

in batrooms and in sheds, for I know that the circumstances are such that it is not possible to effect a remedy within three or six years in view of the needs in all other directions. However, I do complain about people being given the impression that these things could be done by the Government and I blame the Government for not having done them. The Minister for Education said, "You can see the muddle all around you." Was that a fair statement to make about the Department of Education which was not in a muddle at all but was struggling against difficulties that could not be surmounted in that short period? It is still struggling, but of course with a better chance now, seeing that more years of peace have been enjoyed, than was the case previously. There is no comparison with the opportunities to make improvements when we pay attention to the fact that the previous Government could not recruit teachers on account of the large number of young people who were taken into the Forces.

Mr. Marshall: They were in the Army.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Many of the young men and women who were eligible for training as teachers joined the Air Force and other services which were attractive to them. Not only that, but applications were pouring in from teachers day after day clamouring to join those services. The building of classrooms was impossible also because of the lack of materials and manpower and other aspects. Houses and other building practically had to stand still. Was it fair to draw attention to the lack of buildings and the shortage of equipment and teachers in such a way? Was it fair to give the impression that the previous Government was to blame for the situation and that the remedy was to be effected by a change of Government? That is what was done. Events have proved that the promises made have not been fulfilled. It has been shown that it was most unfair to bring these matters up in such a way as to endeavour to shoulder the blame on to the Labour Government. No man could be more conscientious in his job than the present Minister. He is interested in it. He is interested in children. In all the circumstances, his work has been good. I quite readily admit that and praise him

for it—but he has done no more than he should have and he has done considerably less than he promised to do.

Progress reported.

## ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL

**THE PREMIER** (Hon. D. R. McLarty—Murray-Wellington): I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till 3 p.m. on Tuesday next.

Question put and passed.

*House adjourned at 10.53 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 13th September, 1949.

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 3 p.m., and read prayers.

### HOUSING.

#### (a) As to Government's Policy, Rental Homes.

Mr. NIMMO asked the Minister for Housing:

(1) What is the Government's present policy with regard to the sale of Commonwealth-State houses?

(2) What is the basis of valuation?

(3) Will the Government arrange finance for the sales to tenants?

(4) Will the Government state whether or not it is prepared to sell the houses at cost?

(5) On what terms are rental homes being sold in—

- (a) Queensland;
- (b) New South Wales;
- (c) Victoria;
- (d) Tasmania;
- (e) South Australia?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) The matter of the basis for the determination of the sale price of these houses is at present being considered by the Government and the State Housing Commission. It is hoped to make an announcement of the basis of price determination before the end of this month.

(2) Answered by No. (1).

(3) Yes.

(4) Answered by No. (1).

(5) Queensland—at capital cost; New South Wales—value or cost, whichever is greater; Victoria—not yet decided; Tasmania—at capital cost; South Australia—not building under Commonwealth-State Housing Scheme.

(b) *As to Accommodation for Migrant Tradesmen.*

Mr. NEEDHAM (without notice) asked the Minister for Housing:

(1) Is it a fact that four-roomed flats are being built at Belmont, Fremantle and Midland Junction for 1,100 British migrants nominated by Australians and due to arrive before June, 1950?

(2) Is it also a fact that 135 tradesmen have been withdrawn from general house building?

(3) If the answers to (1) and (2) are in the affirmative, will he explain to the House why preference is being given to migrants as against Australian ex-Servicemen and other Australians who are living under deplorable conditions and who have been waiting for Commonwealth tenancy homes or permits to build in many cases for years?

(4) Is it not laid down in the migration scheme that those who nominate migrants must provide accommodation for them?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) No; except that over 200 building and other tradesmen nominated by the State Housing Commission and other Government departments are now commencing to arrive

and the State is responsible for providing accommodation for these tradesmen whom it has nominated.

(2) While some of the tradesmen engaged on this work have been previously employed on other housing projects, the building force on these other projects is being constantly reinforced by additional labour, including migrant tradesmen.

(3) Subject to the State's obligation to the tradesmen it has nominated, these flats will be available for occupation by applicants previously residing in the State as well as the migrant population, according to their respective housing needs.

(4) Yes; but where the State itself nominates migrants it has a responsibility for their accommodation.

## EDUCATION.

*As to Migrants, Midland Junction-Bassendean.*

Mr. BRADY asked the Minister for Education:

Will he state whether educational facilities are to be provided at the proposed settlement for new Australians at Midland Junction and Bassendean where existing schools are already up to capacity?

The MINISTER replied:

Educational facilities will be provided if and when required.

## TOUR OF GOVERNOR-GENERAL

*As to Ministerial Participation.*

Hon. F. J. S. WISE (without notice) asked the Premier:

In view of the impending visit of the King's representative, His Excellency the Governor-General, and because of the non-necessity for all Ministers to be in this Chamber during the period of his visit, will he reconsider the Government's decision and arrange for a Minister of the Government to accompany the Governor-General during his tour?

The PREMIER replied:

When I was in Canberra, I explained to His Excellency the Governor-General that Parliament would be sitting during his visit and that in consequence it would be difficult to detail a Minister to accompany him on his tour. He agreed that there would be

difficulties and said that he appreciated the position. The Government has now arranged for two members of the Legislative Council to represent the Government during His Excellency's tour, and it is also hoped that the members for the districts which will be visited by His Excellency will be able to be in the districts during the time he is making his visit.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE (without notice) asked the Premier:

Pursuant to the answer given by the Premier, does he not think it would be more fitting for a Minister of the Crown to accompany his Excellency, because, as he knows, there will be no difficulty in making such an arrangement?

The PREMIER replied:

I would ask the Leader of the Opposition to put that question on the notice paper, so that I can give consideration to it and reply to him tomorrow.

#### SWAN RIVER CONSERVATION BOARD.

##### *As to Tabling Proposed Bill.*

Mr. GRAYDEN (without notice) asked the Minister for Works:

Will he lay on the Table of the House the proposed Bill for the setting up of a Swan River Conservation Board?

The MINISTER replied:

If the hon. member will present me with a spare copy of the Bill I will be very glad to lay it on the Table.

#### ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1949-50.

##### *In Committee of Supply.*

Resumed from the 8th September; Mr. Perkins in the Chair.

*Vote—Education, £1,852,311* (partly considered):

**MR. ACKLAND** (Irwin-Moore) [3.12]: I listened with considerable interest to the remarks of the Minister when he introduced his departmental Estimates and, later, to the member for North-East Fremantle when he criticised the present Government on its educational programme and progress during the past two and a half years. It appeared to me to be the duty of at least one Country Party member to express on behalf of country folk the appreciation they feel towards

the present Government for what has been done in connection with education, particularly in agricultural districts. I can assure the Committee that I have no intention of speaking at any great length on this matter, but I would like to suggest to the member for North-East Fremantle that, if he has any real fear that the Government has not carried out its promises with regard to education, he should make a tour of the country, and more particularly of the agricultural districts.

I would also suggest that he visit especially the electorate of Irwin-Moore, where he will find all the people appreciative of what has been done for them by the present Administration. Regarding suggestions that Irwin-Moore has received preferential treatment, I do not consider that that has been the case because every member I have contacted has been very loud in his praise of what has been done in his electorate. The reason why I suggest the hon. member should go to Irwin-Moore is that I know at first hand what has been accomplished there, and I should like him to compare conditions that existed in March, 1947, with those that prevail now, in September, 1949. I am of the opinion that such a comparison would astonish any unbiassed observer.

In March, 1947, the Education Department's buildings, whether they were schools, houses, shelter sheds, or outbuildings, were in a state of disrepair, neglect and decay. Today, only 21 months afterwards, the position will be found to have been very much revolutionised. The hon. member had no need to depreciate the efforts of the present Government, because he is not personally responsible for the conditions which existed when the Labour Government was in office. He had occupied the position of Minister for Education for only a small part of the last 25 years, and it was a breaking-down over the whole of that period which brought about the conditions that obtained when the present Government took office. I understand that the hon. member was Minister for Education from December, 1943, until March, 1947, a period of some 40 or 41 months.

Although there had been a progressive state of decay over the whole of that period, I would like to point out that the present Government has been in occupation of the Treasury bench for only two and a half

years; and when it is considered that, except for the period from 1930 to 1933, Labour occupied the Treasury bench for some 25 years, previous Labour administrations must be held responsible for the deterioration that took place, even though during that time we had a world war—

Mr. Hoar: You mean that in spite of that world war, Labour must be held responsible? What are you talking about?

Mr. ACKLAND: —for conditions as they existed at March, 1947. I would like to speak of these conditions as they obtained more particularly in my electorate. There schools were not only in disrepair and neglected but they were also overcrowded to a very great degree. The overflow was accommodated on school verandahs, and in shelter sheds, disused shops and country halls, in fact, in any building at all which the Government could find to accommodate children in the areas where overcrowding existed. Headmasters who had three-teacher schools had their classes spread over the whole of a township, and far beyond any control which they could be expected to exercise over the children attending the school. Today, with two exceptions, in my electorate at any rate, all the children are accommodated in departmental schools which have been renovated and made fit, both for the teachers and the children to give of their best. In the period of two and a half years, two new schools have been built, five abandoned schools have been moved to other centres where schools still exist, in order to accommodate the children. Numerous new shelter sheds have been erected, and renovations, repairs and painting have been carried out both to schools and school houses, with the result that the conditions under which the children are being taught today are much improved on what obtained prior to this Administration coming into existence.

Early in the life of the Government, the Minister for Education said that he would give priority to the requirements of the Education Department strictly according to the needs. I say that throughout the wheatbelt that has been carried out very satisfactorily. I am not suggesting that all that is wanted has been done—there is still a lot to be achieved—but a great

deal has been accomplished. I have sufficient confidence in the present Administration—and I know the people in the country have too—to know that the needs of the outer areas will be attended to. Last week the member for North-East Fremantle in one breath accused the present Administration because it had not given effect to its promises regarding school hostels and, almost in the next breath, he criticised the department because in one instance it had provided a hostel at Bunbury. We are told that it bought a building there for £500 and spent £5,000 on it to provide suitable accommodation for the children.

I do not pretend to know much about Bunbury, but I have made some inquiries and I find that the site of the present hostel is ideal. I am also told that the building is still there, and that the £5,000 has been spent mainly on such things as the erection of good substantial bathrooms and lavatories in order to make the hostel suitable to accommodate children. I am informed that some 40 boys are housed there. Had the Education Department set out on an entirely new building programme, I am of the opinion that the type of building which the architectural branch of the Public Works Department insists on, to accommodate the same number of boys, would have cost something more like £40,000 to £45,000. Here we have, for an expenditure of £5,500, a building which suits the present needs and is accommodating these boys who would not otherwise be accommodated.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Who told the hon. member all this?

Mr. ACKLAND: Mr. Chairman—

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: No, he did not.

Mr. ACKLAND: Some reference has been made to the provision of a second agricultural college. I ask the Government not to give further consideration to that suggestion. I think the interests of the people would be much better served by increasing the staff and equipment of the Muresk Agricultural College so as to make it a more efficient unit, rather than by dividing the available money between two institutions. The number of people who wish to go in for higher agricultural education is not so great that Muresk could not be enlarged to accommodate them.

The position with regard to agricultural schools is somewhat different. There are numbers of farmers' sons and others who wish to go on the land and desire to gain some primary agricultural education. At present we have two schools for that purpose, one of which is at Narrogin—I am told it has accommodation for approximately 80 children—and the other, which can cater for about 40 children, is at Denmark. Those two schools can fill the need of the people who live in the Great Southern and the South-Western parts of the State.

North of the East-West railway we have a vast agricultural province, and I believe that at least as much of our agricultural wealth is produced there as is produced in the southern part of the State. I earnestly ask the Government to give consideration to the building of an agricultural school to serve the wants of the people who live in that area. We are just on the fringe of knowing what can be done with our light lands, of which we have a vast acreage. They are suitable for the growing of legumes. I believe the time is not far distant when the light lands, particularly the 15-inch rainfall areas, and upwards will be considered to be of more value and to have greater agricultural potentialities than some of our heavier lands. I suggest that consideration be given to the establishment of an agricultural school in that area, and that it be situated on light land and worked in conjunction with a research station so that the boys would not only be able to watch the experiments, but would be available during the periods of labour shortages on those stations. I hope the Minister will give consideration to the suggestion.

