

would be the best way to bring down the high rents now being charged there. Apparently, houses are not a profitable investment on the goldfields; otherwise people on the goldfields with money would invest it in cottages for letting purposes. The Government should not build the same class of house on the goldfields as it builds in the metropolitan area. The people in the metropolitan area build rather expensive houses. The Government could, however, provide the people on the goldfields with comfortable weatherboard homes, properly lined, at a rental they can afford to pay. It is no good complaining and then saying a Fair Rents Act will overcome the difficulty. It will not. It would probably have the effect of stopping the building of houses and so overcrowding would follow. No one wants overcrowding: we have plenty of land, goodness knows. I have taken up the time of the House longer than I expected; but I do hope that I have to some extent misjudged the Government. To start vying with each other to win popularity in the way I have indicated is unwise. Such a course will not benefit the public generally, nor will it do us much good.

On motion by the Premier, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 8.18 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 10th August, 1938.

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

QUESTION—HARBOURS, AMOUNTS VOTED.

Hon. G. B. WOOD asked the Chief Secretary: What is the total amount voted by Parliament for each of the following harbours since, and including, 1924—(a) Geraldton, (b) Fremantle, (c) Bunbury, (d) Albany, (e) Esperance?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: (a) Geraldton, £801,965. (b) Fremantle, £1,064,220. (c) Bunbury, £303,000. (d) Albany, £6,000. (e) Esperance, £105,085.

QUESTION—TAXATION, FINANCIAL EMERGENCY AND HOSPITAL.

Hon. H. SEDDON asked the Chief Secretary: 1, What amount was collected from the financial emergency tax for each of the last six months of the year ended June, 1938? 2, What amount was collected from the hospital tax during the same months? 3, What was the amount collected from the financial emergency and hospital taxes in July, 1938?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:—

	Financial Emergency Tax.	Hospital Tax.
1938.	£	£
January	60,215	16,456
February	113,012	21,818
March	116,702	24,658
April	119,101	23,404
May	94,806	19,774
June	117,184	24,658
July	68,844	17,285

QUESTION—NURSES, KALGOORLIE HOSPITAL.

Domestic Science Course.

Hon. H. SEDDON asked the Chief Secretary: 1, Is the Minister aware that the arrangement whereby nurses at the Kalgoorlie Government Hospital were able to take the domestic science course at the local centre has been discontinued? 2, Will he take steps to see that these nurses are given every assistance to complete their studies and qualify in this branch of their work?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, No. 2, Yes.

QUESTION—CHILD WELFARE DEPARTMENT.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL asked the Chief Secretary: 1, Does the Minister controlling the Child Welfare Department approve of officers of that department paying visits of inspection to the homes of widows on Sundays accompanied by police constables in uniform, as was recently the case in Geraldton? 2, If not, will he have the necessary action taken to prevent a continuance of the practice?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: The policy is against the carrying out of inspections on a Sunday. Inquiries are being made for the purpose of ascertaining the reason which necessitated the Sunday inspection mentioned in the question and the reason why a police constable accompanied the officer on his visits of inspection.

COMMITTEES FOR THE SESSION.

On motion by the Chief Secretary, Sessional Committees were appointed as follows:—

Standing Orders.—The President, the Chief Secretary, Hon. J. Cornell, Hon. C. F. Baxter and Hon. J. Nicholson.

Library.—The President, Hon. C. F. Baxter and Hon. G. Fraser.

Printing.—The President, the Honorary Minister and Hon. W. J. Mann.

Joint House.—The President, the Honorary Minister, Hon. J. Cornell, Hon. V. Hammersley and Hon. G. W. Miles.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

Hon. C. F. Baxter and Appointment of Crown Solicitor.

Notice of motion by Hon. C. F. Baxter (East) read as follows:—

That all papers, including applications, in connection with the appointment of Mr. E. A. Dunphy as Crown Solicitor, be laid on the Table of the House.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I desire to make a personal explanation regarding the motion of which I have given notice.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. member may do so, but his personal explanation must not be of a controversial nature.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: No, it will not. I asked for the postponement of the motion yesterday, hoping that I would be in a position to deal with it at this sitting. Since then, however, the tabling of papers in the House has prevented me from going as far as I would like with the matter, and I would appreciate a further extension of time within which to deal with the motion. To give my reasons: First of all, if the Governor-in-Council does not approve of a recommendation from the Public Service Commissioner, under Subsection 3 of Section 44 of the Public Service Act the reasons for such non-approval must be given, and must be laid on the Table of the House. On looking through the file, I noticed one paper containing an objection to a recommendation by the Public Service Commissioner for the appointment of Mr. Good, the Crown Prosecutor and Assistant Crown-Solicitor, to the post of Crown Solicitor and Assistant Parliamentary Draftsman. The reason given was that Mr. Good's permanent service in the department had been too short to justify his appointment by way of promotion. That being so and in view of the fact that the other gentleman concerned has not been in the service at all, I ask that the consideration of my motion be postponed until Tuesday next.

The PRESIDENT: The motion will be postponed until next Tuesday, but, of course, the hon. member is well aware that only formal business can be taken until after the Address-in-reply has been disposed of.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Quite so.

BILL—SUPPLY (No. 1), £2,500,000.*Standing Orders Suspension.*

On motion by the Chief Secretary, resolved:

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as is necessary to enable a Supply Bill to pass through all stages at one sitting.

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West [4.43]) in moving the second reading said: This is the usual Bill to provide Supply to finance operations pending the passing of the Estimates at a later date. The Estimates are in course of preparation, and the Treasurer expects to present them to Parliament shortly. The amount asked for is as follows:—

	£
Consolidated Revenue Fund ..	1,700,000
General Loan Fund	500,000
Treasurer's Advance	300,000
	<hr/>
	£2,500,000

The total amount asked for is the same as was voted last year, and will provide Supply for three months. Expenditure from Consolidated Revenue is expected to be about the same amount as for the corresponding period last year, when it totalled £1,728,353. This figure does not include expenditure under Special Acts, such as interest, sinking fund contributions, etc. The amount required from the General Loan Fund is £100,000 less than the sum asked for last year. The Loan Fund will be used to the best advantage to enable as many men as possible to be employed on useful works. Treasurer's Advance—£300,000—is to meet expenditure which, for the time being, cannot be charged against Votes, or otherwise cleared. Because of unexpected revenue increases, operations for last year on the Consolidated Revenue Fund resulted in a deficit of £10,693, compared with the estimated deficit of £128,855—an improvement of £118,162.

