other day I came across a man in my electorate who was 64 years of age and had seven children. He was a "C" class man.

Mr. Marshall: Another one!

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: Yes, another one, and he had found extra work for two days during the week; but because he had found that extra work he was docked of a certain amount of the money that would have come to him in ordinary circumstances. I feel that is exceedingly wrong, for the man who has the spirit to go out and find overtime work should certainly get his extra money. I know a man who is receiving a margin for skill. He does piece-work and is receiving nearly £9 a week.

Mr. Cross: Do you complain about that?

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: Yes. I feel that the Government which is so hard up for money should at least provide for two families on that amount instead of one.

Mr. Styants: What is his occupation?

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: I do not know; but I do know that what I am saying is correct.

Mr. Cross: What is his name?

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: I am at the council chambers on Wednesday mornings and could give the hon. member the information he requires. I know of another man who has been on sustenance for some time. He then received private employment at £4 a week. Because he earned that money for a short time, he was deprived of rations. He had four children and no means whatever. Because he earned £4 a week for a little while, no consideration was given to the fact that after being on rations for many months he got behind with his rent and grocery account. He paid his account, but because he had received over the basic wage he was deprived of rations. I had to give this man food for himself and children for the time being. The 14s. and the 21s. men are in a hopeless state, in addition to other men who are receiving a little more. The Minister may know of the case of a man named Adams at the Heathcote Hospital. This man had for some years been on sustenance, and reached the stage when he was unable to take ordinary work which was offered him. He was given the option of work in the country, or no rations. On the way he jumped from the train because he felt he could not stand the work. He was taken to the Heathcote

Hospital where he has been for a few months in a hopeless state. He has a wife and three children. I do not think he has long to live. Through living on sustenance he was unable to undertake the hard work that was offered him. He tried to commit suicide, and since he has been in the hospital he has tried on several occasions to take his life. Men of this type should be given light work. I know the position of the Minister is a difficult one. It would be better to give those men who receive 21s., 28s. or 35s. two or three days' work in the week rather than give them just money. Let them be kept employed, and keep up to that standard at which they can be physically fit. I know of women who prefer, in the circumstances, to have children, because they feel they will receive an extra 7s. a week for each child. That sounds an awful thing to say. I realise I am saying something that is perhaps not understood by members. The extra 7s. a week in a home means quite a lot to these people. It is understandable that these women would prefer to have children than to remain on 14s. or 21s. a week. I could name many women who think that an extra child added to the family would be of advantage because it would bring in a few shillings a week extra. That is a great indictment against the Government.

Mr. Styants: It costs more than that to keep a child.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: That is true, but 7s. a week extra means a lot to a family that is living on 28s. or 35s. a week. These people think an extra 7s. a week makes a lot of difference to them.

Mr. Cross: You have a wonderful imagination.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: The member for Kalgoorlie said that if free milk were given to the children in the schools he did not know whether it would stop at that. He said perhaps they would also want food and clothes. They might indeed require food, and then perhaps clothes. I can see nothing wrong in that. If the parents have not enough money to keep the children, why should they not want these additional things? A man receiving 21s. a week and having to keep one child cannot live on that sum. He has to pay at least 8s. a week for the rent of one room with a kitchenette. He then has to buy food and clothing for three people. No man can do that. I suggest that

the Minister should not only arrange for the 35s. to 49s. men, but that he should also take into consideration the problem of the 14s. and 21s. men. I was not in the House when the Minister accused me of being a capitalist with socialistic ideas. I may be what is termed a capitalist, but do not regard myself as such. I do, however, look upon myself as a humanitarian. I consider that members on this side of the House are out to see that every person has sufficient to eat and sufficient with which to clothe himself and live.

Mr. Withers: They did not prove that when they were in power.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: I am sorry to say I was not in the House then. Since I have been here I have found that my colleagues have been out to help these people and wished to help them. I ask the Minister why there are three men to give out ration tickets, or see that the money is distributed to a few sustenance workers every week. I am glad the Minister puts his hands to his ears so that he may hear. I should like him to answer this question. There is first a man with green tickets, another to hand out ration cards, and then a man to see that the others do their work correctly. There are three men in one small room to see that sustenance men get the proper ration cards. The Minister will know there have been some great discrepancies in the unemployment department. I believe he is endeavouring to clean up whatever mess has occurred and to put things right. I want to know why it is necessary to have three men to do the job of one man. I firmly believe that an amount could be saved that could go to the 14s. and 21s. men. I wish to reply to the member for South Fremantle. He said that in the metropolitan area there was perhaps not the same need for free milk as there was in Fremantle. I assure him that the free milk council is giving free milk to 26 children in the North Fremantle area. He suggested that a subsidy should be given to Fremantle, but I think one should be given to the metropolitan area as a whole. The council is distributing milk to 13 schools, but only to those children whose parents receive less than the basic wage. I agree with the member for Forrest in wishing that free milk might be distributed to every child. I feel, however, that the Government is not in a position to do that. If it can be given to

those children who are really in great need and are terribly under-nourished we shall be doing the best we can at present. I hope the Minister will be able to do something for the 14s. and 21s. men and also see whether it is possible to provide free milk for every under-nourished child throughout the State, not alone at Fremantle or in the metropolitan area. In supporting the Estimates, I hope the Minister will give consideration to these points.