I believe the people who live north of the Eastern Goldfields line have in the past not received the consideration due to them. As we have agricultural schools in existence at Narrogin, to serve the Great Southern and at Denmark to serve the South-West, I feel that if the building of a further school of that type is contemplated, the interests of the people of the northern and north-eastern agricultural districts should be taken into account. Members may recall that, on three occasions since the present Government took office, the secretary of the Teachers' Union has rushed into print stating that

I have accused teachers—or the Education Department, I am not certain which—of being communistic. I never said it or inferred it, and I never thought it. I feel he has been far too touchy about any remarks I have made but I do believe, with some justification, that there are some communists in the Education Department of Western Australia.

Mr. Graham: Have you reason for thinking that?

Mr. ACKLAND: I think so, and the teachers have a greater influence over the children than have the parents, in many instances.

Mr. Graham: Who are these teachers?

Mr. ACKLAND: I feel that such people should not be employed by the State Government at all, and particularly that they should not be employed in the Education Department.

Mr. Graham: Who are they?

Mr. ACKLAND: It has been suggested that there are six known communists in the Education Department. I do not know how many there are but, whether there are six or any other number, there are just that number too many. They should be emptied out and should not be allowed to occupy any positions at all in the Education Department, and more particularly the teaching staff, where they come into direct contact with the children. It is only natural for a teacher to have a tremendous influence over the child, whether in the kindergarten class or in the sphere of higher education up to the University. We should have none of such influences and the Government should find ways and means of purging the Education Department of people of that kind. On behalf of the country people and particularly those in the wheatgrowing districts with which I am more closely associated, I desire to thank the Minister for honouring the promise he made earlier during this Parliament. I wish also to thank the administrative officers of the department and especially the chief administrative officer, Mr. O'Mahoney, who has at all times been helpful and considerate not only to me but also to other members of this Chamber. To those officers I express wholeheartedly the appreciation of the country people of Western Australia.

**MR. NEEDHAM** (Perth) [3.35]: I have listened with keen interest to the speeches that have so far been made on the Estimates for the Education Department. First, there was the confident speech of the Minister, who attempted to lead the Committee to believe that everything in the department and everything connected with it was all right. I then listened to the keen analysis and trenchant criticism of the Minister's speech by the ex-Minister for Education, the member for North-East Fremantle. Now I have listened also to the apologia by the member for Irwin-Moore and his attempt to make out that everything in the department is progressing satisfactorily.

**Mr. Reynolds:** He wears rose-tinted glasses.

**Mr. NEEDHAM:** I look on the Education Department as one of the most important departments of State, and on its employees as some of our most important public servants, because they have the destinies of the State in their hands through their responsibility to mould and develop the minds of the children of today. Because of that, I have always taken a keen interest in education in this State and in the Commonwealth generally. I do not think today that everything is as it should be in our Education Department, and certainly it is a long way from the ideal position promised by members of the present Government when they were on the hustings in 1947, and by the present Minister for Education, in his Policy Speech. He and his colleagues at that time criticised the conduct of educational affairs by the Labour Government and concentrated on the shortage of staff and schools and on the exceptionally large classes. I agree, with the member for North-East Fremantle, that in none of those respects has there been an improvement worthy of notice since the present Government took office.

This afternoon the member for Irwin-Moore referred to the fact that Labour had been in power for 14 years prior to the advent of the present composite Government, and stated that Labour was responsible for the position of the Education Department at the time of the last election. It is true that Labour occupied the Treasury Bench for 14 years, and it is also true that

during that time there was a depression of six years' duration, and six years of war. Members of the then Government willingly admitted the necessity for improvement in the Education Department, but were hampered by the two events I have mentioned. Members of the present Government did not take that view at all, but contended that, even during the two years after the cessation of hostilities, the size of classes should have been reduced, that more schools should have been built, and that many other improvements should have been effected. But we find that there is scarcely any improvement in that regard today. I have a statement which appeared in "The West Australian" during the time of the conference of the State School Teachers' Union. This statement shows that everything in this State is not just as good as the member for Irwin-Moore tried to make out. If everything is all right in his electorate, then I think he is one of the favoured few. The article states—

The shortage of school-teachers and the difficulty of obtaining suitable recruits were the main matters discussed yesterday by the 120 delegates attending the first day of the annual conference of the State School Teachers' Union.

After the presidential address by Mr. F. Wallace and the reading of the annual report and balance sheet, discussion centred on the "alarming" shortage of teachers and means of attracting additional recruits.

A report submitted by the Union executive said that the number of teachers was insufficient adequately to cope with the existing situation. A still graver shortage of teachers was threatening. An obstacle to recruitment was the well-founded belief that teachers were underpaid and a further obstacle was a feeling that however difficult conditions might be, a teacher would be dealt with on an unfeeling routine without the consideration commonly given by a reasonable employer.

After referring to the competitive difficulties encountered in securing suitable young people, the report gave figures showing the decline in the intake of teachers during and since the war. Since 1941 to 1948 inclusive, the total intake was 864 and the loss of teachers 1,353, the loss being greater than the intake in any one year.

That is a statement from the president of the Teachers' Union and he is in a better position to speak of the general situation than is the member for Irwin-Moore or any other member of this Chamber. He is in constant touch with all teachers and takes part in most of the educational facilities

throughout the State. I notice in the Policy Speech of the present Minister for Education the following statement—

As quickly as possible classes will be reduced in numbers.

The member for North-East Fremantle proved that very little reduction has taken place so far as the sizes of classes are concerned. I think there has been one school where there has been a slight reduction in the number in the classes. Speaking of the size of classes, there is an article in the Teachers' Journal of the 2nd June, 1949, which deals with this aspect and it is as follows:—

Speaking about the struggle for educational standards the other day at Manchester, Mr. R. A. Butler, a predecessor of Mr. Tomlinson's in the Ministry of Education and the man who organised the preparation for, and piloted through Parliament, the Great British Education Reform Act of 1944, gave some interesting figures to show that the number of pupils aspiring to higher standards of education was steadily increasing, but expressed the view that this increase would be much greater if out-size classes were abolished. "Standards are bound to deteriorate in classes over 40 and teachers become circus masters rather than prophets." In this emphatic sentence he voiced the views of all who accept education as a process of drawing out rather than stuffing in.

The Teachers' Union also contends that the sizes of classes are still too large and everything possible should be done to reduce them. I realise that the classes cannot be reduced in numbers until more classrooms are provided. Of course that brings us to the question of the supply of the necessary materials. I also realise that the Minister has done the best he can in view of the fact that there has been, and still is, a shortage of materials necessary to build more schools. However, he has been in a better position to provide the necessary materials and labour than was the member for North-East Fremantle when he was Minister for Education.

The second World War concluded in August, 1945, and the election took place in March, 1947. At that time men who were engaged in the war had not been returned to their civilian duties but there has been a considerable improvement in that position since then. Men who went away to take part in the conflict, and were spared to return, have gone back to their civilian occupations and this Government

has had a better opportunity to provide the labour and material than was its predecessor. There is no excuse at all for the fact that classes are still too large and that schools are in short supply.

There is another phase of the educational question which should be attended to and which I commend to the Minister. That is the question of isolation. This aspect is dealt with in "The West Australian" of the 19th August, 1949. It states—

Teachers in Isolation. Department's System Criticised. Single girl schoolteachers were frequently placed in isolated country areas. The secretary of the Teachers' Union (Mr. W. E. Thomas) said yesterday.

The Union believed that if the practice of sending girls to small schools on completion of their training were discontinued a stimulus would be given to the recruitment of girls for the teaching service, Mr. Thomas said. The placement of single girls in isolated country areas had been discontinued in South Australia from January, 1949, as a result of representations made by the South Australian Teachers' Union, supported by Press publicity. The secretary of the S.A. Union had written of the change: "You will observe that this is a progressive step. It means that no woman teacher is sent to take charge of a one-teacher school until she has served two years in the companionship of a group of teachers in a larger school. Consequently, not only will her teaching properties be improved, but her confidence in handling the many problems that arise will be definitely established. The introduction by the department of this policy is a milestone in union history, because for many years we have been fighting this iniquitous method of sending young girls out to isolated schools."

As far as my recollection goes, that policy, which I commend to the Minister, is very rarely followed by the Government of this day. I notice also that the Minister for Education in his Policy Speech said that the raising of the school leaving age was introduced with a flourish of trumpets before the 1943 election but that its implementation was still no nearer. When the Minister replies to this debate I hope he will tell the Committee how much nearer it now is today than it was two and a half years ago when he assumed office. It is well known that this Parliament passed an Act in 1943 to raise the school leaving age to 15, but it is also well known that this country in 1943 was face to face with one of the most ruthless foes ever known, against whom we had to preserve this land of ours. In order to do that and to stem

the tide of Japanese invasion it was exceedingly difficult to fill teaching positions in the schools so that the legislation to raise the school leaving age could be implemented. As I previously stated, conditions have changed considerably because the men and women are now available, but I have seen no attempt on the part of this Government to raise the school leaving age in accordance with the provisions of the legislation passed. On the question of education generally, the record of the Government is anything but good no matter from which angle one may regard it.

Referring to the statement made by the member for Irwin-Moore that he is quite definite there are communists among the teaching profession, I notice that he did not name them as I think he should have done in justice to those men and women who are engaged as staff and teachers in the department. I know that if I had children going to school I would not care for them to be taught by communists, and I am certain that other parents who have children attending school today do not want their children to be educated by communists. If any member of this Chamber knows there are communists in any department of the State, particularly that of education, he should have the courage to give their names and thus not leave the whole of the education teaching staff suspect. The hon. member's statement referred only to a certain number of teachers who are alleged to be communists and therefore the atmosphere should be cleared to enable the Government to take the necessary action.

Mr. McCulloch: It could appoint another Royal Commission.

Mr. NEEDHAM: I do not care what method it adopts, but something should be done so that no-one will be suspected wrongly. I can quite imagine the feelings of the teachers in the Education Department when the statement by the member for Irwin-Moore, suggesting that there are communists amongst them, is published. I can also realise the anxiety of the parents of our children as to whether or not a communist is teaching them. We all know what the communists are and that they do not believe in the Christian way of life. We are aware that our children cannot become true and proper citizens unless they are

taught to practise this principle. Therefore, every good example should be shown to them not only by their parents but also by those people who deputise for the parents during the day, namely, the school teachers. So if the member for Irwin-Moore knows that there are communists in the Education Department it is his duty to name them in order that the position can be remedied.

MR. WILD (Swan) [3.56]: I was extremely disappointed on Thursday last to hear the member for North-East Fremantle continue with his tirade, most of which was read from pamphlets, because in recent days in this House we have had the unedifying spectacle of a member reading for four and three-quarter hours from newspaper articles. I will therefore reply to two of the points of criticism that he made. Firstly, there is the one stating that this Government has not honoured the promises made during the last election campaign relating to educational facilities and, secondly, there is that concerning the sizes of classes. After listening to him the other evening, and knowing in my own mind from files which I have at hand the amount of work that has been done, and also the number of extra teachers that have been appointed in the schools in the Swan electorate, I made a survey of the 22 schools in my district and found that no less than 11 had had new classrooms built or major additions made to them since June, 1947.

As to the size of classes, in this Chamber last year, on the debate on the Estimates, I made reference to two or three schools which had classes containing 50 children or over, and I now find that although the number of pupils has increased considerably in my district, and everywhere else, there are only two classes out of 22 schools with over 50 children. I do not think anyone, two or two and a half years ago, could have dreamed that Western Australia was to increase her population by 27,520 and, furthermore, who was to say that our kissing Minister in Canberra was going to greet 50,000 people on their entry into Australia in the past two years, of whom 10,000 have arrived in Western Australia.

Hon. A. H. Panton: He has done a good job, has he not?

Mr. WILD: He has, but notwithstanding that the members on the Opposition side,



although knowing full well all the facts, continue to criticise the Government's efforts.

Mr. Styants: It is a pity you did not think of that during the last election campaign and realise that we had had six years of war.

Mr. WILD: I wish to make a few observations on the requirements of schools in the Swan electorate. I am hoping that the Minister in the not-too-distant future will be able to do something for us at Orange Grove. Quite recently a block of land was resumed there and I understand that Treasury approval is about to be obtained for the erection of a new school. But the people in the district are not too happy. The site selected is alongside Plunkett's brickworks, which makes the block dangerous and, further, on the same block of land a man in the past three months has started to build himself a home. That block is over 300 yards from the existing school, which is in the centre of the little village of Orange Grove. Although the School Sites Committee had rejected adjacent grounds, the surroundings of which are unsatisfactory because they are wet and the soil is mostly clay, it is remarkable that only 18 months ago the residents, many of whom had been in the district for 25 or 28 years, had requested the local road board to make available ten acres alongside the school for a recreation ground. Further consideration should be given to the site where the new school is to be erected. Wattle Grove is another centre where the school requires attention. An extra room is necessary as at present two teachers occupy one small room 20 x 40. The most urgent requirement of the electorate, however, is the erection of a high school at Armadale.

