

Mr. Money: I have a perfect right to ask a civil question.

*1½ o'clock midnight.*

Mr. ANGELO: Let me emphasise the absolute necessity for the Government continuing the service along the North-West coast. At any time we may lose the Singapore boats, and then where shall we be? The whole of the development of the North-West will be stopped, and to re-establish a suitable shipping service will take months and months, possibly years. It is all very well to say that if the Government steamers went off the coast, the private shipping companies would come along. If that statement is well founded, I would like the Government to invite offers from the private shipping companies, so that we may know what they are prepared to do. If the companies are allowed to take over the North-West service, they should be allowed to do so only on conditions which will safeguard the development of the North-West and will prevent the raising of freights and fares to exorbitant figures. At the present time, we have the motor ship "Kangaroo." She seems to be fitted up in an excellent manner for carrying stock and may yet prove to be a good stock boat. She is untried, however, because she is only now on her first trip to Java and Singapore. Provided she can get into the port where stock is to be loaded, she should prove satisfactory. From her appearance and the opinion of marine men I have met in Fremantle, I consider she will be a serviceable boat but unfortunately she is about three knots too slow. We have lost the "Kwinana" which was an excellent stock boat and a very profitable one too. As to the "Bambra," at the present time there is no passenger boat that is being run in such an excellent manner along the Northern coast. She has become the most popular passenger boat on the coast. The present skipper and his officers do their utmost to make the passengers comfortable. They get every ounce that is possible out of the boat for the comfort of the passengers and in order to give the people the best available service. There are difficulties, however, which prove that she is unsuitable for the trade. Sometimes the "Bambra" leaves Fremantle two days before the s.s. "Minderoo." The captain and his officers are just as anxious to do the trip as quickly as possible as are those connected with any other vessel. Every time they go up the coast, they urge the agents at the various ports to expedite loading in and out of the ports. At Perth Hedland I have known the "Bambra" to arrive six hours before the "Minderoo" but she has had to anchor because there was not sufficient water available for her to cross the bar.

The Minister for Works: Am I to be held responsible because there is not sufficient water?

Mr. ANGELO: Of course not; I am merely pointing out the position which does arise

there. Because the "Minderoo" is not of such a draught as the "Bambra," she can berth. If such conditions are to continue, the position will remain unsatisfactory. This shows how those connected with the State Steamship Service, who are doing their utmost to make the service profitable, are hampered. I again urge upon the Government to do all that is possible, if they desire to continue the service, to put on at least one or two decent boats. If the Government provide such boats, those in control of the service will make a success of it. If the Government are determined to get rid of the steamship service, it is their duty to the North-West to see that a proper service is inaugurated under such strict conditions as will prevent the creation of any monopoly or overcharges in fares and freights.

Mr. Teesdale: They cannot do that.

Mr. ANGELO: If they cannot, then it is the duty of the Government to keep the service going and buy one or two good boats for the service.

Division put and passed.

Divisions—State Saw Mills, £568,987; Wyndham Freezing, Canning, and Meat Export Works, £264,630—agreed to.

Resolutions reported and the report adopted.

*House adjourned at 10.6 a.m. (Thursday).*

## Legislative Council.

*Thursday, 8th December, 1921.*

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

### IRISH AGREEMENT, CONGRATULATIONS.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [4.32]: With the

consent of the House I desire to submit without notice the following motion:—

That the Legislative Council of Western Australia expresses its profound gratification at the settlement of the long-standing differences between Great Britain and Ireland, and its confident hope that the agreement arrived at will inaugurate a period of enduring amity amongst all the Dominions of the British Empire; and that a cablegram be forwarded by the Government to Mr. Lloyd George warmly congratulating him and all participants in the recent conference on the successful termination of their long and difficult negotiations.

I feel that no words of mine are necessary to commend this motion to the favourable consideration of hon. members. The news that a settlement honourable and satisfactory to all parties has been achieved of the age-long differences between Great Britain and Ireland seems almost too good to be true; but we have read the terms of the agreement as published in this morning's newspaper, and from both sides we have had assurances of the acceptance of those terms in a spirit of mutual consideration and mutual regard. From that agreement and from those assurances I think we are not over-sanguine in indulging the hope that a new and brighter era has dawned, not only for England and Ireland, but for the whole of the British Empire and for the entire civilised world. We must all of us feel that it is the best, the greatest news that we have received since the Armistice; and to me it seems that the minds and the hearts of the people of England and of the people of Ireland have been prepared for this happy reconciliation by the trials and the tragedies and the sacrifices of the war. To us, notwithstanding our great distance from the seat of trouble, the consummation of this agreement means much. It means the burning away of barriers that have from time to time raised themselves against the complete amity of our own people and the consolidation of those feelings of warm regard and respectful tolerance which are amongst the outstanding natural characteristics of our race. I trust that the terms of the motion will commend themselves to hon. members. A similar motion is being submitted in the Legislative Assembly; and, if passed, it will be forwarded as a resolution of the assembled Parliament of Western Australia. There can be no doubt that to many men and many minds praise is due for the settlement which has been reached. We propose to send this cablegram of congratulation to Mr. Lloyd George because he is the Prime Minister, and also because we feel that his has been the master mind on this occasion. Without further words I commend the motion to the House.

Hon. J. EWING (South-West) [4.36]: It is with great pleasure and with great joy that I second the motion. I know of nothing

that can give greater satisfaction to the British Empire and to the members of this Legislative Council here assembled than this morning's news. The eloquent manner in which the motion has been proposed by the Leader of the House has expressed much more than I could have said or intend to attempt to say. However, I do join in the Minister's remarks regarding Ireland and the difficulties and troubles which have confronted that country for hundreds of years. It is a very good and a very great thing to know that those difficulties are over. From the very thorough manner in which the conference was carried on, one may hope that the settlement will be of an enduring nature. I feel sure that the men representing the countries of England and Ireland, joined together, after many difficulties and differences, must rejoice greatly at having reached an honourable and what to my mind seems a very satisfactory solution of the problem. Our hearts have been troubled during the last four or five months, and I have been doubtful, and at times even fearful, of what might happen as the result of a breakdown of the conference. It is a most joyful thing now to know that the difficulties are over. I feel that the constitution given to Ireland is practically the same as that under which we enjoy our liberties here. It is a constitution sufficient for Australia and the Indian Empire and also South Africa. I feel sure that in the fulness of time Ireland will realise that wherever the British flag flies there is liberty and justice and peace. I have every assurance that as time passes the prosperity of Ireland will become greater and greater—far greater than it ever has been in the past. I can only pray that what we have learnt to-day inaugurates a lasting benefit to this great British Empire.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN (South) [4.41]: I feel I ought to say a few words regarding this motion. My parents were Irish, and I am proud of the fact. Australia is my adopted country, and I feel none the less worthy of being an adopted Australian, and none the less keen in the interests of the British Empire, because the country of my people is very dear to me. I feel all the more strongly on this question because I was in Ireland only last year and travelled from North to South of Ireland through the troubled districts, and saw some of the most dreadful scenes that I have ever witnessed. I came to Tubbercurry when the town was a heap of smoking ruins. The previous night there had been reprisals in return for an attack which had been made upon the police: the whole town had been destroyed. I was in Tuom, and saw the ruins of that town. I saw also the ruins of numbers of creameries which had been destroyed. I talked to people who had been the victims of terrible deeds that had been done, not by one side, but by both sides. When civil war occurs, it is the most hor-

rible of all wars; and the condition of the country is invariably such as no one can care to contemplate. I, who have relatives in Ireland, looked forward with dismay to the prospect of a renewal of that fearful condition of things—a condition of things that brought dread and horror to every heart in Ireland. Unfortunately the political situation in Ireland is such that no one in Australia can realise the extent to which politics enter into the life of the people. There is scarcely a family that is not directly associated with one side or the other, and I can well understand the feeling of relief that will be brought to the people throughout Ireland when they know that peace has been established. The peace is one that I regard as honourable to the Empire, and it is a peace that even the most extreme in Ireland should accept with gratitude, because it means that Ireland becomes one of that family of nations which constitute the British Empire. Ireland is now in the same position as Australia and Canada, New Zealand and South Africa; and, knowing Ireland as I do, knowing the Irish question from different points of view—because my relatives and friends have been amongst those who took opposite views in politics; I have been amongst the extremists on each side—I feel perfectly satisfied that Ireland will not be false to the trust that has been reposed in her. The granting of Home Rule, the granting of nationhood, to South Africa was a great success. We saw what General Botha and General Smuts did as the result of the generosity that was extended towards the Boers and South Africans after the war by the British Empire. Now, I feel that the men who were engaged in that Conference in London were men of great ability. I think, too, that they are broad-minded, far seeing men, and generous enough, and also wise enough, to recognise that the only possible hope for the future of Ireland is along the line of friendship and conciliation with the sister islands of Great Britain. I hope the day is not far distant when those men will prove that they are not less appreciative of what has been done by the British Empire than General Botha and General Smuts. I quite agree with all that the Leader of the House has said in praise of Mr. Lloyd George. No one could have a higher appreciation of that great statesman, probably the greatest Prime Minister Britain has ever had, than I, but, with all due respect to what Mr. Lloyd George has done, I think there is another great man to whom credit ought to be due on this occasion. I refer to His Majesty the King.

Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: It was the message of peace and goodwill that His Majesty uttered at Belfast that was responsible for bringing about the Irish conference, and it is significant that the first message of congratulation and satisfaction that was

sent to Mr. Lloyd George was from His Majesty King George. A new era of prosperity and peace has opened up for Ireland, and the prosperity and peace which Ireland will get will also bring about contentment in that country. I believe that Ireland will be a contented member of the British Empire and that will mean further security, safety and strength to all the countries forming what has been called in the Irish peace treaty, "the British Commonwealth of Nations."

