

fixed that value for five years, either in favour of the taxpayer or against him, according to the occasion when the valuation was made. I have made these observations because I hope the Minister will talk over the matter with his colleagues. Meanwhile I will support the Bill.

On motion by Hon. G. W. Miles, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 6.12 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 30th October, 1930.

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

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Mr. Wells, leave of absence for two months granted to Mr. Teesdale (Roebourne) on the ground of ill-health.

BILL—COLLIE RECREATION AND PARK LANDS RESERVE.

Introduced by the Minister for Lands and read a first time.

MOTION—COST OF LIVING.

To Inquire by Select Committee.

MR. MILLINGTON (Mt. Hawthorn) [4.36]: I move—

That a select committee be appointed to inquire into the cost of the necessaries of life, particularly in regard to the disparity in the price received by producers for primary products and the price charged to consumers.

This motion has a two-fold object, one that an inquiry be held into the unnecessarily high prices charged for the necessaries of life mainly owing to the high cost of distribution, and the other the unjustifiable burden that is placed upon industry. I propose to deal with the question from those two standpoints. There has been a general demand in recent months that the cost of production should be reduced. Side by side with that there has been a demand that wages should be reduced. Some people go so far as to suggest that the Arbitration Court should go into recess and that the awards of the court should be scrapped. The position is so desperate that all sorts of remedies have been suggested. Therefore I contend we are justified in turning the searchlight upon every section of expenditure involved not only in the production but in the distribution of the necessaries of life. It is imperative for us to face the problems confronting us. They persist, and any attempt to get by them or over them must fail. People engaged in industry, when they begin to suffer, demand some sacrifice by other sections of the community. It seems to me that one section is attempting to blame and to pass the responsibility on to others. That is not to be wondered at, because people in trouble naturally look for a way out and, if they are bearing an undue burden, they naturally desire that other people shall be called upon to share the load. At present a vast number of people are unemployed, and throughout all industry there is a rationing of work, which means that industry generally has been shrinking. If we could only get up-to-date statistics, I am afraid they would reveal a very serious diminution in the number of people employed in our primary and secondary industries. Therefore anything that has a bearing upon the present position of industry is of interest, and anything that might relieve the burden is worthy of investigation and consideration. The demand for our products is declining on account of the decreased spending capacity

of the community. Although primary industries this year have produced more than their quota, we are in a worse position than ever before in the history of the State. I propose to show justification for an inquiry, a stocktaking, an endeavour to discover the weakness in our methods of conducting industry and the wastefulness of present practices. I realise that we shall have to work our way out of our difficulties, but we shall also have to do a lot of thinking. A portion of the motion that warrants earnest consideration is that referring to the disparity in the prices producers receive for their primary products and the prices charged to consumers. The general public have not received the advantage from the very serious fall in the prices of primary products. Those prices have fallen below the cost of production. Much is said about decreasing the cost of production, but that cost has not been decreased though commodity prices have fallen. The problem has not been solved so far as the primary producer is concerned, and a difficulty is that the State is not getting the advantage it should reap from the extremely low prices ruling for primary products. That in itself constitutes ground for inquiry. Although in times past we adopted a most expensive and wasteful method of distribution, many of the old accepted ideas will have to be submitted to close scrutiny and altered if they are to continue to exist under present conditions. Last evening a Bill was introduced by the Attorney General seeking to alter the ordinary course of business as regards the creditors of primary producers. In ordinary times such a measure would have met with strong opposition. It is an indication of the condition of the industry that such a proposal should be made and that there is every probability of its receiving general support. Just as we recognise the extraordinary position in that respect, so I maintain the time has arrived when attention must be given to the question of distribution. I am aware that this question has been tackled before and, although many suggestions have been offered, very little alteration has been made. I believe the times are such that there will be a general demand from the public, and particularly from the primary producers, who are not receiving the value of their products, for the tackling of wasteful methods of distribution. I do not suggest that those engaged in distribu-

tion of the necessities of life are doing particularly well. That is not the point. I have not set out to show that. What I seek to establish is that a wide disparity exists between prices received by the primary producers and those charged to the public. Since everything is being submitted to close analysis and investigation, my suggestion is that attention should be turned to that phase of our economic life. In ordinary times no notice would be taken of such a suggestion. It is only when people become desperate that they are prepared for desperate remedies, prepared to depart from the ordinary, accepted practice. In my opinion, people are now in that frame of mind. I believe that ways and means can be devised to alter the position for the betterment of the community generally. As I do not wish to take up too much time, my idea is to give instances of excessive cost of distribution of the main necessities of life. In Western Australia I start at the foundation when I deal with wheat first. The wheat industry to-day is at its lowest ebb. Wheat, if not actually, yet economically, is at a lower price than ever before in our history. Although I shall not deal with the matter elaborately, I call attention to the first stage in the treatment of wheat—flour milling. I am not in a position to say what should be charged by the flour millers. There is, however, the outstanding fact of the difference between the prices charged for the milled products, flour and bran and pollard, here and those charged in South Australia. I quote from the last "Commonwealth Year Book" available, that for 1929, which on page 845 deals with flour mills throughout the Commonwealth. As it happens, South Australia treats just about the same quantity of wheat as Western Australia. I shall not enter into all the details, but examination shows that there is nothing extraordinary as regards the expenses of flour millers here. Their wages, capital cost, and other industrial factors are similar to those obtaining in South Australia; in some cases, charges here are lower. I quote the figures merely to show that the value of the raw material, the wheat, in South Australia is £1,633,000 and in this State £1,640,000. The added value of the product, ex mill, in South Australia is £204,970, and in this State £314,215, an excess of £110,000, or more than 50 per cent. over the figure for South Australia.

The Premier: That is the added value.

Mr. MILLINGTON: Yes.

The Premier: There is a disparity all along the line, though, is there not?

Mr. MILLINGTON: No.

The Premier: In the several States, I mean.

Mr. MILLINGTON: This is the point. In South Australia the quantity of wheat treated is similar to that treated here, and the charge for treatment here is over £100,000 more than the charge in South Australia. There is a ground for inquiry.

Mr. H. W. Mann: The defence is that the difference enables the millers to exploit foreign markets with their flour.

Mr. MILLINGTON: I am not asking for reasons. Since we are inquiring into the matter, I start at the beginning. There is cause for Western Australian flour millers to show why their charge is fully 50 per cent. more than the corresponding charge of South Australian flour millers. The excess received by millers here is worthy of inquiry. Now as to the price of bread. I have had a table prepared setting out costs in Western Australia and costs in New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia. The table shows that it takes 48 bushels of wheat to produce 2,000 lbs. of flour, 286 lbs. of pollard, and 570 lbs. of bran. For that product the Sydney charge is £9 10s., the Melbourne charge £9 17s. 6d., and the Adelaide charge £9. In Western Australia the price of flour was recently reduced from £11 5s. to £11. The price of wheat to the Sydney miller is 3s. 2½d., to the Melbourne miller 3s. 2d., to the Adelaide miller 3s., and to the Perth miller 3s. 3d. per bushel. The table, I may mention, was drawn up before wheat fell to its present level of about 2s. 6d. The basis of the table is 3s. 3d. per bushel. In view of the Adelaide price for flour, £9, the Perth price of £10 requires explanation. Again, pollard costs £6 per ton in Adelaide, and £7 per ton here. For bran the corresponding figures are £5 10s. and £6 10s. I have made allowance for rebate on large lots in Western Australia. The prices I have quoted are bedrock. For the treatment of that quantity of wheat in South Australia the miller receives £4 4s. 6d., in Western Australia £5 1s. 1d. So that the charge here certainly does not compare favourably with that in South Australia. As to the price of bread, at the figure of £10 per ton for flour I find that the value of the flour in the 2lb. loaf

works out at 1.82d., leaving, since 5d. is charged for the loaf, 3.18d., or 3½d., for baking and delivery. The value of the wheat is reflected in the price of the flour. The baker here charges over 3d. to bake and deliver the 5d. loaf of bread. Some time ago I questioned the Minister controlling the Blackboy Camp as to the prices charged to that institution, and I found that the contract price for bread delivered was 2 9/16d., a little over 2½d., per 2lb. loaf. That fact appears to me to show that the real wastefulness is in the delivery.

Mr. H. W. Mann: That is so.

Mr. MILLINGTON: Getting flour at the price they do, bakers can afford to bake and deliver bread at a little over 2½d. per loaf to the Blackboy Camp; and yet the public, who should get the benefit of the present exceedingly low price of wheat and comparatively low price of flour, do not receive that advantage. The public have to pay 5d. per loaf delivered, as against the charge of a little over 2½d. for bread delivered at Blackboy Hill. The price of 5d. does not allow for bad debts, as it is the cash price. The booking price is 5½d. There again, explanation is required from the bakers of the price they charge for bread. If the bakers are not doing well, that does not solve the difficulty or justify the charge. It is not a question whether the bakers are making fortunes. The point is that in view of the low price of the primary necessity, flour, there can be no justification for the enormous added cost of baking and delivering bread. Certainly, in these times, when the searchlight is being turned on to everyone, all industries, when every section of the community is suggesting that someone else should bear the burden, here appears a real waste and weakness in our economic system. Even if this were the only instance, it is one justifying inquiry. Ways and means should be devised of enabling the people to reap the advantage of the excessively low prices being obtained for primary products. In order to compare present prices with those obtaining in past times, I will refer to the report of the Prices Regulation Commission of 1920. The Commission dealt with the same question. At that time flour had risen from £11 17s. 6d. to £14 10s. per ton, and wheat from 6s. 6d. to 7s. 8d. per bushel. Yet the Commission then refused an application to increase the price of bread above 5d.

The Minister for Works: Wheat was double the price then.