MR. NEEDHAM (Perth) [9.43]: If the arguments of the member for Subiaco were carried to their logical conclusion instead of decreasing the number of unemployed, they would lead to an increase in the number. She complained about some man receiving £9 a week. Others are receiving much less. She did not tell the occupation of that man.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: I do not know it, but I can give you his name and address.

Mr. NEEDHAM: That is on a par with many statement made by the hon. member.

Mr. Marshall: If he was a piece-worker he would only get what he earned.

Mr. NEEDHAM: I suggest to the hon. member that a little knowledge is a dangerous thing. If she wishes to improve the employment situation by reducing the wages one man receives and bringing him down to the level of others, that is not the right way to set about it. She complains about the number of men employed in some Government departments. That is not helping to solve the problem and reduce the number of unemployed. I should like the hon. member next time she speaks to tell us what the man who receives £9 a week is doing. What is his occupation? Is he a skilled artisan or a labourer? When we are acquainted with those details, we can better determine whether the statement of the hon. member is right or wrong.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: It is a fact.

Mr. NEEDHAM: I want some proof.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: I do not tell lies.

Mr. NEEDHAM: I cannot accept the suggestion of the hon. member as indicating one way by which the unemployed may be helped. The statement by the Minister regarding the new scheme that is to operate as from the New Year indicates a step in the right direction. It outlined an honest attempt on the part of the Government to get as near to full time for men

who depend upon the Government for work as is possible, always remembering the financial limitations imposed upon it. The scheme suggested that the men with the larger number of children—I refer to the men in receipt of the 35s., 42s., and 49s. rates—will, as from the beginning of the year, have to stand down for one week in six months, but while working will have full-time work on the job from start to finish. That is certainly a step in the right direction. It attains as nearly as possible the goal that the Government has had in view from its assumption of office in 1933. That goal has been to provide full-time employment for the men. I hope that later on it will be possible to extend that scheme to the men on the 14s., 21s. and 28s. rates. There is no doubt that their position has been very difficult, and still is, but I also realise that it presents a very difficult problem for the present or any Government to solve, bearing in mind the financial limitations imposed. I again remind the member for Subiaco that she is a member of a party whose representatives were in charge of the Treasury bench. If she were to compare the record of the Government, drawn from her political party, during the early depression years, with that of the present Government with regard to the treatment of the unemployed, she would find nothing to complain of. Although the conditions to-day are not as ideal as I, the Government or any member of the Committee would like them to be, we must always remember the financial situation that has to be faced, with the dread spectre of the Loan Council watching every move of each Government in Australia. No man or woman will contend that the miserable pittance of 7s. weekly is proper for an unemployed citizen. But there again I ask the member for Subiaco to compare the records of Governments that have held office in other States as well as in Western Australia. I refer mainly to Governments that are anti-Labour in their outlook. If she does that, she will find that in South Australia, New South Wales and Victoria the Governments do not pay even 7s. a week.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: A person cannot live on 7s. a week.

Mr. NEEDHAM: I do not say he can, but Governments holding the same political views as the hon. member are asking people to live on less than that amount per week.

None of us is so foolish as to think that 1s. per day is sufficient for anyone to live on in any country, let alone in this glorious land under the Southern Cross. Needs must when the devil drives, and the position of any State Treasurer, even though the member for York (Hon. C. G. Latham) or the member for Claremont (Mr. North) should be the Treasurer in the future, inevitably must be similarly difficult to that in which the Premier finds himself to-day. In fairness to each other, and to anyone saddled with the responsibility of Government, be he Labour or anti-Labour, we must always realise that no State Government in Australia to-day has control of the public purse. Each has to go cap in hand to the Loan Council and from there to the Commonwealth Bank for every penny obtainable. One of the worst days for any State Government in Australia was the day that the Financial Agreement was endorsed.

Mr. Patrick: The people voted for it.

Mr. NEEDHAM: That day saw the end of the sovereignty of the States. That will be the position for many years to come until the day arrives when the Financial Agreement is lifted out of the Constitution once more.

Mr. Patrick: But the people of Australia voted to put it into the Constitution.

Mr. NEEDHAM: I did not help to put it there.

Mr. Patrick: The people did by an overwhelming majority.

Mr. NEEDHAM: I think the hon. member's own people in this State helped to put it there. My voice was raised both here and in the Federal Parliament against the proposal, and I shall continue to speak against it. I believe even the Leader of the Opposition appreciates the position now, and that at this late hour the member for Swan (Mr. Sampson) has awakened to the fact that he made a mistake when he voted to include the Financial Agreement in the Constitution. There is one matter dealt with by the Estimates to which I desire to refer, namely, child welfare and the Children's Court. I compliment the Minister on the departure he has made regarding the magistrate in charge of the court. That was a wise move. For the first time in the history of the court it has been removed from a legal atmosphere and a homely atmosphere has been substituted. I do not refer to the "legal atmosphere" in any derogatory sense, but if there is any court that should be removed

from the atmosphere of the law it is the one in which endeavours are made to correct the children who have gone astray. The new magistrate has certainly made a good start in substituting a homely for the former legal atmosphere. I would like the Minister to go a step further and alter the name of the Children's Court, substituting therefor a more appropriate name indicating that the institution was advisory. While I congratulate the Minister on his departure regarding the magistracy, I cannot compliment him upon the external surroundings, or the situation, of the Children's Court. It is not at all a suitable place for children to assemble for such purposes. Quite rightly, everything is done to keep the names of the children out of the Press, and no publicity is given to the names of the parents. On the other hand, the court is situated at a place where the parents and children have to wait in the public gaze. Everyone passing by knows what the parents and the children are there for and can ascertain who they are. Then, again, the court is a furnace in summer and an ice chest in winter. I have previously suggested to the Minister that the court should be removed to another place where there would be complete privacy, apart altogether from the question of the names of the parents and children being kept out of the Press. All concerned should be as far away as possible from the public gaze. I hope that something will be done in that respect before long, and I again commend the suggestion to the Minister.