Hon. J. W. HICKEY (Central) [4.47]: I have never supported a motion in this Chamber with greater pleasure than I do on this occasion. I join with Mr. Kirwan in the belief that a new era has dawned for Ireland. Ireland has long been recognised as a country of romance and tragedy. We hope this settlement will relieve that position and put an end to the long line of tragedy which has characterised the history of that country, and that Ireland will now come into her own. Every broad-minded person in Australia has recognised for many years that Ireland is entitled to a certain amount of home rule. Every Parliament in Australia has carried a motion to that effect including our National Parliament, and this is what Ireland has now got. Whilst we rejoice and hasten to express our feelings of deep pleasure at the news we have received, as regards the cessation of hostilities and the amicable settlement that has been arrived at, and realise that the age-long dispute has now been concluded, and that peace has come at last, we must not forget the example that has thus been set to us or fail to realise how far-reaching this influence will be throughout the length and breadth of the world. It has been reflected in the Washington conference, and will be reflected even in our own domestic affairs in Australia. In our Commonwealth we have our little quarrels and difficulties which appear to be hard to adjust. We have only to turn to the long drawn out calamity which has existed in Ireland for such a long period of years, to see how men have been able to sit down quietly and find a way out of the great difficulties which have grown up as the result of prejudice and have even led to bloodshed. Those men recognised that the thing had to be settled round the table. Whilst we rejoice over all these things, we must take the lesson to heart, and see if we cannot nearer home adjust our own small difficulties. This Irish question is one of the greatest difficulties which has ever existed, and yet men have been able to adjust it. Surely, therefore, we can adjust some of our own difficulties of lesser moment. We rejoice in the good tidings that have been communicated to us. Those men of Irish sentiment and Australian sentiment and men throughout the length and breadth of the land who have fought with unselfish interest for Ireland, will now realise that their work has not been for naught, and that peace once more reigns and Ireland has again become

a nation. I have the greatest pleasure in supporting the motion, and offer my humble but hearty congratulations to those who have been responsible for this settlement. Particularly do we congratulate the Prime Minister, Mr. Lloyd George, because, without him, it would have been absolutely impossible to negotiate this settlement. Those who have been more closely in touch with the business than perhaps others, realise to the full extent what the Prime Minister has done on this occasion.

Question put and passed.

#### SELECT COMMITTEE — WYNDHAM FREEZING WORKS AND STATE SHIPPING SERVICE.

On motion by Hon. J. J. Holmes the time for bringing up the report of the select committee upon the State Shipping Service was extended until Tuesday next.

#### QUESTION—TOWNSITE, WALLISTON.

Hon. A. SANDERSON asked the Minister for Education: 1, What is the date of the survey of the Walliston townsite? 2, What is the cost of the survey? 3, What is the date of the first Government sale? 4, How many blocks were sold to the 30th November, 1921?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: 1, Survey approved 7th October, 1918. 2, £67 9s. 3, 11th April, 1919. 4, Seven blocks, two of which have since been forfeited.

#### PAPERS—ESPLANADE FAIR GROUNDS, VESTING.

Hon. F. A. BAGLIN (West) [4.53]: I move—

That the files relating to the circumstances under which the Fair Grounds on the Perth Esplanade were vested in a board, and the files relating to the subsequent dealings of the board with the reserves referred to, be laid on the Table of the House.

I understand the usual procedure in cases where there is no objection to a motion is to move it formally, upon which the papers are laid upon the Table of the House. In this case there are some unusual circumstances to which I must refer. I desire to enter my protest against the procedure which has been adopted. As far back as the 13th October I brought the matter under the notice of the House, but failed to receive a satisfactory reply. Again, on the 25th October I asked for the production of these papers, but once more the answer was unsatisfactory. The excuse was offered that the reason why the papers could not be produced was that they were in constant use, and I was informed that if necessary I could

go to the Premier's office and there peruse the file. If further information was necessary I could then move for their production. If Mr. Shapcott is responsible, and I think he is, and does not think that members of Parliament have some dignity to preserve, I do. I went to the Premier's office and asked for these files, and was told they were not there but that they would be procured for me.

Hon. E. H. Harris: You were about as successful as I was in getting the findings of the Commission on the Mining Bill.

Hon. F. A. BAGLIN: I was politely requested to call again. I did so and the file was produced, and Mr. Shapcott invited me to sit down and peruse it. I sat there on the chair like a shag on a rock. Members all know what a busy office Mr. Shapcott's office is, and how constantly people are coming in and out. Is it a fair thing to ask a member to sit there and peruse a file and come to a decision as to its contents? It cannot be done. Prior to that I had sent a request to Mr. Shapcott that these files should be brought to the House on the understanding that they would be returned on the following day. My object was to peruse the files in quiet and obtain the necessary information from them. Mr. Shapcott absolutely refused my request. He said I would have to go to his office if I wished to see the files. I trust in future that members when asking for the production of files will be able to get them, and will not be required to attend the Premier's office, in order to peruse them. I certainly glanced through the files as best I could, but in a very rough way, and I came to the conclusion that I could not possibly gather the information necessary. Consequently, I have tabled this motion. If Mr. Shapcott does not understand what the dignity of a member of Parliament is, he must be told. It is unfair to ask a member to go to his office to read over a file while sitting in a chair. One requires to get into a quiet place in order to do that. I would not have spoken but for this incident.

Question put and passed.

#### BILL—CONSTITUTION FURTHER AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM (North-East) [5.0] in moving the second reading said: On several occasions during the last few years attempts have been made in another place to amend the franchise qualification for the Legislative Council. Bills have been sent to this Chamber only to be defeated. The purpose of this Bill is to amend the household qualification. The present qualification consists of a householder occupying a dwelling of a clear annual value of £17 sterling. The Bill provides for the repeal of that qualification and for replacing it with a straight out household qualification. There are many desirable citizens living in the outback portions of Western Australia who are not allowed to be enrolled as electors under the existing quali-

fication system. It is a very simple matter, where people are paying rent amounting to 6s. 9d. per week or more, to make application to become enrolled. In the more remote portions of the State, however, people working in connection with the mining industry own, to a very great extent, their own dwellings. It has been held that their dwellings do not carry a clear annual value of £17 sterling. Irrespective of the fact that these people are connected with a great primary industry, and are developing a valuable asset for the State, they are compelled, through the very nature of their employment, to live in homes that are not of a costly description. Therefore they erect buildings which are not constructed of bricks and mortar, nor yet, in many cases, of iron. Though they live in such dwellings, they are rearing families and are doing the best they can, not only for themselves, but for the State as a whole. I claim it is not fair that these people should be deprived from exercising the franchise for the Legislative Council. I am of opinion that where we have people prepared to do work such as these pioneers are engaged upon, thus assisting to build up the State of Western Australia, this Chamber should recognise them as citizens and as such, they should not be deprived of the rights of full citizenship. It will be pointed out that by acquiring property, these people could qualify to exercise a vote in connection with the Legislative Council under the existing system but, taking into consideration the localities where these people work, it will be recognised that they cannot all become property holders. They have very large expenses arising out of the extra cost of living in those parts of the State and we should recognise the fact that they are doing their duty as citizens in rearing families. Only recently I met people from some of the outback portions of the State and they claimed that they were entitled to become enrolled under the present household qualification. They asserted, however, that they were afraid to make any such claim, fearing that a prosecution would follow their application, or that, at least, some trouble would be experienced by them. The object of the amendment embodied in the Bill is to clear up that position. We should not permit a qualification clause to stand in a Constitution Act that makes the position so uncertain that people do not make application for enrolment for fear of being prosecuted. This is one of the reasons I am advancing for the House giving favourable consideration to the Bill. It is not sought to interfere in any way with the other qualifications set out in the Constitution Act. I remember two years ago, when a somewhat similar Bill was sent to this Chamber, the clauses contained proposals to delete other qualifications that now stand in our existing legislation. It should be clearly understood that no such intention is implied in the present measure. The object is merely to clearly confer the straight-out household qualification upon certain citizens in Western Australia.

In South Australia, the Constitution Act already contains this provision and is at present in operation there. It will thus be understood that I am not asking the House to agree to something that is new or something which is at present untried. We simply ask for an amendment of the Constitution in the interests of a large and desirable section of the community on the lines adopted in South Australia. It will probably be mentioned during the course of the debate that the Labour Party is pledged to the abolition of the Legislative Council. I would direct the attention of hon. members to the fact that on several occasions in the past, this Chamber has arrived at decisions, when dealing with the franchise question, which have not met with the approval of a large section of the community and those decisions of the Legislative Council are largely responsible for people desiring the abolition of this Chamber. If I adhered strictly to Labour principles, I would probably not move the second reading of the Bill but would attempt to devise some means of bringing about the abolition of this Chamber. In asking the House to give the Bill favourable consideration, I may be charged with assisting to build up the very foundations of the Council. In the past, I have done everything possible to broaden the franchise of the Legislative Council. In those circumstances, I am justified in asking the House to give favourable consideration to this measure. I intend to draw attention to the fact that I have never been able to find, either inside or outside Parliament, any citizen who could in any way justify the franchise being fixed on a 6s., 7s., or 10s. per week basis. Why could it not have been fixed at 5s. per week as easily as it was fixed on a 6s. 9d. basis? What principle guided us in fixing the franchise qualification at 6s. 9d. per week? Perhaps that question will be answered by opponents to the Bill. We must recognise that, right throughout the world, Constitutions are being amended in the direction of giving the people a greater voice in the government of their country. I have already referred to the South Australian Constitution Act and in Great Britain, just prior to the signing of the armistice, the franchise was extended to the British women for the first time. While all this is going on, I ask hon. members to take into consideration the fact that it is profitable to keep pace with the times. If we continue to treat unfairly a desirable section of the community who are conducting themselves as law-abiding citizens, it cannot be in the best interests of the people of Western Australia. When I refer to that desirable section as discontented I refer, of course, to their dissatisfaction in not having the opportunity of enjoying full citizenship. Members will only require to give brief consideration to the Bill to realise the justice of the amendments sought in the Constitution. They will appreciate the justice of the desire to broaden, liberalise and extend the franchise. The Bill is a simple one and Clause