Mr. MILLINGTON: After hearing evidence from bakers, millers, and all associated with the milling of flour and the baking and delivering of bread, with wheat at such a price the Commission considered people could not complain of paying 5d. for the 2-lb. loaf. Naturally, however, the public are beginning to inquire a little more closely now, when they know that the miller obtains wheat at 3s. 3d. per bushel and that the baker obtains flour at £10 per ton. I consider the enormous disparity to be something worthy of investigation. Ways and means should be devised of ascertaining whether there is any justification for the present price of bread. If existing methods are such that the baker can justify the price, then I say attention will have to be given to those methods. They must be wasteful. Whereas the advance of science has introduced wonderful organisation into every branch of industry, distribution alone, apparently, has not advanced in like measure with methods in other walks of life. When we could afford these expensive methods, in our usual careless way we overlooked such things. Now, when times are desperate, and the very existence of some of our industries depends upon whether or not we can secure a reduction in the cost of living and, automatically, in the cost of production, we cannot continue wasteful methods that were countenanced when times were good. When we cast around for means by which industry may be revived and our general conditions bettered, we should inquire regarding the method of distribution of necessities of life, particularly in view of the fact that those commodities are produced in these times at such cheap rates. I shall quote from a speech delivered by Professor Wilmore, when addressing a meeting of the Royal Society of Western Australia a week ago, during the course of which he dealt with this question, and referred to the increased cost of commodities to the consumers. In the course of his remarks he said—

Other methods suggested were a reduction in wages and salaries, and a reduction in the cost of distribution. Experience in the United States had shown that high wages were not incompatible with low costs of production, provided that the output per man was high, which, however, required hearty co-operation by all concerned, as well as efficient plant and processes. Reduction of wages and salaries should therefore be the last, not the first, means to

adopt for reducing costs of production. Moreover, it was well to remember that industries should exist for the sake of the people, not the people for the sake of the industries. Costs of distributing and retailing in Australia were outrageously excessive. It was a scandal that the man who sold a case of apples on commission—perhaps without even seeing them—and the man who retailed them, should each gain more profit from the transaction than the orchardist, who had had all the risk and labour of growing them. Yet this kind of thing was happening every day with most of our commodities throughout Australia. In this connection, it was pertinent to mention that for the wool that had been used to make a man's tweed suit, the pastoralist who grew the wool received less than five per cent. of the ultimate cost of the suit to the purchaser. Again, for the wheat used to make a 4lb. loaf of bread, costing the consumer at least 10d., the farmer got less than 3d. gross, the larger part of the balance being the perquisite of the baker.

Professor Wilmore concluded with the following statement—

There was room for enormous savings in our cost of distribution, and distribution was an essential part of production.

The Premier: Goods are delivered in motor cars now.

Mr. MILLINGTON: That is just the point. Even to-day, when the primary producer is receiving a price which has no relation to production costs, he still has to pay high transport and handling charges. That is the position, even though to-day wheat is sold at under cost. I can understand the attitude of a farmer who is turning his attention to other sections of the community whose wages, if I may put it in that way, have not been reduced to the same extent as his own. He is demanding, unfortunately, a levelling down. If there is to be a re-adjustment, I should say that the most justifiable and equitable way in Western Australia would be, first of all, for the people generally to secure the advantage of the cheap rates applying regarding foodstuffs and other commodities. Then automatically the position would adjust itself in other directions. At present the consuming public are not getting the advantage that they should derive from the low cost of primary products.

The Premier: Meat is cheap.

Mr. MILLINGTON: I shall also deal with milk, which is another necessary commodity. It is produced in the metropolitan area and sold wholesale at 1s. 4½d. per gallon. In the course of his reply to my question, the Minister who controls unemployment stated that milk was delivered at

Blackboy for 1s. 8d. per gallon, and to the general public at 2s. 8d. per gallon. Personally, I pay 3s. per gallon.

Mr. Panton: We are negotiating now for the delivery of milk to the Perth Hospital at 1s. 2½d. per gallon.

Mr. MILLINGTON: Naturally stock held in the metropolitan area have to be hand fed, and milk cannot be produced under those conditions as cheaply as in the South-West where the cattle have the advantage of pastures practically throughout the year. Despite the fact that milk can be sold wholesale at 1s. 8d. per gallon, the consumers have to pay 2s. 9d. per gallon. As a matter of fact, this demonstrates that it costs more to deliver the milk than to produce it. I made inquiries regarding this question from time to time, but nothing has been done to ameliorate the position. When we could afford these luxuries we could pay for them, but we cannot stand this wasteful method of distribution in these days. The distributors will have to find a cheaper method of getting their products into the hands of the consumers. As to meat, the position in the metropolitan area is that stock is brought to, and sold at the Midland Junction abattoirs or at Fremantle. I have a list of the average wholesale prices charged for meat delivered at Midland Junction. The practice there is for the wholesale butchers to buy the stock, and make all arrangements for killing, and the meat is then placed in carcase form in the chilling chambers. The retail butchers buy their requirements from the wholesalers. I do not know whether the wholesalers are doing well or not, but they have a minimum charge when dealing in a wholesale fashion with the retail butchers. The prices they charge—the figures are spread over the last month or so—are as follows:—

Beef, best local—5¼d. per lb.
Beef, best North-West—4¾d. per lb.
Beef, medium—3d. per lb.
Mutton—3½d. per lb.
Lamb—5d. to 5½d. per lb.
Pork—8d. per lb.

Though meat has been slaughtered at Midland Junction under the conditions I have indicated—and people say there is a good deal of expense attached to getting stock to the abattoirs there—it can be sold wholesale to the retailers at the prices I have mentioned. Yet the public do not get full advantage from the low prices ob-

tained for their stock by the growers, or from the low prices charged by the wholesale butchers to the retail butchers. I have not the time necessary to go into the detailed figures that have been supplied to me, but I shall give some instances. For instance, I shall mention a Maylands butcher, who may be classed as one of the cheapest of the retailers. The cash prices he charges are—

Beef, sirloin—10d. per lb.
Beef, rib—9d. per lb.
Beef, corned, round—9d. per lb.
Mutton, leg—7d. per lb.
Mutton, loin—6d. per lb.
Mutton, chops—7d. per lb.
Pork (average)—1s. per lb.

It is possible to obtain meat in the city at fairly reasonable prices, but that does not apply to the suburbs. Most housewives have to buy their meat from suburban butchers. There are no cut prices, and despite the fact, as I have indicated, that lambs are bringing low prices at present, the charges levied in the suburbs range about the figures I have mentioned.

The Premier: Are not lambs bringing a fair price?

Mr. MILLINGTON: Lambs are down so low in price that they can be purchased for export purposes. I do not think anyone could buy lamb at high prices to send to overseas markets. When we find men doing that, it means that the prices obtainable for lambs are not excessive locally. I shall quote other figures to show that this matter interests the country people as well. I cannot understand why excessive prices should be charged by butchers in the country centres, but that is the position. At Goomalling, for instance, the prices are—

Beef, sirloin—10d. per lb.
Beef, rib—10d. per lb.
Beef, corned, round—9d. per lb.
Mutton, leg—10d. per lb.
Mutton, loin—10d. per lb.
Mutton, chops—10d. per lb.
Pork—1s. per lb.

The Minister for Agriculture. It costs as much to deliver there as in Perth.

Mr. MILLINGTON: But in those districts the stock are grown and, I presume, are sold more cheaply locally than would be possible if the stock were sent to the metropolitan area for consumption there. At any rate, the people are not securing any advantage because the meat is pro-

duced locally. At Southern Cross the prices charged have been—

Beef, sirloin—1s. 1d. per lb.
 Beef, rib—1s. per lb.
 Beef, rump steak—1s. 8d. per lb.
 Mutton, leg—1s. 2d. per lb.
 Mutton, loin—11d. per lb.
 Mutton, loin chops—1s. 2d. per lb.
 Pork, leg—1s. 4d. per lb.
 Pork, loin—1s. 3d. per lb.
 Pork, chops—1s. 3d. per lb.

I notice that at Kalgoorlie beef prices have been from 11d. to 1s. 1d., despite the low prices obtained for cattle, while high prices are also charged at Mount Magnet and Meekatharra.

Mr. Thorn: How do those prices compare with those charged at Midland Junction?

Mr. MILLINGTON: The retail prices charged for meat in the country districts are higher than those levied in Perth. I do not know why that should be.

Mr. Angelo: It may be on account of the turnover.

Mr. MILLINGTON: I quote those figures in order to show that under the present system the consumers have to pay excessive prices, having regard to those obtained for the stock. I cannot understand why meat should be 1s. per lb. Mutton is usually slightly lower. In some instances, prices are nearly 1s. all round for first-class meat, with mutton slightly lower. I have not dealt with groceries and other commodities. I set out to show that the position to-day is entirely different from what it was in years gone by. When this question was dealt with before, prices were high. Good returns were received for wheat and stock, but now it is entirely different. In those circumstances, there should not be the same difficulty in conducting an inquiry into this subject that there was in earlier days. I think it will be agreed that enormous cost is added because of the methods adopted in distributing the necessities of life, and in that direction we might provide a check. It is most difficult to check the costs and profits of traders. Under existing circumstances, we have not to show justification for the inquiry, but rather have the traders and distributors to show justification for the high cost of distribution of articles grown so cheaply in Western Australia. There are those who say that if wages were reduced, the cost of production would automatically be re-

duced materially. Here is a case where the farmers' wages are reduced. He is brought down, not to a living wage, but to a point below a living wage, and he is providing foodstuffs at less than cost. It would be impossible to get men to produce those goods if for a moment it was thought the present position was permanent. The fact remains that they are being produced and the people of Western Australia are not getting the advantage of them. Exactly the same position would obtain if wages were cut in halves; the people of Western Australia generally, and industry generally, would not get the advantage. Here is a notable instance: The workers of Western Australia, men who understand their business, are producing foodstuffs below cost for the people of the State, and still we do not know enough to take advantage of it. Yet there are people who consider that all our difficulties would be overcome if wages could be reduced. If that were brought about, still the prices of the necessities of life would not conform to the reduced rates of wages any more than they are conforming to the reduced cost at which a most important section of workers are producing for the benefit of the public. It has not had a general benefit on the people of Western Australia. Another matter that needs to be inquired into is house rent. Rent charged for houses and for business premises has a very material bearing, not only upon the cost of living, but also upon the cost of running a business. Whereas other commodities have been reduced, the cost of money, instead of being reduced, has been increased, and during the last year or so this has had a material effect on the prices charged by the distributors. Rents have not come down, and interest on overdrafts has not been reduced. In these hard times, when we are called upon to make sacrifices—and some are not asked, but compelled, to make sacrifices, the result of their labours not being paid for commensurately—we have to pay attention to all sections of the community. Recently, it is true, the cost of building has come down. But during peak periods, it is surprising the prices charged by the builder for building an ordinary cottage. To those who would compare these times with 10 or 15 years ago, I instance a case