The estimated expenditure last year was £10,781,840. The actual expenditure, including Special Acts was £10,829,735, show-

ing an excess over the estimate of £47,895. The excess is accounted for as follows:—

	Over Estimate.	Under Estimate.
	£	£
Interest	10,631	..
Sinking Fund .. ..	..	1,173
Exchange .. ..	..	12,098
Social Expenditure ..	2,223	..
Pensions	3,819	..
Other Public Works ..	..	12,131
Business Undertakings ..	6,082	..
All Other Expenditure ..	50,542	..
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	£73,297	£25,402

Net Excess £47,895

The revenue collected was £10,819,042, and the estimated revenue was £10,652,985, an increase on the estimate of £166,057. The improvement was made up as follows:—

	Over Estimate.	Under Estimate.
	£	£
Taxation	137,217	..
Territorial .. ..	..	7,890
Business Undertakings ..	..	5,936
All Other Revenue ..	42,666	..
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	£179,883	£13,826

Net improvement .. £166,057

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 read a third time and *passed*.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.*Third Day.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. H. V. PIESSE (South-East) [4.52]: I wish to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your re-election to the most important position in the House. I am pleased to think that during the next six years you will be controlling the business of this House. We realise the sense of fairness that has characterised your actions in the past, and feel sure that you will continue to maintain the dignity of the position. Let me briefly refer to the regrettable deaths of

the Hon. S. W. Munsie, M.L.A., the Hon. C. G. Elliott, M.L.C., and Mr. Brockman, M.L.A. During my term in Parliament I learnt to admire the energy displayed by Mr. Munsie and to appreciate the excellent work he did, particularly for country hospitals. I am expressing the feelings of country people generally when I say that their sympathy goes out to the widow and family at the passing of such an excellent man, who in the past 25 years had given of his best to the State. Mr. Elliott's term of four years in this House gave me an opportunity to become acquainted with him, but not until one visited the eastern goldfields could one appreciate the esteem in which he was held. He was a conscientious member who on many occasions was able to give the House valuable advice, and he had endeared himself to all of us. I had known Mr. Vernon Brockman since boyhood, and he, too, had endeared himself to members of both branches of the Legislature.

The Lieut.-Governor's Speech contains a reference to the passing of Lieut.-General Sir Talbot Hobbs, a man who, though small of stature, was a great soldier, and one of the most able men Australia has produced. I am proud to recall that when I was a lad of 16 I served as batman to him. It was my duty to polish his boots and keep his leggings in order, and I was proud of the honour of working for such a man. He was then a captain in the army, but by training, largely at his own expense, and going afield, he acquired the wide knowledge that fitted him so well for the excellent work he did on the battlefronts of France. Nothing would have pleased the people more than that he should have been spared to attend the ceremony of unveiling the famous monument in France.

We miss our old friend, Mr. Clydesdale, who was a personal friend of all of us. With the electors, however, the choice of members lies, and they have decided in favour of Mr. Dimmitt. Since the occasion when I first stood for Parliament and my colleague, Mr. Thomson, defeated me—we are now excellent friends—Mr. Clydesdale and I had developed a close friendship, and I certainly regret the loss of his services. At the same time, I have pleasure in welcoming Mr. Dimmitt and Mr. W. R. Hall amongst us, and I am sure that they will soon find themselves on a friendly footing with us.

I listened with great pleasure to Mr. W. R. Hall's speech in moving the adoption of

the Address-in-reply. Without question, the gold mines represent a very marvellous part of our primary production, though I cannot agree with Mr. Hall that it is the most marvellous part. He expressed the hope that the gold mines would be operating after the lapse of another 40 years, but I hope they will be in existence much longer. Let me remind him, however, that the primary producers on the land will by that time be just about getting into their stride, but I trust that after centuries have passed, our gold mines will still be producing, and that Western Australia will then be the greatest primary producing State of the Commonwealth.

Hon. G. Fraser: The farmers will be "broke" if 40 years must elapse before they get into their stride.

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: During the recess I visited the Eastern States. I journeyed into the back country of New South Wales and went as far north as Cairns in Queensland. I was greatly impressed with the productivity of Queensland; I had many opportunities to see various cattle runs and sheep stations. I attended the stud sheep sales and the sheep show in Sydney. Australia undoubtedly has a great heritage in its merino sheep, and the future of the fat lamb industry is assured. One had only to view the exhibits staged in New South Wales to appreciate those facts. When we realise that droughts had been rampant throughout New South Wales and in parts of Victoria, it was remarkable that such exhibits of sheep were forthcoming. Australia has certainly come into its own as regards the merino sheep and fat lamb industry. On my return to Western Australia, I had occasion to visit Bunbury on business, and left that town at 2 p.m. to return to Perth. On the way back I saw the greatest number of cattle per acre that I had seen anywhere. In my opinion, there is nothing in Australia to equal the stocking in that part of the State. The improvement in the pastures during the last 20 years has been remarkable. If members have not visited that part of the State for some years, a trip would be an eye-opener to them.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Mr. Mann is always telling us that.

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: But seeing is believing. Having seen that part of the State, I can vouch for its ability to stand heavy stocking. I also visited the Avon Valley on

a Reso Tour. That is another astounding piece of country, though different from the Bunbury district, production in the latter being chiefly in the direction of fat lambs and dairy cattle.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: You should go to Moora!