Some 12 months ago one of the largest public meetings ever held in the district attracted an attendance of 250 people, who came from all parts of the electorate to protest against the delay that has occurred in the provision of that institution. I have no doubt that when the present Minister took office and gained an appreciation of the situation which led him to determine that the provision of primary education had to come first, his decision was right and proper. Nevertheless, I am hoping that in the not too distant future, when the supply of building material becomes easier, he will

do something in the matter. I understand that at present over 600 children travel from Armadale to secure their secondary education in the metropolitan area. Those who go from Serpentine have to leave their homes at 7 a.m. and do not get back till 7 p.m. Those going from Roleystone—I understand there are 19 of them—climb in to the Metro bus in the morning but before they reach Kelmscott they are all standing up.

Hon. A. H. Panton called attention to the state of the Committee.

Bells rung and a quorum formed.

Mr. WILD: When I was interrupted—

Hon. A. H. Panton: Surely your remarks are worth listening to!

Mr. WILD:—I was drawing attention to the fact that at 7.30 a.m. 19 children board the Metro bus at Roleystone and before they reach Kelmscott they are forced to stand up. The same thing happens on the return journey at night. Some effort should be made to persuade the Metro Bus Company to provide a special vehicle for the school-children from the district. The co-operation I have received from the Education Department, particularly from Mr. O'Mahony, has been excellent, and I realise that when the educational authorities are approached regarding necessary works the difficulties confronting them are great. I feel that the system under which we are operating is far from satisfactory. In my view, there is need for an alteration. Take a small job such as the provision of an electric light fitting in a school. We approach the Education Department on the matter and the work is approved. The matter goes to the Public Works Department and there is some delay while the requisite expenditure is authorised. Then our application takes its position in the queue, so to speak, and there is a wait of four or five months.

Last year, when discussing the Estimates, I recommended that more use should be made of the local governing authorities. I am pleased to say that in the Gosnells and Armadale districts the provision of school additions has been undertaken by the road board, and I think that is an excellent idea. There are certain periods during the year when the plant and equipment owned by the local authority are available and the road board is only too pleased to assist the

local people. I also feel—I give this to the Minister as a constructive thought—that the present system whereby all public works affecting schools and hospitals are carried out by the Public Works Department is quite wrong. It was all right in Western Australia 30 or 40 years ago when we did not have half the present population or half the number of schools. I think the system has outgrown its usefulness.

Today we should, as is the practice in some States of America and in parts of England, have special sections dealing with such matters. I cannot help thinking that the Principal Architect—I have no intention of saying anything personal against him—is, like some other prominent civil servants, engaged upon four times too many boards. Before one can get anything done, Mr. Clare has to be consulted; and it is generally found that he is engaged on the Housing Commission or is with the Town Planning Commission. He simply has not the time to pay attention to small jobs. The stage has been reached when a move should be made to have sections of the Public Works Department set aside that would deal only with work required in connection with schools and with hospitals respectively. I hope that the Minister, at no far distant date when the materials position is eased, will be able to make a move with regard to the long promised high school for Armadale.

**MR. KELLY** (Yilgarn-Coolgardie) [4.8]: I cannot fully subscribe to the laudatory remarks of the member for Irwin-Moore. We are getting accustomed to expect that type of address from the hon. member. Most of what he said was very interesting, particularly when a comparison is made with the situation respecting many electorates apart from the one he specifically mentioned.

Hon. A. H. Panton: He must be the good boy of the family!

Mr. KELLY: Not many constituencies are so fortunately placed as that of the member for Swan.

Mr. Fox: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman, I draw your attention to the state of the Committee.

The CHAIRMAN: The member for Yilgarn-Coolgardie may proceed. A quorum was present a few minutes ago.

Hon. A. H. Panton: We cannot draw attention to the state of the Committee again until 4.20 p.m.

Mr. KELLY: Apparently the member for Swan has received very fair treatment in his electorate, seeing that 11 schools have been renovated out of the 22 situated in his constituency. If others of us were similarly situated, we would be very pleased. That is not the position in too many instances. Certainly I have had some little success, but only in recent weeks; and that applies to both the Southern Cross and Bodallin schools. To some extent the provision of additions to the Southern Cross school has been unduly prolonged because no contractor has been willing to undertake the work, although the department called tenders on a number of occasions. I think, too, that there is some need for alteration with respect to the calling of tenders by the department. Old contractors, very reliable men, have complained from time to time that these Government contracts are too exacting and in consequence they are not prepared to put in a tender. There seems to be an impression in many cases that Government work is not worth tendering for because, shall I say, of the quantity of red tape attached to it.

This is the last opportunity during the life of the present Parliament that we will have of reviewing educational matters. I do not desire to detract entirely from the Minister's remarks when I offer some criticism of them, but I consider there is justification for criticism. I do not think the Minister has, during the period under review, effected any more than a normal improvement, such as could be expected under almost any circumstances. The fact that the Vote does show an increase does not point to any accomplishment by the department so far as educational progress is concerned. On the other hand, it is absorbed in its entirety by the salary increases that have been granted. The lag in the building of new schools does not seem to have been overtaken since the present Government came into power; the position seems to be the same. I am not prepared to say that there has been an increase in the necessity for new schools, but the demand is as insistent today as it was several years ago.

The Minister gave a few instances of new schools now under construction. He mentioned one of which I happen to have some knowledge. I do not think he purposely misrepresented the position, but his statement was nevertheless misleading. He said that new schools were now under construction at Boyup Brook and other places. Among many—eight or nine—that he mentioned was the Narrogin School of Agriculture, headmaster's residence. Although this new building was authorised some time ago and a contract was let for it, up to the present not a scrap of work has been done to it. Certainly, some asbestos is on the ground, but I am informed today by the timber mill that it will be at least three weeks before timber can be made available, while the contractors informed me today that, provided timber is delivered within a specified time, they might be able to commence work by the end of September. The Minister was therefore entirely wrong and misleading when he said that this building was under construction. He should be more accurate in his facts before giving them to the House.

I am disappointed at the lack of progress in the establishment of area schools. In his election criticism of the past Labour Administration, the present Minister, then Leader of the Opposition, compared South Australia with Western Australia. Speaking of South Australia, he said that that State had a string of area schools but that Western Australia—this was in 1947—still only had the idea. He also said, "We will set up area schools where conditions are suitable." No ifs or buts about it; no difficulties to be overcome apparently; no likelihood of delays because of shortages of building materials or skilled labour. None of those factors meant anything in the establishment of area schools. In fact, delays of any kind would not be countenanced by the Minister at that time; but after three years of this modern obstacle hopper I think I am safe in claiming with emphasis equal to his own, that area schools are still in their cocoon stage as far as this State is concerned.

When introducing his Estimates the other evening, the Minister was practically silent on the subject of the raising of the school leaving age. I think it pertinent to remind him that he was trenchant

in his criticism when on the hustings nearly three years ago. In fact, in 1943, this same Minister supported a measure for the raising of the school leaving age from 14 to 15 years. That was at the third reading stage. In 1947 he said, "We will make provision for the actual raising of the school leaving age to 15 years." He did not qualify that statement in any way. He did not mention the then existing circumstances, such as shortage of teachers, already overcrowded schools and lack of building materials. All these difficulties were to be side-stepped—"We will make provision." At the time I read those remarks I thought an educational Goliath had come amongst us, but two and a half years have since elapsed and I am still wondering where the signs of this provision are to be seen. There has certainly been little, if any, move in the matter of area schools.

The Minister's criticism at that time must have been designed to be destructive, not constructive, because little achievement can be placed at the door of the present Government so far as concerns the establishment of area schools. I would say that the Estimates are practically devoid of reference to high schools and hostels. At all events, they did not figure prominently in the Minister's introduction of his Estimates. There does not appear to be any expansion of high school policy, nor can the Government claim that additional hostels have been provided, with one exception at Bunbury where some attempt has been made to provide such a facility.

The Minister for Education: There is another at Albany on the way. You will hear about that soon.

Mr. KELLY: That is still in the cocoon stage.

The Minister for Education: No, it is a long way further than that. It will start at the beginning of next year.

Mr. KELLY: We will be glad to know it is an accomplished fact when the first foundation is laid! But I hope that will not be similar to the opening of the comprehensive water scheme recently, when a few pipes were laid and then left for a long time.

The Minister for Works: That is certainly not so.

Mr. KELLY: I have it on very good authority that it is so.

The Minister for Works: Your authority is not quite good enough.

Mr. KELLY: I think on this occasion the authority will prove quite correct. However, I do not want to be led away from the subject I am considering, so I hope the Minister will not interject too often.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Interjections are disorderly, anyway.

Mr. KELLY: Yes, they are. Reverting to high schools and hostels, in February, 1947, the Minister said, "We will establish hostels at high school centres." Except so far as Bunbury is concerned, that statement has proved to be just another squib, as was the reference to area schools about which I spoke previously, and it must come within the category of lip service only. Regarding accommodation for teachers, in very many centres that is far from what we would desire to see. I know the Minister is going to interject that these conditions have prevailed for some time.

The Minister for Education: You had better take it up with the Housing Commission, to which your Government handed it.

Mr. KELLY: The position is not as it was when the previous Government went out of office.

The Minister for Education: We have nothing to do with it now.

Mr. KELLY: On the hustings the Minister made a great song that he was going to do all sorts of things about teachers' conditions.

The Minister for Education: Not about housing.

Mr. KELLY: They were going to be on a much better basis than in the past.

The Minister for Education: Not about housing.

Mr. KELLY: The Minister was going to give them wonderful conditions.

The Minister for Education: They have good ones, too.

Mr. KELLY: They have not had much other than the normal increase in salary due to the rise in the cost of living. There has been very little improvement beyond that and the fact that they are working a

shorter number of hours per week than previously. Little else has been conceded to them. That is an aspect that must undergo very drastic revision.

The Minister for Education: You mean housing?

Mr. KELLY: There must be an improvement in housing if we are going to encourage new trainees to enter the profession of teaching and retain those already in the department. Unless the housing position is given far more consideration than has been given to it by the present Government or past Governments, we will not maintain interest in the profession. Most of the dwellings for teachers are totally unsuitable. They are obsolete in design and unattractive both internally and externally, and few have sufficient accommodation to provide for families. When reference is made to the department, many of these people are told that the houses were never intended to accommodate families, and it is just too bad for the men if they happen to have families. That is a wrong approach. The matter is one that must receive very serious consideration if the department is to retain many of its older and experienced teachers.

Several of these houses are devoid of normal amenities. Few of them have any modern conveniences whatever; and a very full inquiry should be made into the matter with a view to making better housing conditions available. The school and the teacher's quarters at No. 5 Pumping Station are a disgrace. I know that repairs have recently been made to the school, after several years of endeavour on the part of quite a number of people besides myself to have something accomplished in that direction. Originally, the quarters were designed to accommodate a single teacher only; but because of circumstances, a married man with a family has to live in them. The house is most uncomfortable. The rooms are very small and insufficient in number. There is a makeshift bathroom erected by a previous teacher with the assistance of a very decent type of manager at the pumping station. The bath is housed in a 4ft. x 6ft. lean-to. The conditions at this place are not as good as those which many people provide for their fowls.

There is little likelihood of consolidation taking place in that area, although it is quite likely the Minister may make mention of that point because, some years ago, it was under consideration. The suggestion was ruled out, the department being fully agreed that consolidation was not likely to be achieved in that district, and that therefore something must be done to the quarters. However, it has been a story of procrastination; because, although several buildings have been mentioned by the department as being suitable for removal to this centre, there has always appeared to be some fly in the ointment to prevent that being done. My final reference is to a subject on which I have commented on previous occasions. I refer to the building of a high school at Merredin. This was advocated, even before the present Government came into power, and has been advocated since. Such a high school would serve an area within a radius of roughly 70 miles from Merredin, embracing no fewer than nine road board districts. It is safe to estimate that in that area there would be a population of between 15,000 and 16,000. I think that Yilgarn, Westonia, Merredin, Naremben, Nungarin, and parts of Mt. Marshall, Kellerberrin, Bruce Rock and Kununoppin-Trayning would be served if a high school were erected in Merredin. Parts of other electorates would also be served, but to a lesser degree.