in 1915 of a five-roomed cottage being built for £620 which, capitalised at six per cent., would mean 14s. per week. Last year a cottage of similar dimensions was built. With the land it cost £1,300 which, capitalised at eight per cent., would mean 40s. per week. So when people talk about getting back to normal, and ask why we cannot live on wages that were sufficient years ago, it will be found that one of the big difficulties is house rents. Certainly attention will have to be given to that. Many people simply cannot afford to pay the rents they are charged. I suggest that when going into the cost of necessary commodities, house rent and rent charged for business premises will have to be inquired into also. Whatever the reason may be for charging high rents for houses that were built during peak periods when costs were high, the fact remains that in a very large proportion of the central business section of Perth, the alleged values and rents were artificially raised, and now people who have to pay rent for those premises have to pass it on to the purchasing public. That is one of the factors in the exceedingly high cost of living and high cost of distribution. But since we are inquiring into every phase of our expenditure, and a search light is turned on to everybody, there is a disposition to inquire into the most intimate matters of any public official, and the suggestion is made that, generally, salaries and wages should be decreased. My contention is that that is not the way out of our difficulties. Rather we require improved methods. That would be better than allowing any section of the community to be unnecessarily penalised. I mentioned that this motion had to do not only with the prices being charged to the general community, but had also a distinct bearing on industry. There is no need to quote the position of the primary industries. They simply cannot bear the present charges. And this is true also of the secondary industries. When the latest figures were made up, there were 21,000 people employed in secondary industries in this State, and the value of their produce approximated £17,000,000. No doubt the statistics of to-day would show a great decrease in those figures. Some of those industries have closed right down, and others show a very serious diminution in output and reduction in the number of hands employed. So the problem to which we must turn attention is the reviving of

those industries. We are in competition with the Eastern States and other parts of the world. We should be able to compete, at all events with the Eastern States. If our methods are wasteful, as I have sought to show, it means that we have no prospect of competing with the Eastern States, which have certain advantages over Western Australia in that they established their industries long before ours were brought into being. But I am hopeful that with the patronage that should be given to local products, Western Australian industries will revive and be firmly established. But to do that, the costs of production will have to be decreased, and therefore the cost of the necessities of life. If those necessities of life are made available to the public at a reasonable rate we may have a prospect of competing with the Eastern States and so building up our industries.

The Premier: The Eastern States dump their goods here.

Mr. MILLINGTON: That is one of our difficulties, and to an extent it has been responsible not only for strangling some of our industries, but also for preventing the establishment of others. Although I have not time to deal fully with this phase of the question, our secondary industries must be protected, especially from wasteful methods of distribution. Those who say that under a reorganised scheme certain persons engaged in distributing goods would be displaced, should be reminded that for every unit so displaced under such a scheme, ten would be employed. So if industry can be economically run, it does not mean a lesser number employed, but a greater number employed, because of the better methods adopted in the industry. As I have said, my main reason for moving this motion is first of all that I believe the public are being penalised mainly on account of the enormous cost of distribution, which could be decreased; as I think it will be once there is sufficient demand on the part of the public, and particularly since the primary producers are doing their part and the public are taking advantage of it. The time has arrived when the proposed inquiry is warranted and when those responsible for the enormous cost of distribution ought to be called upon to show cause why that cost should not be reduced. Then, as I have said, there is the other reason, namely in order that it may be possible for the primary and secondary in-

dustries of Western Australia to be maintained.

On motion by the Chief Secretary, debate adjourned.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1930-31.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from the previous day; Mr. Richardson in the Chair.

Department of Chief Secretary (Hon. N. Keenan, Minister).

Vote—Chief Secretary, £15,367:

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. N. Keenan—Nedlands) [5.28]: There is very little of importance or even of interest to inform the House of in regard to this Vote. Members will see that on the whole the amount is small. The principal work done by the Chief Secretary's office is to conduct correspondence for all departments of Government. It also superintends the cleaning of the main block in which the Chief Secretary's office is situated, and acts generally as an administrative head for a number of small departments, such as the Fire Brigade. It is not one that permits of any great amount of consideration being given to it by members. There is a small decrease of £789, which is arrived at after allowing for the automatic increases in salary for the staff and small savings that have been effected in other directions. The amount of revenue received by the department is very limited. It has shrunk to the extent of £61, though that is not a matter of very great concern. The first department dealt with in this division is that of the Aborigines. The shrinkage in expenditure there is £3,134. This decrease is brought about by the savings (£2,728) under the heading of Contingencies. That has largely resulted from the stores not having been added to. These stores have accumulated over the years past to a considerable extent. They comprise blankets and general stores. When the Blackboy Camp was established the blankets we supplied to those who went there were given chiefly out of the stores of the Aborigines Department.

Mr. McCallum: Those which would have gone to the natives?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes, had they been issued to the natives. The stores

in hand are sufficiently large to permit of a considerable reduction this year. It is here that the decrease in expenditure is largely accounted for. The revenue shows a small increase of £44. The principal source of revenue is the permits that are issued to certain white persons and half-castes in different parts of the State to enable them to employ aborigines. That brings in pretty well half our total revenue. There is one matter upon which members are entitled to get some information. Unfortunately, the trouble of the half-caste is increasing rapidly in the South-West. The pure bloods present no difficulties, but the half-caste problem is one that will have to be dealt with unless we are going to allow it to reach dangerous proportions. Although the pure-blooded native is decreasing in number, the half-caste is very prolific. There are large families of half-castes and the opportunities for employment for them are limited. It is impossible to deal with the question of their education. We cannot compel children to attend schools with half-castes. Although there is no regulation excluding half-castes from the State schools, they are in fact excluded by the objection that parents have to sending their children to schools where half-castes are admitted. In spite of the fact that every expenditure which could be avoided has been avoided, I am afraid we shall have to establish some camp in the South-West, possibly at Carrolup, which was once a native camp, for the purpose of collecting a number of wandering half-castes who are either starving or semi-starving, and are a nuisance to the whole country side. That has not been dealt with on these Estimates. When they were framed the extent to which the trouble had grown was not appreciated. The next item is the Fisheries Department. This shows a decrease in expenditure of £980. This is brought about by abolishing the post of temporary inspector of fisheries at Broome and Shark Bay. Further, we do not expect this year to have to incur the biennial expense of £580 for replenishing stores in the northern part of the State. The department must be of considerable importance, because our fish supply is an important part of the food supply of the community. Although fish are caught in large numbers, apparently in this State the supply seems to die out. We find that it does

not maintain the standard as to quantity. That it showed when it was first opened up. That is due, perhaps, in a considerable degree to the fact of the department being a small one, and to the number of inspectors being insufficient to prevent the destruction of fish in their immature state. The breeding grounds for fish in our waters will have to be protected in order that we may have a plentiful supply. This the department are unable to do to the fullest extent owing to the small number of inspectors on the staff. If money were available, it would be wisely spent in bringing in new types of fish and acclimatising them to our waters. We do that now in a small way, but the operations are restricted by our financial resources. Within the limits of the money available, the department is admirably managed. It may be when we have more money to spend we can lay it out in the way I have indicated. The revenue received by the department consists almost entirely of the royalties on the sale of skins. If effect is given to the resolution that was carried, the revenue will be seriously reduced. Even as things are, we estimate there will be a reduction of £3,385 from the total collection of £10,000. If that revenue is to be further reduced by £5,000, by doing without the proceeds of the royalty on kangaroos, there will scarcely be any money left. That is a matter for the Treasury, and not one that concerns the department.

Mr. Coverley: What revenue would be received from licenses issued to pearling boats, etc.?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I have not the figures, but will look them up. It is a matter for the Treasury to say whether the royalties on skins shall be collected or not. If the money is not collected, the department will show a considerable loss on the balance of its figures. There is a small amount shown on the vote for commission. This may be regarded as money paid for services rendered. It is an amount of £60, and comes under the heading of Contingencies. It is paid to the Geraldton station-master, who acts as agent for the department. He receives this commission for stamping all skins that come through his hands, but it is then passed on to the Railway Department. To a certain extent the

Fisheries Department may be said to be assisting the railways to balance their budget.

Mr. Doney: Are you able to make a division between what is taken from the agricultural areas from royalty and what comes from other parts?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The figures are all grouped on the Estimates. I now come to the Registrar of Friendly Societies. There is a small increase of £171, which is brought about by the automatic salary increases of the staff. They are all graded increases. There is a decrease in Incidentals of £99, but I am afraid that will not be realised. The probability is we shall exceed the vote.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: That is serious.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It is a small sum that is put down as a guess as to what will be required. On the revenue side I am afraid the estimate will not be realised. Most of the revenue of the department is derived from the registration of births, deaths and marriages. I do not suppose births will be greatly affected by the depression, and possibly the number of deaths may increase, but what is happening is that marriages are falling off to a large extent. That is to be anticipated.