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: Travel is most important to every member of Parliament. I would suggest to the Chief Secretary that he convey to the Premier the opinion that members of Parliament should make a point of seeing more of the country in which they live and for which they legislate. If Reso Tours for members of Parliament could be arranged, it would be a great advantage to all concerned inasmuch as they would obtain first-hand knowledge of country conditions. I go further and say that agricultural-minded members representing country districts should visit factories and other places where secondary industries are carried on. Thus they would obtain knowledge which I feel quite sure some hon. members have not had an opportunity of securing. Reso Tours are taking place all over Australia. When I was in South Australia 28 or 30 New Zealand farmers were visiting that State at the invitation of the South Australian Government. Undoubtedly, before those men left South Australia, they had a good knowledge of the advantages of that State.

A similar tour here would demonstrate the resources and the development of our State to those who legislate for Western Australia. It would foster settlement, proving what wonderful results can be obtained by scientific water conservation and other developmental measures in our great South-West. It would increase the general understanding of both town and country members as to what is possible here in both primary and secondary industries. It would enable members of Parliament to obtain first-hand information as to conditions in the various industries. Throughout such tours we would naturally be accompanied by Press representatives. That would be a great advantage from the aspect of publicity not only in our own State, but all over Australia and all over the world. In order that such tours should be conducted on right lines, the Golden Mile must not be overlooked as a most important place to visit. Most of us, when travelling to the East, jump into a motor car at Kalgoorlie and drive round the

big heaps of dirt and tailings that are stacked up, and then say to ourselves that we have seen the Golden Mile. We go back to the Trans train feeling satisfied that Kalgoorlie is a very fine place. Recently, however, I had the pleasure of visiting the Great Boulder mine at the invitation of the mayor of Kalgoorlie, our former colleague in this House, Mr. R. G. Moore; and it was a revelation to me to learn of the large amount of labour employed in the industry, which means so much to Western Australia. I was astounded at the marvellous development that had taken place in the way of machinery and the work that was carried on. I was also struck with the number of men picked up on the day of my visit. Travel, getting the opportunity to see important features in the life of Western Australia, brings home to us the practical aspect of that for which we are legislating. I personally have a knowledge of what I may call the factory point of view, being engaged not only in agriculture, but also in an industrial business in Perth. Hon. members generally might well visit factories in the metropolitan district to gain a knowledge of the working of those factories and of the people employed in them. The Government has repeatedly arranged tours of the railway workshops. I always have the feeling that our railway workshops are among the best in Australia. There is very little trouble in them, and they do excellent work from a railway point of view. I claim that hon. members are given a gold railway pass so that they may travel for the purpose of gaining information that will be helpful to them in legislating for the State. That is of great advantage to them in their parliamentary work. We should take every advantage of such opportunities.

When in Bunbury a few days ago, I was struck with some information conveyed to me by a gentleman there. He said that he had put up in his window a notice that a tour was being arranged to the Caves, and that the Transport Board had notified him that he must take the notice out of the window. When in Sydney I stayed at the Commercial Travellers' Club and I had only to walk along past the post office to realise that in scores of offices transport arrangements were being made for tours throughout Queensland, New South Wales and Vie-

toria—interstate tours. Officers were available to give information. On the other hand, our Transport Board will not even permit such centres as Bunbury and Albany to develop their own small tours for the purpose of enabling the local residents to gain knowledge of the district. A little more sympathy is required in this connection. The promotion of tours should not be curtailed.

I welcome the opening in the Plaza Arcade of a tourist bureau by Victoria and New South Wales. When I was in the arcade a couple of days ago I had the pleasure of seeing the officer in charge, who at once showed a desire to give me all possible information as to how to go East. What is there in the Eastern States that can give people information about Western Australia? Nothing at all. We have here a most capable officer who is doing his utmost on the very small amount of money allocated for the purpose. When returning from the East I found on the Trans train a fine pamphlet setting out the advantages of Western Australia, with youth and beauty on the cover. The contents of that pamphlet showed it to be one of the best pieces of propaganda ever prepared in Australia. But there are not enough copies of the pamphlet available. They may be expensive to produce, but I repeat that in the Eastern States to-day we have no information bureau on anything like the same level as other States have.

Hon. V. Hamersley: In the East they do not know that Western Australia exists!

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: I think they do know that we exist, because Western Australia pays them a lot of money.

The Chief Secretary: Literature is provided.

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: Only in the railway booking offices. I am referring to other offices.

The Chief Secretary: What about the tourist bureaux?

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: The tourist bureaux have no Western Australian pamphlets. At any rate, I could not find any. Tasmania, Victoria and Queensland all have their own tourist bureaux.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Have you seen the new big pamphlet that was sent out by the Tourist Bureau a week or two ago?

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: Yes, and I say it is one of the finest advertisements ever

put out in Australia. It should be distributed from one end of Australia to the other.

In the Speech I notice a reference to housing and workers' homes. When the Workers' Homes Act Amendment Bill was before the House last session, I supported the proposal to build £200 and £300 houses. I am glad the Government is bringing the matter forward again. It is most important that the Workers' Homes Board should be empowered to erect houses of smaller value than hitherto, so that workers may be able to obtain a residence at a reasonable figure. I am still inclined to support the proposal to erect houses for letting purposes, as suggested last session. Then, when the tenant has a £5 note to spare, he can pay it as a deposit towards the purchase of the residence. Our Workers' Homes Board is outstanding in point of efficiency and for the way it has administered its Act over decades.

Reference was made by Mr. Baxter to the native regulations. It is extremely difficult for the Government to do everything in a way as to please everybody. At the same time I consider it the duty of every man and every woman in this country to help the Government in every way possible to look after the natives. When advice or help can be given, it should be given. In my own district I have opportunities of seeing the natives; and really, when all is said and done, the way they are compelled to live in the winter months is terrible. It is terrible to see women and children, and also men, living in such awful camps. To decide how to deal with those unfortunate people is a most difficult problem. To shift them from their own districts seems wrong. During my life I have seen natives born and bred in the district I come from moved away—natives whose names one knows and whom one has seen grow up. They have been shifted to some district where they would not be as happy as in their own district. However, we have a lot of timber in Western Australia, and surely we could put up, on reserves of the various towns, barracks or small huts even if they were only rain and wind proof. That would be a step in the right direction. In Katanning today there is a shanty built of old bits of tin, cut with a tin-opener and straightened out—a dreadful sight. Yet that shanty seems to be the

mansion of the camp. It is a positive disgrace to drive past.