MR. SAMPSON (Swan) [9.55]: I regret that I was temporarily absent from the Chamber when the Minister introduced his Estimates, but I have read his speech and I realise that the work of providing for the unemployed is very difficult indeed. The trouble is that the problem is not being attacked at the root. Unfortunately unemployment is the result of incapacity to do skilled work and the number of unskilled workers is far in excess of requirements. The position to-day whereby sustenance is in some instances provided, means that the morale of those receiving the help is seriously injured. I appreciate the courtesy of those who are in charge of the office and acknowledge that they do, to the utmost of their ability, all that is possible. The problem is how to find permanent work for the men. The present situation is very cruel and is one for which, in most instances, the

men affected are not responsible. The Government may do its best to find money for sustenance, but that does not cure the evil. The policy that has been adopted for years past is one that would be exceedingly difficult to abandon in any instance, but worse than the sustenance scheme is the supply of rations. Unfortunately, the supply of rations is carried out even to-day. I know of one instance regarding a man who has eight children. He is receiving £2 9s. 6d. a week and he seems to be quite reconciled to the idea. The other morning I went out to see how he was progressing. There was no evidence on his holding that any work was being carried out and the man was quite convinced that £2 9s. 6d. was quite inadequate for his needs. I agreed with him, but I think it should be an obligation on the part of the department, or rather on the part of the Minister, because in the final analysis he is the one concerned, to see that work is done by men of the type to whom I refer. I was visited to-day by a man who informed me that while he could not get sustenance, he could get rations. I think that is wrong in principle, and even if carried on for a short period only, is greatly to the detriment of the man himself.

The Minister for Employment: What is the difference between sustenance and rations?

Mr. SAMPSON: The difference is that a man who receives sustenance works for it.

Mr. Doney: That is relief work.

Mr. SAMPSON: Relief covers both sustenance and rations, and rations are supplied by tickets, which enable the person to buy meat and groceries, and certain other requirements. I appreciate the difficulty and realise how easy it is to criticise, but the provision of rations to men able to work is a bad system. Enforced idleness soon becomes a habit. If one went far enough back in the history of the human race one would find that work is entirely a habit which has grown up during the passage of years, and it does not take long to throw off the habit. In the early days of history men did not do work as we know it to-day. Work appears to be one of the results of civilisation. I am not saying anything against it. It becomes a hobby if one starts early enough, and devotes himself seriously to it. I have spoken so often in regard to the unfair treatment the youth of this country receive in respect to the right to learn a trade

that I hesitate to refer to it beyond making the brief reference which I have made. Boys should have an opportunity, but so long as the position continues as it is to-day, so long will there be unemployment. Life to many of those who have no trade is something scarcely worth while. It is a burden. Work is given as a charity and the number seeking unskilled work is so great that it is impossible for it to go round. I was pleased to hear the Minister say he hoped the time was not far distant when sustenance to the extent of the basic wage would be available, and better than that will be the time when it will not be necessary for sustenance to be given at all, and when men will be able to find work in the different departments—on road construction, railway construction, and so on—as men of comparative independence, carrying on the work as they did some years ago. In Auckland, a policy has been adopted by the Government that is worthy of consideration by our Government. There a scheme has been adopted to give employment to single young men on sustenance. The department concerned has adopted a policy whereby it continues to pay the customary allowance of £1 per week and the young men are encouraged to accept work with farmers. The farmers on their part make up the wages to £2 12s. 6d. a week, with keep in addition. That is a greatly improved method of dealing with unemployment over the method of having young men chip weeds off the footpath, or do other work that is equally valueless. The system at Auckland has much to commend it. The Government incurs no additional expenditure, and the farm labour problem is partly solved. The Minister will agree that so far in the eastern districts, farmers find it difficult during harvesting and other busy farming periods to obtain the labour essential if farm work is to be carried out as it should be. In addition—and this is the most important point—the youths concerned are given an opportunity to learn farming and, after a period of approximately six months, they are, in most cases, able to retain a job on the land. The practical training they receive during that six months places them in a position, if they are anxious to remain on the land, to secure a job and thereby obtain a living. I am aware that something of the sort was in existence in this State for a while and I have wondered why it was not continued. Undoubtedly the young men of

this State would be better off under such a scheme than in receiving sustenance rations or any other consideration. The farmers in Auckland were subsidised by the Government to the extent of the amount usually paid by the Government in sustenance, and the youths were given an opportunity to become qualified workers on the land. That would permanently solve the problem and would not deprive anyone of a position were the system adopted in this State.

The Minister for Employment: Your last Government tried that scheme, and abandoned it.

Mr. SAMPSON: It is a very good scheme, and if the Minister gave consideration to it, he might decide to take it up again. In New Zealand it is proving successful, and in the interests of the young men concerned it is important that it should be tried out here. Ultimately these young men would obtain work independently of the Government sustenance and later on be able to secure holdings of their own.