Mr. Munsie: This is not a good time in which to get married.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The income is likely to be less than it was as a consequence. I now come to Gaols. There is an increase here of £2,029. This is due to the fact that the only popular institution in the State is the Fremantle Gaol. We have had a number of visitors from the Eastern States, whose proclivities for crime have brought them here. We are now obliged to entertain them at Fremantle. One reason why the criminal classes of the East are flocking here is, apart from the fact that they think they are slightly better off, and criminals always frequent those places where the most money is in circulation, is that we are backward in our legislation. In almost all the Eastern States they have a Consorting with Criminals Act. When the Leader of the Opposition was in power, the police represented the advisability of adopting similar legislation here, but that was not done. It is a happier home for criminals here than it is in New South

Wales or Victoria. In better times, when a fine is inflicted for an offence upon a man or woman, the fine is paid; nowadays, owing to the serious depression, the convicted parties prefer to serve the default in gaol. We therefore have to supply the means whereby they can do so. There is, unfortunately, an increase of £2,000 in this vote. This is occasioned by the need to employ additional warders, and the furnishing of extra beds and provisions for the increased number of prisoners. The revenue shows a slight increase. That is brought about by the fact that the Rottnest board of control has been called upon to pay more for prison labour, and thus make a slightly greater contribution towards the cost of keeping the prisoners. The next division is the Harbour and Lights. This shows a decrease of £1,345. It is unfortunately an index of our trade. Almost the whole amount of the decrease arises from the fact that we shall have to pay less wages on the jetties in the North for the handling of trade. The trade has so shrunk that employment on the wharves has dwindled accordingly. It is estimated that we shall save in respect of wharf labour, £845.

Mr. Willcock: But you will get decreased revenue, so that no saving will be effected.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The estimated decrease in revenue is £449, but I am afraid it will be more than that. The Lunacy Department shows a decrease of £1,829. In this department we might save a little more than we do. Undoubtedly in the past we have been affording facilities in certain phases of mental derangement for which we have a right, when we do give those facilities, to charge the people who enjoy them, but scarcely anything has been received and the result is that the department is a very expensive one. We are showing a decrease by eliminating staff appointments which are not absolutely necessary. Those are the only observations I have to make on the Vote, but I shall be prepared to answer any questions that may be asked by members on items.

MR. MARSHALL (Murchison) [5.47]: The Minister, in giving an outline of the Vote, has mustered miscellaneous departmental activities, but he has not said

anything about the motion that was carried in this House a few weeks back urging that the Government should no longer collect royalties on kangaroo skins. The Chief Secretary at that time informed the House that the money collected was not benefiting the Treasurer in any way, that it was appropriated by the Fisheries Department. The Minister, however, did not tell us how the money was spent. I protest against the kangaroos of the North being taxed to the extent of £5,500 to provide the wherewithal to enable the Chief Inspector of Fisheries to protect other pests in the southern part of the State, feathered pests on the Swan River, and providing those pests with daily appetising meals. It is not possible for a hungry individual who may seek to procure for himself a meal of fish and catches those that are under-sized without being liable to a penalty, and while he is forbidden to catch these small fish, there is nothing done to destroy the pests which eat several pounds of fish, all under-sized, daily. I refer to shags and pelicans. I am told they eat a couple of pounds of fish a day.

Hon. P. Collier: Very much more than that.

Mr. MARSHALL: I am not going to argue with my Leader as to the exact poundage, but I do object to the kangaroos providing the means to enable the birds I have mentioned to thrive on the fish in the Swan River. I never did have any time for the feathered pests that are doing so much harm on our river and that disfigure all the surroundings.

Hon. P. Collier: Every day is Friday with those birds.

Mr. MARSHALL: Yes; they are most religious. From what I can see, and from the information that has been supplied to us, it looks as if it is not the intention of the Government to accede to the wishes of a majority of members of this Chamber as expressed by the resolution passed a few weeks ago. On other occasions resolution have been adopted and have been ignored entirely, and we have got to that stage when we appear to be making the institution of Parliament resemble a farce. A majority of members having said that a certain thing should be done, the executive body of the Chamber should not assume the right to flout the desires of the majority of mem-

bers. I appeal to the Chief Secretary to use his influence in the direction of assisting the kangarooer on the Murchison by abolishing the royalties on skins. In that way the shooters will be able to secure ammunition for the destruction of the pest. I cannot understand how it comes about that the Chief Inspector of Fisheries is able to appropriate the royalties. Another matter to which I wish to refer—and if I am wrong I shall be glad to be corrected—is with regard to certain unfortunate individuals incarcerated in institutions controlled by the State and who are permitted to visit the the Royal Show. Some of these unfortunates, more or less mentally deficient, but who are believed to have a chance of recovery, and who by the way through having been addicted to alcohol are abnormal, are at the time of the Show escorted to the grounds, their fares being paid and a cup of tea provided for them in the afternoon. On the occasion of the last Show I understand that whilst some of these people were taken to the Show grounds, they were denied the right to have a cup of tea. The total cost of providing tea for these people would not have been more than £3; it used to run into about £8, but I am told that the Chief Secretary decided on the last occasion that the men's fares only would be paid. I am sure the Treasurer will be very thankful to the Chief Secretary for having saved the State £3 at the expense of a number of unfortunate men. All the same, the men were not deprived of their tea because I understand an after-care body went to the rescue and provided refreshments.

Vote put and passed.

Votes—Aborigines, £11,203; Fisheries £4,707; Registry and Friendly Societies, £11,703; Gaols, £33,598; Harbour and Light and Jetties, £23,730; Lunacy and Inebriates, £11,020; Observatory, £1,750—*agreed to*.

Department of the Minister for Education (Hon. N. Keenan, Minister).

Vote—Education, £681,131:

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. N. Keenan—Nedlands) [5.55]: This Vote shows a decrease of £11,541 on the previous year's expenditure. Last year's expenditure was £1,600 over the estimate. It is exceedingly difficult to effect economies in a department such as this. Hon. mem-

bers are aware that the House as a whole has never been niggardly in providing funds for education. Therefore it is a matter of extreme difficulty for any Minister, however hard-hearted he may be, to effect economies in this department. I propose to ask members to cast their minds back 12 years in respect of which period I propose to quote certain figures. I intend to refer to the number of children that were then attending school and compare the costs with those of the present period. In 1918 there were 42,800 children attending the schools and that figure has increased now to 48,500. At the same time the expenditure has increased from £353,792 to £692,672. We have the position that whilst the number of children attending the schools has increased to the extent of 14 per cent., the expenditure on the Education Vote has gone up 97 per cent. That increase has been the result of two causes, mainly. One was the fact that in 1921-22 there was a reclassification of teachers and in 1926-27 there was another reclassification. If hon. members look at the figures of those two years, they will notice the big jump the vote took in consequence of the reclassifications. Another reason is the nomadic character of the population of this State. During the same period 463 new schools were opened bringing the total to 624, and 430 schools were closed. In various parts of the State we have found that after making provision for educational facilities, population has left on account of a particular industry carried on there coming to an end, and the department has had to abandon a lot of property and sacrifice it. I should like to give a few figures to show how the Vote is expended. The one-teacher schools are dearest by far per head of pupils. Country schools having fewer than 20 children in average attendance last year absorbed £122,516 of the Vote. In round figures every child attending such a school cost £20 per year. As the schools get bigger, the cost per child goes down considerably. Country schools largely consist of small schools, and the result is that we have a very high cost per head of children taught. The next class of school having an attendance of fewer than 50 absorbs £51,266 of the Vote, while all other primary schools in the country absorb £154,147. The result is that we are to-day spending on primary schools in the country £327,929. On primary education in the metropolitan area, we are

spending £209,644. I was almost saying that we spend "only" £209,644, but it would not be right to use that modification having regard to the fact that the metropolitan area is more compact and it is possible to have larger schools. Hence it is obvious that the cost per child in the metropolitan area must be lower.

Hon. P. Collier: Have you the relative attendances?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The figures I have quoted are based on average attendance. I have given those figures to make a point which I am afraid is sometimes open to misconception, namely, that the department is not neglecting its duty in educating the children of the farmers and miners and other people living in the back districts. The department is doing its part properly, and will continue to do so. On the other hand, the secondary schools of the State cost £37,204 last year, manual training and domestic science schools £20,000, technical education £25,500, correspondence classes £10,891, and assisted schools £2,451. Those figures exhaust a Vote which on the face of it appears to be rather large. As to primary education, notwithstanding the disadvantage we suffer because of our scattered population and because of having to provide so many schools for small attendances, the cost in Western Australia is not excessive. This may be appreciated if I give the figures. The cost of primary education in New South Wales is £12 17s. 8d. per head of the population, Victoria £10 18s., Queensland £13 0s. 1d., South Australia £10 3s. 2d., Western Australia £12 1s., and Tasmania £9 4s. Members will see that we come a very good third, and if we have regard for the fact that we have a very difficult proposition on account of the scattered nature of our population, the figure is one of which we have no need to be ashamed. On the other hand, I must say that we do not stand in the same enviable position as regards secondary schools. We are a long way ahead of other States in expenditure on State secondary schools, and I do not know why it should be so. I believe we could make some saving in that expenditure.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: It is due to the amount of work done here. The other States do not conduct secondary schools to the same extent.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Yes they do. The cost of secondary educa-

tion in the various States is—New South Wales 3s. 6d. per head of population, Victoria 4s. 3d., Queensland 2s. 8d., South Australia 3s. 1d., Tasmania 1s. 7d., and Western Australia 6s. That can be explained not by the fact that other States do not provide secondary education, but that here our secondary education is more availed of by the general mass of the people than possibly it is in the other States. In other words, secondary schools outside the State secondary schools are more frequented in the Eastern States than here. In the time ahead we must look forward to the possibility of having to classify necessities. It will not be possible to indulge in the mere separation of necessities from luxuries and say that, as times are bad, luxuries must go. We shall have to do more than that. While I regard the secondary schools of the State as a necessity, it may be that in classifying our necessities into vital necessities and those not so vital, we shall have to consider the magnitude of the effort we are making in regard to secondary education. I hope that time will not arrive; but if it does the department, insofar as Government policy is concerned, will endeavour first of all to render to every child in the State, no matter where it is living, an opportunity to receive what is usually termed a sound education. This implies a knowledge of elementary arithmetic, capacity to express itself in our mother tongue, capacity to write so as to be able intelligently to place one's thoughts on paper, and a knowledge of the art of reading. Added to that we shall continue to inculcate some knowledge of hygiene. If we are able to do this for every child in the State, we shall be fulfilling the first and most vital necessity. To the very last farthing in our purse, we must attempt to discharge that duty. When we have done that, we may consider other necessities in no sense so vital, and among them will be various phases of our secondary education. It will be the aim not only of the present Government, but I hope of succeeding Governments, to leave that path open for any ambitious child who is willing and worthy to climb it to reach the highest point in education, but consistent with doing that, we shall undoubtedly in future be compelled to examine carefully every penny we spend. As I have pointed out, our first expenditure must be in the direction of affording edu-

cation in every instance, no matter where a child may live—a duty we are discharging to-day. If, after doing that, we have funds at our disposal, we shall proceed to elaborate that education and so enable everyone—not merely a few, as I am afraid has been the case in the past—to reach the higher forms of education. If the child of a miner in Wiluna is exceedingly brilliant and promising, it is under a handicap as compared with the child of a parent living in Perth and at the very doors of the schools we provide. We are not in a position to provide a Vote to carry the expense of bringing such a child to Perth. All we can do is to provide for it in places where we have high schools, such as Northam, Kalgoorlie, Albany and Bunbury.