A high school at Merredin would render satisfaction to many parents who are at their wit's end to know what to do with their children who are old enough to attend such a school. There is no high school between Northam and Kalgoorlie. One has only to view the position at the time of the school holidays when the railways are overcrowded with children returning to their parents to appreciate fully the advantages which would be gained as a result of a high school being set up in the Merredin area.

**MR. BOVELL (Sussex) [4.32]:** There is one matter I wish to bring before the Minister, and that is the consolidation of country schools, and the problem which is brought about by the maintenance of roads to transport the children to those schools. This is an important matter. To ensure the safety of the children it is essen-

tial that good roads be provided. The Busseton school, which has been remodelled and renovated during the term of the present Government, is served by six bus services from the country. I feel that the consolidation of country schools is all-important. I congratulate not only this Government but the previous one, on the work they have done in the country areas to bring the education available to the country children to a higher standard. Most country members received their education in the rural districts, and they know that in the past the educational facilities in the country have not been as good as those in the metropolitan area.

I hope the Government will make a concerted effort to see that the roads over which the school bus services operate are put into proper order. Definite approaches must be made to the Commonwealth Government to emphasise the importance of keeping those roads in sound condition. Some children have to travel between 10 and 15 miles each day. They leave home early in the morning and do not return until four or five o'clock in the afternoon. It must be worrying to parents to know that the roads over which they have to travel are not in as good condition as they should be.

The Minister for Education: You know we have made a special arrangement with the Main Roads Department about this. Perhaps you did not hear what I said last week.

**Mr. BOVELL:** I thank the Minister for his interjection. I hope it will not be long before the arrangement he has mentioned is carried into effect because this matter is one of great concern to country parents. To have children bumped over bad roads is not a good thing. I join with other members in expressing appreciation of the Minister's work in assisting to promote education in the State. It should not be a matter of Party politics; we should not discredit any Government for its activities in this connection.

**Hon. F. J. S. Wise:** That is quite right. Every Minister for Education has adopted that attitude.

**Mr. BOVELL:** I hope that is so. My experience has only been with this Government. I appreciate the courtesy and co-operation of the Minister and the Government

in providing educational facilities for the children of Western Australia. I do not want to discredit the activities of any former Government.

I said on the General Estimates that the previous Minister was responsible for making plans and having renovations and additions carried out at the Busselton school. He also formulated a scheme for an area school at Margaret River. I am pleased to have the assurance of the present Minister that the plans for that area school are to be carried out as soon as possible.

It is gratifying to know that the Margaret River school will be a combination of a consolidated school and a farm school. The Minister has advised me that it is proposed to consolidate the whole district at this centre and to establish a residential farm school for adolescent boys. An area of approximately 36 acres adjoining the Margaret River townsite has been acquired. I hope the Government will soon be in a position to go ahead with this building. As we all know, this is a farming area and the type of school that I have described is something that is much needed. I understand that plans have been drawn and everything is in readiness to make a start when materials are available.

**MR. BRADY** (Guildford-Midland) [4.40]: I am disappointed that the Minister, during his speech, made no reference to the proposed high school that has been needed for so many years by the people in my electorate. As far back as 20 years ago those people were promised a high school, but nothing has so far been done and apparently the building of this school has not been considered a major item in the programme of the department. I would remind the Minister that a site for that high school was purchased many years ago and the people of the area are keen to see something done towards the establishment of that school. It is long overdue and I feel that a decent high school should be built in that district. The present technical school is inadequate for the work it has to do and the existing building being used as a high school will, I understand, ultimately become a technical school. Therefore the construction of the new high school would do much

to overcome the difficulties confronting the people of that area with regard to the education of their children.

Schooling is one of the major problems in my electorate and the facilities have been inadequate for many years. As I said earlier in the session, the position has been still further aggravated by the development of one or two new townships close to Midland Junction, where the position is already acute. I refer first of all to the new centre at Midvale, where about 70 houses have been completed and are now occupied. Young children from that area have to depend on the Midland school for their education. Midland Junction has arrived at the stage where the existing schools cannot absorb any more children and although I thought, 12 months ago, that an infants school would adequately meet the requirements of Midvale, I am sure now that that would not be sufficient, because quite close to that centre there is being established a further settlement for the housing of migrants and displaced persons.

The children of those expected arrivals—I presume that there will be, among them, children over the infant school age—will not be able to be absorbed into the Midland High School and will have to depend upon the school that was proposed for Midvale to absorb the smaller children. That is quite distinct from the new area that is being built up in the vicinity of North Midland, and which is served by no school at all unless the department proceeds immediately with the construction of an infants school in the vicinity of North Midland in the area of George-road, Hamersley-street and Margaret-street, where the homes are being erected. I think the Minister should co-operate with the Minister for Housing while the contractors are building the flats and homes for the expected new arrivals, in order that a temporary infants school might be built by the same contractor. I can visualise parents in my electorate early next year desiring deputations and holding protest meetings if something is not done immediately to improve schooling facilities. I know the Minister will reply that a new infants school is being built at Morrison-road, but that will absorb only those children at present being housed, for schooling purposes, in public halls and church halls in the town.

As the Minister knows, children are at present being accommodated in the Trades Hall, where many have received their schooling over the last 10 years, and others are accommodated in the Church of England Hall at Newcastle-road. Still others receive their schooling in the Christ Church Hall in Padbury-terrace. While we are grateful for the building of the new infants school at Morrison-road—it will not be completed for a good while yet—I desire to point out that it will not be nearly adequate to cope with the present needs of the residents of the Midland Junction area. The infants school at present under construction will absorb only those children now being temporarily accommodated in the hall, and no provision is being made for the expansion taking place in the town or in the new areas that are so rapidly being built up.

The position is just as bad at Bassendean. The Minister for Works has advised me that approval has been given for a new classroom to be added to the Bassendean State School, but I would point out to the Minister for Education that there is pressing need for an infants school in that part of Bassendean where the State Housing Commission has recently erected 50 or 60 new homes. The occupants of those dwellings are all comparatively young married couples, with children that must be catered for. They cannot attend the Bassendean school, which is already filled to capacity and, even if a new classroom is added, it will not be able to cope with the children from the new residential areas that are coming into existence in the south portion of Bassendean. I understand that the State Housing Commission has recently entered into negotiations with the Bassendean Road Board to build a number of flats for new arrivals in that area. That will further aggravate the already difficult position with which Bassendean residents are faced as regards education for their children.

Quite apart from the new arrivals, that area is expanding rapidly and many new homes are being built. A number of new industries are being established opposite this new residential area at Bassendean and a new infants school is now an urgent necessity. Further new residential areas are being built up on the outskirts of Midland Junction and, while the problem is

not yet urgent, it is becoming evident that within 18 months or so further difficulties will arise in connection with the area at Bushmead, opposite and south of the West Midland station. Some children from that area are already going to the West Midland infants school. They cross the river during the drier months of the year, but during the winter they have to bypass the river and go about one and a half miles to get to school. That should not be necessary and I would like the Minister to give early consideration to the building of an infants school at Bushmead. There, again, the residents are mostly young married couples whose families are growing.

I feel that the Education Department should consider the establishment at Midland Junction, Guildford or Bassendean, of a class for what might be termed backward or slow-learning children. In all schools there are a number of children, anything from eight or nine years of age to 12 years of age, who cannot absorb their education as quickly as the other children, and invariably we find those children standing outside the door week after week and month after month because the teacher, who is trying to teach a class of 40 to 50 children, cannot hold back the education of the majority just to look after the one or two who cannot absorb their education as quickly as the others. These one or two children apparently suffer from slight physical defects and they do not seem to be able to absorb their education very quickly, and therefore they should have special attention. I understand that recently a parent discussed the matter with an inspector and the headmaster of the Midland Junction school. The parent pointed out that there were 14 or 15 children whom he could immediately place in a special class if it were established. However, he had very little encouragement from the inspector and was told that there was no likelihood of a class for slow-learning children being introduced into the Midland Junction school in the near future.

This is a problem and I would like to see the Minister give some consideration to the training of teachers in order to cope with the education of slow-learning children. I feel that one or two classes could be commenced almost immediately, or at least in the new year. I understand there

is a teacher in Midland Junction who has already been trained in the University and that teacher could cater for the educational requirements of these children. The teacher has been specially trained for the purpose and could be made available, in the near future, to commence a slow-learning class at the Midland Junction school. Therefore I hope the Minister will give special consideration to the matter.

**MR. LESLIE** (Mt. Marshall [4.52]: There is one particular point that I want to discuss in connection with the education Estimates and that concerns the provision of facilities for spastic children. Whatever differences of opinion there might be in regard to the achievements of this or any other Government, I am quite certain that as regards the provision of a training centre for spastic children, no-one will withhold credit from this Government for having initiated the step. I say that without detracting, or intending to detract, in any way from the work done by the previous Government. It was not until such time as a group of parents who have spastic children approached me about some special facilities being provided for their children, and I in turn approached the present Minister for Education, by way of a deputation, with the problems of that particular group of parents and their children, that any move was initiated. I do not believe that the attention of the previous Government had actually been drawn to the magnitude of the problem.

It must be clearly understood that there is a vast difference between crippled children and spastic children. There is a Crippled Children's Society and a band of honorary workers who have done a fine job for the crippled children generally. But the problem of spastic children is entirely different to that of crippled children. The crippled child requires no particular educational facilities. A child without a limb, or a child who has been injured and as a result has some bodily defect which may limit that child in its normal operations—such as the playing of cricket or football—must learn to write with the left hand instead of the right, or vice versa. A child who has a paralysed arm is also forced to do the same thing. But those children can take their places, for educational purposes, in the

same classes as normal children. However, the spastic child is something entirely different. I think the member for North-East Fremantle will agree with me that the spastic child has been considered, by the people generally, to be something of an idiot.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: No, that is not so.

Mr. LESLIE: I did not say officially. I said by the people generally.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: The previous Government made special provision at the Children's Hospital for a school for them.

Mr. LESLIE: For crippled children?

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: No, for spastic children; not crippled children.

Mr. LESLIE: I, with the present Minister for Education, had considerable difficulty in initiating this move because some people at the Children's Hospital wanted the provision to apply to all the children there.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Education for spastic children has been in operation in this State for five years.

Mr. LESLIE: But not as a special clinic.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: A special class. Many of them have their education in bed.

Mr. LESLIE: Quite. But the children to whom I am referring are those who are at home with their parents. They are not necessarily ill and there are many hundreds of them. There are clinics in other parts of the world—in America, England and the Eastern States—but all of them are running on a voluntary aid basis with some measure of Government assistance. My opinion was—and it seems to be the opinion of the present Minister because this Government has assumed responsibility—that the Government must assume the responsibility but the parents of the children must assist as far as possible. This clinic—and the Minister made some explanation about it in his speech on the Estimates—will be the first of its kind in the world. It is the first time that a Government has assumed the entire responsibility for the medical treatment and the specialised education necessary for spastic children. I hope that as a result of that work we will find a more kindly attitude on the part of the public generally towards these unfortunate children.



Once we are able to get over the mental reserve behind which they take cover, we will find that the majority of them are normal children and many of them will become good citizens and of value to the State. There are cases on record where spastic children in the spastic clinic in Mosman, New South Wales, have taken their B.A. degrees. That clinic has adopted ways and means of teaching these children. For instance, a child who cannot speak and appears to be helpless, has been known to become an excellent mathematician. Many of them cannot write yet they are able to indicate the right and wrong figures by a shake of the head and to answer questions to prove that they have an intelligence and capacity to absorb knowledge which they can apply once we are able to find ways for them to do so. I know there are difficulties in the way of the establishment of a spastic clinic because it requires considerable alteration to the premises and material must be obtained which is not available in this State. However, once it is established it will be a monument to the Western Australian Government—whatever Government it may be. This Government can take the credit for having initiated the step, and this is the first time that a Government has assumed the entire responsibility in connection with the treatment of spastic children. The Government, as a Western Australian Government, can be proud of that fact.

The job is not an easy one and it is a large task. The parents of the spastic children are a little disappointed at the rate of progress but they appreciate that there are difficulties in the way. They also appreciate the fact that the Government is sincerely pursuing the course it has set itself and I feel sure that the project will be carried through successfully. When the clinic is established some action will surely be taken by the Government to interest the public generally, and to educate the people to show them that these unfortunate children are not a drain upon society and do not necessarily grow into the types of individuals we have been obliged to relegate them to in the past.