The Minister for Employment: Why should we not subsidise labour for printers as well?

Mr. SAMPSON: It would be necessary perhaps to do that if the Minister were conducting a printing office. It would require a good deal of thought to make it pay its way. However, I am not suggesting that. There is a shortage of printers, I believe, but that could be got over by the extension of the apprenticeship system and the relaxation of the strict limitation of apprentices permitted, and since the Minister is interested in this I would say, as on different occasions previously, that employers themselves should be required to employ such apprentices as the award permits. I should like to stress the two subjects I have mentioned. I commend to the Minister consideration of the elimination of rations and the substitution of work for those capable of working, those who are not so capable to continue to receive assistance from the Child Welfare Department. The second point, the subsidising of farmers for the employment of young men on the land, is a thoroughly practicable scheme and one which, if carried out, must do good to all concerned. It would relieve the Minister of some of the worries which must be incidental to his work, and would prove an advantage to the State.

MR. WARNER (Mt. Marshall) [10.10]: I do not desire to say much on these Esti-

mates, but I am pleased to note that the Minister for Employment was in a position to advise us that he will be able to afford some extra work for those men who, unfortunately, are compelled to seek work on sustenance. We shall never get out of our difficulties until we get all men back on full-time work. Of course we should be carrying on our public works while the labour is available, but unfortunately the money is not there. However, I trust we shall not have many more months during which we shall have to continue keeping the workers in the misery and suffering they have gone through during the past five or six years. The general worker of Australia is a very loyal person. He has reached the turning point on many occasions and his heart has been sad on realising that he had to live on the very small amount of money available to him. From what I heard the other night it would appear that somebody said that the men working on the roads sat down and took things quietly until a motor car came along, when they all got up and turned to on their work, sitting down again as soon as the motor car passed. In other words, they were just a lot of loafers. I do not believe that for a moment. I understand that all men working on the roads are under gangers provided by the local road boards, and the road boards are satisfied with the work the men are doing. So I don't approve of such tales being told, and I am satisfied our party does not stand for them. On many occasions have I been going along roads in my electorate, sometimes accompanied by a man from the metropolis, and invariably my friend has declared that the work those men on the road were doing was far too hard for him to carry out. Moreover I can remember the time when I myself had to sweat in a similar manner. It is only a person who has never had to work harder than is entailed in using a toothpick who would castigate honest workers who were keeping picks and shovels going the whole of the long day. I hope that next year the season will be better and more money available, which would give us an opportunity to put men back on to full-time work. I sympathise with the worker, for I know that the farmers I represent work just as hard as their horses.

MR. HEGNEY (Middle Swan) [10.14]: I congratulate the Minister for Employment on the fact that he has been able to bring about certain effective improvements for the men who have been on relief work for a period, but I hope he will not take much notice of the suggestion made by the member for Swan (Mr. Sampson). That hon. member put up the proposal that for the employment of single men who are out of work the farmers should be subsidised in the payment of their wages. As the Minister himself interjected, that system was tried out in a small way by a previous Minister who was supported by the member for Swan. The late Mr. Scaddan, when Minister for Employment, instituted that system in a small degree, and the result was that the Minister found that some of the farmers to whom the subsidy had been paid were not employing it for the payment of wages, were not paying it to the men employed. We know it is because of their difficulties that some farmers cannot pay wages. How many wage-earners who have worked for farmers have invariably received their wages in full? A farmer goes before the Farmers' Debts Adjustment Board and is ranked only 60 per cent. on his wages account. Yet the member for Swan suggests that the wages paid by farmers should be subsidised. However, I hope the Minister will not accept the advice tendered by the member for Swan. It is remarkable that while it is necessary for labour to be made available for the garnering of the harvest, what the farmers require is a reservoir of labour, and it must be skilled labour. But when such labour is required by the farmers for only a short season, say, three months in a year, it is expected that that volume of labour should be available just when the season is coming on. From the point of view of the farm labourers themselves, it is important that they should have further work to carry them on. Such is the history of wages paid in the farming industry that very few men get sufficient wages from the industry to save enough to get married on and rear a family.

Mr. Seward: Oh rot!

Mr. HEGNEY: I have come in contact with a great many single men who follow farming occupations. They go to the Employment Department seeking work after the harvest has cut out. It is difficult for

them to get assistance from the department. They are referred to the Employment Bureau, where they are told that certain farming work is available. However, very few men can get more than 30s. and their keep at farming work.

Mr. Seward: They cannot drive a team of horses.

Mr. HEGNEY: It cannot be said that all farm workers in this country are incapable of driving a team of horses. I have perused references given by farmers to some of those men, and those references have spoken in glowing terms of the qualities of the workers. But the farmers pay very low wages, so low as not to give a man a chance to save and get married. The member for Swan suggests that the Government subsidise the payment of farm labour, but I hope the Minister will disregard the suggestion. The employment of single men and of youths is of paramount importance to this State. In other days much of the work now made available to married men was the preserve of single men. I speak particularly of the public works of this country. To-day single men are excluded from those works because of the exigencies of the times. Many of the men who are not working for farmers at low wages and are not in a decent occupation are working in the South-West for approximately 30s. a week sustenance, and have been on that racket for close on five years.