2 clearly sets out the definition of a dwelling house. With these few remarks, I leave it to the good sense of the House to assist me in passing the second reading of the Bill. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY (East) [5.13]: This is a measure that I do not think requires very much consideration at the hands of members of this House. We have had placed before us on so many occasions a Bill of this nature that it has become almost a hardy annual. We realise that throughout the community there are a great many who wish to whittle away the powers and rights of this Chamber. We must recognise that this Chamber has always given a very willing response and has always passed legislation most freely in the interests of the whole community. There may be instances, as mentioned by Mr. Cunningham, where the people are doing good work in the outback centres but who are not able to obtain a vote in connection with this House. It has always seemed to me that by the exercise of a little thrift, people may enjoy the franchise for the Legislative Council, for that franchise is not a very exacting one. The conditions and circumstances under which people can acquire property in Western Australia enable them at very small expense, to obtain homes for themselves. I think it will be agreed by everyone that we want to encourage the people to have their own homes. People should have habitable and good homes and the opportunities to obtain them are very great indeed. The State lends money under the workers' homes system to enable people to acquire homes of their own, and many workers avail themselves of this method of securing a home. The opportunities for acquiring property in Western Australia are probably greater than anywhere else in the world, and it is extraordinary indeed that a claim such as this Bill contains should be submitted to us. There must be legislation in the interests of those who are thrifty. There must be power whereby those who have been careful and who are the first people to bear taxation should have a final say in the expenditure of the revenue collected from them. The Assembly possesses the power of the purse. It has the right of imposing taxation whereby those who are thrifty have to contribute to the revenue. If this measure were passed, it would give another place even greater power, and I am afraid would result in this country speedily reaching the condition of affairs which prevails in Russia, because there would be an immediate onslaught and those who had been thrifty would find themselves in a minority. The Bill provides that where a person inhabits any dwelling house by virtue of any office, service, or employment and the dwelling house is not inhabited by anyone under whom such person serves in such office, service, or employment, he shall be entitled to a vote. This would entirely sweep away the franchise which even

at present is very light. Every one of the persons residing in such a dwelling house would be enfranchised. The Legislative Assembly has provided very wide exemptions in some of its taxation measures. People who are not subject to direct taxation should not enjoy the right to elect members to this Chamber.

Hon. T. Moore: Would you favour giving all direct taxpayers a vote for this Chamber?

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: That question is not before us. If the hon. member brings in a measure to enfranchise all direct taxpayers, I can assure him it will receive very fair consideration. When it is remembered that single persons are exempted to the extent of £100 and married persons to the extent of £156, it must be conceded that a fairly wide exemption is granted from direct taxation. All such people have the right to elect representatives to the Chamber which has power over the expenditure, and we must have a House of review on behalf of those people who have to find the major portion of the revenue.

Hon. J. Cunningham: The household qualification will do that.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: This measure provides for more than a household qualification. There would be nothing to prevent anyone swamping one of the electoral provinces by moving the whole crowd of men on a public work from one portion of the country to another.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Why has that not been done in the case of the Assembly?

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: It has been done frequently, and in connection with elections for this Chamber.

Hon. E. H. Harris: People have to reside in an electorate for a certain period before becoming qualified.

Hon. T. Moore: For a period of one month.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: This is a dangerous proposal, and it will be no improvement on the present qualification. It would certainly whittle away the powers of this Chamber.

Hon. T. Moore: It would not interfere with our powers.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: Mr. Cunningham admitted that the Labour Party were anxious to do away with the Upper House.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: No, to do away with the qualification.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: The desire of the Labour Party is to abolish this House.

Hon. J. Cunningham: And who is responsible for that?

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: This Bill is merely a move in that direction. Very slight alterations to the present franchise for the Council would lead to the abolition of this House. If it is considered that one Chamber is sufficient, it would be as well to do away with the Legislative Assembly. If we sent down a measure having that object in view, however, it would get very short shrift. I trust that this Bill will receive similar treat-

ment at the hands of this Chamber. I cannot see anything in favour of the measure and shall therefore oppose the second reading.

Hon. A. H. PANTON (West) [5.26]: Mr. Hamersley has probably voiced the opinion of a great number of members of this House. Notwithstanding that this Bill may be a hardy annual, it is an important one, and so long as I am a member of the House I shall take every opportunity to see that it is presented. Mr. Cunningham has given some of the reasons which actuated the hon. member in introducing the measure. In the session before last, we had a more comprehensive measure containing eight or nine clauses before us and it was defeated on the second reading. Within about 24 hours, one of the clauses was again before us in the form of a separate Bill and was passed. Since then three of the clauses have been embodied in separate Bills and passed though with regard to one, there is still a slight difference of opinion existing between this House and another place. Practically the only other clause which has not been enacted is that embodied in this Bill, and even here it is much more limited than on the previous occasion. It was then proposed to allow every returned soldier the right to vote for this House.

Hon. T. Moore: So it should.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: A majority of this House did not think so on that occasion. That request is not being preferred in this Bill. Practically what is being asked now is that every man be given a vote. There are very few men other than those who are married occupying dwelling houses. Mr. Hamersley was quite wrong in suggesting that where three or four or half a dozen young fellows occupied a dwelling house, they would be entitled under this Bill to the franchise. The proviso to Clause 3 states, "Provided that no person shall be qualified to vote by reason of being a joint occupier of any dwelling-house." But for that proviso, there might have been some force in his argument. My interpretation of the measure is that the occupier of the dwelling must be the owner or the tenant. It is all very well to assert that if a man is thrifty, he can get a home. There are quite a lot of thrifty persons in the State who, by virtue of their occupations, have to live on the goldfields and in the timber areas, but thrifty as they might be, it would be a mistake on their part to build or rent a home for which they would have to pay 6s. 9d. a week. The men employed in the timber industry are constantly shifting. Their dwelling is part and parcel of their wages. The timber companies put up houses or shacks in which scores of married men are living and the rent is considered part of their wages. Those men cannot possibly get a vote under the existing franchise, because their places are not rated at the value of 6s. 9d. weekly.

Hon. J. Duffell: Notwithstanding that, the member who introduced the Bill in another

place said, "Thank God we have another House, the bulwark of the Constitution."

Hon. A. H. PANTON: And the Leader of this House, the other night said "Thank God there are five Labour members in the House to support the Government." I do not suppose the hon. member who introduced the Bill in another place was any more earnest in his devout remark than was the Minister here. Members of the Country Party frequently declare that they are against centralisation. In that I am with them. If we are to keep our industries going, if we are to ask people to go out hundreds of miles away, where they will live in places that do not command the franchise of the Council, we should give them the privilege of voting for both Houses of Parliament. It is those people who are doing the pioneering of the State. They are practically the only men who will be affected by the Bill. In the West Province the Bill will not add 50 names to the roll.

Hon. V. Hamersley: What about the boarders?

Hon. A. H. PANTON: There is no possibility of boarders coming under the Bill. The elector must be the owner or tenant of a dwelling-place; the boarder is neither. If Mr. Hamersley were right in his contention, then everybody renting a room in the A.M.P. building would have a vote. Manifestly that is not intended. I do not suppose the Bill would add 50 names to the roll of the Metropolitan Province; because under our health laws every dwelling-place in the metropolitan area must be up to a certain standard, and consequently the rateable value of such place is sufficient to carry a vote for this House. That is not the position in the back blocks. The only people about whom I am concerned are those out there.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Are you not concerned about the people living in flats in the city?

Hon. A. H. PANTON: No, not at all. I am not in favour of centralisation.

Hon. E. H. Harris: But there are not sufficient houses to go round.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: Well, let those people go to the Government, as I did, and get workers' homes. Like Mr. Hamersley, I am arguing for decentralisation. It is unfair to ask people to go out back and pioneer the State, and then tell them that because it is unnecessary that they shall live in mansions out there, they shall not be entitled to the vote. Mr. Hamersley, for some reason known only to himself, mentioned Russia. Surely he is not going to suggest that if the Bill be passed it will serve to Russianise Western Australia! If anything of that sort were to happen, it would happen through another place, and we here should be overwhelmed in the revolution. Mr. Hamersley dealt with the taxation aspect of the proposal. If he be sincere in that, he must give every unmarried person whose income is £100 or over, a vote and give a vote to every married person whose income is £156 or over. Persons whose incomes are only

£100 are not entitled to a vote. Mr. Hamersley has the happy knack of saying those things and at the same time looking serious. I agree that those people should have a vote. But that is not what is asked for in the Bill. All I desire is that those people who are doing the pioneering out back should have a vote. I fail to see how hon. members can refuse that concession, since they are dependent on those pioneers as, indeed, is all the rest of the community. To give those people a vote would be some recognition of the value of their services.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: At election time only about 50 per cent. of those on the roll trouble to vote.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: That does not affect the franchise. I cannot say why so few vote; it may be the fault of the candidates. Still, it is not a question of thrifty people rushing to the poll. People out back always vote in greater proportion than do the people of the more settled districts. The pioneers have not so many distractions with which to occupy their time, and so they take a greater interest in public affairs. Notwithstanding that, we say to them, or to a large percentage of them, "We are not going to allow you to have a vote for the Council." Mr. Hamersley asked, "Why not get a worker's home"? I advise Mr. Hamersley to suggest to the Premier that he should erect workers' homes in, say, Leonora or Menzies, or in some of the timber areas of the South-West. I expect the Premier would refuse on the score that the security is not good enough. Yet the place is good enough for a man to take his wife and family out to. The workers do not live and work in those places because they like them. They live there because they have to earn a living somewhere. I appeal to hon. members to look at this question in a broad light. Mr. Hamersley said—I am sure he did not mean it—that if we pass the Bill the House will be swamped by Labour members. With an adult franchise in the Assembly, why is that House not swamped by Labour members? If it is not possible in another place with adult franchise, it certainly is not possible here with our property franchise. I support the second reading, and I hope members will give the pioneers a vote.

On motion by Minister for Education, debate adjourned.