I am extremely pleased that I have at least one disciple in the member for Swan in the agitation for the establishment of a works section in the Education Department. I put up this proposition many years ago

and I feel that by hammering away at it we may eventually get somewhere. I agree entirely with the member for Swan that we would make far more progress and obtain a better understanding of the particular requirements of the Education Department, just as we would with hospitals, if the department had a team of men with the necessary qualifications, in addition to their ordinary educational knowledge, to administer the works section of the department. We would need to recruit not only men who know all about the strain and stress of engineering construction, but we would also require on that works committee men who have a knowledge of the most suitable type of building and equipment in order to facilitate the work of the department, keeping in mind its engineering requirements.

I hope the Minister having heard that I have at least one supporter, will pursue that aspect of his department's activities to see if ways and means cannot be found, as the member for Swan suggests, of setting up a section of the Department of Public Works to deal with educational facilities, even if it is not possible at this late stage to have an educational works committee as a separate entity. Instead of the Education Department approaching the Treasury cap in hand periodically for money for works to be commenced, if this works committee were established, at the end of the year it could have a complete estimate of the works which the department proposes to set in train, and thus the carrying out of that work would lie entirely in the hands of that department instead of the present situation of one department passing the buck to another.

To the departmental officers I, too, want to offer my meed of appreciation for the attention and consideration they have shown to me during the year. Out of all Government departments I have found that that of education has officers who are most agreeable to listen to suggestions and to give effect to them if it is at all possible. On encountering difficulties I have approached the officers and made suggestions which might have been quite foreign to the usual rules of red tape, but I always found that they accepted my proposals, investigated them and implemented them if they were practicable. This indicates that we have a

band of officers who are keenly interested in their job and are out to do the best they possibly can for all of us. With due regard to the lack of progress that has obtained during the last three or four years, we have to bear in mind that demands for educational facilities are progressively increasing and, without any lag to overtake, we would find at present, in view of the existing circumstances relating to production generally, great difficulty in meeting current requirements. That is how I view the position and in that light the Government has done extremely well. Not only is it meeting current demands, but it is overtaking that lag.

Today we have demands for additional schools and requirements which could not have been anticipated because of the changing population, and we find that where the school accommodation may have been more than adequate, today it is quite inadequate and additional accommodation must be provided. The current demand is increasing to such an extent, without taking into consideration the lag that has to be overtaken, that considerable difficulty is experienced in an endeavour to effect a remedy.

Mr. Graham: When did this position start to develop?

Mr. LESLIE: It has progressively developed, but it is more evident than ever today. I can see in my own electorate a considerable change in the population over the past two or three years.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Is that in your Federal or State electorate?

Mr. LESLIE: In both, because I have travelled widely through the Federal electorate and, although I may not have been as acquainted with it as I am now, I know that there are changes taking place in it. I have seen a complete change in the population of my State electorate. The older people are moving out and the younger people are taking over. A younger generation is springing into existence to a greater extent than a lot of people could possibly have anticipated. Perhaps the prosperity being enjoyed today may have some bearing on that. That is the cause of the unanticipated demands which no Government could possibly have provided for at the time, because they are abnormal.

Those on the other side of the Chamber cannot fail to give credit to this Government for the great improvement which is taking place in the school bus services. The Minister is certainly to be commended on the appointment of a school bus inspector and in particular on the individual that he did select. I hope the time is not far distant when all the old school busses, which we were content to see put into operation at a time when there was a shortage of vehicles, will be scrapped and modern busses installed. With the supply of vehicles and motor bodies becoming easier, I consider that the use of modern busses can be considerably expedited. The bus inspector is performing an excellent job and somehow he is able to please both sides. I have never known of any Government official being able to do that yet. Even the bus owners who have been condemned for the vehicles which they are using have co-operated with him happily, being fully aware of all the difficulties. He is bringing about a congenial spirit between the operators of the services, the children, the parents and the department itself.

One last subject I wish to draw the Minister's attention to is that of the medical examination of school children. It is all very well to have medical and dental officers examine the children at school and then to hand them a note saying that there is this, that and the other wrong with them. In too many cases that is all that happens and there is no follow up. I think that something further requires to happen. In most districts there is a local government medical officer. Whether such officers receive a remuneration for their services I do not know, but the point is that there is generally an official medical officer in each district. When a school medical examination is made and the parents notified of any medical defects in their children, they should be asked at that time whether they are prepared to have the necessary remedial treatment carried out themselves or whether they will consent to the child being treated by the local medical officer.

Where the parent agrees to the child being treated by that officer—and I am satisfied quite a number of parents will, because I have been told so by several of

them—the child should be sent to that medical officer to have the necessary attention, so long as it does require a measure of further treatment. It is perfectly useless merely to send home a note saying the child has this or that wrong with it, if no check up is made later to see that the requisite remedial measures are carried out. It is not that parents are negligent. It sometimes escapes their notice. They may live at a great distance from the town. On the odd occasions when they go to their nearest centre, they may arrive at a time which is outside the doctor's consulting hours. The child concerned may have been left at home and lots of the other things may occur, with the result that attention is not given to the medical requirements of the child. On the other hand, if the parent were to return a note to the school saying that the matter could receive attention, the child could be taken to the medical officer and the trouble fixed up. If we were to do something along those lines, it would be progressively effective.

I have great objection to paying inspectors merely to inspect, and to let it go at that. Such a procedure gets us nowhere. If the inspector were to go further and see that the job was completed, we could claim the system of medical inspection in schools was serving a real purpose. I hope the day is not far distant when the position generally will be improved and that the high schools referred to by the member for Yilgarn-Coolgardie, the member for Swan and others will be provided. I have in mind as well the erection of a high school at Wyalkatchem. I trust that when conditions generally will permit of a commencement being made with the erection of these junior high schools, the Minister will put the work in hand. Unless we are to catch up with the programme in that respect very speedily, we shall be confronted with a far greater problem educationally than the one before us today. I agree that it is necessary—in fact, no-one will disagree on the point—to adhere to the present policy under which the provision of primary education must come first, and that until it is completely provided for, the second step, that of secondary educational facilities, the provision of which is a growing matter of urgency, cannot ade-

quately be supplied. I hope we shall soon be able to cope with these several educational requirements.

**HON. E. NULSEN** (Kanowna) [5.13]: Owing to the carrying of the motion last week which restricted the life of this Parliament to the end of this month, I shall be as concise as possible in my remarks, because I desire the whole of the Estimates to be discussed as they would be under normal conditions. I am afraid, however, that by the time we have considered the Railway Estimates and the State Batteries Vote, there will not be the requisite time to enable members to engage in as full a discussion of the transport question as we would desire. Dealing with the educational facilities afforded in Western Australia, I feel that propaganda indulged in has committed the Minister to promises that are impossible of fulfilment. I am not in any way depreciating the good work of all Ministers for Education, including the present holder of that portfolio. On the other hand, I say that if the present Minister were to carry out all the promises he made just before the last general election, the departmental machinery would be working very smoothly at present.

Mr. Graham: He would be a wizard.

**Hon. E. NULSEN**: The condition of our schools is still very unsatisfactory. There is a shortage of teachers and a very great shortage of amenities, the provision of which is sought by various parents and citizens' associations and which are regarded as absolutely necessary as an aid in the education of our children. I think the word "propaganda" has been inappropriately used. Delving back into history, I find that the term originated in 1622 in the time of Pope Gregory XV, when it was used ecclesiastically for the purpose of disseminating the doctrines of the Church. It was to give a true reflex of the conscientious belief held in those days. Nowadays, from what I can see, the public regard the word "propaganda" in a sense very far from its real meaning. It now suggests a snare and a delusion.

Propaganda, in the eyes of people generally today, does not imply the real truth as it did in past centuries. I suppose it will

hardly be possible to revert to the general acceptance of the word in its original connotation. I feel that democracy is deteriorating in consequence, and propaganda now has no meaning apart from deluding the community. That certainly is how it applied during the last general election. I do not blame the Government altogether, because that sort of thing applies nearly everywhere, but I caution people not to take too much notice of propaganda for it has panned out very badly in recent years.

The Minister for Lands: Do you mean that people are "gandered" but not "proper gandered"?

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. Graham: Why do you not behave like a Minister?

Hon. E. NULSEN: I could give the Minister a very rude answer.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Don't do anything of the sort!

Hon. E. NULSEN: I would not use such words before members of the Committee.

Hon. A. H. Panton: You would shock the Minister.

Hon. E. NULSEN: I desire to thank the officers of the Education Department who have always been very helpful in every way possible. I have gone to them on numerous occasions and they have furnished me with information that I did not possess, and that has been to my advantage. I thank all the departmental 'officials, from the Director down, for their services. I thank not only the present Minister but all Ministers for Education for the kindly assistance they have afforded me with respect to educational matters. The only thing I have against the present Minister is that he has not kept up with his propaganda. Parents and citizens' associations have done a splendid job in an honorary capacity, providing various schools with necessary amenities. I desire to emphasise the word "necessary." In my opinion, these amenities should be supplied by the Education Department. However, the parents do a lot of work in organising dances and other social meetings for the purpose of raising money to provide amenities. I wish to make sure that the new school at Haig will soon be built. The Minister was good enough to say that it had been started.

The Minister for Education: No, I did not say that. I said it was on the list, but I will find out and let you know.

Hon. E. NULSEN: I thank the Minister. The teacher's quarters at Reid are in a bad condition and general improvements are needed to the school. There is an excellent school at Norseman, as the member for Swan can tell the Committee. There is, however, some overcrowding and more accommodation is needed. But what is required perhaps more than anything else there is a close-picket fence in order to keep out the dust. I do not know whether to blame the Public Works Department or the Education Department on this score, but the fence is certainly needed.

I am concerned about the complaints as to dental treatment of children in the back country. On the Trans. line, between Kalgoorlie and the border, there are over 100 children who have never yet been visited by a dentist. It is even more important for these children to receive this treatment than it is for the children in the metropolitan area, because they can go to a dentist to have their teeth attended to. The child in the country with a toothache or a bad mouth must perforce travel hundreds of miles to get treatment. Nor has a dentist yet visited Laverton.

The Minister for Education: You, when Minister for Health, ought to have remedied that position.

Hon. E. NULSEN: I quite realise that, but it is the responsibility of the Minister for Education to see that children's teeth are attended to.

The Minister for Education: It is the responsibility of the Minister for Health, not mine.

Hon. E. NULSEN: The Minister for Health is not here at the moment, but I shall deal with the matter again on his Estimates. I have to thank the Minister for putting into operation the bus service which was actually initiated by his predecessor, the member for North-East Fremantle. It is an excellent service.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Where is it operating?

Hon. E. NULSEN: At Salmon Gums. However, I want still another bus service and I think the Minister should do something about it. At Grass Patch recently

a public meeting of parents interested in schooling facilities for the southern Mallee children was held to discuss a bus service from Seaddan to Salmon Gums. The meeting was convened by an ex-school-teacher, Mrs. O. C. Freeman, who takes a very keen interest in the children. In that area the children are not getting any schooling at all and therefore the bus service should be started as soon as possible.

As we all know, education is of prime importance and it is but fair that these children in the back country should receive it. Given the opportunity, they may in time be able to enter various professions instead of growing up without even an ordinary education. It is not fair to penalise people in the outback country in this way, as but for them we could not adequately develop our huge State. I have no more to say on these Estimates; I have curtailed my remarks so that we shall have an opportunity to consider the Railway Estimates, as I think transport is most important. I hope that other members and I will be able to devote some time to that subject.

**MR. McCULLOCH** (Hannans) [5.28]: I listened carefully to the Minister when he introduced his Estimates the other evening and to the members who spoke this afternoon. This must be an interesting subject, because no fewer than four members on the Government side of the House spoke for 40 minutes on it, which is very strange.

**Mr. Graham**: They are wasting our limited time.

**Mr. McCULLOCH**: It is strange owing to the fact that the guillotine is now in operation and they were taking up some of the time of the members of the Opposition. What mostly concerns me on these Estimates is the promises that were made before the last election in 1947. The present Minister for Education made several promises, few of which, if any, I say without fear of contradiction, have been carried out. I shall enumerate some of them. He dealt with the matter of additions to existing schools and the necessity for new schools. No additions have been made to Goldfields schools, nor have any new schools been erected there.

The Minister for Education: It is a pity you were not in your seat on Thursday night. I could have told you something about it.

