

goldfields, I am not going to make one to say that the agricultural industry in this State has retrogressed since 1912. Every speech made by the hon. member and his party has been designed to show that the agricultural industry is the one strong reed upon which the whole of our industrial and economic position rests, and that our whole future depends upon the farming industry. I believe that a portion of that claim is true. I have personal knowledge of farmers in the eastern agricultural areas who, in 1909 and 1910, were living on boiled wheat and were experiencing very hard times. I can give instances of men who, five or six years ago, owed the Industries Assistance Board as much as £1,200, but who, in five short years, have so improved their positions that they could be out of the hands of the board if they so desired, because they have balances to their credit. But they find it is to their advantage to remain under the board, even though they have money on the right side of the ledger. Tents are provided for under the Shearers Accommodation Act, and I say that good tents on a frame, and with a good fly, would suffice in some parts where buildings of a permanent character were not justified, say for use merely at harvest time. But for the ordinary farm labourer who is employed during the whole of the year, the farmers themselves should recognise that it is to their interests to provide decent accommodation. I recognise that a majority of the farmers have already provided decent accommodation, but I am here to suggest that those who have not fallen into line should be compelled to do so. I take it that members representing the farming districts would not insinuate for a moment that in their case compulsion would be necessary.

Mr. Maley: I think they are all prepared to give a man as good as they have got for themselves.

Mr. GREEN: Unfortunately, my experience in the eastern districts shows that that is not always the case. Often it is so, but it is because of one or two isolated instances which I have in mind that I believe the Act is necessary. At Dalwallinu a few weeks ago I visited a certain place. I shall not mention names as I do not wish to give the farmer a cheap advertisement. There were two men sleeping in an old shanty having bag sides and a bit of a tin roof. It had no floor and there was a lean-to stable attached to it, and the effluvium which came from adjacent horses was mingled with their dreams, while myriads of flies attacked them even in their sleep. They had hardly any time to sleep because the farmer had an alarm clock, not in his house but on the verandah, and at 4 a.m. I heard it go off and waken the hens two or three hours before they would have been awakened if they had been left to the kindly process of nature.

Mr. Hickmott: He must have been a poultry farmer who wanted to wake them early so that they would lay more eggs.

Mr. GREEN: For the moment I am not complaining of the hours, but that farmer is not more successful than other farmers in that district who keep decent hours. The conditions on that farm were insupportable. In another place I saw a hut within 50 yards of a pigsty. No doubt it is a joke to the farmers of the master class who are lucky enough to be in Parliament.

Mr. Hickmott: I was at a farmer's place not long ago and all he had was a bag shanty.

Mr. GREEN: It might be a joke to master farmers to think of men sleeping adjacent to a pigsty.

Mr. Thomson: Some of the farmers have only bag houses for themselves.

Mr. GREEN: Then the hon. member, who is a contractor, will be kept busy in building decent habitations. In one district a man had to sleep in the corner of a stable. His bunk was erected on a bed of manure, and those who know anything about the country in the summer time and the myriads of flies that infest such localities will agree that such conditions should not be allowed to continue. I shall have something more to say during the course of my reply if the discussion warrants it. I feel sure that the good sense of the House and the justice of all, irrespective of what avocation members are engaged in, will assist me to carry the motion, and it will then be for the Government to introduce legislation such as I have described.

On motion by the Premier, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 10.7 p.m.*

## Legislative Council,

*Thursday, 2nd September, 1920.*

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

### LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Hon. G. J. G. W. Miles, leave of absence for six consecutive sittings granted to Hon. J. J. Holmes (North) on the ground of ill-health.

### MOTION—WAR GRATUITY BONDS REDEMPTION.

Hon. A. H. PANTON (West) [4.35]: I move—

That in the opinion of this House the Government should redeem the war gratuity bonds issued to the employees of the Western Australian Government.