Hon. A. Thomson: But it is not right in Katanning.

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: No. It is on a reserve near the rifle range. I feel that something should be done for those poor people. I know very well that a sympathetic Minister is in charge of the department, but on some occasions the department is not very sympathetic. I know of one half-caste who served for four years in the Great War. That man came into my office and spoke indignantly of the treatment he was receiving. He has been working under white men's conditions, having only lately been employed by the Telegraph Department in erecting telegraph poles, but recently he was informed that he could not enter a hotel because he was a native. It seemed to me unfortunate that such a man should have to apply for exemption, although I do not doubt that if he did apply, he would recover his original status. But why should such a man be treated with the ignominy of being classed as a native?

Hon. A. Thomson: If he was good enough to fight in the Great War for his country, he should have the treatment of a white man.

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: The man is fairly well educated. He can write quite well, and I was requested to recommend him to the Minister as a teacher of the young natives in Katanning, where it is desired that a school for the natives should be established. That is the opinion of the natives concerning that man. I do not say he is all that he should be in every possible way, but he is a returned soldier and he fought for four years at the Front, and surely he should have been treated as a white man and enabled to enjoy white man's conditions instead of being relegated to the position of a native.

I wish to congratulate the Commissioner of Railways on the efficiency of the Westland train he is now running to connect with the Trans. train. The observation car is very comfortable indeed, and I assure members that its provision fills a long felt need. Nobody knows better than yourself, Mr. President, the advantage of having such a coach on the train. I would like to see a little more comfort of the kind provided for second-class passengers. A car of that type, though not perhaps as large, should be attached to the second-class coaches. During the recess there has been a considerable

amount of Press controversy concerning bulk handling at Albany. All I desire to say on the subject is that if the Government has not the money to finance the erection of terminals at Albany, I sincerely hope it will give careful consideration to the question of permitting private enterprise to carry out the work in much the same way as it is being carried out at Geraldton and Fremantle.

The water supplies of the Great Southern have formed the subject of much discussion. The Hon. C. B. Williams, who visited Katanning some time ago, said to me, "When I went through I could not fill even my water bag. I was told by a local butcher to go to the bank and fill my bag at the tank on the bank premises." That is perfectly true. The water at Katanning is discoloured and the bank had control of what good water there was. How inadequate are the facilities for a satisfactory water supply in the Great Southern can be realised when one considers what is being done from a national point of view in Victoria and on the Victoria-New South Wales border. A large water scheme has been inaugurated there with national money. I remember when the Coolgardie water scheme was constructed. For many years the populace of Western Australia had to pay for that scheme, and only in the last two or three years has it become a payable proposition. It has, however, been worth while. I feel that the position in the Great Southern today is as important as that which existed at Kalgoorlie in those days and that a national scheme should be initiated to provide adequate water for the districts lacking it. The public of Western Australia might have to contribute to such a scheme, but its introduction would mean much in the future development of that great area because it would ensure considerably increased production.

The Press has published a considerable amount of information about the fat lamb industry supplied by Mr. Coleman, one of the Australian Meat Board representatives, who stressed the necessity for the production of fodder crops. We have the land for that purpose; all we need is a good water conservation scheme. Given that, the development of the Great Southern district will be marvellous, a fact that is patent when we realise the extent of the territory. Victoria could be put into the Great Southern and would

not overlap. We have a marvellous heritage in the Great Southern, and the provision of such a scheme as I have suggested should be given careful consideration by the Government. We have been told that a superannuation scheme is to be introduced. Without having seen the Bill, I may say that I am in favour of such a scheme and am looking forward to an examination of the contents of the measure.

During my recent trip through the Eastern States, I had an opportunity to investigate the position of the potato industry, being a member of the Federal Potato Advisory Committee and having attended meetings of the board at the invitation of the growers in Western Australia and Adelaide. I was impressed by the reports handed to members of the board concerning the marvellous productivity of Western Australia. This State produces one ton per acre more than any other State. Comparing production here with that of the Eastern States, I claim that, with the highest production in Australia per acre, Western Australia is cultivating this crop on the most scientific lines in the Commonwealth.

Hon. L. Craig: We use more manure.

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: Yes, that is one of the things we do which the Eastern States have not done up to date. We use a lot of potato manure. I was struck by the fact that we have a definite market for our crop in the Eastern States, particularly in Queensland and New South Wales. There are also occasions when the South Australian market is available to growers in this State. I was impressed by figures I obtained showing the decrease in the area under potatoes in New South Wales since 1890. In that year there were 19,400 acres on which potatoes were produced, the production totalling 52,000 tons. In 1910 there were 44,000 acres that produced 121,000 tons. Last year there were only 18,000 acres and they yielded 41,000 tons. This goes to show that the production in New South Wales last year was less than in 1890, whereas Victoria has increased its area by 10,000 acres, Tasmania by 16,000 acres, Queensland by 4,000 acres and Western Australia by 4,000 acres. Hundreds of acres of land in Western Australia are capable of producing potatoes, and usually, after such a crop has been grown, the land develops into a much more productive area and has a much higher value for grazing and dairying purposes. The growing of potatoes is one method of bring-

ing into production a lot of this good country. In Queensland I saw Western Australian potatoes being sold for about £13 6s. a ton, and I was told by Mr. Skinner, one of the leading merchants, that they were the best potatoes offered for sale in that centre.

Hon. L. Craig: It is not a regular market, unfortunately.