**Mr. McCULLOCH**: Not later than yesterday—26 hours ago—I was in a school at Kalgoorlie that was overflowing with pupils. That was the position in regard to one school in particular. Another of his promises was that he would reduce the number of pupils in classes. Yesterday I counted the children in a classroom measuring 36ft. x 20ft. and there were 59. The headmaster was with me when I counted them and the school was the North Kalgoorlie school. The Minister made these promises but they have not been carried out. It was no good his making them when he knew it was impossible to fulfil them. He also promised that he would make provision for raising the school leaving age. That is impossible today, and the Minister knew it was impossible 2½ years ago. He further said that he would establish hostels for high schools. There are no hostels on the Goldfields and I doubt whether there are in any other part of the State. Then there was to be the establishment of a medical school. Where is that? Is it in the metropolitan area? It is certainly not on the Goldfields.

**Mr. Rodoreda**: It may be in the electorate of the member for Irwin-Moore.

**Mr. McCULLOCH**: Not many months ago I wrote to the Minister requesting that equipment be supplied for the new Goldfields technical school where theory is all the instructors can teach. I wrote to the Minister in June and up to date I have had no reply. I suggest to the Minister that junior clerks should be employed to assist the headmasters and teachers who, in the schools I have visited, have quite a lot of clerical work to do which could be quite easily done by clerks from the Public Service, thus saving the teachers much valuable time. Teachers would be able to give more attention to their class duties and some burden would be removed from them if clerks were employed. One could probably do the work of two schools, or perhaps one clerk would be needed for each school. The expense would not be great, but such an improvement would be of immense value to education in general.

It is all right for the Minister to talk about receiving Federal aid. I cannot understand why the Government should make promises and then pass the buck to the Commonwealth Government. It is easy to make promises provided somebody else will find the cash to fulfil them. Quite a lot could be done in regard to education on the Goldfields. I have visited all the schools in my electorate and have made complaints in this House with regard to each of them. During the last week-end I visited them again. Whether any attempt was made by the Government to get them done I do not know, but nothing had been done. The North Kalgoorlie school has 700 pupils. Some 90 children enter every year and 90 leave. That is the normal figure. But last year quite a number of people went to the Goldfields and the intake at the school was abnormal. An attempt has been made to have a septic system installed; and in reply to a question I asked, I was advised that tenders were to be called for that work. The letter was written in May, but tenders have not been called. Yesterday I went to the school and found that no effort is being made to install such a system. Whether or not the Minister is waiting until the Kalgoorlie Municipal Council establishes its sewerage system through the area, I do not know. It may be so.

I have been advised that the council intends spending £60,000 to sewer the rest of the town, but I assure the Minister that it will be three years before the North Kalgoorlie school can be connected. It would be easy to couple the school to the existing Kalgoorlie sewerage system. All that would be required would be 80 chains of pipe line, which I have been advised could be installed for £1,200. If the Council established its sewerage system in due course nothing would be wasted, because the 80 chains of piping could be used for some other purpose. I previously referred to the school at Lake-wood. I visited it again on Sunday and the conditions were worse than before. Only about £10 or £15 would be necessary to put the playground in order and thus give the children some place in which to do their exercises properly.

I heard the member for Irwin-Moore refer to communists in the Teachers' Union. I do not believe that. He said there should

be a purge in the union. If he thinks that, I suggest that the Government should set up a Royal Commission so that the matter can be cleared up once and for all. The hon. member may know something that I do not know; but I have been mixed up with the union for some time and have yet to be able to say with certainty that there are any avowed communists in its ranks. If the member for Irwin-Moore holds that view, a Royal Commission should be appointed and he should be a star witness and made to prove his statement. It is not fair to any department or any body of men to make such an accusation, because all are under suspicion unless names are mentioned. It is unfair to make a statement in this House which will go to the country that there are communists amongst the teaching fraternity in the Education Department. I repeat that I hope the Minister, before his term of office expires, will make endeavours to fulfil some of his promises, if not all. He has got another eight months to go, probably, before he will have to get his portfolio renewed, if ever. I hope he will let the people see that he was trying to be genuine when, prior to his attestation as Minister for Education, he made the promises he did in connection with the renovations, improvements and additions to the schools.

**MR. NALDER** (Wagin) [5.41]: First of all I wish to say that I am proud to be associated with the Government of which the Minister for Education is a member because of the progress that has been made in education in this State. I speak with a knowledge of what has been going on in the country areas, especially in the electorate which I represent. To listen to the remarks from the other side of the Chamber, one would believe that the children of this State were getting a pretty raw deal. If I were living in another country and read what members opposite have said, I would be reluctant to come to Western Australia because I would be afraid that my children's education would be neglected.

**Mr. Graham:** You did not hear the remarks in 1947, did you?

**Mr. NALDER:** Knowing the progress that has been and is being made, I would like to say how much I appreciate what is being done for the country children. That also applies to those in the metropolitan

area. In the country we have a problem that is not encountered in the city. We have the school busses which bring the children into the school from a number of miles distant. The country people accept this as a move in the right direction. The idea is to give the outback children better facilities for education than they had previously.

Mr. Kelly: You are not giving this Government credit for instituting that, are you?

Mr. NALDER: I am not saying that the system has been wholly and solely set up by this Government. I give credit where it is due. I say that the introduction of the school bus is accepted by country people as a move in the right direction. If the Government, to which the hon. member who interjected belonged, instituted the system, I am prepared to say that it did a good job. We find now that with the ex-Servicemen who are being settled in the country areas, there are many more children in the rural districts. This is creating a problem in connection with accommodating the children in the schools. Much progress has been made in quite a few country schools inasmuch as they have been enlarged and more rooms built. While migrants come to this country, and people from the city are looking for farms, it will be necessary to enlarge the country schools. Considerable interest in educational matters has been taken by the parents in the country through the Parents and Citizens' organisation. I pay tribute to the many branches of that association for the work they are doing to improve the present position.

The move to have visual education facilities installed at the various schools for the benefit of the children has already been mentioned by other members. The words used by the Minister when he introduced the Estimates cannot be over-emphasised. A child can have figures and facts driven into him, but if he has the opportunity of seeing something on a screen it creates an impression on his mind that he will never forget. We cannot over-estimate the good that can be achieved by the installation of visual education facilities in the country schools.

I would like to mention the needs of my district. At the moment we urgently want a new room at the Wagin school. We are proud of the fine buildings, which have been there for many years, but the time has come when we need another room. I suggest that the Minister consider the possibility of having, in the near future, a brick room erected. I mention a brick room, as I feel it would be preferable to shifting a small school there—I understand there is one that could be brought in—because if we did that we would have little rooms dotted all over the playground, and that would be disadvantageous to the children and to the teachers. The position of the Kojonup, Lake Grace, Dumbleyung and Newdegate schools, as the Minister has mentioned, is being looked into. I thank the Minister for the manner in which he is carrying out the work for the benefit of the children in the Wagin electorate.

**MR. STYANTS** (Kalgoorlie) [5.48]: When the first speaker on this debate rose this afternoon—the member for Irwin-Moore—I was a little astonished, but as he proceeded I got accustomed to his policy of, "My Party, right or wrong," as he was saying what had been done for the school children in the country areas. If it is a question of what has been done for the children in the country, we shall have to exclude those on the Goldfields because little or nothing has been done by this Government in connection with facilities for teaching them. I am astonished to find that not only was the member for Irwin-Moore quite satisfied and even eulogistic about the performance of the Government in connection with educational matters, but quite a number of other Government supporters were of the same opinion. It seemed to be unanimous. One might be pardoned for concluding that it is a policy of "Spoils to the victor" as far as this Government is concerned.

The member for Irwin-Moore said the Government had performed wonders, in this direction, in country districts. If it has done all the hon. member claims in some areas, that is certainly wonderful in comparison with what has been done for the children of the Goldfields. The hon. member said that two new schools had been built and additions made to five others, in the districts to which he referred, but there have

not been even decent renovations done to the Kalgoorlie Central School, which is the biggest on the Eastern Goldfields. When we connect up what the hon. member said about what has been done for children in certain areas and add that to the statement made by the member for Middle Swan, that he has had scores of two-unit family residences approved and permits issued in his electorate, we are forced to the unpalatable conclusion that electorates represented by members on this side of the House are getting a poor deal.

The Minister for Lands: After 14 years of Labour Government.

• Mr. STYANTS: We have heard that statement until it has become almost a parrot cry. There were not 14 years of Labour Government. Whilst the Labour Party may have been occupying the Treasury Bench, it was always stood-over by another place and so, although Labour was in office, it was not in power. I would point out also that during that 14 years we experienced the tail-end of the depression, and the results of the foolish measures adopted by the preceding Government were hard to rectify. In addition to that, we had the six years of war, followed by about 18 months or two years during which there began the rehabilitation of almost a million people who had served their country during the war.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: The hon. member will not blame the Legislative Council for that.

Mr. STYANTS: I took up with the Minister for Education—I think in August, 1947—the question of the Kalgoorlie Central school. Most of the buildings on the Eastern Goldfields are about 50 years old and unless a continuous policy of renovation is observed they rapidly fall into a state of disrepair. During the war period, when tradesmen were not available, not a great deal was done to maintain school buildings in Kalgoorlie, but, even so, it was a great deal more than has been done to the Kalgoorlie Central school since then. When the Minister for Education was in Kalgoorlie in connection with the Hannans by-election last February, I took the opportunity, on finding that he was going to inspect the central school, of going with him and pointing out first hand some of the things about which

complaints had been made to me by the headmaster of the school, the Kalgoorlie Municipal Council and the Parents and Citizens' Association. On one occasion when I visited the school, there were gaping holes in the floors of two or three of the classrooms. There was a danger of the children falling through them, at the risk of injury in the form of broken limbs or abrasions. There are two rooms in the central school—I do not blame the present Government, as they have been in this condition for a number of years—that are so badly lighted as to be injurious to the eyes of the children. If a child of mine were to be accommodated in either of those two rooms for schooling purposes I would refuse to let it attend the school.

I do not usually adopt a policy of downright opposition in matters of that sort, but the lighting of those two rooms is totally inadequate, and it is worse in one of them than in the other. This state of affairs is due to the original building having been added to with the result that, where the natural daylight should enter these rooms, it has been obscured by the additions. I understand that among the officials of the Education Department there are many who do not approve of electric lighting in schools. None of us approves of it, but if it is a question of the children working either in semi-darkness or under electric light, any sensible person would prefer to see the children working under electric light. It is an abomination that any schoolroom should have to be lighted artificially in these days but, in the case of the two rooms to which I have referred, the natural light has been entirely excluded.

If the wiseacres in the Education Department, who object to the installation of electric light, persist in that attitude, there is no reason why one or more skylights should not be fitted in the roofs of these rooms. The Minister was good enough to say he would give the matter his immediate attention on his return to Perth and I believe he did so. From inquiries I made of him since then I believe he put the matter up to the Education Department and the officials admitted that certain things should be done at that school, but nothing has yet transpired in that regard. It is certain that no effective action has been taken



up to date. About three weeks ago I again wrote to the Minister, asking when the promised alterations would be made to the school premises, but I have not yet received a reply. Anyone who knows the Kalgoorlie Central school must realise that the surface of the ground there is simply dust in dry weather and a sheet of mud after rain. Although repeated requests have been made that the small assembly area should be bituminised, that has not been done. The Kalgoorlie Municipal Council was so concerned about the conditions obtaining at the school that it approached me, as member for the district, in order to get something done. Recently there was a change of headmasters and the new man, who had come there from an up-to-date school that had been well attended to and properly planned, was horrified with the conditions he found. He immediately took the matter up and wrote out a list of 25 or 30 alterations that would be required to bring the Kalgoorlie Central school up to anything like a modern standard.

Despite the fact that these matters have been before the department and the Minister since August, 1947, nothing has yet been done about them, and I cannot discover that anything is intended to be done in this regard in the near future. The Minister said the matter had been referred to the Public Works Department, which was preparing estimates in connection with the work, but that was months ago. It was in February that the Minister saw the conditions for himself and admitted that they required urgent attention, but so far either the Education Department or the Public Works Department is holding things up, and we have not yet been able to get anything concrete done. I also think that the dental attention given to country children is not as comprehensive as it could or should be, and neither is it as good as that given to the children in the more closely populated area adjacent to the metropolis. That aspect should be given more attention.

I implore the Minister to see if something can be done about the lighting in the two particular classrooms to which I have already referred. A member of the Parents and Citizens' Association came to see me a fortnight ago when I was in Kalgoorlie.