## BILL—GRAIN.

### Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

Hon. H. STEWART (South-East) [5.40]: I intend to support the second reading. I came to the House this afternoon intending to furnish additional information in respect of the Bill and bulk handling, but since my arrival I have been informed by the Leader of the House and by another hon. member who yesterday was most strenuous in his

opposition to the Bill, that the Minister in his reply to the debate intends to read a letter which he has received from the directors of the company stating that they have no objection to the withdrawal of certain contentious clauses and that consequently the opposition of a number of members to the second reading is withdrawn. Therefore I will not now speak at the same length and cover the same ground as I otherwise would have done. The hon. member who yesterday was so strenuous in his opposition to the second reading as to quote at great length from the report of an inquiry in New South Wales, has informed me that all opposition to the second reading has practically disappeared. On his assurance I feel justified in relieving you, Sir, and hon. members generally from what perhaps would be the unnecessary infliction of a long speech from me. To me it is a matter of great moment that bulk handling should be inaugurated in this State as early as possible. When in 1917 I first spoke in the House, I advocated the introduction of bulk handling, one reason being that it meant the economising of the man power of the State. In my speech on the Address-in-reply on Tuesday, 24th July, 1917, I outlined the advantages and disadvantages of the respective systems. After giving the result of my reading and investigation on the subject I quoted from the report of the advisory board on bulk handling, a board appointed by the then Minister for Agriculture and Industries (Hon. T. H. Bath) in 1914. That board consisted of four permanent officers of the public service, three of whom are still in the service.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Had they any experience of grain elevators?

Hon. H. STEWART: The advisory board investigated the whole position and I do not know whether hon. members have seen the report which that board presented. If they had seen it, I am sure it would have helped them in some respects to deal with the question. To my mind the report is one which is terse and well expressed. Since the year in which it was presented, namely, 1914, the condition of things has not altered to any radical extent, but there have been some converts to bulk handling. The present Premier is one of these. In 1918 he was occupying a seat in another place as an independent, and at that period he was against bulk handling. The information which was gathered, however, led him to alter his views. In the attitude he was adopting at that time he had no support, but subsequently in 1918 he came to realise that bulk handling was a necessity. His own words, quoted from a letter which he wrote to the managing director of the grain growers company, may be used. He stated then that he had been converted and that "no one could question the advantage of the bulk handling system." He arrived at that conclusion after he had been all along



an opponent of bulk handling. He was an opponent of the scheme when he sat as an independent member in the Legislative Assembly, and his changed opinion is the opinion he holds to-day.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: Was it political reasons or conviction which changed his opinion?

Hon. H. STEWART: The hon. member who interjected was at that time in a place where we know he was conferring greater benefits on his country than he could have done here, and, therefore, being out of the State was not able to realise what the position was. At that particular period, anyone who was aware of the circumstances must have realised that the present Premier did not change his views for political reasons; he changed his views because an investigation of the subject by experts in bulk handling from abroad led him to believe that bulk handling was a sound and desirable system to introduce. It seems to me from the interjections that are being made that my remarks are likely to be prolonged. I intend to give the reasons showing what it was that made bulk handling desirable. Bulk handling, I believe, is a plank of the platform of every party in this State. The Commonwealth Government appointed an independent commission to investigate the desirability of bulk storage. Bulk handling has been accepted as desirable in Victoria and in New South Wales, and it is in vogue in many parts of the world.

Hon. J. Cornell: What did the 1917 Commission say about it?

Hon. H. STEWART: The Argentine, like ourselves, is situated in the Southern Hemisphere, and has had bulk handling in operation for years.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Only in one port.

Hon. H. STEWART: Abundant evidence can be brought forward to refute the statements which have been made in this Chamber against bulk handling. The report of our own advisory board contains valuable information, and that in itself refutes much of what was advanced by Mr. Lovekin last night as arguments against the adoption of bulk handling. Mr. Lovekin quoted extensively from a New South Wales report, a report not by technical people. This report was prepared by a committee of the members of the Legislative Council of New South Wales and they based their conclusions largely on the testimony of the following witnesses:—Mr. F. J. Sutton, formerly grain agent in Canada, Mr. Harris, executive member and secretary of the bulk handling committee, Mr. G. W. Walker, of Lindley Walker and Co., grain merchants, Mr. J. M. Paxton, shipping agent, Mr. H. D. Bell, manager for Gilchrist Watt and Sanderson, who are the agents for two shipping lines, Mr. C. A. Hodgson, Chief Traffic Manager and Mr. E. A. Buttenshaw, a wheat grower of Wyalong. Some of the conclusions that committee arrived at, and which were read by Mr. Lovekin last evening, were

conclusions based to a large extent on the evidence of persons who naturally would be opposed to the inauguration of bulk handling, shipping agents, merchants, etc.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Mr. Walker is an ardent advocate of bulk handling.

Hon. H. STEWART: Yes. I am going to quote what Mr. Walker said, but I intend to read that portion of the report which was not referred to by Mr. Lovekin to refute his argument. It did not suit the hon. member to quote it all, and those portions to which I intend to make reference will put the matter in a different light. The position at the present time is that practically every right thinking person believes it to be advisable that bulk handling should be the method of dealing with wheat to-day. Even as far back as 1914 the advisory board in this State recommended that bulk handling should be gradually introduced in Western Australia, and they also urged that steps be taken to introduce the system at once so as to provide for the surplus beyond the quantity now capable of being handled in bags. Had the recommendations of that board been adopted at the time, and had the sum of money which they suggested been spent on the scheme in order to bring it into effect, on the then prices of bags and material, in five years time the saving would have covered the cost of the inauguration. Unfortunately, the matter was not taken in hand. A change of Government and altered conditions were responsible for the question being allowed to lapse. The matter, however, is now at that stage that the longer it is delayed the greater will be the difficulty of the change over, and the greater will be the expense involved. A number of the arguments advanced by Mr. Lovekin are partly replied to by the report of the New South Wales committee. Let me repeat this paragraph which was read by Mr. Lovekin for the information of hon. members—

That on the evidence, your committee is of opinion that owing to the hazardous character of grain in bulk as a cargo, and the length and route of the voyage, insurance could not be effected at less than a 40 per cent. increase on present rates. Your committee considers it not improbable that even further increase may in time take place, as insurers have at present no practical experience of carrying wheat in bulk from Australia to British ports.

The advisory board in Western Australia were asked amongst other things to deal with this question, whether the insurance would be heavier on wheat cargoes in bulk than under the present bag system, and their reply in the report was as follows—

The board were at the outset warned by the Marine Underwriters' Association of Western Australia that London underwriters had intimated that insurance under the bulk system would be heavier than under the bag system, and the possibility of a re-insurance would be very remote. The board in reply pointed to the replies of the

great majority of the ship owners that they will be prepared to carry Australian grain in bulk. This answer from such shrewd business heads as the leading ship owners of the present day should dispel any idea that the bulk system will be nullified by any impossible rates of insurance.

Mr. Lovekin last night quoted something that was said by Mr. Bell, the manager for Gilchrist Watt & Sanderson, Ltd. This firm represent in Sydney the P. & O. Company and the Blue Funnel Line. In the statement which was quoted it was set out that the need for fitting out boats to take bulk cargoes would cost an extra 2d. per bushel. But the hon. member did not read the very next paragraph over the page. Let me read it to the House—

An important fact relating to shipping needs to be pointed out. "Liners," or ships that regularly trade to Australian ports, and are specially fitted to carry general cargo, can carry parcels of wheat in bulk without any material alterations or additional fittings. Such parcels may run up to 1,000 tons at a time, and in the year may account for a considerable quantity in the aggregate.

The Advisory Board of this State in 1914 have expressed an opinion on the shipping aspect. I quote from the Advisory Board's report—

Is the type of general cargo steamer now used in the trade between Australia and Europe suitable for the carriage of grain in bulk over such a voyage as from Australia to Europe? The board have answered this question by writing to practically every ship owner in the world sending cargo steamers to Australia. Thirty five replies (as per Appendix "B") were received to these inquiries. Of these replies, 23 were favourable, four were non-committal, five were not interested, and only three replied in the negative. It will be observed, therefore, that the vast majority of shipowners have stated that they are prepared to carry bulk grain in their present ships, or to provide ships more suited to the work when same are warranted, always provided full cargoes of grain can be assured.

Had the position regarding the opposition to the second reading not been modified, I would have dealt with the statements made by Mr. Lovekin, either from the Advisory Board's report or from the New South Wales report, or from authentic information obtained elsewhere. I would have been prepared to join issue with the hon. member, and feel sure I could have alienated some support from him, had he not altered his position. In the changed circumstances I shall deal with the subject in a more general way. I ask hon. members to cast their minds back to Mr. Lovekin's quotation of the observations made by the New South Wales committee as to whether a farmer could benefit from bulk handling without

establishing special and elaborate facilities on his farm. The Advisory Board's report gives the following particulars of a trial made by Mr. James McManus, of Northam, as the result of an arrangement made with the Northam mills to accept his grain in bulk. Whilst he was harvesting, he handled his wheat in two simple tanks, one of corrugated iron with a strong frame of timber put on his wagon. The bags from the harvester were run out on a little trolley and tipped into the tank, which held 165 bushels. Then the bags were taken back and used again. The wagon with the tank went to the mill; a sliding door was dropped in the bottom, and the wheat was weighed and accepted by the mill. That was prior to 1914, and the following are the results of the experiment made by Mr. McManus:—

Altogether he had about 20,000 bushels of wheat to send away. To deal with all this in bags he would have had to purchase 6,500 bags. He, however, only purchased 4,200, so that he saved—

	£	s.	d.
1st—The initial cost of 2,300 bags	65	0	0
2nd—Value of 1,335 bags, which of the 4,200 bags purchased he still has on hand, and which as second-hand bags are valued	22	10	0
Total gross saving	87	10	0
Less cost of wagon "tanks"—			
1st	£20		
2nd	5	25	0
	£62	10	0

The experiment shows that no great alterations are required to fit existing farm plant to be used for the purposes of bulk handling. Hon. members will note that, learning by experience, Mr. McManus got his second tank for £5, as against £20 for the first.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: That farmer had two miles to cart. Every farmer is not in that position.