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: No. The market this year has been exceptional, I admit. If we had a few thousand extra tons available this year they could be sold in the Eastern States, owing to the shortage there. I do not say that that could be done every year, but if the excellent grading that is now taking place is continued, Western Australian potatoes can compete with Tasmanian potatoes at any time and there is a market for them in the east. In the past some of the potatoes exported have not been graded properly, but under the new grading scheme the value of the potatoes has been considerably enhanced. The Federal Conference carried a resolution to the effect that the State Governments should be asked to introduce a measure to provide for the registration of growers. A Bill of that nature is before the New South Wales Parliament at the present time and there is no doubt that it will be passed. I should like to ask the Chief Secretary if he would arrange for the Government to introduce a similar Bill at an early date. The Bill is a simple one. All that is required is provision to register the growers of potatoes.

The suggested Bill would contain only a few clauses but, if it were passed, it would afford the department an opportunity of knowing who was engaged in the production of potatoes. There is no thought of constituting boards to control the industry, but it was pointed out at the conference that if a small fee were charged for the registration of growers, as is done for orchard registration, funds would be available to pay the expenses of delegates to conferences held in the interests of the industry. It would also assist in meeting the departmental expenses. Other benefits would accrue from the introduction of such a measure. It would give the Government inspector a better opportunity of dealing with any disease likely to become prevalent in the industry, as all growers would be registered. In the event of a vote having to be taken on some question affecting

the industry, a list of growers would be available. It would greatly help from a statistical point of view in arriving at quantities grown and crops available for interstate requirements.

An important reason why such a Bill should be introduced is that New Zealand is at present endeavouring to have its potatoes admitted into Australia. Mr. Perrett, of the Federal Committee, called three or four of the members of the executive together in Sydney, and they were able to give the Prime Minister (Mr. Lyons) the information that there were sufficient potatoes in Australia to meet requirements, and that there was therefore no need to permit the importation of New Zealand potatoes. In order that the quantity of potatoes available in Australia may be known, the provision of statistics is most essential. In the Commonwealth to-day there are 23,000 growers. Of these 5,000 operate in Tasmania, 6,600 in Victoria, 5,500 in Queensland, 3,640 in New South Wales, and 1,400 in South Australia. Last year there were estimated to be 850 in Western Australia, but we know that the number has greatly increased. The Federal committee if the association is desirous that registration shall take place. The matter has been before the Australian Council and was, I understand, approved at its last meeting. I am hopeful, therefore, that the Chief Secretary will do his utmost to ensure that a Bill for this purpose is brought down. I notice that the Government intends to amend the Municipal Corporations Act, and I sincerely hope that the clause dealing with plural voting will be deleted. Amendment of this legislation is long overdue.

There have been many controversies about the home consumption price of wheat, but it is not my intention to-night to discuss that matter. I understand that several other members will deal with it.

Member: Give the House your view.

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: My view is that there should be a home consumption price for wheat. I have expressed that view both inside and outside the House on many occasions. When reading the newspaper this morning, I was struck by a letter from the Leader of the National Party. May I congratulate him upon his statement? He certainly seems to be trying to bring about an amicable settlement, and the three

points he raised in his letter are quite good. I must, however, take exception to his remarks about the Rural Relief Fund Act and interference with secured debts. When the Rural Relief Fund Act was introduced in another place, the intention was not to interfere to a greater extent with secured debts than was done in Victoria. Our Act is similar to that of Victoria. The Leader of the National Party did not touch on one provision of our Rural Relief Fund Act, namely, the right to defer the payment of an unsecured portion of a debt for seven years. When the Rural Relief Department seeks to take advantage of that provision, the secured creditor generally cuts off supplies. What is the use of deferring payment of portion of a debt when funds are not available to enable the debtor to carry on? Victoria and New South Wales are outstanding in this respect. Their legislation is of great help to the primary producer. In the early stages of the depression, New South Wales allocated from State funds the sum of £1,000,000 to assist farmers and graziers to carry on their business. Victoria did the same. In Victoria, as a man becomes rehabilitated, a certain proportion of the funds is applied in reduction of the amount that was written off his debt. He then has money available from the State fund with which to purchase machinery and stock. In some instances, interest has been paid on his secured debt for one or two years, thus enabling him to get on his feet. I feel sure that our agriculturists and pastoralists would be perfectly satisfied with the provisions of the Victorian Act. That is an important point of which the Leader of the National Party lost sight.

I trust the Government will make money available for this purpose. No one is desirous of asking a secured creditor to give up part of his security. The excess debt is not written off; payment is merely deferred for a number of years. If the farmer or the grazier cannot make good, then it is written off at the end of the time. If an ordinary trader becomes bankrupt, his secured creditor must step in and take over the security. We know the debtor is responsible for the full amount of the debt; but if his assets, which might be valued at £5,000, were sold for £4,000, it is unlikely that any institution would hold him responsible for the differ-

ence of £1,000, if that sum represented the balance of its security. Blood cannot be drawn from a stone. Why should not a farmer who, through no fault of his own, is in such a position be allowed to carry on his farm? Why should he not have the advantage of doing so, rather than some other man who might purchase the property for £4,000?

There was much discussion during the last session of Parliament about the Mortgagees' Rights Restriction Act. Eventually, the measure was passed by a very large majority. It is well sometimes to read the writing on the wall. Personally, I always try to look ahead. A suggestion was then made by some members for whose opinions I have respect—

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Many people cannot read the writing on the wall.

The Honorary Minister: They cannot always read it.

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: Sometimes the writing is not proved. I said then that if the members of the metropolitan area were desirous of discontinuing the measure, it should nevertheless be retained for the rural districts, because the farming and grazing industries were then not in a position to forego the benefit of the Act. So far as the rural districts are concerned, I say the time has not yet arrived when that Act should be removed from the statute-book.

There has been considerable discussion about the liberation of the rabbit virus. This is really a Federal matter, but I feel it should receive the attention of the Government. If the virus were liberated, we have in our State many capable farmers and graziers who could put it to use and perhaps teach some of the men that are experimenting with it.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Are you quite sure it is safe to liberate the virus?

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: I have noticed in the Press that it is absolutely safe to do so.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: I am not so sure.