He complained about this matter and was rather surprised to know that the circumstances had been placed before not only this Government but also the previous Government. One has only to see the two classrooms concerned to realise what an imposition it is upon the children's eyesight. If members were to go there on a dull day, during the winter months, they would be astonished to know that it is even possible for teachers to give tuition to the children under such deplorable conditions. I hope the Minister will have action taken, because the lighting of these two classrooms is an urgent necessity. If the department still objects to the installation of electric light—I am not keen on electric light and in an office or building, particularly a school building, it should not be necessary—then a couple of skylights should be fitted. Even that would be preferable to working in the semi-dark.

**MR. MARSHALL** (Murchison) [6.2]: I will be particularly brief, but I want to make one or two observations upon this Vote, because I think the Government has been a little unfair in the treatment it has meted out to those who are obliged to send their children to the city in order to obtain higher education. As is well known, the people on the Murchison, and the outer Goldfields on the Murchison side, have to send their children to Perth. When one endeavours to secure cheaper fares for these people to assist their children to obtain this higher education, one finds that the railways, like the Education Department, are always adamant and advance the argument that these children should go to Geraldton. There is nothing wrong with that proposal because educational facilities are available at Geraldton, but the trouble is that it is impossible to obtain the necessary residential accommodation. That is the point I wish to stress.

On the Estimates the Government has provided for an expenditure of £500 for the purchase of a building to establish a boys' hostel at Bunbury. It has been renovated and practically rebuilt at a cost of £4,500. The total expenditure is approximately £5,000. I take no exception to that, but in the case of Geraldton there were worthy citizens who were prepared to build a hostel for the accommodation of children

from the outer Goldfields, on the Murchison side, without any cost to the taxpayers of this State. All that was required was a release of materials from the State Housing Commission. That department was the hold-up. It is unfair for the Government to spend £4,500 of the taxpayers' money and obtain the materials to build a hostel for boys at Bunbury, and yet on the other hand to refuse private individuals the right to spend a like sum for the provision of a hostel at Geraldton. This would not have cost the taxpayers a penny-piece, but the Government refused to assist the people concerned or encourage them in any way. The hostel which would have been erected would have been similar to that at Bunbury and would have provided accommodation for children coming from the Murchison. This would have enabled those children to obtain their higher education in Geraldton.

The Government must have acquired a considerable amount of material when it expended £4,500 on this building. The money was not all spent on labour and I consider that the people of the Goldfields, on the Murchison side, have not been treated very well. I have already brought the matter under the notice of the Minister. The people concerned have been negotiating for the release of materials to build the premises at Geraldton but they have been unable to get anywhere, and finally have given it up in disgust. We were on the verge of getting an institution built for us but the materials were not released. I do not know what the Minister has done in regard to this matter but I handed him the last note I received. This letter stated that the people were disgusted because there was too much red tape involved and I believe they have given the proposition away. A number of these children have to come in from outlying stations and have to travel hundreds of miles by car and then hundreds of miles by train. They are forced to pay the maximum fare three or four times a year owing to the quarterly periods of education. An opportunity presented itself for the building of a hostel, and it would not have cost the Government anything at all. All the people wanted was the material to build it, but the opportunity was not seized. We let it slip by because of red tape methods, restrictions and controls, and the people who intended to do the work gave it up as hopeless.

I hope the Minister will be mindful of a recent communication which I sent to him because evidently there is some move to shift the school at Nannine. The only material that would be movable is the iron roofing and the scantling. There is nothing else movable of any value in the building. It is particularly dangerous to do anything of this nature on the Goldfields because no-one knows what might happen in the future. At present there is a mining syndicate operating in the district which employs a few men and no doubt they will have children. Apart from that, Nannine has always been a home centre for permanent way gangs. Those employees are still operating along the line and in time the department may change its policy and again station them at Nannine. In view of those facts I would be extremely sorry to see any part of this building removed as yet. It is only a small place and I cannot see the need for it to be pulled down when only the roof and the scantling can be moved.

Again, too, some members representing country districts seem to be able to get anything out of this Government but that is not our experience in the real country. Places like Wongan Hills and Wagin are only suburbs of Perth; they are not country districts. A good cross-country runner would do the distance to Wongan Hills and return in 24 hours. The member for Swan talks about his country district. One could throw a stone into it from here. We who are living in the country do not enjoy the amenities which these members are obtaining for their districts. We have had no manual instructor or domestic science teacher appointed in our parts or indeed any of the facilities that other members seem to obtain from the Ministers now in office. We did have them but for some reason or other they have been taken away and the children who are actually in the country are being denied them, and it is no wonder that their parents have an inclination to travel citywards.

When in Perth on holidays people see all round them the facilities provided for children and naturally they say, "Why should not our children enjoy these concessions?" I believe the Minister is doing his best because I have been here too long to ride the political hack and know too much. I believe that every Minister does his best for the country regardless of the Party to which he

belongs. Sometimes, however, he is a little enthusiastic with his promises made on the hustings and then finds he cannot carry them out when he assumes office, because if they were possible of fulfilment his predecessor would have fulfilled them. That is by the way, but these matters are particularly important to us because we are really out in the country. I ask the Minister to give favourable consideration to expediting these urgent facilities to us, such as the appointment of an instructor in manual work and another for domestic science. Whether or not the Minister has made any headway with the State Housing Commission to build this hostel at Geraldton I do not know, but I do know that the people in that area who were very enthusiastic about the idea abandoned it because of the restrictions and the attitude adopted by the State Housing Commission.

**HON. F. J. S. WISE** (Gascoyne) [6.12]: When the Education Department's Estimates are being discussed it is not unusual for the Minister in charge of that department to be eulogised by members on both sides of the House. That has been the practice in this Chamber for at least the past 16 years to my knowledge. Many men of great administrative talent, of considerable ability, have been privileged to hold the position of Minister for Education. Irrespective of Government, irrespective of the session of Parliament, through the pages of "Hansard" it will be found that Ministers have been thanked for the work they have done in various districts throughout the State and congratulated upon their administrative ability. My attention has been drawn to a statement made by a member on one occasion in which he said—

I congratulate the Minister for Education on his methods of administration. He is a most efficient and most capable administrator of the department. He does his best in every respect. He is not one to tell you that he will do a thing, if he cannot do it. If he promises to do it, he will do it. I would much sooner have a Minister who acts in that way than one who, to use an Australianism, "Kicks you up a tree."

That was said in 1938.

The Premier: Tell us by whom.

**Hon. F. J. S. WISE**: It was said of the Minister for Education who I am sure you would agree, Mr. Chairman, did an excellent job and rendered a wonderful service to the

community. The Minister in those three years created a record for the progress in education up to that period and his record extended not only to the advancement of education as such, but also to the building programme for which he was responsible. I was that Minister, Mr. Chairman. During that period, from 1936-39, education in Western Australia made an advancement of which I am personally proud.

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

**Hon. F. J. S. WISE**: I had mentioned how frequent it is and how it has almost become a rule here that Ministers for Education, whoever they may be, are earnestly flattered by members on both sides of the Chamber following upon the introduction of their Estimates. If one reads through the pages of "Hansard" dealing with the debates on those Estimates, one will find that always eight or ten more speeches were delivered by members of differing political beliefs that consisted to some extent of laudatory remarks. Of course, the Education portfolio is not an easy one, but it is one that because of its creative possibilities induces enthusiasm even though the Minister of the day might not be enthusiastic at the outset. Therefore, from year to year and from Government to Government, there have been, throughout the whole of the period of Responsible Government in Western Australia, achievements by successive Ministers. I know I was not honoured or knighted in recognition of my administration of the Education portfolio.

The Minister for Lands: Would you like a knighthood?

**Hon. F. J. S. WISE**: That is very kind of the Minister; I did not know it was within his province to offer me one! The fact that I did not receive one does not connote that I did not deserve one, nor that my administration was not satisfactory or outstanding. It is on record throughout the years when I was Minister for Education that some most kindly remarks regarding my work came from some of those who today occupy the Treasury bench. Indeed, if one looks through the debates in this Chamber in 1946 when the Education Vote was dealt with, one notes even ultra-generous references by members now sitting on the Government side of the

House to the efforts of the member for North-East Fremantle. It will be recognised that successive Ministers, through their enthusiasm, diligence and application of the creative instinct, as well as their anxiety to do the best possible for the younger generation, had a mass of achievements scored up by them.

I have one very great regret in connection with this subject, and it is that the present Government has made of it such a political matter. I regret that two subjects in particular should have become instances of intense political consideration, these being Education and Housing. To me it is a matter of very great regret that it is so. However, since it is so, we must accept the situation as we find it. In other countries of the world, including the United Kingdom, it is neither possible for Governments to take kudos nor to accept blame for anything that happens in connection with both Education and Housing because, with the exception of contributions by Governments in respect of finance, the matters are not governmental at all. That is the position in more than one country. For instance, Canada has for the Government there no housing problem. Canada's shortage of homes and the serious position in connection with that problem lay at the door of private enterprise, and the Government of that Dominion has not at any stage accepted responsibility for the housing of the people. So we see that in this country both these matters, because of their direct effect on every section of the community, are made the subject of intensive political claims and disclaims. I repeat, I regret that it is so.

I intend to touch upon matters that are directly associated with education, not those that have a remote or even an ancillary connection along the lines pursued by previous speakers, which involved references to lavatories, fences, bitumen and so forth—all having something to do with education though some only remotely so. The history of education in Australia is very interesting and is a matter of evolution. The first State of the Commonwealth—New South Wales—naturally had the beginnings of an educational system for all Australia, and it was a very humble approach to the subject, obviously because

of the circumstances obtaining in the early days of settlement in this country. But now in all the States the various stages appear in logical sequence from the kindergarten to the University, and we have such organisations as the Council for Educational Research, which is an Australia-wide body, doing an excellent job in the furtherance of educational improvements, in methods of teaching, in subjects to be taught and in the preparation of students in the art of teaching.

We have throughout Australia varying laws affecting education and differing regulations that govern the school leaving age. These vary from six to fifteen years in two States and from six to sixteen years in another. Tasmania has the school age statutorily fixed at from six to sixteen years. In Western Australia we had, because of certain circumstances, a much slower approach to the position we have now reached, which, in view of the difficulties of both area and finance, has been very creditable in the results that have been achieved under our system. We began in a very small way and continued in that manner for a long period. It was not until 1871 that progressive steps of any note were taken in Western Australia, but in that year the first Education Act of this State was passed. It is also interesting to note that very little over £6,000 was spent on education by the Government in that year. It was not until 1896—the year in which Mr. Cyril Jackson was appointed first Inspector General of Schools—that any marked progress was made. He was an M.A. of Oxford University and took up his duties early in 1897. If we study the plans that were laid in 1897 by that very learned gentleman we can see a bold and broad policy beginning to unfold. In 1899 the Public Education Amendment Act was passed. It made education in this State free up to the age of 14 years; indeed, as long ago as that year attendance by children of school age was made compulsory. The records of the department will show how bold were the plans made by Mr. Jackson.

In 1909, 40 years ago, a move was made, following the American pattern, to consolidate schools. Vigorous attempts were made to consolidate rural schools 40 years ago, but because of the remoteness of the settlements and of their widely scattered nature

the plan had to be abandoned. One of the greatest contributions which Western Australia has made to the whole world so far as education is concerned is the establishment of correspondence classes by the late Inspector of Schools, Mr. Miles. It is not generally known that Western Australia initiated that plan. Very full marks were deserved by the late Mr. Miles for his wonderful work in building up that service. He went to America to study methods of consolidating schools, as well as educational systems, in order adequately to cope with the needs of our outback children. I do not know whether the Minister for Lands is aware of it, but the first consolidation attempt was made at Toodyay about 27 years ago.

The Minister for Lands: I did not know that.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: Horse-drawn vehicles were used to bring children from the country to a central school. I simply state these facts in brief to illustrate how educational systems have evolved in this State under the enthusiastic guidance of Ministers and of Governments and, to a degree, because of public pressure, but generally because of public need. As the finances of Governments increased, so were education Votes also increased, and no previous Government has been so lucky in that respect as the present one. That cannot be denied. All Governments, however, no matter of what political colour, have done their utmost, according to their lights, for the schoolchildren of Western Australia. The foundation of our teaching staff also has an interesting history. The first teachers, brought here under Mr. Jackson's authority, had university degrees and came from New South Wales. They were appointed to the senior positions. The rank and file teachers came from Victoria just before the beginning of the century; a sprinkling of them came from South Australia. Before the advent of our Teachers' Training College most of the teachers engaged in the small schools were untrained. They had had no training at all as teachers and were brought in from outside vocations.