Mr. Sampson: Would not they get that much if they worked for the farmers?

Mr. HEGNEY: Many of them will not work for farmers, and it is useless to try to compel them to accept that class of work. When Mr. Kenneally was administering the department it was the policy that when farm work was available the men must accept it. The men, however, say that they will not work for farmers because they do not always get the wages they have earned. Those men speak from bitter experience, and they are reluctant to accept work in the farming industry. They refuse such work because the conditions are bad. The housing conditions, in some instances, are intolerable, and when they have done the work, they are not sure of getting their money. As I mentioned, single men have been working for many years in the south-west part of the State and all they have an opportunity to earn is 30s. a week. They have to accept the work because of the economic insecurity in which

they find themselves, caused by the inherent rottenness of the existing system throughout the world. Unemployment is rampant throughout the world, and that condition of affairs is likely to continue. Those men seem to have no place at all in the sun. It is essential that the State should have a natural increase of population. There has been a slight natural increase. Those men, however, are segregated in the South-West and have no contact with civilisation. Mr. Kenneally laid down a policy of providing employment near the mining areas, so that the men might get into better occupations, but a good many of them have been segregated in the South-West all those years and it is time that a considerable improvement was effected in their conditions.

Mr. Sampson: They are not being confined there.

Mr. HEGNEY: It is a pity the hon. member is not confined. When unemployed men were confined in the Swan electorate at Hovea, the hon. member did everything possible to get them moved to another electorate. A thousand of them were in the Middle Swan electorate on the basis of receiving their keep and 1s. a week. At first they were paid 5s. a week, but the financial emergency measure applied and the amount was cut down by 4s. The men that were incarcerated in Blackboy were paid 1s. a week.

Hon. C. G. Latham: They were not incarcerated at all.

Mr. HEGNEY: The workers in the South-West are confined there because of economic insecurity and because of unemployment in other parts of the State. We as Labour men have been returned to Parliament to do the best possible under the existing system, but a system that permits of such conditions to continue can only be described as rotten. The Government has endeavoured to be sympathetic and has made considerable advances in the administration regarding those men, and will continue to do the best possible consistent with the available resources. Knowing the conditions under which men and women are trying to rear children and pay rent on the present basic wage, I regard it as remarkable that they are able to struggle along. Unfortunately, unemployment is likely to be with us for many years. I am not a pessimist, but I cannot help believing that Governments will be faced with a serious unemployment problem for many years. Let us consider what is happening in other countries. The indus-

tries of the United States of America cannot be said to be conducted on socialistic lines. Nor can it be said that there is a socialistic Government in office there. Big business and the financiers have had full play in America, and yet millions of workers are seeking employment and are likely to continue to do so. As recently as the 14th November, President Roosevelt appealed to the nation, saying that unemployment was one of the most bitter and galling problems at present afflicting mankind. He, like others, is trying to find a solution of the problem.

Mr. Marshall: He knows the solution and knows it well.

Mr. HEGNEY: Unemployment is the problem of the age and apparently will continue to be so. We, as representatives of the people, have pleaded for improvement here and improvement there, but we are only tinkering with the problem. Those men are just the flotsam and jetsam of the present economic system. As the years go by, more and more men are being put out of employment and they are compelled to seek assistance from the Government. Thus Governments are forced, by the exigencies of the times, to provide a bigger public works policy, but unfortunately the policy of the Loan Council is to restrict public works activities considerably.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Why do not you blame the right people? The Loan Council has nothing to do with it.

Mr. HEGNEY: The hon. gentleman knows everything about it.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I know that much.

Mr. HEGNEY: The financial institutions and the commercial community have been urging Governments through the Loan Council to restrict the loan works programmes. The hon. member knows full well that at the last meeting of the Loan Council, when there was an agitation to provide additional funds, the Loan Council refused to do so.

Hon. C. G. Latham: The Loan Council refused to give Governments money to squander.

Mr. HEGNEY: The fact is that loan works have been cut down considerably by the policy of the Loan Council.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Do not you think the Loan Council knows that your Government is spending money on trolley buses that are unnecessary?

Mr. HEGNEY: I know what the hon. member's Government spent money on.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Tell us.

Mr. HEGNEY: I am not to be deflected from the point I wish to make. The member for Claremont urged an enlargement of the present public works programme. He knows it has been the policy for the last two years on the part of the Loan Council to restrict public works programmes. That means difficulties for the Government in the way of finding employment for those who are thrown out of work by private industry. No matter what Government is in power, it will have to provide a more extensive public works programme to absorb men who are out of work. The member for Nedlands also urged a wider public works policy, an Empire programme, with the object of absorbing men who are the flotsam and jetsam of private industry. The State Government has done its utmost to provide the necessary employment. It had to follow on the conditions that were left when the previous Government went out of office, but even 12 months later the position had immeasurably improved.

Hon. C. G. Latham: We laid the foundations for you, and took all the rough stuff.

Mr. HEGNEY: Even a supporter of the hon. member urged the necessity for subsidising farm labour, when the Minister belonging to his party found that unworkable because the farmers did not pay the wages that were due.

Mr. Sampson: You should keep to rations.