My object is to obtain an expression of opinion from hon. members on this subject, and to endeavour to induce the Government to set an example in so far as the cashing of these bonds is concerned. The Commonwealth Government are redeeming the bonds of the employees in the Commonwealth service. The position at present is unsatisfactory in view of the fact that this war gratuity has been paid to the soldiers in the shape of bonds. Owing to the many regulations concerning the cashing of these bonds, the intentions of the Commonwealth Government are going to be defeated. There are all sorts of methods being adopted, which it is impossible to prevent, by which the soldier is being defrauded of a very large amount of the value of these bonds. The actual number of bonds that the Government would have to cash, if they accepted this proposition, I am unable to say. I am of opinion, however, that it would not be such a large number as would appear on the surface. There are many men who have received these bonds and who have since entered into the matrimonial state, and under the regulations they are able to obtain cash for their bonds. I shall speak principally of the married men in the course of my remarks on this motion. The married men who went away, and left their wives and families, have found themselves in the position that they could only draw, to April, 1917, up to 8s. per day. The soldier was paid 6s. a day, and the wife was able to draw 2s. per day separation allowance, according to the number of children. Under the regulations the soldier was compelled to leave at least 3s. a day for his wife, 1s. a day he retained for himself, and 1s. per day was regarded as deferred pay. At least 90 per cent. of the married men who went away accepted that and left 4s. for the benefit of their family. These married men honestly believed that they were leaving sufficient for their wives and families, but whilst they were away the cost of living went up so much that the amount that was left behind was totally inadequate to meet the demands of the household expenses. Also, those who went away leaving behind some savings found on their return that the savings had been eaten up in household expenses. The deferred pay amounted to various sums, according to the time the man was away, but soldiers have found that to clothe themselves as civilians on their return accounted for nearly the whole of their deferred pay. The result is that many married men who had no savings when they went away soon found themselves in debt when they came back. There are many re-

turned men in the Government service to-day, and elsewhere in the State, to whom these bonds are of little or no use. Others are endeavouring to start in business for themselves, but bonds of from £50 to £100 are not much use to them when they have to wait for four years to realise on them. There is a large number of employers in Western Australia who only want the lead from the Government to assist in this matter themselves. If the Government could redeem these bonds, more especially those of the married men, I believe that a large section of the employers would follow suit and cash the bonds held by their employees. There is quite a large number of people who are prepared to do this, but under the regulations no ordinary individual can cash more than one bond. If I wanted to invest £1,000 in these gratuity bonds I could not do so, and the most I could invest would be in the value of one, which is at the most about £128. There is no reasonable opportunity for a man to unload these bonds, even if people are prepared to cash them. I think the arguments I have used will appeal to hon. members. I have not moved this resolution in order to place the Government in any awkward position. I believe the matter can be satisfactorily arranged, and if the Government will give the lead to the employers I am quite hopeful that many of them will follow it. My chief object is to prevent the soldier from being defrauded by various methods of a large amount of the money that is coming to him.

Hon. J. Duffell: Is this for married men only, or for both married and single men?

Hon. A. H. PANTON: It will affect both classes, but I am speaking specially on behalf of the married men.

On motion by the Minister for Education debate adjourned.

### MOTION—RETURNED SOLDIERS AND RAILWAY PASSES.

Hon. A. H. PANTON (West) [4.42]: I move—

That in the opinion of this House returned soldiers who are attending the Base Hospital, Fremantle, or the vocational training school in Perth, should be carried over the railways free of charge.

I am actuated by the desire chiefly of bringing under the notice of hon. members and the Government—I do not believe they know the position—what is likely to occur so far as returned men are concerned in the near future. Up to last August all returned soldiers travelling to the base hospital and the vocational training school were carried free in Western Australia. I desire to pay a tribute to the Government because of this. Western Australia was the only State I know of carrying soldiers free during that period over the railways. In October of last year the Premier wrote to the Federal

Government pointing out that on July 1st it was proposed to cease carrying soldiers over the railways free of charge. Since then a conference of Railway Commissioners has been held, and it was decided to adopt uniform action. Some States were carrying the soldiers at a third of the fare, some at one-half, and some at the full fare, Western Australia alone carrying them free. The Railway Commissioners proposed that after 1st July all soldiers should pay their fares. No action was taken by the Federal Government in reply to the previous letters to them. Consequently the Commissioner of Railways here saw fit to extend the privilege that had been operating in this State until 31st August last. There are many men who are still under treatment at the base hospital, the Anzac hospital at Keane's Point, and at the convalescent home, Kalamunda. If a patient reports at the Repatriation Department and wants treatment at the base hospital, they will grant him his fare, but there are many men at present in the base hospital who are granted leave practically every day. Some go to see their friends and some have their wives in Perth, and some go to the hospital daily and sleep at home. Those men in future will have to pay railway fares. They are not doing any work; they are on sustenance, some of them on pensions. We are in the unfortunate position of having to train a considerable number of men in vocational training schools because, owing to the lack of secondary industries, we have been unable to place those men in such occupations. Most of them left vigorous avocations to go to the Front, where they were wounded, and so, on their return it has been found necessary to train them for some more suitable occupation than that which they left. The sustenance which they are receiving amounts to £2 2s. weekly, including pension, for a single man. A married man without children receives 57s. per week, a married man with one child 60s. 6d., a married man with two children 64s., a married man with three children 67s. 6d., and a married man with four children or more 69s. Since I gave notice of the motion, the Federal Government have been prevailed upon to grant an extra 4s. 6d. per week for the purpose of helping to pay railway fares for these men, a large number of whom live out of Perth. Since that 4s. 6d. has been granted towards railway fares, the granting of free passes will not mean so much to the State Government, because only those living at Midland Junction or Fremantle, whose fares amount to 6s. per week, will require assistance in this respect. The vocational trainees are a decreasing quantity, and we hope that at the end of two years we shall be finished with vocational training. Hon. members will agree that to carry the few men concerned over the railways to and from their work will not cost the Government any more for the running of the railways. At most it would mean, say, one ounce of coal per man per day. I admit that if those men were to pay their fares they would be