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: The Council of Scientific and Industrial Research has said that it is. I have read many of the reports. The virus can harm no animal except the rabbit. We look forward to the Government giving attention to this matter, and hope it will not be long before this important virus is distributed for use in Western Australia.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: I spent three days with the Council of Scientific and Industrial

Research, and the persons dealing with the virus are not absolutely sure that it is yet safe to distribute it.

Hon. V. Hamersley: They said they were sure.

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: It was stated in the Press on several occasions that it was safe to distribute the virus.

Hon. H. Tuckey: The officers of the council will not recommend the Federal Government to distribute it.

The PRESIDENT: I must ask hon. members to allow Mr. Piesse to proceed with his speech.

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: I have pleasure in supporting the motion.

HON. L. CRAIG (South-West) [5.42]: I would like to add my congratulations to you, Sir, on your appointment to your high office. I also desire to congratulate the two newly elected members. To them I would say that a new member in his first year has the idea that he will reform the whole country. Afterwards he becomes accustomed to being a member; he likes it and enjoys the work. I do not propose to speak at great length. I shall deal with parochial matters; perhaps one can be excused for talking about the province he represents.

Hon. A. Thomson: It is the only opportunity an hon. member has.

Hon. L. CRAIG: That is so. I propose to deal with the province which, with my two colleagues, I have the honour of representing. To people engaged in trade today, it is obvious that production has outstripped available markets. That fact is recognised particularly by primary producers. It is also recognised by those engaged in secondary industries. Australia's position on the overseas market is not nearly so secure as it was even last year. The last trade delegation that went to England to endeavour to make a trade agreement with England is insisting that Australia shall have the right to expand its secondary industries. It is also insisting that Australia shall have the right to seek foreign markets for its primary products. Consequently, England is quite justified in saying, "We will give you that measure of preference which we hope will continue, but we, in turn, must seek foreign markets for our manufactured goods; and, in order that we may acquire foreign markets for our manufactured goods, we may have to give some preference to

these foreign buyers for some of their primary products." That is the position as it is today. The point I am leading to is that, in order to maintain our position on the overseas market, we must produce a first quality product at a cheap price, because we have to produce it in competition with other countries of the world. That has not been our position before.

Admittedly the quality of our products is not as high as it might be, but our primary products are now better than they have ever been. The quality of our butter has improved tremendously during the last four or five years, due to better pastures and to the adoption of better methods, such as the use of milking machines, and so on. The quality of our export lambs has also vastly improved. Our best lambs are now equal to the finest in the world, but we have a large percentage of lower-grade lambs, and that is due mainly to the lack of suitable breeding ewes. The industry has grown so quickly that the ewes available for the breeding of choice lambs are not the best, and it will take some time to breed up first-class ewes for this purpose. That time, I am sure, is coming. The Department of Agriculture is affording wonderful help by way of giving advice regarding the adoption of the best methods to follow and the best kind of lambs to breed for export. Our fruit is better than it has ever been before. This is due to the stringent regulations, and only the choicest fruit is exported from Western Australia. Thus we are not very far from having first quality goods competing in the markets of the world.

The next question is the cost of production. We compare very favourably with older countries in respect to our production costs on the farm. That our costs here are comparatively low is due largely in the first place to the comparatively cheap price of our land. Compared with the price of land in other parts of Australia ours is cheap. The low costs are also due to an extent to the wonderful response that the land in our good rainfall areas makes when superphosphate is applied. It responds here as it does in no other country, and that is mainly because of our warm and usually wet winter. Thus our costs of production are reasonably low. The next important question is the cost of delivery, but that is something over which the producer has no control. I am referring particularly to the delivery of

the product from the farm to the overseas market, where it is purchased by the consumer. That is the greatest cost the producer has to bear. Immediately the grower parts with the product, it is handled by men on higher rates of pay than the farmer himself or anyone he employs has earned. Thus the handling costs are too high in proportion to the value of the product. This is a charge which should, if possible, be reduced to a minimum, and by that I mean that the handling facilities provided by the Government should be the most economical that can possibly be provided.

Now I shall become parochial for a moment. Considerably more products are carried over the south-western railways than over any other line. Timber and fruit are two of the biggest revenue producers for the railways. Those products, and butter as well, pass at the outside within five miles of the harbour, where it should be possible for vessels to berth; but the products are sometimes taken right to the port of Bunbury and from there train loads are made up and the goods are carried to Fremantle for shipment. That is most uneconomical. It costs many thousands of pounds to carry the goods over the extra 120 miles.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: And the goods suffer in transit.

Hon. L. CRAIG: Yes. Mr. Piesse said that he was amazed at the production that was taking place in the South-West. I am prepared to say that production has barely started; it is in its infancy, but the people in the province I represent are becoming very perturbed as to how long it will be before it will be possible for them to ship their products from their own port of Bunbury. I find that in 1930 or 1931 the port was declared to have a depth of 29 feet at the berths. To-day the depth is under 27 feet, showing that the dredging that has taken place has not been sufficient to maintain the original depth. It is recognised that to get overseas ships to call at this port to pick up lambs and other perishable products, a depth of 30 to 32 feet is required. The Bunbury harbour has not that depth, and I do not think it is possible to dredge to that depth, without incurring considerable expense. The time is approaching, however, when the Government will have to declare a policy in respect to an adequate harbour at Bunbury, even if it is to cost a million or a million and a half. If the money is not available, we would like to know, and that

perhaps we would not press so much for the carrying out of so extensive an undertaking. But everyone is vitally concerned in seeing that something is done. The Chamber of Commerce, the road board and the farmers' organisations are all convinced that the port of Bunbury is not receiving the attention to which it is entitled, and, indeed, that it is going back. The South-West is rapidly becoming such a big producer that it must have facilities for the export of its products. Requests have been made and I am informed money has been available for the erection of cool stores, but it is not much good erecting cool stores if we cannot get ships to pick up the products. The harbour at Bunbury has gone back roughly two feet in the last ten years. I understand that the dredge that has been operating there is quite out of date, and its operation at the port is so much waste of good money.

Hon. C. H. Wittenoom: If you had not that dredge, there would be no dredge at all.