Mr. HEGNEY: Single men are in difficulties. The Government will have to consider their welfare in conjunction with the welfare of married men, and when providing schemes for relief, see that they are not lost sight of. They are able-bodied men and capable of doing work if given the opportunity. All the opportunity the single men get is to go to the South-West at 30s. a week. It is time that position was altered and that they were given a better opportunity than they have been given. Another very important problem is that of providing employment for youths. Apparently private industry does not want to employ them. Hundreds of young fellows are leaving school, some with excellent educations, others equipped from the technical schools and some having reached the matriculation standard at the University. They cannot find situations for

themselves, and are growing up to manhood as hewers of wood and drawers of water. Mr. Wolff was appointed by the Government some time ago to investigate the problem of youth employment both here and in the Eastern States. The Minister has made no reference to what the Commissioner has to say, nor as to any conclusions he has reached. Some information should be given to members concerning the activities of the Commissioner. A conference of State and Federal Ministers was held to discuss the problem of youth, but nothing has arisen out of that.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Except £100,000 from the Commonwealth Government.

Mr. HEGNEY: That Government made available about £22,000.

The Minister for Employment: £14,000.

Mr. HEGNEY: That was provided for the purpose of solving the problem, but nothing further has been done. In the interests of the State and the Commonwealth as a whole it is essential that the problem should be tackled at once. A considerable amount of propaganda is abroad suggestive of youth being able to defend the country. And yet these youths do not get the opportunity to earn a decent living in the country they are expected to defend. The Commonwealth Government possesses great resources, and could help the State Government to effect a considerable improvement in the situation. It pledged itself at the previous elections to tackle this problem, but has done nothing. At the last Federal election I listened to speakers stating that they would solve the problem and I hope they will do so. I suggest that if a Minister from this State attends the next Premiers' Conference he should bring this vital problem before the meeting. Many parents are very worried because they cannot place their boys in employment. Members opposite apparently stand for a continuance of the present system, namely that the Government should take their hands off private enterprise and leave private enterprise to do the job. Members opposite failed miserably to find employment for the single men, and the present Government is obliged to endeavour to do what it can to relieve the situation.

Mr. Sampson: Why not try yourself out and start something?

Mr. HEGNEY: I cannot hear the hon. member. The Government has brought about a considerable improvement in the situation.

Even before the relief scheme was inaugurated many men on relief did not get as much employment under the old scheme as under the new proposals. Before the depression many men were only able to get from seven to nine months' work in the year because of the then economic situation. Unemployment has been with us for many years, and will continue to be with us. The Government will be forced by the economic situation to provide more work than it is providing to-day.

Mr. Sampson: Give us the solution.

Mr. HEGNEY: Many men who are now on relief work have for five or six years done excellent service for the State. This is proved by statements made by responsible engineers. The work on the Canning dam, carried out by men on relief work, is, they say, comparable to that which was done on the Mundaring Weir, under quite a different system. It is true, as the member for Mt. Marshall has said, there are people who would sneer at and condemn the type of labour available to road boards and the Main Roads Board. I deplore such a statement. Having regard to all the circumstances the men engaged in that labour are giving and have given excellent value for the money they receive. These men have been given work on rotation and have done extremely well. The Minister for Works admits that in connection with the Canning reservoir, and it was admitted by his predecessor and the engineers in charge. Not only did the men give excellent service, but the cost per man was comparable with the cost per man on other big engineering works in this country. I complained the other evening that there was no item on the Estimates dealing with main roads, and suggested that over £750,000 was spent, and that Parliament should have some say in the expenditure of such a big sum of money. Apparently members of the Country Party were satisfied with that position. One of their own number in another place traduced the labour that was made available for the construction of roads in the country. It ill becomes any man, particularly if he himself has not to toil in the heat and in all kinds of weather, as these men have to do, to say such a thing. A man is unchristian and inhuman when he says that these men are loafing and will not do their work.

Mr. Boyle: He spoke only for himself.

Mr. HEGNEY: I hope he did speak only for himself. Capitalists agree that no matter what the kind of employment, industrial fatigue occurs at the end of, say, a couple of hours, and that a spell of ten minutes or so reinvigorates men. An American engineer named Taylor studied the question of fatigue with a view to utilising labour properly. Experience, according to him, has shown that if men have a short spell they become much more capable of producing effectively for another period than they would be if kept at their task uninterruptedly. Therefore the gentleman who made sneering references to relief workers on the roads does not know what he is talking about. I doubt whether he ever had a shovel or a hammer in his hands; otherwise he would not make such sneering remarks. The Minister hopes, under his scheme, to be able to place about 300 men before Christmas. I do not know whether they have yet been placed, but if not I hope he will see that they are placed speedily. Christmas is upon us, and many of those men have been seeking employment for months past. The Minister's scheme is excellent if work is continuously organised and provided; but if for months on end 300 or 400 men have to wait to get further employment, they cannot derive the benefits that the Minister has announced. It is essential that there should be complete co-ordination between the Employment Department and the Public Works Department, so that the men as they finish one job will be able to go on to another without standing down. I hope that for the men now standing down employment will be found very soon. The bulk of the men on relief work seek employment; and if they cannot get a job locally, they are willing to go to any district to secure it. It is the Minister's duty to see that as many as possible of these men are placed in work before Christmas. The scheme has been in vogue for so long that the time has come to close down the Employment Department. The present Minister's predecessor stated here that he hoped to see the Employment Department joined to the Public Works Department. It seems that the former department is destined to continue for a considerable period. Recently I asked a question with regard to the inspectorial staff, particularly as to the appointment of Detective Hughes. That offi-