adding a trifle to the railway revenue. However, I hope the Government will not follow the lead of the Eastern States. We in Western Australia have always prided ourselves on our war record, and I trust that the Government will be able to continue to point to the fact that we have a good post-war record also, in respect of the treatment of our disabled soldiers. One section of those men about whom I am particularly anxious are the blind men. We have 10 blinded soldiers, and will possibly get one more. I do not think any hon. member will withhold sympathy from the proposal that those blind men should be carried over the railways free of charge. And if we are going to give a blind man a free pass, then certainly the man who has lost two legs has just as much claim as the blind man. I know of two men, each of whom has lost two legs and has to travel on the railways.

Hon. J. Duffell: And there is a third at Keane's Point.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: Yes, but those at the Anzac Hostel and at the Convalescent Home, Kalamunda, are there for treatment. However, we do not wish to see them confined to those places if their medical officers agree to their taking an occasional run into Perth. I think the Government should allow those men to make the short journey over the railways without having to cut into their little pensions to provide railway fares. I do not propose to labour this question. I am sure it will appeal to the Government. If it is to be a question of the Railway Commissioners meeting and devising some uniform system, I hope the Government will give our Railway Commissioner an opportunity to show the Commissioners of the Eastern States that he is still sympathetic towards the returned soldier. In view of the small amount involved, I am convinced that the Commissioner of Railways will not have any objections to offer. If the Government are prepared to continue this privilege, which has been in operation for some considerable time, for another 18 months or at most two years, we shall be able to boast, not only of our excellent war record, but also that we saw to it that our injured men had a fair deal on their return.

Hon. T. MOORE (Central) [4.52]: It gives me pleasure to second the motion. I can only endorse what Mr. Panton has said. It is not generally known what a hard struggle for existence many of our young fellows are having, particularly those in the vocational training schools. There are down there men in the prime of life, from 20 to 25 years of age, being asked to live on £2 2s. a week. In view of this it may be said that while we have talked a great deal of what we were prepared to do for our returned soldiers, we are not acting up to our promises. There are in the vocational training school young fellows who walk to their school in the mornings and walk straight back to their homes in the evenings. I have remarked to several of them who were in the hospital with

me, and are now in the vocational training school, that I have not seen them around the town; and they have said in reply, "No, we have no money in our pockets, and we are not going around the town without the wherewithal to return any hospitality which may be extended to us." If the people generally knew how some of these young fellows are being treated, I am sure there would be a public demand for an improvement. It is a small matter this giving to vocational trainees the right to travel over our railways, for the expense to the department will be practically nil; since the trains have to run in any case. Again, in regard to patients in the Base Hospital at Fremantle, it must be remembered that most of them are cripples, all others having been fixed up by this time. Therefore it will be seen that the men whom we propose to ask to pay railway fares are cripples for life. I think it is not necessary to appeal to hon. members to give those men the right to travel free. It is the smallest possible thing we could give them.

On motion by the Minister for Education, debate adjourned.

#### BILL—TIME OF REGISTRATION EXTENSION.

Second Reading.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [4.55] in moving the second reading said: This is a purely formal Bill. The necessity for it has arisen out of the recent simultaneous suspension of work in Government offices. The purpose of the Bill is to make regular certain things which became irregular because of that simultaneous suspension of work in Government offices. The Bill itself, I think, explains its purposes quite as briefly as I could possibly do. It provides that, for the purpose of presentation, registration or lodgment of any document in any public office or registry closed on any day upon which such registry should have been open to the public between the 11th and 29th days of July inclusive, the days on which any such office or registry was closed shall not be reckoned in computing the time in which the document is required by law to be presented, registered or lodged, and the time for presentation, registration or lodgment, or within which such registration is required by law to be effected, shall by force of this Act be extended, and shall be deemed to have been extended accordingly. Clause 3 simply provides that for the purposes of the Act an office or registry shall be deemed to have been closed if, owing to the absence of the staff, it was not practicable to carry on the operations thereof. Clause 4, which is the concluding clause, refers to the stamping of documents. It was impossible, during the time referred to, to obtain revenue stamps, and certain expedients were adopted to overcome the difficulty. The clause is to legalise and validate those proceedings. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