Hon. L. CRAIG: It is not capable of keeping the silt away. What we are entitled to expect is that the maximum depth shall be maintained, and let it not be forgotten that there is scarcely a harbour in the world that does not have dredges continually employed. Furthermore, the Government should definitely state approximately what it would cost to provide berths for overseas ships drawing 30ft. or 32ft. Then the people would know where they stood. For years the matter has been under consideration, and large sums of money have been spent without solving the problem. So I hope that in the near future the Government will declare a policy in regard to the Bunbury harbour, and tell us that if it is not possible to provide a first-class harbour, it will at any rate keep permanently employed there a dredge that at least will maintain the maximum required depth at the berths.

Another outstanding problem in the province I represent is irrigation. The irrigation scheme at Harvey was the first in Western Australia, and it was established when citrus-growing failed because of the existence of a clay subsoil. Then the district changed over to dairying. A weir was constructed and irrigation commenced, and as the years have gone by, pasture farming has changed completely. To-day, under irrigation methods, Harvey is producing pastures equal to the best in England or New Zealand. I have never seen better

pastures produced under irrigation. Last year one man, who had been watering 100 acres of land for about 20 years, had his area cut down to 80 acres. This meant that 20 acres of permanent pasture, which had been laid down at great expense, had to go because it could not be watered. That pasture has completely disappeared: the ground has had to be reploughed and re-sown. Farms have been taken up recently in the Harvey irrigation area, the purchasers honestly believing that water would be made available. They have now been told that, owing to a shortage, water is not available. The value of their land has consequently dropped tremendously. There are vast areas of first-class land around Harvey capable of immediate production if water is forthcoming. If the Government has loan moneys to spend on reproductive works, I suggest it could find no better work than to raise the weir or dam wall at Harvey with a view to impounding more water there.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: I doubt if it will stand that.

Hon. L. CRAIG: I am told it will. It is only a matter of finding a catchment area above the Harvey Weir. If money were made available, an unlimited supply of water could be conserved.

Hon. H. Tuckey: The site is all right.

Hon. L. CRAIG: Yes; only the money is wanted. It would be a reproductive and revenue-producing work, and would bring a lot of land, which to-day is almost non-productive, into a state of high productivity. The district produces an article that is saleable overseas, and increased production would help us to pay our overseas debts. At Harvey the authorities are allowing the pastures to be watered only once a month. That system is out of date. A monthly watering is insufficient. I live in an irrigation area, and know the difference between a monthly watering and one every fortnight or three weeks. Under the system of watering monthly, it is possible to lose the best of one's grasses. Clovers and rye grasses are soft and succulent, and require watering at least every three weeks. In some parts of Victoria the irrigation water is put on every seven days. Owing to lack of water during a hot summer, the settlers in Harvey cannot keep first-class pastures if allowed to water only once a month. From my experience as an irriga-

tion farmer, I have found that if the watering is done only once a month, one will lose as much as a fortnight's grazing in the month.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: Are there not millions of gallons of water running to waste over the weir each year?

Hon. L. CRAIG: Thousands of millions of gallons run to waste every year.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: It is only a question of impounding it?

Hon. L. CRAIG: It is only a question of holding up the water.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Has not the water been overflowing for the last three weeks?

Hon. L. CRAIG: I do not know, but the water is there and the demand for it exists. It is only a question of providing the money. This is a portion of the State that will be developed, and people will live there permanently. In many other parts of the State people take up farms only to make money from them. At Harvey settlers take up land with a view to living out their lives there. It is in the South-West where that sort of thing will occur. We have the facilities, the railways and the schools, etc. If we can increase production in the settled areas, it is far better than going out into unsettled areas where new railways, schools and other facilities have yet to be supplied. There is unlimited scope in our wet areas for greater production and a greater population. I earnestly hope the Government will give consideration to the expenditure of money on the conservation of further water supplies in this particular district. Reference to the rabbit virus was made by Mr. Piessé. The scientific name for this virus is "Myxomatosis."

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: Refer to it as "virus," and we will know what you are talking about.

Hon. L. CRAIG: I have a lot of information on this important subject. The virus has been definitely proved to be harmless to human beings, domesticated animals, and to our native animals. As we have acquired that information, surely it would not be asking too much that the experiments, which have already been conducted biologically and under small-area conditions, should now be followed up in the States under the control of departmental officers, and tried out in open areas or on big farms. I should like to read what Dr. L. B. Bull has to say on this matter. He is chief of the Division of

Animal Health and Nutrition of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research. He is the king pin on this question, and is in charge of the experiments connected with the use of this virus. He says—

We have been able to determine that the virus is specific for the European rabbit, that it is incapable of causing disease in man, in the domesticated animals, or in our native animals. It is not even capable of infecting hares, and there is absolutely no contradiction against its use on the score of danger.

It is clear that it constitutes no danger to anything but the European rabbit.

The disease causes the death of wild rabbits. Although an occasional tame rabbit will recover from the disease, we have not yet observed a single case of recovery in the wild rabbit, either in our experimental animals, which run into 700 or more, or in the wild rabbits under natural conditions on Wardang Island, where a field trial is being made.

These are facts put forward by Dr. Bull, a wonderful man, who is in charge of the experiments.

It has been proved therefore that the virus is safe to use and that it causes a fatal disease in wild rabbits. It has also been demonstrated, both in England and Australia, that the disease will wipe out closed colonies of up to 55 rabbits in about a month. It has not yet been demonstrated that the disease will spread sufficiently rapidly from colony to colony under natural conditions to enable it to control rabbit populations and reduce numbers to a level low enough to prevent the rabbit becoming a menace.

We know that.

The spread of the disease from colony to colony depends more upon the habits of the rabbit than anything inherent in the virus itself. The disease is spread mainly, if not entirely, by contact of a sick with a healthy rabbit.

We know all that, as a result of experiment.

Infected rabbits were introduced at one end of the enclosure, 90 acres in area. The disease started in one or two colonies at this extremity and quickly gained some momentum. Rabbits were caught from outside the enclosure, were infected by having a drop of infected material placed in their eyes, and were then liberated.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: Mere eyewash.