Mr. McCallum: Is not there an allowance?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: It would not meet the whole cost of the child's maintenance. A comparison of the positions of the two children shows that the handicap on the Wiluna child is colossal. If the day comes when we are once more prosperous and if it so happens that I have anything to do with politics and this particular department, I should certainly, as a first measure, suggest a scheme of bursaries to enable a child suffering the disadvantages I have indicated to come to Perth, not merely on a pittance representing a small portion of the expense, but under conditions that would enable the child to receive the whole of the expense. That is all I desire to say on the Vote. It is one towards which members have always been generously disposed, and I hope the reception on this occasion will be as generous as it has been in the past.

HON. W. D. JOHNSON (Guildford-Midland) [6.12]: I cannot permit the Minister's remarks to pass without offering some little comment. We are very jealous of the education system of Western Australia. We have given wholehearted support to the establishment of primary schools throughout the goldfields and agricultural areas, and we also supported the establishment of secondary schools, and are proud of the liberal provisions governing the University. The Minister has indicated that the needs of the hour might necessitate some revision of expenditure on education, and I gather from

his remarks that it might have to be applied to the secondary schools. I would appeal to him that before he does anything in that direction, Parliament should be given an opportunity to express an opinion. I appreciate the fact that the Government during the recess might take the responsibility of closing some of the secondary schools or reducing their efficiency.

The Minister for Lands: We shall not do so if the money is available.

HON. W. D. JOHNSON: I appreciate that, but I for one would be very sorry if any drastic reduction were made in the secondary school system. Particularly would I regret it in regard to the Modern School. The high schools are playing a very important part in educating the children. They have given the children of the working class an opportunity to extend their education, an opportunity that was not afforded them before the high schools were established. I think there are other avenues where economies might be effected before we demand any extensive reduction of the Education Vote.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

HON. W. D. JOHNSON: When the House rose for tea, I was expressing the hope that the Minister's very carefully worded indication that a reduction in the education expenditure might be necessary, would not be carried into effect without Parliament having the opportunity to discuss any proposal of the kind. In our secondary schools we have institutions of which we are justly proud. There is no waste education there, because all the scholars reach them as the result of competitive examination. I question the wisdom of interfering with education at the top when we are dealing with proved scholars, particularly when there is a possibility of making reductions, if such are necessary, in other portions of our education system. I do not want to indicate that I desire any reduction. Economies are possible, of course, but when we speak of reductions we refer to reducing the number of schools and the efficiency of the schools. We also have a technical education system. This is doing great service to young men and women who, after leaving school, continue to receive tuition in various callings. The technical education system is very essential, particularly for apprentices to assist them in gaining more scientific knowledge of the trade or

calling they follow. Technical education has extended beyond that. Many adults are attending these technical schools, and gaining knowledge for which they pay a certain amount, though nothing like the amount it costs the State. These are avenues in which the Minister might make investigation. I do not want them to be interfered with, but there are avenues which could be investigated with a view to possible reductions in expenditure without touching our secondary schools. It is questionable whether it is wise, when we have schools filled with proved scholars, to turn our attention to them, and disregard the fact that there are many thousands of young children attending other schools who are not altogether the asset to the State that is represented by those who attend our secondary schools. Their education must be continued, of course, but it is a question whether we should not investigate the suggestion of raising the school age as a means of helping ourselves over some of our difficulties rather than interfering with the higher standards. We have also continuation schools, all of which cost money, but afford opportunities for economies before we interfere with those schools referred to by the Minister. During the last election a good deal of attention was devoted to means of effecting economies. The election was fought with the knowledge of the financial stringency and the need for economy. I understand the party with which I am associated strongly opposed any suggestion of a reduction of the education vote. It is so easy to cut down expenditure on education. It is one of the votes where I am prepared to admit a section of the community, many representatives of which are in Parliament, and more particularly in another place, thinks that the expenditure is far beyond the needs of the situation, and is strong in its condemnation of the lavish outlay on the system. Even in times more affluent than the present these people have urged a reduction in the vote. They are persistent in this, and are anxious to interfere with the education system generally. In this Chamber I have not known any member to make an attempt to reduce the expenditure. We all realise we are justified in calling for economy and care in expenditure, but not in this direction. Many people believe it is wrong to give this high education to the children of

working people. They believe higher education should be limited to the children of those who are in a position financially to pay for it themselves. That system existed for many years, for only one section of the community had the opportunity to get a higher education beyond the primary schools. Largely because of the activities and enthusiasm of members of the Labour Party, the education system has been extended until to-day we have, not only our secondary schools, but a university established on a more uniform opportunity-basis than is any other university in the world. There is no place where children of working people who, by their ability in the primary schools have demonstrated their right to pass on to the secondary schools, and thence to the University, have greater opportunities afforded to them than in Western Australia. We appreciate the fact that the standard of education in our secondary schools is extremely high. That is proved by the results of examinations for scholarships, etc., not only at the University but at the Modern School from which young people pass to the University. It is also demonstrated by the number of Rhodes scholars who have been chosen from amongst the children attending the Modern School. Speaking generally it can be said that but for the Modern School, children now attending the primary schools would not have nearly the same opportunity to advance their education. I sincerely trust the Minister in his desire to effect economies will do nothing in respect of the secondary schools without reference to Parliament. Parliament should be consulted before there is any interference of importance with the system of secondary education in this State.

MR. GRIFFITHS (Avon) [7.38]: I wish to state my appreciation of the work performed in the past by the Education Department, more especially as this has reference to the standard of the teachers who have been sent out to country schools, and of those schools themselves. Whilst I give unstinted praise to the department for that feature of their work, I am a little concerned about the future. Circumstances have brought about a position that makes it imperative for economies to be exercised. Certain reductions in expenditure and certain restrictions have been made as a consequence of that position. I hear that the

short courses at the practising school at the Training College are to be cut out. It will now be a case of falling back upon teachers who have not had the benefit of an attendance at these short courses. Those who are appointed to the larger schools will naturally be under the control of first-class teachers. The quality of such teachers in such schools may be improved, but in the case of those who go into the country to take charge of a one-man school, I am afraid that the cutting out of these courses will have a detrimental effect. I take it that the Minister and his advisers who are working with him to effect this alteration will see that justice is meted out to all, that there is no loss in salary or status for the teachers concerned, and that as little change as possible is made in the present system. We all admit that changes will have to be made. I and other members have been interviewed by individuals on this subject, but we have felt that we could not take up the cudgels on behalf of individuals. As a body, however, we were quite prepared to leave the decision arrived at with respect to alterations or reductions entirely to the sense of justice and fair play of the director, in whom we have great confidence. My opinion is that what is being done at the Training College will leave that institution with a skeleton staff, and much the same thing will happen as we heard last night is happening in the Public Works Department. It is admitted that these changes have to take place, but I would again stress the aspect of justice and fair-play. All of us remember certain changes which were made at the Training College and which caused heart-burning and trouble. Without particularising, I may state that at the college to-day there is a man who was brought over here from Melbourne because of his high qualifications. It seems only fair and right that that man should be kept in his place, and that a junior should not be put over his head. I draw the Minister's attention to that matter, because it is just possible that something which happened at the college before may happen again, men occupying certain positions being passed over. I have nothing but praise for the department as regards the conduct of the schools in my electorate, and also as regards the class of teachers supplied. Both Mr. Andrews and Mr. Clubb have shown themselves most

obliging in the filling of country vacancies. Everyone is reconciled to the fact that money can now be spent only on absolute essentials.

MR. WITHERS (Bunbury) [7.47]: I join issue with the member for Guildford-Midland as to the reduction of this Vote. The Education Department have done wonderful work in their secondary schools over a period of years, and particularly of late. Any reduction in the secondary schools, or in the opportunities for attending them, would be most detrimental to the youth of Western Australia. The decrease in the item is about £11,000, and one or two items reduced are worthy of further consideration. There is a reduction due to the fact that numerous teachers long overdue for long service leave have had their leave stopped for the present—for how long is not known. Many of those teachers have made sacrifices during the period their leave was accruing. They may have been in outback districts holding positions with inconvenience to themselves but with advantage to the department. It seems hard that just when they are entitled to long service leave, the Government should suspend it. From a pecuniary aspect the matter is so small that it cannot have much effect on the Budget. Therefore the Government might have left the long service leave as it was. Another reduction, amounting to £1,200, is in the expenditure on manual training classes. Such training is absolutely essential, particularly in country schools. A country member realises the disadvantage under which country children labour as regards manual training; there are no technical schools available for them as there are for children in the metropolitan area. Capable youths have received manual training at country high schools, but this training is meagre as compared with that given at the Technical School in Perth. When applications have been called for the filling of positions at, say, the Midland Junction workshops, the country boy has had no chance as compared with the city boy. The item for manual training, instead of being reduced, should be either maintained as it was or else increased, so as to give country youths the same opportunity as is enjoyed by youths in the city. It is not always possible for country parents of limited means to send their child-

ren to the metropolitan area for higher education. The member for Guildford-Midland said members of Parliament, more particularly members of another place, had expressed the view that it is not essential to spend so large an amount of money on education. It is common knowledge, however, that intelligence is not always with those who can afford to pay for education. I have in mind a young fellow who received his early education in the backblocks of the Murchison, who became a Rhodes Scholar and is now a prominent physician of Perth. His parents were poor, but he was brainy enough to take advantage of the educational opportunities offered. Such a boy is as much entitled to higher education as is the son of wealthy parents.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Hear, hear!