#### BILL—HIGH SCHOOL ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [5.0] in moving the second reading said: The purpose of this Bill is to amend the High School Act of 1876, increasing the number of governors and providing that the increased number shall be elected by the Old Boys' Association. Hon. members will recollect that some six years ago a Bill was passed which took away, after an interval of three years, the grant of £1,000 per annum which had previously been paid by the Government for the maintenance of the school. The same Act removed the limitation of fees which had been previously imposed. Since the passing of this amending Act the school has developed wonderfully. The number of scholars has increased from 95 to 320, whilst the present income without a grant is three times greater than it was previously with the grant. Under the existing Act six governors are provided for, and all are nominated by the Government. It is felt that the passing of the Act of six years ago, which took away the Government subsidy, has created an entirely different position, and a position in which the Government should not insist on the nomination of the whole of the board of governors. There is no doubt the Government still have some right of control in connection with the school, for the reason that the school occupies land granted by the Government for the purpose, and estimated in value at £34,000. It is now desired that the Old Boys' Association should be empowered to elect a certain number of members to the board of governors. It has been pointed out by the Old Boys' Association, and concurred in by the present governors, that the other secondary schools have the backing of influential religious denominations. The High School is entirely undenominational. It has no organisation of any kind behind it, and it is felt that the school as an institution would be strengthened, and the continuity of spirit and policy assured to it by giving the Old Boys' Association a voice in the nomination of governors. Up to the present time 1,700 boys have passed through the school, and before the war the association had a membership of 400. Owing to the number of enlistments from amongst the old boys, the Association practically lapsed during the war period. It has been revived, and now has a membership of over 200. The present governors of the High School are Mr. Battye, who is the chairman, the Hon.

Sir Edward Wittenoom, the Hon. Dr. Saw, the Hon. T. P. Draper, Sir Walter James, and Mr. W. T. Loton. The Bill provides for an increase in the number of governors from six to nine, and it also provides that the three additional members shall be appointed by the Government on the nomination, in the prescribed manner, of the High School Old Boys' Association. Provision is also made that if at any time the Old Boys' Association falls in number below 200 the Governor may make his appointments to the board without reference to that body at all. That is a very desirable provision, because, whilst it is a splendid idea that the association should have this direct interest in the High School, it would certainly be a mistake to give that association power, if at any time it fell off in numbers, to such an extent as to become significant.

Hon. J. Duffell: For what period are the governors appointed?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Clause 3 sets out the period. It states—

Three of the governors of the High School shall retire on the 30th day of April in every year. Of the governors firstly appointed on the nomination of "The High School Old Boys' Association," one shall retire on the 30th day of April, 1921, one shall retire on the 30th day of April, 1922, and one shall retire on the 30th day of April, 1923, and the order in which they shall so retire shall be determined by lot among themselves.

That would mean that they would be appointed for three years, one retiring each year.

Hon. J. Duffell: This will not detract from the Government's appointments?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The Government will still appoint six governors as before, and the three additional governors will be appointed by the Governor on the recommendation of the High School Old Boys' Association. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Hon. A. J. H. SAW (Metropolitan-Suburban) [5.7]: I would like to support the second reading of the Bill, and it gives me great pleasure to do so, firstly, as an old boy of the High School, and secondly as one of the governors. I had the good fortune to become a student of the High School practically at its inception, I think at the second term. Everything I have is very largely owing to that school. When I returned to this State after finishing my training in the old country, the governors of the High School asked the Government of the day to nominate me as one of the school's governors, and I have remained as one of the governors ever since. Consequently, I take a great interest in the Bill before the House. The idea of the Bill originated with the Old Boys' Association, and it came about in this way. Many old boys were anxious to do something for their school. At the same time they felt that under present conditions

they were having no say whatever in the management of the school, all the governors of which were appointed by the Government. At the present time there is a movement on foot, which is being well supported financially, to erect a war memorial in the form of four additional class rooms, which will be in memory of those boys of the High School who fell during the war, and it is only natural, when the Old Boys' Association requests support from boys who previously attended the school, that they should feel they would be in a much stronger position if they could point to the fact that they had a small say in the government of the school. I do not think the proposal which the Old Boys' Association have put forward that they should nominate three of the governors is excessive. The Government will undoubtedly still retain full control, but the power of the Old Boys' Association will be increased and the outcome will be the advancement of the school. The school at the present time is in a most flourishing position, and on all sides we hear nothing but praise of the way in which it is being conducted. The Government are saving many thousands of pounds, because if the High School ceased to exist, the Government would have to fill its place by the establishment of a school of the same character. I do not think there is much more to add, except to say that the governors of the High School are in sympathy with the Bill, which is the result of a combined deputation to the Minister for Education, a deputation representative of the governors of the school, and of the Old Boys' Association.