cer was on loan from the Police Department, but has now resigned from the detective branch and become an officer of the Employment Department, with nine inspectors under him. In my opinion, half of those inspectors should be done away with. The Employment Department receives few applications now, and so the need for an army of inspectors no longer exists. At least half of them could be found other employment. The salary paid to an inspector would suffice to provide full-time work for two or three wages men, and thus the department also would benefit. I congratulate the Minister on having made the best possible effort to provide work. Whilst there are numbers of men purely on relief, that fact is due to the absence of full co-ordination between the Employment Department and the Public Works Department. Many engineers are reluctant to start fresh jobs just before Christmas, preferring to stand off until the New Year. Employment in the meantime would be of considerable help to many men. The same remarks apply to the closing months of the financial year. During May and June private employers, like the Government, are apt to retrench considerable numbers of men, no provision being made for further jobs meanwhile. That is a matter of organisation. The Minister's scheme as announced is excellent provided full effect is given to it; but if large numbers of men are to be out of work for months on end, on bare relief, they will not derive from the scheme such benefits as the Minister has indicated. I hope that when the hon. gentleman submits his Estimates next year, they will represent a considerable improvement for the men.

MR. TONKIN (North-East Fremantle) [10.48]: As a rule the Estimates for the Department of the Minister for Employment provoke considerable discussion. This occasion is no exception. It is an excellent thing that the department should come in for a good deal of discussion and that there should be a fair amount of criticism; otherwise there would be a danger of members accepting the present conditions as being satisfactory, with consequent bad results for men who are obliged year after year to seek employment under relief schemes. The previous speaker has dealt comprehensively with the Estimates of the department. Prob-

ably it would meet my desires if I were to say ditto to him and sit down. However, a good case will bear a slight amount of repetition; and there are two or three points upon which I desire to say a few words. The most important phase of unemployment to-day is that in connection with single men. Unfortunately we cannot congratulate any Minister in Western Australia, or for that matter any Minister in any other part of Australia, on what has been done for unemployed single men. For the most part they have been left severely alone, the reason being that that phase of the problem is the most difficult. Successive Ministers have devoted most of their attention to making provision for married men and their dependants, and, so far as was possible, have left single men to fend for themselves. It is true there has been some modification in that respect. At times a number of single men are picked up for special relief jobs, mostly clearing in the remote parts of the State. A few apprentices have been trained and young men have been absorbed in prospecting schemes. Generally speaking, however, no definite plan has been drawn up for the provision of employment for those young men and women who were unfortunate to have left school at the outset of the depression. It is common knowledge that there are hundreds of young men who have been unemployed for upwards of five or six years or have never had a regular job. Some have worked only a day or two in the year. It is to those young men and women that we must look to carry on the affairs of the State in the years to come. We cry out repeatedly because of the fall in the birthrate. We direct attention to the fact that if the birthrate does not improve the annihilation of the race will eventuate. Here is one of the reasons. We cannot expect a young man who has never had a job and has no prospect of one to seek a mate and get married. He would be foolish if he did under such circumstances. Therefore if we desire to improve the birthrate we must make it possible for such young men to have a future. We must guarantee them work of some description. This problem is not unique in Western Australia or even in Australia. It must confront Governments in every part of the world. My reading informs me that in a number of countries considerable attention has been given to the problem and much data collated. Has the department in this

State made any inquiries abroad? Has the department sought to find out in any way what has been done for the young people in other countries? If so, have the officials decided to adopt any such scheme? So far as I can ascertain, no evidence is forthcoming of any special scheme being adopted for the provision of work for those people. Daily I come in contact with young men who find it impossible to get work. The fact that such young fellows are out of employment saps their morale and that will eventually re-act upon the nation considerably to its detriment. We have, it is true, done something towards ameliorating the conditions of the adult workers, and I am pleased to say that over a period of years there has been successive improvement in that direction. But up to the present we have done scarcely anything for the young men and woman about whom I have been speaking. I hope that something will be done to make provision for them. The member for Middle Swan (Mr. Hegney) mentioned that a report was due from the Royal Commissioner charged with the responsibility of making inquiries into youth employment matters. That report is overdue. If the Commissioner was unable to find out anything, we should be told so. If, on the other hand, he has been able to arrive at certain conclusions, we should be told what they are in order that we may see if there is anything to be done for these young people. I have stated often, and I repeat again, that I do not expect any one State to be able to deal with the problem on its own. This is a question where Federal aid is essential and should be forthcoming. In view of statements made during the last Federal elections, we ought to be able to anticipate some help from the Lyons Government. Whether or not it is to be forthcoming remains to be seen, and our experience in the past has not been very satisfactory. I hope for the sake of the young people that efforts will be made by the Federal Government to assist the States to adopt a worth-while plan. Up to the present we have had about £17,000 with which to handle the problem in this State, which is ridiculous.

Hon. C. G. Latham: We have had other money but the Government could not find any use for it.

Mr. TONKIN: The provision of £17,000 only is practically useless. What is required is hundreds of thousands of pounds. We do

not want the problem handed over solely to the States, but the Commonwealth Government should take a hand in dealing with the situation. It is for that Government so to organise the Commonwealth work that a certain proportion of the men will be absorbed.

Mr. Hegney: I heard Mr. Nairn say that the Federal Government had made £130,000 available to the State and the money had not been used. That was not true.