Hon. L. CRAIG: Dr. Bull continues—

They were all marked so that when picked up they could be identified. They would have developed the disease in about six days, and would have lived for another two days or

slightly more, during which they would have been capable of infecting other rabbits with which they came in contact. Results showed that probably only two of the 20 rabbits released became accepted into any of the existing colonies.

It has been found that rabbits in one colony are rather opposed to visitors joining their colony.

Probably time was too short and the rabbits were too scared after their few days of confinement before being affected and released. However, within about 60 days the main portion of the population of this part of the enclosure was wiped out. The disease only spread to the colonies immediately adjacent to the two which became primarily infected. At this time the grass was dry, and the rabbits foraged further afield and went in search of water. A little later heavy rain fell, an abundance of green feed became available, and no further water was drunk. Under these changed conditions the spread of the disease to the more distant colonies appears to have been prevented.

It has definitely been proved that the release of infected rabbits into a colony will wipe out that colony, and that the disease is not dangerous to human beings or any other animal. Where rabbits are thick it is not difficult to catch one out of each colony. On any morning one can catch one or two rabbits from each colony.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: That seems to be the only way in which this virus can be effective.

Hon. L. CRAIG: The rabbits could then be infected and allowed to run back to their own particular colony. It would be much better to do that than to spend thousands of pounds on wire netting. Many of our settlers are deeply worried about the rabbit menace, and many thousands of acres of pasture lands have been abandoned purely on account of rabbits.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Is the virus expensive?

Hon. L. CRAIG: I do not think so. It is not too much to ask that the experts of the Department of Agriculture be permitted to conduct experiments under farm conditions. Why should we wait a couple of years and spend thousands of pounds in the endeavour to keep out rabbits, when we have another means of destroying them? One has only to visit those areas where rabbits are thick to understand the stress under which the settlers labour. They feel they are being

neglected, but they know already a great deal of what I am telling the House. They have a definite grievance. They should be allowed to introduce this virus to their own farms.

Hon. H. Tuckey: The Federal Government is at fault.

Hon. L. CRAIG: Dr. Bull says that the State authorities are responsible for the control of the rabbit pest. He continues—

Large numbers of people have apparently allowed their ignorance and their imagination to run away with them. They have imagined that the virus, if liberated in any one spot, would spread in ever-widening circles until all the rabbits in Australia were exterminated.

That is not believed by any intelligent farmer.

This is a mad dream and the sooner it is forgotten the better. At very best, the virus, if used skilfully, may prove valuable in assisting in the control of rabbit populations, particularly in preventing the development of plague proportions. . . . The virus is still under strict quarantine. When the investigation is sufficiently advanced, the result will be placed before the standing committee on agriculture, and this body will be asked to make a recommendation. The object of the council is to obtain all the necessary and cogent information which can be placed before the State authorities, who are entirely responsible by statute for the control of the rabbit pest.

If this virus is harmless except to the European rabbit all I ask is that the State be allowed to have some of it and use it. We have scientific officers here, and they could be permitted to conduct experiments under field conditions. Certain farmers should also be given the virus, and, under supervision or instruction, allowed to infect rabbits and return them to their colonies, with a view to their extermination.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: Whose permission would you ask?

Hon. L. CRAIG: The Council of Scientific and Industrial Research could report that the virus was harmless to other animals and human beings; in fact, it has so reported. If the State authorities made a request that the virus be supplied to the scientific officers of the Government, I think it would be supplied. I trust that the Government will give earnest consideration to the question.

On motion by Hon. G. B. Wood, debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [6.17]: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till Tuesday next.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 6.18 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 10th August, 1938.

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

QUESTIONS (3)—EDUCATION.

Schools, East Perth and Merredin.

Mr. **BOYLE** asked the Minister for Education: 1, What is the cost, to date, of the new Girls' State School at East Perth for—(a) land; (b) buildings; (c) tennis courts and playing fields; (d) furniture; (e) maintenance of building since erection? What is the average number of children attending? 2, What is the cost, to date, of the State School at Merredin for—(a) land; (b) buildings; (c) tennis courts and playing fields; (d) furniture. (e) maintenance of buildings for the two-year period ended 30th June, 1937? What is the average number of children attending?

The **MINISTER FOR WORKS** (for the Minister for Education) replied: 1, Cost, to date, of the new Girls' State School at East Perth:—(a) Land and (b) buildings, £73,607; (c) tennis courts and playing fields, £76; (d) furniture, £4,816; (e) cost of maintenance of building since erection, £11 7s. Average number of children attending, 669. 2, Cost, to date, of the State School at Merredin:—(a) Land and (b) buildings, £3,829; (c) tennis courts and playing fields, nil—privately constructed; (d) furniture, £290; (e) cost of maintenance of buildings for the two years' period ending 30th June, 1937, £105 12s. Average number of children attending, 252.

Scholarships not availed of.

Mr. **SEWARD** asked the Minister for Education: 1, Were all the secondary school scholarships offered at the end of 1937 awarded, and were they all taken advantage of by the winners? 2, If any were not so availed of, what was the reason? 3, As regards the ten reserved for country children, were any winners prevented from taking advantage of them? 4, If so, how many, and to whom were they awarded?

The **MINISTER FOR WORKS** (for the Minister for Education) replied: 1, All were offered, one was declined, and re-awarded to the next best candidate. 2, The parents declining as above did so because they wished to send their child to a college which is not registered as one at which secondary school scholarships are tenable. 3, Eleven went to country children, and all were accepted. 4, Answered by No. 3.

New Schools erected, cost.

Mr. **SEWARD** asked the Minister for Education: What new school buildings were erected during the years ended 30th June, 1936, 1937, 1938, and what was the cost of each building?

The **MINISTER FOR WORKS** (for the Minister for Education) replied: A statement setting out the information requested will be laid on the Table of the House.

QUESTION—BETTING.

Police action on racecourses.

Mr. **MARSHALL** asked the Minister for Justice: Is it intended to issue instructions to the Commissioner of Police to take