Hon. J. DUFFELL (Metropolitan-Suburban) [5.10]: While I do not intend to offer any objection to the Bill, I am not quite clear what the effect of it is likely to be on other schools. In the first place I realise, for the reasons set out by the leader of the House, that the Government have an interest in the school by reason of the value of the Crown lands on which the school stands. What I am not quite clear about is whether the six governors appointed by the Government will eventually have to retire and go up again for re-election, or whether the re-election will apply only in regard to the three to be appointed by the Old Boys' Association. Who is to retire on the dates set out in the Bill? I am exercised also with regard to the precedent we shall create in connection with the Old Boys' Associations of the various schools. If the Government are recognising under a special amendment of the High School Act the Old Boys' Association of the High School, what about similar associations in connection with the denominational schools? They may also have some reason for approaching the Government and asking for a Bill which will validate certain actions of theirs. These are two points which are exercising my mind, and in regard to which I would like to have some further light before I vote for the second reading.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East—in reply) [5.12]: "I think I can satisfy the hon. member on the two points he has raised. The governors who are to retire on the 30th day of April in each year will be one of the governors appointed on the nomination of the Old Boys' Association, and two of the others. The position in regard to the six governors appointed by the Government will not be altered. The three governors appointed on the nomination of the Old Boys' Association will be appointed in just the same way for a period of three years, and one will retire each year at the end of April. When the three retirements take place one nomination will come from the Old Boys' Association and two from the Government.

Hon. J. Duffell: The Old Boys' Association will not interfere with the reappointments?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The position of the six governors will not be affected at all. So far as the other secondary schools are concerned, I cannot see that they will be affected at all, as the hon. member fears. We are not interested in the board of the Scotch College or in that of the Guildford Grammar School. Moreover, they do not require an Act of Parliament to enable them to do anything. The properties on which the schools are built are their own, and they can do as they like. They are purely their own institutions conducted by different bodies, and the Government have no interest in them, financial or otherwise. This Bill makes no difference whatever in their position. After the passing of the measure they will still be able to do exactly as they please.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Hon. J. Ewing in the Chair, the Minister for Education in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1, 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Retirement of governors:

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Mr. Duffell's point is one which may require a little further elucidation. The clause is not as clear as it might be, nor does it give expression to what is the obvious intention of the draftsman. It is open to the interpretation that two of the three governors to retire will be two of the governors appointed by the Government. The intention would have been much clearer had this clause stated that two of the governors appointed under the High School Appointment Act shall retire on the 30th April and that one of the governors appointed under this measure shall similarly retire.

Hon. A. J. H. SAW: I see no difficulty in the matter at all. The clause says that three governors shall retire each year, and that one of the governors appointed under this measure shall retire. The only place where two other governors can be obtained is among the governors appointed by the Government. The clause seems to me perfectly clear.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The clause is perfectly clear. Moreover Sub-clause (2) says who shall retire; namely, those who have been longest in office.

Hon. J. Nicholson: But that might apply also to the three governors under this measure.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 4, 5—agreed to.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

House adjourned at 5.25 p.m.

## Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 2nd September, 1920.

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

### QUESTION—INDUSTRIES ASSISTANCE BOARD.

#### Machinery and Netting Prices.

Mr. HARRISON asked the Premier: 1, What were the prices of the following to Industries Assistance Board clients in 1916:—(a) Massey reaper and binder, also reaper-thresher; (b) Sunshine 6ft. harvester, 17-disc drill, four-furrow disc plough, and ten-twin discs cultivator; (c) wire netting—(36in. sheep) and rabbit proof (48in.)? 2, What are the quoted prices to Industries Assistance Board clients in 1920 for the above machines and wire netting?

The PREMIER replied: 1, (a) Massey reaper and binder—price to L.A.B., 1916, £49; reaper-threshers—1916, £151. (b) Sunshine 6ft. harvester, 1916, 1st payment, £113 15s; 3 payments £128 15s. 4-furrow disc