Hon. H. STEWART: An obstacle in the way of the adoption of bulk handling was said to be the modification of plant involved. If this man had only two miles to cart, and another man had 10 miles, could not the latter make a comparable saving by the same means?

Hon. C. F. Baxter: No.

Hon. H. STEWART: Then I join issue with Mr. Baxter on that point. The distance of carting makes no difference in that regard, so far as I can see. The saving is made in the handling.

Hon. J. Cornell: You are academic now, not practical.

Hon. H. STEWART: Another objection to bulk handling, or a feature rendering its adoption of questionable utility, according

to the report from which Mr. Lovekin quoted, was that there was no evidence to show definitely that bulk handling would do away with the use of bags. It is not anticipated that bulk handling will do away with the use of bags altogether. It is, however, contended in the report quoted by Mr. Lovekin that men already farming would not be willing to scrap their plant. But that argument assumes that bulk handling means completely new plant on the farm. Such a step is rendered unnecessary by the simple fact that bags can be used several times. The New South Wales committee calculated that, with care, a farmer could use his bags three or four times over. On a nine million bushel crop for Western Australia, which crop would mean three million bags, the saving, at 5s. per dozen, would be very considerable indeed.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Is the price of bags likely to come down?

Hon. H. STEWART: The price is down, and is not likely to go up again. Cornsacks have fallen in price very considerably. They went up to 17s. per dozen in 1919, and three months ago they were obtainable for 8s. per dozen. On a nine million bushel wheat crop, representing three million bags, the saving, at 5s. per dozen bags, would amount to £62,500. Is not that a considerable item? And it is anticipated that this season Western Australia's yield will be considerably more than nine million bushels. If one has to buy that number of bags, three millions, only once instead of two or three times, the saving will range between £120,000 and £180,000, approximately, according to whether the bags last three or four years. That is a broad statement of the general position. But there are other great advantages to be derived from bulk handling. Prior to September of 1917 the fastest loading ever done at Fremantle was on the "Armada," when 25 men in five days loaded 100,000 bags of wheat. I now quote from my speech of the 24th July, 1917, on the Address-in-reply—

In contrast with that, the Lake steamers in America would load the same quantity in 1½ days, as against the five days occupied here, and with five men, as against the 25 required here.

There is a tremendous saving in man power, and we do not want the men of this community to spend their energies in the heavy and arduous work of bag-lifting if they can be occupied in producing. One thing that bulk handling will undoubtedly bring about is to relieve labour by substituting mechanical power in its place. It is well known that by the bulk handling system grain can be better conserved. In connection with the crop of 1916-17, which was 440,000 tons, or about 15 million bushels, the waste alone which would have been saved by bulk handling, would amount to 22,000 tons. That quantity would not have been transported to Great Britain, but would have remained here

for general use. I do not wish to bring the House back after the tea adjournment, and therefore I will wind up very shortly. I believe this Bill will pass the second reading easily. The agreement with the Federal Government requires that the company shall have legislative and executive authority to carry on their work. That is all that is necessary. In reply to Mr. Lovekin, I say that the grain board under the Bill provides exactly the scientific board that he wants. In Committee I shall be able to explain that matter further. I may say now that the effect of the provision in question is that qualified men shall be graders and inspectors under the scheme. Seeing that the Leader of the House has an intimation that the Bill will pass the second reading, I feel that I need not trespass further on the time of hon. members. I would deal with the position at considerable length and in detail—and by doing so I think I could induce some members to adopt a different attitude from that to which they seemed to incline last night—were it not for the intimation given by the Leader of the House.

*Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.*

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East—in reply) [7.30]: In view of the course of action I propose to ask the House to adopt on this Bill, it is not necessary for me to traverse the arguments raised by hon. members in opposition to it, particularly as most objection has been raised against the clause which proposes to give the company a monopoly. There is one matter I think it necessary for me to explain. When introducing the Bill I said that the agreement which is printed at the end of the Bill was not a part of the Bill, but was inserted for the purpose of easy reference by members, since the agreement was referred to in the Bill itself. I find I was in error, that the Bill was originally prepared in that form; that as a matter of fact the agreement was included in the schedule and should appear as a schedule to the Bill. The word "schedule" should have been printed at the top of it. That was an omission which led me to suppose it was not part of the Bill. It was part of the Bill, and I take it without any formal amendment the word "schedule" would have been put in. Had this been not so I intended to move the necessary amendment. This afternoon I received a letter from the directors of the Western Grain Elevators Ltd., which I will read to the House. It is as follows:—

Members of my board have this morning fully considered the position, and they find that the many amendments which have been made in the Lower House have affected the Bill so materially that they consider it would be most unwise to allow the Bill to pass. Under the Federal Act it is necessary for the company to obtain legislative authority to proceed, and the directors of my company desire to intimate that they

will be perfectly satisfied at present if the clauses of the Bill, excepting Clause 19—That is the clause which makes a certain amendment to the agreement in regard to the rental of the site, and the method by which that rental is to be arrived at.

—and the schedule were struck out. The effect of this would be that the necessary authority as described in the Federal Act would be given, and the terms of the lease of the Fremantle site would be approved by Parliament. We feel that public necessity will require in due course a comprehensive Grain Act on the lines of the Canadian measure, but this can be left to a future date. I am desired also to assure the House that neither the present Act nor the future Grain Act need contain any suggestion of monopoly to ourselves or any other company. My directors will be exceedingly obliged if you will kindly take such steps in the House as are deemed advisable to bring about the desired amendments. I feel sure that our decision will commend itself to you, and many members of the House. You have our assurance that immediately the Bill is passed and one or two small matters are fixed up we will proceed with the construction of the elevators, and when the time comes for actually handling the grain the Government of the day can take into consideration the formation of the necessary Grain Act.

If the House is agreeable, I suggest that we should pass the second reading of the Bill, and I will then have the matter gone into by the Crown Law authorities between this time and our next sitting, with a view to eliminating the whole of the clauses with the exception only of Clause 19, which amends the conditions of the lease and which itself will need some slight amendment making it clear that the schedule is the agreement referred to, and leaving the schedule in.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Why not withdraw it and introduce a new Bill?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: This will be a very much quicker method. If a second Bill were introduced we should have to thrash out the whole question again.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: It would be more satisfactory.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: This House will do nothing more than confirm the agreement and the alterations already made and any other alteration the House may think desirable to make to it. The company will then have legislative sanction of their agreement. The only other condition made by the Commonwealth Government, and I understand it is one they have complied with, was that a certain number of shares should be applied for. The company will consequently have all that is necessary to enable them to go on. It is I think important that they should have that, because although the money has been placed on the Estimates by the Federal Gov-

ernment for the past couple of years for this purpose, I understand it has been intimated to the company that unless they show a desire to make use of the money, the provision will not be made in the future. What would happen would be that the company, having carried out its obligations to the Federal Government to entitle them to the money, would proceed with the work. When it has proceeded with the work, and before it is in a position to receive wheat, it will be necessary for a comprehensive Grain Bill to be submitted by the Government and passed through Parliament.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: In the meantime the country will be committed to all sorts of things.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The country will not be committed to anything. This company will have a lease, with no monopoly rights at all, of a certain piece of land at Fremantle, on certain terms on which to erect their terminal elevators.

Hon. F. A. Baglin: They will have the picked site.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I do not think so. In the course of time, the harbour at Fremantle is bound to be tremendously extended, and it is quite likely that the site will turn out to be not the best site that may then be available for the purpose.

Hon. A. Lovekin: It is on the wrong side of the river.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I am not going into that question. The company is satisfied with that, and in view of the general tenor of the debate I do not think members are likely to take exception to the course I propose.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: They ought to have a good site.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Of course. At all events they have a site with which they appear to be quite satisfied.

Hon. A. Lovekin: On the other side of the river, it is in the wrong place.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: They will have that site, and will have all that they require to go on with except the money, which is their business. They say they can get the money. When they have got the money, and are ready to proceed with the work, it will be necessary for a Grain Bill to be passed protecting the interests of the people using the elevators.

Hon. J. Mills: How will this affect the other ports at which it is proposed to erect elevators?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: There is no agreement arrived at in regard to the other ports.

Hon. J. Mills: There is in the present Bill.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: This Bill granted to the company certain monopoly rights. In return for these rights there were cast upon the company certain obligations. What the company says now

is that if Parliament is opposed to granting these monopoly rights, necessarily they must be relieved of these obligations. That is the attitude at present taken up by the company.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Will the Government give the same privilege at other ports?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I do not know that they have been applied for. There would be no objection on the part of the Government to give them such facilities as they desired. It seems to me a great pity that so much time has been taken up in this Chamber and in another place over this Bill, when all that was necessary at the outset was that a Bill should have been introduced merely ratifying the agreement already entered into, and allowing the company to go ahead with this work.

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

Ayes .. .. .	17
Noes .. .. .	5

Majority for .. 12

#### AYES.

Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. J. Mills
Hon. H. P. Colebatch	Hon. T. Moore
Hon. J. Cunningham	Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. J. Ewing	Hon. A. H. Pantou
Hon. J. A. Greig	Hon. A. J. H. Saw
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. H. Stewart
Hon. J. W. Hickey	Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom
Hon. A. Lovelkin	Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. C. McKenzie	(Teller.)

#### NOES.

Hon. F. A. Baglin	Hon. J. W. Kirwan
Hon. J. Cornell	Hon. R. G. Ardagh
Hon. E. H. Harris	(Teller.)

Question thus passed.

#### BILLS (3)—RETURNED.

- 1, Gold Buyers.
- 2, Reciprocal Enforcement of Maintenance Orders.
- 3, Bank Holidays Amendment.

#### BILL—STAMP.

##### Assembly's Message.

Message received from the Assembly notifying the Council that it had made amendments No. 1 to 3 and 6 to 11 requested by the Council, but had declined to make amendments Nos. 4, 5, 12, and 13.