Hon. C. G. Latham: It was true and the money was mainly used in connection with forestry.

Mr. TONKIN: I will not argue that point at this stage but will content myself with reiterating my hope that something will be done in the near future. So far as I can see, scarcely anything of material benefit has been done for young people. With regard to the class of work performed by men in receipt of sustenance, it has been said that relief workers do not give a fair return for the wages they receive, that they loaf on the job, and take every advantage of each opportunity to dodge the boss. Possibly that may be done on some jobs, but that is not confined to relief workers. All men do that at one time or another. Relief workers as a class labour just as hard and conscientiously as anyone else. We have had definite evidence that when placed on big jobs they have carried out their part of the undertaking to the satisfaction of those concerned. The Leader of the Opposition will recall that a year or two ago he attended a function at the Mosman Park reservoir. That undertaking was carried out by relief workers. When the Minister was dealing with some of the details in connection with the work he mentioned that the job had been completed within the departmental estimate. That goes to show that the relief workers must have acted in the proper way. They must have done their job; otherwise the Estimates of the department would have been considerably exceeded. That is not an isolated instance. Any person who deliberately sets out to give the impression that the relief worker is a slacker is doing a grave injustice to those men, because, as a class, they do their job as well as anybody else. And if they did not, there would be some justification for their going slow on the job because they are not given the best of conditions. They have not full-time employment. There are times when they

are standing down and in receipt of rations only, and that would affect the output of labour when they returned to a job. After having been idle, in some cases for long periods, there would be some justification if they did not do the amount of work expected of them. But my experience has been that they work as well as anybody else and earn the money they are paid. I hope every effort will be made to see that the jobs follow one after the other fairly quickly. I am satisfied that the scheme outlined by the Minister will be a big improvement on what has been obtaining lately, but I am afraid we will lose the benefit of that scheme because of the long waits in between the jobs. If there is a lot of work available so that they will keep within the rates of sustenance to which they are entitled, there will be no cause for complaint, but it appears to me that there is a grave danger that if one job is completed there may be a considerable delay before another is put in hand, and if that is the case the earnings of a relief worker for a 12-monthly period will be much reduced. I hope steps will be taken to minimise the standing-down periods which must occur from time to time. I desire to make a reference to the Child Welfare Department. That is a department where the most liberal spirit possible should be shown. The people who are handled by the department are those who probably experience the very worst of conditions this life offers. For the most part they are widows or orphans or incapacitated men, and the amount the department can give in ordinary circumstances is so small as to keep those persons who receive allowances down to a minimum and to keep them on bare necessities, depriving them of practically all comforts. I hope that in the administration of this department the most liberal view possible will be taken when allowances are being made. The department should err on the side of liberality when it comes to a question of deciding how much should be paid in certain circumstances. We should not be too careful in our calculations in seeing that we do not overpay a shilling here or a shilling there, for every additional shilling so overpaid may be a loss to the Treasury in actual money but a benefit to the country, inasmuch as the people who get the money will be able to enjoy a little higher standard of living than would other-

wise have been the case. There are hundreds of instances where people in receipt of sustenance are men and women suffering from some ailment which renders their lives a misery. They need special diet or medicine and without money they cannot obtain such necessities. I hope nothing will be done by the department to deprive those people of those comforts or rather necessities, because in most instances they have only a few years to live and we should do everything possible to bring a little happiness and brightness into their lives. Even though we may do some cheeseparing in other departments, such as the Public Works Department and the Education Department, we should not use the pruning knife at all in the Child Welfare Department, and I hope that even though the vote may be exceeded by some thousands of pounds, the expenditure will not be watched too closely in that direction. A noticeable improvement has taken place in the administration of the department. A month or two ago it was difficult to get correspondence answered within a reasonable time and cases that were submitted were tardily dealt with. In recent months there has been an improvement and I do not think any hon. member has cause for complaint. Any case put up at the present time is dealt with with great alacrity and in fewer hours than it previously took days the cases are attended to, and where assistance is merited it is forthcoming. Whoever is responsible is entitled to congratulation for that, and that congratulation I freely give.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 11.10 p.m.

Legislative Council.

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

BILL—FINANCIAL EMERGENCY TAX ASSESSMENT ACT AMENDMENT.

Further report of Committee adopted.

BILL—BUSH FIRES.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. W. J. MANN (South-West) [4.37]: Those of us who have experienced the devastation and destruction created by bush fires in the South-West and I might say in the south-western land division of this State, will welcome the Bill. For many years, almost since the earliest settlement, bush fires have taken a tremendous toll of the natural wealth of the forest country. I do not think any man could compute the monetary value of the rich timber that has been lost to the State as a consequence, nor could he visualise the loss to the State created by the destruction of young growth in the forest country. In that part of the State, bush fires have become so common each year as to be accepted as something in the form of a natural cycle, something that has been ordained to take place during the summer months. Quite a number of men in the country contend that these huge conflagrations in the forest areas are something almost decreed by Providence. They used to tell you that you must burn the forest and sometimes, as they spoke, they proceeded to put a match to it. It is pleasing to note that in latter days, at any rate, that reasoning is losing ground, and a new and better outlook is being adopted. The absence of new growth and the many cut-out areas following the wasteful practice for so long permitted to the old-time timber-cutter has brought about a revulsion of feeling, and those men are regarding forest conservation in a new light and doing what they can to aid in the suppression of