Mr. WITHERS: We should encourage the intelligence of the community rather than its wealth. I hope the Vote will not be cut down any further. I may mention that the Education Department receive and appreciate assistance from the parents and citizens' associations. The parents and citizens of the State are so interested in the education of the children that they give great attention to the accommodation at schools, the playgrounds, and the environments generally. The infants' school at Bunbury was built the wrong way round, according to those who know anything about the subject; I cannot think what the architect was doing. The weather used to beat into the open spaces of the building. In winter, every time a child went into or out of the school, the teacher had to hold the door open against the blasts of wind. Applications for rectifying this matter were made in better times, but we were told that the work could not be done. A similar reply was received from the present Minister for Education as regards the closing-in of the back verandah. Thereupon the Bunbury Parents' and Teachers' Association as the result of a couple of efforts, raised £80 for the purpose of enclosing the back verandah with glass. The work will be done before next winter sets in, and thus the children will receive from their parents what they should have received from the Government in regard to the construction of the school. A school has been built at Water-

loo since I have been in Parliament, and that school also was built with the verandah facing the south-west. Application was made for a shelter shed, and was refused. The department were not even prepared to allow the parents and teachers to erect a shed themselves. The department contended that the verandah space was quite sufficient. However, the verandah is open to the weather. When the Government would not come to light, the people took the matter into their own hands, got up a working bee, and erected a shelter shed, which has proved a great convenience to the children. I hope the Minister and the Government will consider seriously before attempting to reduce the Education Vote any further.

MR. ANGELO (Gascoyne) [7.55]: I join with other members in hoping that the Government will not cut too deeply into the Education Vote. Nobody would regret more than I would the stinting of the education of Western Australian youth. Speaking as one who had to leave school at an early age, I recognise what a handicap it has been to me through life not to have received the education I should have had. Through no fault of my own I was compelled to leave school at the age of 13 years. Knowing what it is not to have a proper education, I do hope that we shall be able to give the children of Western Australia as good an education as is possible. Now, however, it has become a question for the Government to consider what is their chief duty—to feed the mind, or to feed the body. They have to economise to a certain extent, owing to having so many unemployed, both men and women, and children to feed. I feel perfectly sure that the heads of the Education Department, under the guidance of the Minister, will see that all economies and retrenchments which have to be made will be effected with a view to resuming the good work as soon as this time of inevitable reorganisation is past. So soon as funds will allow, we should be able to step off again from the place at which we now have to leave off. That the Education Department have done exceptionally fine work in the past, everyone will admit. It is greatly to be regretted that we have to mark time for the present, but I trust that any reductions now made will be of such a nature as to per-

mit of the full resumption of the good work as soon as the finances will allow.

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION

(Hon. N. Keenan—Nedlands—in reply) [7.58]: There are a few matters to which I desire to be allowed to refer before we proceed to the discussion of the items. First of all I would like particularly to refer to an omission on my part in making my opening remarks. I should have expressed the feeling of admiration held by the Education Department for the parents and teachers' associations. Those associations are always willing to render most valuable services, and also to put their hands in their pockets, which to-day is a serious matter. I am sorry I omitted to acknowledge their services earlier. It is not the Government's intention to make any drastic alterations in the educational system of the State. We undoubtedly intend to make the same efficiency available at the least possible cost, having regard to the proper claims of all parties. Another matter to which I might have referred in my opening remarks is that I have received the most helpful aid from the Teachers' Union in the matter of reduction of expenditure. As regards long service leave, the teachers themselves have voluntarily expressed consent to the proposals of the Government. I was exceedingly gratified to receive their consent in that matter, as also in the matter of the short Bill I brought in a fortnight ago. There is nothing I desire to emphasise except the utter impossibility of looking to the future with the same degree of expectation as we did in past years for more funds being available. Every year since this Vote first appeared on the Estimates it has grown, and now, unfortunately, we have come to a stage at which we cannot allow it to grow any further for the time being. We have to practise economy. It is not a matter of choice, as the member for Guildford-Midland (Hon. W. D. Johnson) knows. It is a matter of necessity. We shall resort to the necessity only insofar as it is impossible to refrain from doing so. That will be the policy of the department, and I hope it will be successful.

This concluded the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the year.

Vote put and passed.

Resolutions reported.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES—STATE TRADING CONCERNS.

In Committee.

Mr. Richardson in the Chair.

Division—State Brickworks, £27,145—agreed to.

Division—State Hotels, £59,565 :

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The State hotels have contributed a certain amount towards Consolidated Revenue. Is it the practice to reduce their capitalisation to the extent of the amount contributed to Consolidated Revenue? If the hotels return definite profits to Consolidated Revenue as the result of the wonderful success achieved by them, the capitalisation should be reduced proportionately.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The profits derived since the inception of the State hotels in 1903 have amounted to £132,442 17s. 9d., which is in excess of the capital involved at present of £67,634 2s. 11d.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Then the State hotels do not owe the State anything.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: In addition, since the inception, £37,913 16s. 6d. has been paid to the Treasury on account of interest, and £9,398 3s. 11d. as an adjustment of the sinking fund reserves.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: It is a pity we have not more pubs.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: In all, £179,754 18s. 2d. has been paid to the Treasury since the inception of the hotels.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Wonderful!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: In the year 1915-16, the State hotels showed a loss of £270 11s. 7d., but otherwise the profits made by the hotels from the inception, after deducting the loss I have referred to, totalled £132,442 17s. 9d.

Division put and passed.

Divisions—State Implement and Engineering Works, £121,634; State Quarries, £27,580—agreed to.

Division—State Shipping Service, £206,500:

Mr. MARSHALL: I notice there is a deficiency in connection with the State Shipping Service of £34,500. Will the Minister please explain how that comes about?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Interest is provided on the capital and overdraft, and

in addition there is a special sinking fund in respect of the "Kangaroo." I can inform hon. members that the earnings of the ships are more than sufficient to pay working expenses, if we exclude interest on capital and overdraft. There is the debit of £36,000 under the last mentioned heading, and then a further sum of £5,250 which is a special sinking fund on £140,000 at $3\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. on account of the "Kangaroo." That makes up a total of just over £41,000, which accounts for the difference. The estimated receipts from the State Shipping Service total £172,000, and the expenditure £206,500. The difference between the two amounts is represented by interest on capital. I take this opportunity to inform the Committee that there is only one vessel in respect to which the Shipping Service is in such a position that it cannot more than pay its way. That vessel is the "Kangaroo." She has been on the run from Fremantle to Singapore, and latterly we have not been able to get full backloading. Formerly that backloading consisted principally of large quantities of case oil, not only for delivery at ports on the way down the coast, but for use in the metropolitan area as well. That trade has come to an end, because crude oil is now brought down in tankers. That trade was important to the shipping service. In addition to that, there has been a general shrinkage in imports and exports to and from Singapore. To counteract that, we intend in the immediate future to send out a delegation of merchants from Perth with the object of endeavouring to open up a better market for our produce in Singapore.

Mr. Marshall: It is shameful that we should lose such opportunities there.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Who are "we"?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It would surprise hon. members if they ascertained the extent to which Eastern States merchants have availed themselves of the Singapore market, which is almost at our door, and yet we do not send large quantities of products forward. Take the position regarding fresh fruit. Compared with the exports from the Eastern States, I do not think we have one-sixth of that market.

Hon. P. Collier: Then there is frozen meat.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes, but, of course, frozen meat can travel much further than fresh fruit. Here we have a market close at hand for various articles

of human consumption, but we do not seem to have our quota of the trade.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Who is to finance the delegation?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: We are providing cheap fares, which is good business.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: That is the Government's contribution?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes. We hope that we shall get that back in the form of increased trade, what will represent many times the cheap fares we provide.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: It would be interesting if the Minister could supply us with figures along the lines of those furnished by the Minister for Works regarding the State hotels. The "Kangaroo" has been specially referred to. I understand that during the war period that vessel returned considerable profits to the State Shipping Service.

The Chief Secretary: That is so.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: A considerable amount was paid into Consolidated Revenue as the result of those profits. I would like to know if we maintain the original capitalisation of that vessel and charge interest accordingly, or has the capitalisation been reduced in proportion to her earnings, and the profits paid into Consolidated Revenue. That is an important phase.

Hon. P. Collier: Two years ago we wrote down the capitalisation heavily. Prior to that the position was as you indicate.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON. Then some help has been given.

Hon. P. Collier: But only in the last two years.

The Chief Secretary: What was the amount written down?

Hon. P. Collier: About £400,000.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I am glad to hear that. The "Kangaroo" has returned large profits, and it would be wrong to expect the State Shipping Service to pay interest on the original capitalisation without any consideration along the lines I have indicated.

Division put and passed.

Divisions—State Sawmills, £555,231; Wyndham Freezing, Canning and Meat Export Works, £330,000—agreed to.

This concluded the Estimates of the Trading Concerns for the year.

Resolutions reported.

BILL—HOSPITAL FUND.*Message.*

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

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH (Hon. C. G. Latham—York [8.15] in moving the second reading said: A number of attempts have been made to obtain legislation for the purpose of taxing the people for the maintenance and support of hospitals. Eight years ago there was introduced into this Chamber a Bill on lines quite different from those in the Bill before us. Since then many attempts have been made, and last year a Bill was introduced by my predecessor on lines similar to the present Bill, with one or two exceptions. The chief exception is that in the Bill of last year it was proposed that everybody who contributed to the fund should receive hospital benefits. Unfortunately, the financial position of the State at present does not permit us to extend that privilege which my predecessor intended to provide. I propose to set out the conditions in this Bill. A trust fund will be established from which hospitals will be financed exactly on the lines proposed in the Bill of last year. They will be required to find their own fund and expend their own money. It is proposed to raise the revenue per medium of a tax of 1½d. in the pound on all wages, salaries and incomes—exactly as in the Bill of last session.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: But no hospital accommodation will be given.

THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH: None at all.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: At what point do you start the tax?

THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH: On the pound basis, exactly the same as in the last Bill. There is no difference in respect of that.

Mr. Munsie: But you expect to get only £156,000.

THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Unfortunately, yes. The primary object is to place hospitals on a firmer financial position. In the past it has been the lot of the Minister for Health to depend on what money could be provided by the Treasurer and voted by Parliament annually. With the present means of raising money, it is in-

tended to place in a trust fund the whole of the revenue, to be administered by the Health Department on the lines of the last Bill. While to-day it is estimated that the revenue will be £156,000 per annum, in the Bill of last session it was estimated that the revenue would be £210,000. Unfortunately, through the falling-off in incomes, and the reduction in salaries and wages paid this year, and through so many men and women being out of employment, it is estimated the amount to be collected will reach only £156,000. In the past hospitals have been provided from revenue funds to the extent of £100,000 per annum. That was so up to last year. But last year the Treasurer made available an additional £4,000, not provided for on the Estimates, but as an emergency subsequently, for the purpose of carrying on the hospitals. Also there was an amount of £38,000 which was collected from the amusements tax and placed in a trust fund and disbursed by the Minister for Health. As the Treasurer has told this Chamber, it is proposed to take into revenue that tax in future, and to compensate for it. In the past it has been the custom of the Public Health Department to pay into Consolidated Revenue the whole of the funds collected from patients attending public hospitals, which roughly amounted to £34,000.

Mr. Munsie: Government hospitals, not public hospitals.

THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH: What is the difference?

Mr. Munsie: There is a lot of difference. Some of the hospitals are public but not Government.

THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Well, the fees paid by patients attending Government hospitals, amounted to £34,000. That sum was paid into Consolidated Revenue. Under the Bill it is proposed that the whole of this money shall be paid into a trust fund, together with the amount collected from the tax, £156,000. The total estimated revenue will be £192,000. Last year we had available £152,000. So it will be seen that there will be a benefit to the fund of about £52,000. Not the whole of that sum will be available, because the cost of collection of the tax will have to be taken into account, roughly about £6,000. That will be deducted from the amount. It does not actually mean that this £52,000 will be available in addition to what was provided last year, because with the imposition of this tax it is estimated

that there will be a falling-off in revenue from other sources. The amount of money that has been collected for hospitals in the past by private contributions and other sources that are conditions of employment in many parts of the State, it is estimated, will fall off considerably, to the extent, perhaps, of £8,000. A concession given under the Bill is that a married man on the basic wage or below it will receive free hospital accommodation for himself and his dependants.

Mr. Munsie: He has that now in all Government hospitals. He has it in the Perth Hospital.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I do not think any man receiving treatment in the Perth Hospital is allowed to go without payment of fees, if he can pay them. There is no fixed standard of wages at present entitling him to exemption. If he can pay, he is expected to pay. Certainly the hospitals are open for treatment of the man on the basic wage, but he has to pay for that treatment if he can. In addition to that, a concession is given to a single person on £156 per annum or less; he will be treated free in the hospitals. Those are the only concessions provided in the Bill. It is estimated that those concessions will cost roughly about £5,000. To-day the equivalent of that amount collected in fees is paid into Consolidated Revenue. I have pointed out there will be a reflex on certain medical and hospital funds which are collected throughout the State, frequently as a condition of employment. It is estimated that in that respect there will be a falling-off of roughly £8,000.

Mr. Munsie: What about the £30,000 annually subscribed to the hospitals? You will lose all of that.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Not the whole of it. It is surprising how much money will be subscribed, although it is admitted that the present financial position will cause a great deal of difficulty in that regard.

Mr. Corboy: How are we to keep our country medical funds going if the people contributing to them have to pay this tax? We have such a fund at Southern Cross.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: The doctor at Southern Cross is not maintained by public subscriptions.

Mr. Corboy: Yes, he is; he gets £300 per annum from our local medical fund.

Now you are going to tax the people who subscribe to that fund.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: That is news to me, for I understood the doctor at Southern Cross was guaranteed a certain sum, portion of which is provided by the local road board.

Mr. Corboy: Not the road board, but the local medical fund.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: It is expected that the people will still have to find some money for that purpose.

Mr. Corboy: The people at Southern Cross have to pay 1s. 6d. weekly to keep the doctor, and now they will have to pay this tax as well. It is utter rubbish; they will not do it.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: This tax is not for medical attention, but for hospitals. It is expected that as the State grows the fund ought to be sufficiently large to maintain our hospitals and provide additional accommodation as required. It is not expected there will be any funds available for additional hospital accommodation this year, but when we get back to normal again our revenue ought to increase as the population and the wealth of the State increase.

Mr. Corboy: Are you anticipating any extra burden through the death of the local medical funds?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Yes, a little.

Mr. Corboy: You will certainly kill all those funds.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: In the timber industry, unfortunately, the funds have practically collapsed.

Mr. Corboy: You are certainly going to kill the fund I have mentioned.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I do not think there is anything paid to the hospitals at Southern Cross. I have the figures here.

Mr. Wilson: There is in Collie.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Yes, it is a condition of employment there.

Mr. Wilson: No, it is not.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: There is some arrangement there. Everybody contributes something towards the fund.

Mr. Wilson: We pay the full salary of the doctor.

Mr. Corboy: But the people are not going to continue paying that and pay the tax as well.

Mr. Munsie: Of course they will. That fund is for the doctor.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: The Bill of last year made exactly the same provision, except that it provided hospital accommodation for everybody. I only wish we were in the position to do that to-day, but unfortunately we are not.

Mr. Munsie: You will take £104,000 into Consolidated Revenue.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: If members appreciate the financial position—and I think they do—they will realise there must be some additional taxation. This additional taxation is for the purpose of raising money for the fund, which will be controlled for the benefit of those who have to use a hospital.

Mr. Corboy: Why call it a hospital fund when it is for the benefit of Consolidated Revenue?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: It is not for the benefit of Consolidated Revenue.

Mr. Munsie: To the extent of £104,000 it is.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I desire to clear up the belief many people entertain that this money is going to be paid into Consolidated Revenue. It is not going to be paid into Consolidated Revenue, any more than was the fund of last year. I have had quite a number of letters asking me about it.

Mr. Munsie: You will stop the contribution of £104,000?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I will not say anything about that. There is nothing to hide; it is all on the Estimates. The Bill is well known to this House, because it is very similar to the Bill that passed this House last year and was amended in another place. Therefore it does not need a great deal of discussion. The points that will be discussed include the taxing of the whole of the people of the State for the hospitals and giving the taxpayers no additional benefit. But we do give a benefit to a man receiving less than the basic wage. We give a benefit to single men and women receiving less than £156. That is a distinct advantage. A man who could not use the hospital because his financial position would debar his entry will contribute to the hospitals.

Mr. Munsie: There is no financial bar to a man entering any hospital, except those of Perth and Fremantle.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Yes, there is.

Mr. Munsie: If you were getting £10,000 a year you could enter any other hospital.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: There is a bar. If a man wished to enter the Bunbury or York hospital and the accommodation was taxed, preference would be given to a man who could not afford to go into a private hospital. One point that will be discussed is that Consolidated Revenue will get a benefit to the extent of £104,000 per annum. The sum previously was £100,000, and the Treasurer found £4,000. I wish to emphasise the necessity for the measure, even if only to assist the hospitals of the metropolitan area. The Children's Hospital at present has a debit balance of £5,600, and it is an unfortunate fact that one of the wards has had to be closed. We are anxious to get that ward re-opened before the summer months, so that it will be available to meet the demand occasioned by summer sickness amongst the children. The finances of the Fremantle hospital are in a parlous condition. The loss experienced there is at the rate of £5,000 a year and there does not seem to be any chance of overtaking the loss.

Mr. Munsie: And no district, good and all as some of them are, does as much for its hospital.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I was about to pay Fremantle that compliment. Being located in an important shipping centre, no hospital has to meet greater demands, and no people in the State do as much for their hospital as do the Fremantle people. The Perth Hospital is falling behind at the rate of about £700 per month. I admit that the Radiological Department, in which the ex-Minister interested himself, was erected for the benefit of people suffering from malignant growths, but it has become a great burden. At present it is costing about £300 a month in excess of the revenue received. Thus there are many commitments that the Treasury cannot meet. Week after week the authorities of the various metropolitan hospitals come to us asking for money. Many of the country hospitals are also in financial difficulties. I hope the House will treat the Bill leniently.

Hon. P. Collier: They will not be any better off when the Bill goes through, not one penny.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: They will. We shall have a fund and we shall be able to spread the money over the 12 months. Apart from this, there is no hope of providing money for the hospitals.

Mr. Sampson: Will this measure stop the selling of buttons in the streets?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: It will stop nothing.

Mr. Corboy: It will stop our medical fund.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: It may. Probably the member for Hannans will tell the House that the amount of revenue will considerably exceed the estimate. I do not think it will.

Mr. Pantou: Do you think you will have any luck with the Bill in another place?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I hope so, though in the past similar proposals have had a rough reception there. For the benefit of new members, let me explain the method of collecting the tax. People employing only one or two persons will use a hospital stamp; others employing many will make a deduction from wages and show it on the wages sheet; persons in receipt of salaries and companies liable to pay the tax will pay to the Commissioner of Taxation in the ordinary way. Thus, no new machinery will be required to collect the tax. In Committee I shall be prepared to consider any amendments that may be proposed so long as they do not interfere with the principles of the Bill. I commend the measure to the House, realising that many members are probably more familiar with its provision than I am. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Munsie, debate adjourned.