#### BILL—NORTH FREMANTLE RATES VALIDATION.

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

#### MOTION—EDUCATION COMMISSION REPORT.

Debate resumed from the previous day on the following motion by Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom:—

That in the opinion of this House the report of the Royal Commission on Education laid on the Table of the House is unsatisfactory.

Hon. J. W. HICKEY (Central) [7.47]: I intended to deal with some small matters in connection with the education question, but unfortunately I have not had time to look into the subject properly. I entirely agree with Sir Edward Wittenoom in the protest he made regarding the constitution of the Royal Commission. I listened with interest to Dr. Saw last night when he remarked that the Labour Party had paid him a compliment by placing him in the position he occupies in connection with the University. While I endorse Sir Edward's protest, I would point out that I have no objection to the appointment of Dr. Saw. I say that, not because he is a member of this Chamber, but because he has had a unique opportunity of knowing something about matters generally. Whatever he has attained in public or professional life in Western Australia, he owes to Western Australia and its policy of public education. With all due respect to that hon. member, however, I do not know that there is any outstanding feature about him to justify his appointment on the Royal Commission, although, at the same time, I had no objection to him receiving that appointment. In fact, I was rather pleased to see him appointed. He is a most estimable citizen. The same thing applies to Mr. Pitchford. I do not agree with Sir Edward in certain of his objections regarding those gentlemen. At the same time, I enter a very strong protest against the constitution of the Royal Commission. I do not think it was constituted as it should have been, if the Government were serious in their desire to find out what had been happening in connection with the educational system of Western Australia. From time to time, protests have been made by people both in the metropolitan area and in the back country regarding that system. As a layman, I am not prepared to say whether the protests are right or wrong, but when the Government decide to take action in such a matter, they should be satisfied that they have appointed people on a Royal Commission who can bring about a solution of the difficulty, people who are able to extract the evidence that will bring about an alteration in the system. I have gone through the evidence as far as I have been able to do so, and I am satisfied that the protests that have been raised by the people have been amply justified. What is more, the Government have not been serious or politically honest in connection with the constitution of the Royal Commission. In

that constitution, I give Dr. Saw pride of place, because he has migrated from the ranks, and is sympathetic towards the people as a whole. Mr. Peter Board has not been sympathetic. The constitution of a Commission is the only thing that matters. The evidence of Sir Edward Wittenoom, Mr. Underwood, and of the other people who were examined does not matter much, because it is a question of how one views that evidence and sizes it up.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: What is the good of evidence then?

Hon. J. W. HICKEY: I have been on juries and I know it is a question of how one views the evidence brought forward. While I would appreciate the evidence of Sir Edward Wittenoom and of Mr. Underwood very much, possibly Mr. Board would not appreciate it, because he was prejudiced before he started. Summing up the whole position, I regard the Royal Commission as a whitewashing proposition. We criticised the Education Department for a long time and, as the outcome of that criticism, the Royal Commission was appointed. Mr. Board, the Director of Education in New South Wales, Dr. Saw and Mr. Pitchford were appointed to that Commission. With Sir Edward, I want to raise a protest and ask why other people or representatives of organisations were not appointed? Why were not the Primary Producers' Association, the Pastoralists' Association or the industrial organisations represented on the Commission? The dominating factor of our educational system is the teacher. Why was not a representative of the Teachers' Union appointed to the Commission. The explanation is simply, in my opinion, that they could have brought forward evidence that the Government did not want extracted. That is my candid opinion. I do not criticise without giving a certain amount of thought and judgment to the question under discussion. I say deliberately that if the Government were serious in their ideas and ideals regarding the educational system, and if they had a desire to place it upon a better footing, they should have attempted to put people on the Commission who would have been in a position to extract evidence. The result of the appointment of such people as were placed on the Royal Commission has been the verdict: "Carry on! Everything is all right! Box on! You have no reason to complain. Nothing is wrong." That is just what the Government wanted the Royal Commission to say. We want something better than that. I claim that our educational system is the only thing that matters. Health and education are really the only things that matter in this world, and when dealing with subjects of that nature we must appoint the best men to handle them. When the Government take the responsibility of dealing with matters affecting the health or education of the people, they should appoint the best men they can secure on bodies such as Royal Commissions. If I were in the position of the

Leader of the House, as Minister in charge of the Education Department, I would welcome the appointment of Dr. Saw and Mr. Pitchford. I do not raise objections to those gentlemen, but why could not representatives of the Trades Hall organisations, the Primary Producers' Association, the Chamber of Mines, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Pastoralists' Association have been appointed? Only by a tribunal so constituted could we expect to get the evidence we require. A representative of the Teachers' Union should have been appointed, for he would have been in a position to extract evidence which would have been of value. The Teachers' Union, so far as I know, was never asked officially to give evidence.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: You are wrong; they refused.

Hon. J. W. HICKEY: If they refused to do so it was by way of protest, because of the insult offered to that organisation by the Government in not appointing one of their representatives on the Royal Commission. No one was more fitted to occupy a seat on the Royal Commission than a representative of the teachers. Only two things matter very much, health and education. To the teachers we must look to impart education to our children. They devote their lives to the interests of the children, and this being so, it is hard to understand Dr. Saw and Mr. Pitchford sitting with Mr. Board and without a representative of the teachers. As a result of the Commission nothing has been done. Dr. Saw last night complained of Sir Edward Wittenoom's remarks regarding the State of New South Wales and its system. Sir Edward Wittenoom claimed that education in that State was responsible for disloyalty. I do not know that there is very much disloyalty in New South Wales. Perhaps after the vote which was given this afternoon the less we say about it, the better. The present trend of our education system appears to be in the direction of centralisation. The children in the outback centres do not get as fair a deal as those in Perth or in the larger towns of the country. In Que recently a monitor was required to assist a teacher. The same thing applied at Mt. Magnet and I made inquiries with Mr. Chesson and Mr. Troy and was satisfied that the disabilities under which these teachers laboured were real. Because the schools happened to fall short by one or two of the required standard as regarded the number of children in attendance, the department turned down the requests. When this sort of thing occurs, one can understand the people in the country complaining of the treatment meted out to them. The department did not take into consideration that last year there were floods in the district. As a result, many people could not get into town, much less get their children to school, and consequently, the attendance suffered. But why should the department stick at a small thing like that, when a big proposition such as education was at stake. If this sort of thing continues, we must expect to hear

complaints against the education system. I do not think this matter came under the notice of the Minister. If it had, no doubt he would have endeavoured to find a way out of the difficulty. In the Leader of the House we have a most sympathetic advocate of education. The Government profess to be out to further the education system, but they appointed what has been termed a white-washing commission and I agree with those who applied that term to the Royal Commission. From its personnel the commission could have come to no other conclusions than those arrived at. Mr. Board is a good man, but Western Australia has good men. Why should not we have got a local man as chairman of the commission without importing one? We might have got a capable man from the Scotch College or from one of the other schools, a man as competent and certainly more practical and with an infinitely better knowledge of local and outback conditions than Mr. Board possessed. I protest against the Government importing a chairman, and I may have something to say on this score in regard to another Royal Commission. To import the chairman of the commission on education was a reflection on the State and on the teaching staff. I have very little to say regarding the findings of the commission because they have not found anything. That is why they were appointed.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: I am afraid you have not read the report.

Hon. J. W. HICKEY: I have read it carefully. We have been told that a prophet has no honour in his own country. The ex-member for Swan, Mr. Turvey, introduced something in the way of a new school book, but he was not appreciated in his own State.

The Minister for Education: Why! We were the first to help him.

Hon. J. W. HICKEY: But Mr. Board did not help him.

The Minister for Education: He was appreciated in his own State.

Hon. J. W. HICKEY: That is so. That is one against me. The Government should not have imported a chairman to preside over this commission and it was an insult to the teachers that they were not represented. If we peruse the evidence and report from cover to cover, we must conclude that there is nothing in it. The members of the Royal Commission were not competent to extract the evidence. Dr. Saw represents the University. He has not been outside of big centres; he was a very able advocate of big interests. So, too, in regard to Mr. Pitchford. He brought out only a certain class of evidence. What we wanted was evidence by men representative of the primary industries, of mining, of agriculture and of the pastoral industry. There was no representative of the primary producers on the Commission. I do not think that either Dr. Saw or Mr. Pitchford can claim to represent the primary producers. Of course they can claim to be broad-minded men, but they do

not know the educational conditions in the back country.

The PRESIDENT: I think the hon. member should confine himself more closely to the question, and endeavour to avoid repetition.

Hon. J. W. HICKEY: I have nothing further to say. The personnel of the board was the only thing that mattered. Our present educational system leans towards centralisation, and the constitution of the Commission tended to make confusion more confounded. I will support the motion.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [8.18]: After the very effective reply delivered by Dr. Saw last night, I do not think it necessary that I should detain the House at any great length. But there are one or two points on which I wish to give some information to hon. members while I desire to correct false impressions entertained by some. Dr. Saw dealt extensively with the objections urged against the chairman of the Royal Commission. Mr. Hickey has practically repeated the objections raised by Sir Edward Wittenoom, and has suggested that a number of interests should have been represented on the Commission. When we were considering the appointment of the Commission, from time to time correspondence appeared in the Press setting out the different interests that ought to be represented on that Commission. I am inclined to think that each of those interests had equal claims to representation—the agriculturists, the pastoralists, the mining industry, the learned professions generally, the Press, women, the Trades Hall, and the teachers themselves. There may be others. I am inclined to think that each of those interests had about equal claim to representation on the Commission. The two alternatives confronting the Government were, either to appoint a Commission that would be regarded as representative of all the interests concerned, or else to appoint a Commission in the same manner as one would appoint a judicial tribunal to try an issue. It would never be thought proper, in the case of a judicial tribunal appointed to try an issue, to put on the bench people so intimately interested in the question as were the teachers themselves; and the Government felt that if the Commission were appointed of representatives of the whole of those interests, it would mean a Commission of at least a dozen persons. Its investigations would necessarily have been very protracted, the expense would have been enormous, the evidence would have been very greatly increased and the Commission would have occupied the better part of a year preparing its report. There have been instances of such Commissions. There was an Education Commission in South Australia of about a dozen members. It travelled all over the States and took a

couple of years to compile its report. Then, like the reports of some other Commissions, it was so voluminous that its value was practically destroyed. The Government took the view that the best course was to appoint three competent men to collect evidence and pronounce judgment on that evidence. We took the view that all the different interests ought to be represented in the form of evidence before the Commission. In selecting the personnel of the Commission, the Government were of opinion that the chairman should be an educational authority. I do not know how any other decision could have been arrived at. Having reached that decision, the Government endeavoured, and, thanks to the good offices of the Government of New South Wales, successfully, to secure as chairman of the Commission the man who is generally recognised as the first educational authority in Australia, a man very highly esteemed in educational circles all over the world. Sir Edward Wittenoom raised the objection that Mr. Board was unsuited for the position, was practically disqualified, because Western Australia had copied the educational system of New South Wales, and that, consequently, had Mr. Board condemned the system, he would have been condemning his own work. Sir Edward Wittenoom told the House that was the ground he had intended to take up, but that he had since been informed that it was really the other way about, that New South Wales had copied the system of Western Australia, notwithstanding which his contention still held good. Neither statement is correct. Western Australia did not copy the system of New South Wales, nor did New South Wales copy the Western Australian system. As a matter of fact, there is no closer resemblance between the systems of New South Wales and of Western Australia than there is between those of other States. There are points of resemblance, and of difference, between the educational methods of the whole of the State and, naturally, in countries so close to each other, very general similarity amongst the lot. As a matter of fact our educational system in Western Australia was developed by people altogether free from Eastern States influences and, in their training at least, influenced rather by English conditions. And so our system has grown up as an independent system, with no particular regard to any other system. From that point of view Mr. Board was as well qualified to act as chairman of the commission as was anybody else. The hon. member also said that Mr. Board was disqualified from acting as chairman of the commission because certain newspapers in New South Wales had said that his own system was defective?

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: It was an educational journal.

**THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION:** Quite so. I saw scarcely anything of Mr. Board while he was here; I spoke to him, I think, only on two occasions; but I know if there is one man who recognises the imperfections of the New South Wales system, it is Mr. Board himself; just as, if there be two men who recognise fully the imperfections of the Western Australian system, I claim to be one of them, and the Director of Education is the other. Mr. Board, like every other Director of Education, and every other Minister for Education, is limited to the amount of money provided for his system. A point to which I should like to refer in passing is this question of finance, because it was chiefly on the question of finance that the commission originated and that was the question on which Sir Edward Wittenoom based his contentions. When, 5½ years ago, I became Minister for Education, we were spending on education a quarter of a million per annum. To-day we are spending more than double that amount, and nearly the whole of it is accounted for by increases in salaries which, in the Education Department, have been similar to increases in other walks of life. So this very large increase in our vote for education is not to any great extent, certainly not to the extent I personally would desire, accounted for by new activities of the department. It is accounted for in part by the natural growth of the work, caused by the increase in our child population, and it is accounted for chiefly by the very great increases made in the salaries of teachers in accordance with increases given to all other classes of employees.

Hon. H. Stewart: It is impossible to find in their report an indication that the Commission investigated that aspect.

**THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION:** I do not know that it requires any close investigation. The hon. member has only to get the salary scale for 1915-16 and the salary scale for to-day, and he can work it out for himself in five minutes. The Government certainly would not appoint a commission to establish so obvious a fact as that.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: The report shows that 92 per cent. of the expenditure goes in salaries.

**THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION:** Of course the difficulty we have to contend against here is the enormous number of small schools which we have. Mr. Hickey has just made reference to the complaints from country districts. I am not going to say there are no complaints. There are frequent complaints, and they are dealt with as promptly and sympathetically as possible. But one reason for the high cost of education in Western Australia is the fact that of the total number of schools—there are 669 at present—more than one-half, or 335, are schools with an average attendance of less than 22. Dr. Saw made reference to the expenditure in other countries. I need not follow the hon. member's figures, which were



correct in every particular. Expenditure on education elsewhere is immensely larger than in Western Australia. It must also be remembered that every pound spent in a congested community, where you can have the right number of scholars in every class, will go a great deal farther than in a sparsely populated State like Western Australia, where we have to provide schools for smaller numbers of children. I am not convinced that we are attempting and doing as much as we ought to for people in the back country, but I do know that no State in Australia attempts more. We will provide a new school in a country district when it can be shown that there is a reasonable prospect of securing an average attendance of 10 children, and we will continue to keep a school open in any district where an average attendance of eight can be maintained; and, although it is against the regulations, even when the number falls below eight, if there is any prospect of recovery we continue the school for a quarter or half a year for six or seven scholars, in the hope that they may increase to eight again. It is only with the greatest reluctance that the department ever closes a school. For children in still smaller localities we provide an assisted school, and for those who cannot have a school at all we provide correspondence classes. Those correspondence classes we have developed to a greater extent than any other State in the Commonwealth. No fewer than 400 children are being educated by correspondence, and the progress those children are making is very encouraging indeed. Mr. Hickey spoke of certain country schools, his objection apparently being that a school which was entitled to a head master and an assistant was not also given a monitor, because the school fell short by two or three of the required number. If that is the most serious fault that can be found against the administration of the schools in the country, the matter is not very important. All the additional activities which have been undertaken by the department during the last four or five years have been in the direction of increasing opportunities for country children by establishing secondary schools in country districts, and by providing a scholarship allowance to country students who attend schools in the cities and towns. Sir Edward Wittenoom attacked Mr. Board as a man having no practical ideas, and he quoted the speech made by Mr. Board and to which Dr. Saw made reference last night. The hon. member also quoted freely from the Sydney "Bulletin." I want to remind the hon. member, and to inform the House, that in those extracts from the "Bulletin" he was quoting the opinion not of the Sydney "Bulletin"—an admirable paper, characteristically Australian, a paper which most of us read with interest and benefit at times—but the opinions of anonymous correspondents to that paper. The opinions were not those of the Editor of the "Bulletin"; they were the opinions of someone who had written to the "Bulletin"

under a pen name. I will quote a few lines, not from an anonymous correspondent, but from one of the leading London newspapers, the "Daily Telegraph," an editorial article touching this particular point which Sir Edward raised, namely, Mr. Board's lack of practical ideas, gathered from the speech delivered by Mr. Board at Parliament House. The article from the London "Daily Telegraph" deals with "Classics in Education" and refers to a commission which recently sat in England to consider this question. The article refers to the opportunity for children of the working classes to get classical education and urges that it is important in each district that one or two secondary schools should be in the position to give it. The article goes on to say—

"They look forward in fact," says the report, "to the provision of schools which would do for the workers what Eton, Harrow, and Winchester have done for other classes in the past." That is a most worthy aspiration and it is not from the side of labour that opposition to the recommendation of the Committee may be anticipated. It is much more to be apprehended from those who beat the loud utilitarian gong and oppose the Classics in the supposed interests of science and business. To them we would commend the pages of this report, in which is set forth the unanimous testimony of witnesses occupying high positions in the world of commerce that technical knowledge carries a man only a very short way in business because "in the higher branches of industry and commerce what is demanded is character, breadth of view, judgment grasp of principle, and the power of clear thinking and clear expression."

I think those were almost the words used by Mr. Board. The article continues—

These witnesses agreed that "a classical education, carried for some purposes even as far as the Honor Schools of the universities, was of the highest value. that premature specialisation was a fundamental mistake, and that from their point of view Classics should be included in all secondary schools curricula up to the age of 16 or 17."

Sir Edward Wittenoom urged that every child should be placed in its place when 14 years of age. These authorities, however, say that premature specialisation is a mistake. The article goes on—

That is the opinion of the men at the very top; such prejudice as exists is found among men of less eminence.

I quote that as the editorial of one of the leading English newspapers, as a sort of counterblast to the lengthy quotation given us by Sir Edward Wittenoom from the Sydney "Bulletin's" anonymous correspondent. Sir Edward Wittenoom's chief objection, as I understood it to be, to the educational system of Western Australia, is that we go in for public secondary education. I wonder whether the hon. member looked closely at page 19 of the Commission's re-

port. On that page we find the results of the examinations for the leaving certificate and junior certificate. These figures show that the students from private secondary schools who are successful in obtaining the leaving certificate, numbered 36 per cent. of those who presented themselves for examination, whereas of those who presented themselves from the State secondary schools the percentage of passes was 67. I would not for a moment have it thought that by quoting these figures I am in any way reflecting on the private secondary schools. I sent my own boys to a private secondary school, and I would not hesitate to do the same again if I had other boys. Those schools probably do as good work, and perhaps better work in many respects, than the State schools, but the whole point is that a private secondary school takes, roughly speaking, the whole of one class of the community, while the State secondary school takes the pick of all classes. They have better material to work upon, and if you are going to close State secondary schools, you are going to confine higher education practically to one class of the community. Of course it will be said that by the means of scholarships this can be avoided. Rightly or wrongly, I am one of those who do not believe too much in the principle of scholarships. I do not believe that the boy who is able to pass examinations at the age of 11, 12 or 13, necessarily makes the best citizen, and I am sure we will not get the maximum of good by confining the secondary education system to the rich and to those who in their early youth are particularly bright and can win scholarships. My idea is that every child in the community ought to be educated to the limit of his or her possibilities. We cannot do this, but the figures show that State secondary education is a sound policy. They show also by the system of State secondary education under which we bring into our secondary schools a large number of children from those classes who cannot afford to pay, that we are getting better results than by confining secondary education to the children of one class only. I do not intend to deal with the hon. member's objection that our system educates children beyond their opportunities. I do not think you can educate a person beyond his opportunities, because the more you educate him so do the opportunities expand. Dr. Saw dealt exhaustively with that aspect last to put up-to-date maps in the schools?