BILL—RESERVES.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. C. G. Latham—York) [8.37] in moving the second reading said: This is a Bill of the type introduced annually to deal with reserves. I have had a copy of the notes made, as well as lithographs, which will be placed on the Table for the information of members. Fourteen reserves are dealt with, which is quite a large number. The measure is almost entirely one for consideration in Committee and therefore I shall not say

much about it at this stage. Provision is made for the vesting of a reserve of half an acre in the Lake Grace Road Board area. It is at present held on a 999 years' lease and vested in trustees for an agricultural hall site. The trustees desire to relinquish their trusteeship in favour of the road board. At Broome there is a Class A reserve on which a mechanics' institute is built, and it is proposed to take a small portion of it and set it aside for a public library and club room for the sub-branch of the R.S.L. At Narrogin the Independent Order of Rechabites hold the Crown grant of Lot 335 and desire to transfer it to the trustees of the United Friendly Societies' Council, for a friendly societies' hall. Legislative authority is desired for the alteration of the trust accordingly. At Mullewa it is desired to exchange the aborigines reserve for a piece of the common. The Aborigines Department is offering the Mullewa Road Board 80 acres and will receive 100 acres in exchange. This will remove the aborigines a little further from the town.

Mr. Marshall: A good job, too.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Williams locations 7830 and 11424 are held under a 99 years lease by the trustees of the Williams Jockey Club for the purpose of a racecourse. The Williams Road Board has acquired other land for a greater sports ground on which it is intended to concentrate the whole of the sporting bodies, and it is proposed to give power to dispose of the racecourse and apply the proceeds to the improvement of the greater sports ground.

Hon. P. Collier: The same as has been done at Narrogin.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes.

Mr. Corboy: A very good idea.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Almost every month we are receiving requests of this kind. At Kununoppin the trustees of a reserve for an agricultural hall site wish to transfer the trust to the Kununoppin-Trayning Road Board, and the board are prepared to take it over. That is a very simple matter. At Midland Junction a cemetery is held by certain trustees who desire to surrender the trust in order that the cemetery may be placed under the control of the Midland Junction Municipal Council. I wish to draw attention to Clause 9 of the Bill. The Western Australian Posta

Institute approached the Claremont Road Board for permission to use a piece of land set aside as a Class A reserve for recreation. The institute authorities have collected from their employees fortnightly sums of money with which to provide work for members out of employment. The money is being spent on beautifying the reserve and providing sporting facilities. It is proposed to give the Claremont Road Board power to lease the reserve to the Postal Institute for 21 years, during which time the rights of the public will be preserved, and at the end of the period any improvements will be transferred free of charge to the Claremont Road Board.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: This is a Class A reserve vested in the road board?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes, for recreation. Members know how difficult it is to obtain revenue from such reserves. There were two objects for the transfer. The one that appealed to me most was that the postal employees were prepared to tax themselves to provide work for fellow members who are unemployed. The proposal also provides an opportunity to beautify this reserve, which is opposite the Old Men's Home and is separated from the foreshore by a road. By approving of the proposal, the Claremont Road Board will have a park made for them. It is proposed to fence the reserve, plant it with trees, prepare football and cricket grounds and tennis courts, and provide generally for the enjoyment of the people who desire to use it. I hope favourable consideration will be given to this proposal because, during the last few months, we have allowed the postal employees to proceed with the work in order to provide employment. A nominal sum is being charged by the Claremont Road Board as rent for the reserve. At Mullewa there was a 1½-chain road. It was reduced to one chain and the half chain was purchased by the road board who desire permission to sell it and use the money towards building road board offices and hall on the present site. At Geraldton a large part of the foreshore is set apart as a Class A reserve for esplanade and recreation. Portion of it is needed in connection with harbour works. It is desired to exclude it from the reserve and set it apart as a new reserve for harbour works. The Works De-

partment have agreed to allow the municipality to exercise control over the land until such time as it is required for harbour works. No more land will be taken than is required for that particular purpose. It is proposed to take about one-eighth of an acre from King's Park so that a bore may be put down upon it by the Water Supply Department. It is necessary to ask Parliament for authority to do that. It is only a small piece of the land along the river front.

Hon. P. Collier: In whom will it be vested?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: In the Minister for Works.

Hon. P. Collier: It would be all right under the control of the King's Park Board.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No, because the board would then control the bore and everything on that piece of land. It is desirable that the Government should have control of it. I admit the chairman of the board has done a great deal for the park and that he has had able support from the board, but in the public interest it is necessary to make this reservation. The piece of land is actually less than one-eighth of an acre in extent, and this will not affect the park area. It is on the right-hand side of the road going west. At Denmark the railway line was shifted from where it was along the river near the foreshore. The land on which the railway terminated—it has now been extended—was a Class A reserve. It is necessary to exclude from such Class A reserve the portions required for railway and road purposes. Only that portion will be taken that is necessary for the station yard and the road leading out of it. We must get Parliamentary authority to take that piece of road out of the Class A reserve. The Quairading Road Board are asking for permission to sell 10 acres of land now set aside for recreation purposes. They want to follow the same principle that has been followed by the Williams local authority, that of consolidating the sports grounds into one ground on the other side of the line. This local authority has an extensive area that is used for general sports, recreation and a racecourse. To avoid any duplication in the expenditure of public funds on the sporting grounds it is proposed to ask for legislative authority to

dispose of this particular piece of land and devote the proceeds to use upon the other ground.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Is it intended to buy another ground?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The local authority have already acquired land from private sources, and had a small portion granted to them on the other side of the line. Already some buildings have been erected upon it. The piece it is desired to get authority to sell is on the west side going towards the Cubbine station. I have here the notes on the Bill, and lithographs, all of which I now desire to lay on the Table of the House. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put and passed.

On motion by Hon. W. D. Johnson, debate adjourned.

BILL—WAGIN HOSPITAL VALIDATION.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. J. Lindsay—Mt. Marshall) [8.52] in moving the second reading said: This is one of those short Bills that come down at this time of year to validate something that was done without legal authority. In 1927 we passed a hospitals Bill. Before it was proclaimed, evidently the Wagin Municipality and Road Board had seen it, and decided to go on with a particular work. They let a contract to erect a hospital at a cost of £5,450. They did this three weeks before the Bill became law. This measure is brought down to legalise that action.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Are they paying the cost?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Government found the whole of the money. Probably that is the reason why the Bill is introduced. We have to protect Government money, and that is what I am asking Parliament to do. The understanding was that the two local authorities should pay interest at 6 per cent. and a sinking fund of 2 per cent., and each local authority agreed to share in the principal at the rate of £1,384 each. They were a little too anxious to get on with the work, a little too energetic, and did not wait until the Act was proclaimed. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

MR. McCALLUM (South Fremantle) [8.54]: I offer no objection to the Bill.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: The Wagin Municipal Council ought to be put in its place.

Mr. McCALLUM: The local authorities seem to do something illegal every year. I cannot remember a single session when we have not had to validate something done by a local authority.

The Premier: It is nearly all at Fremantle.

Mr. McCALLUM: I am not going to have it said, Mr. Speaker, that your district is the only one that does things illegally. I cannot remember my district doing any such thing, but it should be stated that we remember other districts which have done these things, and yours should not be singled out for a special penalty. Local authorities are often impetuous and do many things without sufficient forethought. Many things have been done in the Great Southern district that stand to-day as illegal. In a case like this, we have not much option but to pass the Bill. I do not think there should be any objection to it.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

BILL—METROPOLITAN MARKET TRUST ROAD.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. C. G. Latham—York) [8.57] in moving the second reading said: This is a very simple Bill having for its object the transfer of a piece of land to the City Council. It was thought the Bill that was introduced by the member for South Fremantle (Mr. McCallum) carried out the intention of the Market Trust and the City Council. The Crown Grant of the market site that was issued to the trust comprised Marquis-street, running down to the subway. It was proposed to exchange that street for another running straight to the subway at West Perth. That is a chain and a half wide. It is proposed by this Bill to transfer that road to the City Council. Under the agreement it is provided that the Market Trust shall carry

out the work of laying bitumen over 50 feet of the road, and, when this becomes necessary, the City Council will undertake to complete the whole of the 150 links. The trust will have to contribute a maximum amount of £150 over a period of three years as a contribution towards the cost of regrading the road that may be necessary when it is constructed to the full width of 99 feet, including the taking over of Marquissett which may be necessary as the result of such regrading. The Bill empowers the Market Trust to transfer the road, which it was thought the Bill previously passed already gave the right to do, to the City Council. It merely rectifies a mistake that was made on a previous occasion. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

BILL—ROMAN CATHOLIC NEW NORCIA CHURCH PROPERTY ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. C. G. Latham—York) [9.3] in moving the second reading said: This is another Bill to remedy a defect in an Act. The Act was passed in 1929, vesting certain property in the Lord Abbot of New Norcia.

Hon. P. Collier: Are you referring to last year's Bill?

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes. Some land titles were omitted from that Bill; and since this measure passed another place, there has been discovered the need for a further amendment, which has been placed on the Notice Paper. This last amendment is necessary in order to complete the vesting power. It is merely a question of altering some figures.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Are you sure you are right this time?

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes. I do not think it necessary to make any further explanation. Certain people hold land

in trust for the New Norcia community, and that land is to be included in the existing Act. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Amendment of Schedule:

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: I move an amendment—

That the following words and figures be added to paragraph (b):—"Volume 478, Folio 57; Volume 479, Folio 85; Volume 994, Folio 48."

I have explained the reason for including these titles.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: While I know nothing about the Bill, I appreciate the work done by the New Norcia community. Reference is made in this clause to conditional purchase leases. I take it those conditional purchase leases are not being made freehold before the improvement conditions imposed have been fulfilled. It seems peculiar to have conditional purchase leases included in a Bill of this kind.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: Similar words were contained in the Bill of last year. All the clause does is to vest in the Lord Abbot the whole of the property held by the community. The conditions of conditional purchase have to be observed by the community in the same way as by any person outside the community.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: The clause vests freeholds and conditional purchase rights?

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes. The object is to prevent different sections of the New Norcia community from holding titles.

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with an amendment.

House adjourned at 9.10 p.m.