Hon. G. W. Miles: When are you going night, and I shall not deal with it further.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Dr. Saw also referred to the passages of the Commission's report regarding the Toodyay school system. We are extending this as rapidly as we can, and I would echo the hon. member's suggestion, that Sir Edward Wittenoom and other members who are inclined to be critical of the system, should take the opportunity to visit some of these schools to see what is actually being done.

Then I would challenge them to say that our educational system was not on sound practical lines. The methods introduced during the last seven or eight years have been carried out without any increased cost, and are making our educational system more practical and more useful to the communities amongst which it operates.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: Where are you going to get all the money; you have a deficit every month now?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The Royal Commission recommended two directions in which our educational system should be extended, and I heartily endorse the proposals for the establishment of an agricultural college. It is roughly estimated that that will cost £50,000 to inaugurate, and I suppose £5,000 or £6,000 a year to maintain it. Sir Edward Wittenoom interjected, "Where are you going to get the money from?" We do get money for reproductive undertakings, and I cannot imagine any more reproductive work than an agricultural college.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: It is a most pressing necessity.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: It is the most pressing need at the present time. Our students who have gone from the Narrogin farm school to the agricultural college at Roseworthy, have done remarkably well. I am sure we have material here to work on, and now that we have district high schools which carry on the children from the primary schools until they are fit for the agricultural college, I agree with the Commission that the time is ripe for the establishment of the college. As to whether it will pay or not, one has only to think of the area we cultivate, and by the dissemination of higher knowledge, if we can add a fraction of a bushel to the acre, that will pay for the cost of the college over and over again.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: May I explain that I did not ask where the money was to come from for the agricultural college. What I want to know is where the money is to come from with which to carry on the extensive system of education, bearing in mind our continual deficits.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I take it that is a question for discussion on a financial Bill rather than in connection with the administration of the Education Department. So far we have found the money, and if it is necessary to cut down expenditure, there are other avenues which we should attack before we touch education. After all said and done it is a question of getting a right view of things. It is all very well to say that we have big deficits. Does Sir Edward Wittenoom contend that we are an impoverished community? Is it not a fact that in a general way Western Australia is one of the most prosperous communities in the world? Is there any place in the world where people live better than they do here?

I think there are a great many things on which we now spend a lot of money and which we could afford to do without—which we certainly ought to do without before we say that we are unable to find the necessary money to educate our children. However, that, as I have said, is a financial question rather than a question touching the administration of the Education Department. The other suggestion made by the Royal Commission, and with which I agree, is that at the earliest possible opportunity, as soon as ever the finances admit of it, the compulsory leaving age should be extended. I think Sir Edward Wittenoom is rather inclined to that view himself.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: Yes, I am, but if—

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I believe the hon. member inclines to agree that we ought to continue the children at school up to 15 years of age. My own view is that we should go even further, up to 16 or 17 years. Mr. Moore also advocated an increase in the compulsory leaving age, and I entirely agree with his views in that regard. Then the hon. member made reference to what he termed the frequent changes in the school books. Now, those changes are much less frequent than some hon. members seem to think. I have here a long statement from the department in regard to that matter of changes, showing that there have been practically no changes, or only very, very few, for a good many years. I do not propose to read the whole statement, more especially as Mr. Moore is not present, but I shall have very much pleasure in supplying him and other hon. members with details showing how seldom, in point of fact, changes are made in the school books. We recently made a change in the readers for one of the classes. That change was made because we thought the time was ripe for the production of a reader of our own. We did produce it, and we printed it locally, and it is an excellent book. Further, it is being sold to the children cheaper than the imported article, bought from another country. Whilst, like other reading books, it contains a number of literary subjects, it has the special merit of possessing considerable local colour. There is in it a good deal of Australian poetry, and a large number of references to Australian exploration. In this reply I am avoiding the phases with which Dr. Saw has dealt; but, still, I should like to say a few words in regard to the protests made by Mr. Miles relatively to the maps of Western Australia which are used in our State schools. Knowing the hon. member as I do, I am well aware he would be the last to say anything that is unfair or unjust; but I do assure him that it is most unfair to accuse the Education Department of circulating maps that are wrong. The Education Department have nothing whatever to do with the circulation of maps.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Surely to goodness they can get up reliable maps!

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The Education Department simply take the maps provided for them; and in the case of Western Australia, for instance, those maps are compiled in the Lands Department. The Education Department do not print them. I took up the matter of the maps particularly. The hon. member's chief objection, I gathered, was the description of a portion of this State as "The Great Sandy Desert." This matter I took up with the man who, I think the hon. member will agree, is better qualified than anyone else in Western Australia to speak on the question; and that is Mr. Canning, the surveyor for the North-West. I asked Mr. Canning this question: "If you were producing a new map to-day, would you leave out the Victoria Desert, Gibson's Desert, and the Great Sandy Desert?" He said, "If I did that, it would be incorrect, the map would not be a complete map." Then I said, "You say the deserts are there?" He replied, "Of course they are there."

Hon. G. W. Miles: Not to the extent shown on our maps.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I do not know whether or not they are of exactly the same area as shown on the maps. However, I am entirely in sympathy with the hon. member's ideas; and I hold that a map, while it ought to be absolutely true and correct, should emphasise the good features of a country as well as the unfavourable ones.

Hon. G. W. Miles: That is what the Education Department do not do, though.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I do not know that.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Undoubtedly it should be done.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I am not aware that we do not do it. The hon. member may have seen some maps exhibited by children at a certain show, on which the existence of the Great Sandy Desert was emphasised by the children in big black letters. However, so far as regards there being a desert there, Mr. Canning says it is there; and Mr. Canning speaks as one who has traversed the desert, which he did in the face of statements made by pastoralists that he would never be able to get through.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Mr. Canning discovered water every 12 miles all through.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Yes, he found there, through that desert, one of the best watered stock routes in Australia. There is no doubt of the value of that country; but it is not right to say that the Education Department misrepresent that country.

Hon. G. W. Miles: It is wrong for the Education Department, who are educating the children, to—

The PRESIDENT: Order! The hon. gentleman may speak afterwards.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I am afraid Mr. Miles has spoken once already, Sir. The Education Department do all they can to bring under the notice of the teachers

and the children the latest information available in regard to any portion of Western Australia. As a case in point: the hon. member is probably aware of the latest report issued by Mr. Easton, the surveyor, regarding the undoubtedly splendid country which he traversed in the far North-Western portion of this State. Now, the first use made of that report, after it had been given to the Press, was to publish it straight away in the "Education Circular," which is sent to all teachers for use in instruction. The issue in question of the "Education Circular," like every other issue, was sent immediately to every school in Western Australia—every school. This is merely an illustration of what the Education Department do as a matter of custom and practice. Any authoritative information that is calculated to give the school teachers a better idea of their own country is included in the "Circular." But we cannot be continually producing maps: in fact, we have not any facilities here for producing them at all. Moreover, the map-making firms of the world went practically out of business during the war; and they are only just resuming operations. Consequently, it is very difficult to get maps printed at the present time. But all the latest information the department get, so long as it is authoritative, is circulated amongst the teachers, and by that means disseminated through the schools. In the present case we are going further. Surveyor Easton not only examined that country, but took a large number of most informative photographs regarding the whole of it. At a trifling expense, practically no expense at all, lantern slides have been made of a number of the photographs, and these have been sent to the Training College at Claremont—40 or 50 slides, accompanied by descriptions of the country; and by such means not the children—because we cannot give instruction on this particular subject to all the children in the country direct—but those who are to be the teachers of the children are informed, so far as the Education Department can inform them, of the actual condition of things in those parts of Western Australia which up to the present have become known. Personally I should be very glad if we could put thoroughly up-to-date maps before all our school children.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Do you not think it is time to point out that some of the best pastoral land in this State is marked "desert" on the maps?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: But I do not know that such is the case.

Hon. G. W. Miles: It is the case.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I could instance dozens of things that we might well do; but we could not do them without incurring considerable expense.

Hon. G. W. Miles: In this case the expenditure is necessary.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Let me point out to the hon. member that in

this State we have over 600 schools, many of them containing several classrooms, and that the placing of new maps in every one of those rooms would run into a great deal of money—probably a great deal more than the hon. member thinks. However, we are doing it as quickly as is practicable. It is not so long ago that the general run of people in Western Australia itself thought that most of the country to which the hon. member refers was a desert.

Hon. G. W. Miles: There is a publication in London which shows the whole of the Murchison and Gascoyne districts as desert.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: That is not the fault of the Education Department. The Education Department do not compile maps. If any department of this State is to blame in that respect, it is certainly not the Education Department. I am very sorry that Mr. Hickey should have thought that the Government appointed this Royal Commission on Education as a whitewashing Commission. Nothing was further from my mind, from the minds of all the Ministers. The idea was to get a Commission that would give us the most useful advice. With that end in view we selected the man who, as I have said, is regarded as perhaps the greatest authority on education in Australasia. Dr. Saw was selected because the Government thought—and this will be generally admitted—that he has peculiar qualifications for serving on such a Commission. His selection also had some reference to the fact that the hon. member is a member of the medical profession. If there is one section of the community which ought to have special qualifications, next to the teachers themselves, to speak with authority on the education of children, it is the medical profession. Then we selected Mr. Pitchford as a representative business man, as one who would look at educational matters from a business point of view. It was the Government's opinion that these three Commissioners would be able to collect the evidence of all interested, and submit an adequate report. I have read the Commission's report with the greatest care, and I have not the slightest hesitation in saying that the report is of immense value, not only in this State, but in other parts of the Commonwealth as well. I sincerely hope it will not be very long before the Government are able to carry into effect the major recommendations in that report—a course which lack of finances alone prevents us from adopting at the present time.

Hon. J. W. Hickey: I wish to state that I did not object to the appointment of Dr. Saw.

On motion by Hon. H. Stewart debate adjourned.\*

*House adjourned at 9.56 p.m.*