After the establishment of the Teachers' Training College, Western Australia had the opportunity of building up a body of teachers of both sexes who have rendered

a wonderful service to the State. When one recalls the development of our rural districts, it will be appreciated very readily what were our difficulties in administering the Education Department. We had the opportunity to use to the fullest extent the scheme of correspondence classes; no matter how remote children were from the metropolis they could receive a good education. I distinctly recall, as Minister for Education, developing the idea that these children should also receive scholarships and bursaries. According to the ability to finance the scheme so it has been furthered for the benefit of our outback children. It is heartening to think that we have been able to foster the scheme by the appointment of itinerant teachers, who assist the parents in their homes. From 1936 to 1939 I was Minister for Agriculture, Education, Police and North-West.

The Minister for Education: I think your memory is correct.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: I can assure the Chamber it was a test of one's physical capacity. The appointment of itinerant teachers has assisted people of the outback to a tremendous degree. I was not here when the Minister for Education introduced his Estimates, but I presume that more teacher-supervisors of correspondence lessons have been appointed. I hope so. The first was tried out in my own district and gave excellent service; and now, with thousands of children doing correspondence lessons, it is obvious that some mothers, never having been taught how to teach—and some of them not having had the benefit of much education—are very much handicapped in their attempts to do the best for their children in remote places. But they do a valiant job, and I hope that the idea developed some years ago of keeping itinerant teachers moving from station to station and from farm to farm, however remotely those places may be situated, will be fostered to the greatest degree.

The Minister for Education: I agree. There are two now, I think. The second is doing much the same as the first did.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: Naturally they would have to be hand-picked men; men able to deal with the psychological position within homes, and able to stay with

parents in all sorts of homes, and to do their task with all kinds of children of all ages.

The Minister for Education: It is a very difficult job, I should think.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: Then we have the development of driving allowances. How many country members under today's system recall the basis on which we placed parents in giving them a payment for the mileage their children drove in a sulky to a school? All of these things have been found necessary, have rendered a very great service to education in Western Australia and have been superseded progressively by some more up-to-date system, something more appropriate to the times. Later the idea was brought forward that parents of children living in remote parts and unable to obtain tuition by correspondence beyond the seventh standard should be paid an away-from-home allowance to enable them to send their children away for further education, beyond that which is possible under home tuition. Because, after all, even in pastoral districts, all parents are not sufficiently blessed with this world's goods to enable them to employ governesses to handle correspondence lessons. Consequently that scheme was developed, I think in 1944 or 1945, though it may have been in 1946, whereby parents both in the North and South-West Land Divisions were given a payment enabling them to send their children away from home to complete their education.

I understand that the initial sums made available for this purpose have been increased, and quite properly, so that again it becomes a matter of evolution, a matter of the educational needs demanding improvements in all sections and branches of the service. The increasing demand for education everywhere makes it impossible for any Government to resist pressure whether from urban or rural constituencies, no matter how earnest a Government may, inspired by Ministers who would monopolise the revenues of the State for education—that sort of Minister is not uncommon—be anxious to give service to children who have not the opportunities of those better privileged. Indeed, the greater the hardship a Minister himself may have suffered because of his own lack of education or limitations in his education, the greater enthusiast he becomes

as a rule. I hope, therefore, that there will be less of this political patronage of the public in connection with education. I would like the maximum sums available, no matter from what source they come to the revenues of a State such as this, to be spent in the best possible way, particularly for the under-privileged people remote from the amenities and services that the State provides.

There have been many advances in technical education. That is a direction in which this State, in spite of its difficulties and the smallness of the sums per capita available to us, has been able to show the way to other States. It has been able to demonstrate what can be done in the way of technical education and domestic science teaching. I think the Minister for Education will agree with that. Other States have such things as area schools, places which I have been privileged to visit. Those things were built up just as our system has been built up in different directions; and we should press forward to our limit in imitating and emulating the achievements of other States in the realm of education.

I pass from the establishment of technical education facilities through such things as agricultural high schools and high schools generally, to the University. Our University has been made possible by the substantial benefactions of Sir Winthrop Hackett; and I would say to the wealthy people of this State—few though they may be—that the greatest legacy they could give to this community, something perpetual and substantial, would be the provision of bequests for that University. If any member is interested in that subject, let him have a look at what has been done in South Australia and Victoria and he will see that large sums have been made available by wealthy people to be paid after their death to the educational institutions of the States which assisted them to become great and wealthy men.

I think this: It may be that Western Australia will have to depend on declining revenues at a later stage. That must be faced. When such a contraction of revenue is experienced, I consider that the Education Vote should be the last one to be pruned. I can quite understand the difficulty the Treasurer experiences in meeting the requests—almost demands—of the Univer-

sity. I know the story very well. The University authorities decide, through the Senate, on a certain programme, and then seek the finance for it. I think the Treasurer has his Under Treasurer in a very difficult position in being the Under Treasurer of the State and the Pro-Chancellor of the University. The Treasurer knows that the item printed in his Estimates for the University must be vastly exceeded during the financial year.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The Leader of the Opposition is not in order in referring to the University on the education Vote.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: I must bow to your ruling, Mr. Chairman, but if the University does not connote development from primary education, I shall be surprised.

The CHAIRMAN: The University is specifically provided for in the Premier's Vote.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: I realise that, but I contend that if I discuss the expenditure that the Premier and the Minister for Education must find for the specific needs of the University, I am certainly relating my remarks to education. But since you, Sir, object to my speaking of the University on the education Vote, I shall pass from that subject simply by saying that wherever wealthy people in this community—and they are very few—are wondering what benefactions to make, I suggest they do something specific for education. In discussing this Vote, I think it pertinent to observe that the public schools of this country also make a tremendous contribution to the education of our citizens. The public schools, both denominational and undenominational, have given us some of the best scholars and greatest men in the Australian community.

A reference to the Australian Year Book will show that over 300,000 Australian children are at present being educated in private schools. That is a very big proportion. Since most of those children are there from choice rather than their parents availing themselves of free education—education which is called free but for which the taxpayer finds the money—it is necessary for us to be generous in our attitude to the work of those schools. Where, without involving the State in something that would be unfair to the rest of the taxpayers, anything can be done to stimulate the interest in and assist the private schools, it should

be done. I said at the outset that I intended to speak briefly on matters related directly to education. My attitude to the future of education in this State is that the best possible should be done to prepare and train teachers in the art of teaching. I have spoken, in other addresses to members of this Chamber, of what is being done by the United Kingdom Government at the moment in teaching German teachers how to teach, and in teaching Continental teachers how necessary it is to have a broad outlook, and a knowledge of matters outside the four corners of the boundaries of State.

A more important matter, in my view, is to see that from the very beginning of the training of a child—from the earliest age at which it can be intruded—a knowledge of civics and of civil responsibility is part of the curriculum. It is important that our future Australians should endeavour to live the Golden Rule. Unless they do that, and unless they can be good citizens and accept civic responsibility, they can be neither good neighbours nor good husbands. I hope that a knowledge of civics and of civil responsibility will be an important part of our educational curriculum in the future. I conclude without saying more to the present Minister for Education than that I am glad that he is numbered among the many enthusiastic Ministers for Education who have graced that portfolio.

**HON. E. H. H. HALL** (Geraldton) [8.7]: I am reminded of some eight years that I served on a local governing authority and when, walking to and from meetings, I found that every ratepayer I met could teach the road foreman how to make a road. So it is with education. Everybody I meet can put forward suggestions for the improvement of our educational system. We have in our Director of Education, a man who has worked his way up through the various grades. I happen to have personal recollections of Mr. Murray Little when he was headmaster of the Geraldton primary school. In those days we had no high school in that town. I am sure that those of us who know Mr. Little will recognise him as a man who has both feet on the ground, but is not without ideals. The Minister might give consideration to the following proposition: When a man in the position of Director of

Education goes abroad—as our Director did recently—and returns, it would be a good idea if the Minister were to ask him to address members of Parliament on what he saw in the various countries he visited. There is not the slightest doubt that there is a great diversity of opinion as to the results we are obtaining from our present educational system.

Surely no sane person begrudges the money that is being spent on the education of our children, but we should take every possible step to see that we are getting the best results from what we are paying. After close personal contact with many school teachers and school children—it has been my good fortune to take part in the rearing of five children—I have asked myself whether the methods at present being adopted in our educational system are the most satisfactory that we could wish for. While I would not presume to pass an opinion on such a controversial question, I have it from personal acquaintances and from reading that it is time some decided alterations were made to our present methods. That is why I would like to hear the opinion of our Director of Education on what he has seen in other parts of the world. I feel sure he would be only too glad to come here and give members the benefit of the impressions he gained during his trip. I think we could derive much good also from that sort of personal contact with other highly placed officers who return from abroad. I am sure we are missing something through not being more closely in touch with many of our departmental heads.

I congratulate the Minister on the interest he has taken in our unfortunate spastic children. I am not so well acquainted with the efforts of his predecessor in that regard but, after listening to the Minister the other evening, I was happy to know that he has taken action to improve the facilities available to these children. I know the lady who has gone abroad, partly at her own expense, to gain knowledge of the most modern methods of instructing spastic children. She is an ex-Geraldton girl, Miss Morrisby. She was the teacher who for some years did an excellent job at what is now known as the Princess Margaret Hospital and I am sure that on her return the children under her care will benefit to a considerable degree.

Like the Leader of the Opposition, I feel that the Government would be well advised to render every possible assistance to private schools. Members cannot fail to have read in the Press the opinions expressed by a certain powerful religious organisation in this country as to the value—or lack of value—of the secular education we are imparting to our children. Having moved for a commission of inquiry into the question of delinquent children some years ago, I had opportunity of listening to many of our leading educationists and others. Among them was Mr. Doyle, the present Commissioner of Police, who said most emphatically that we had to depend, for the character building that is so essential to the making of decent citizens, primarily upon home influences. He said that if those influences were not all they should be it was a most difficult job for the school teacher or the policeman, let alone the politician, to make good what was lacking in the training the children received at the hands of their parents. If we can do anything to stop the rot that is making such apparent headway in the public life of most countries today, it is our duty to do it.

I wish to express my gratitude to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition for the uplifting and interesting address he gave the Chamber the other evening, particularly on the subject of character building. The correspondence lessons instituted by the department have done a great deal of good, but I know that in many cases—the Leader of the Opposition said “in some cases”—the superintending of correspondence lessons places a heavy burden upon the mothers in our outback areas. The remarks of the Leader of the Opposition to the Premier about finding still more money for the University, will, I feel sure, receive the attention they deserve, but with so many calls being made upon our impoverished Treasury I wonder how we are going to do our duty by the people so largely responsible for the production of the State's wealth in the outback areas.

Although I represent the area and town of Geraldton, where there is a high school, I have spent most of my life in the outback and am familiar with the needs and plight of those people. While I would not grudge any sum granted to the University, I feel that the educational needs and requirements



of outback children must not be overlooked. For the information of the member for Murchison, I would point out that this Government has purchased in Geraldton a building for the accommodation of girls attending the Geraldton High School. That hostel caters for children from throughout the Victoria district. It is a pity that something of the sort was not done years ago. I give the Minister for Education and the Government credit for having purchased a fine stone building in Geraldton and for having granted a fair amount of money to put it into habitable and up-to-date condition.

**MR. HOAR** (Nelson) [8.20]: I listened with considerable interest the other evening to the Minister introducing his departmental Vote. Without wishing to cast any reflection upon him, because I have no doubt about his competency, I consider his speech to be just a statement of progress such as one would expect some four years after the close of the war. The circumstances and conditions generally which existed prior to the war are entirely different from those of the present-day, not only in regard to the cheapness of labour and materials, and the available supply of labour and materials, but also in regard to the amount of money that now can be made available for education. Providing materials and manpower are still available it will spell even further progress to this State's educational development. So I am not at all amazed to know that we have travelled so far along the road during the past two and a half years.

But I have listened tonight with a good deal of amazement to speeches by Government supporters. One or two of them reminded me very much of the set of circumstances that usually exists towards the end of a school term when prizes are being handed out for good behaviour and so on, and where there is much clapping of hands and scratching of backs and telling everyone what good fellows we are.

**Mr. Nalder:** You will be in the running for a prize.

**Mr. HOAR:** I am glad that the cap has already found its rightful place. I was referring to the member for Wagin but even he looked rather shamefaced whilst he was talking. If we wish to praise a Government, and it is entitled to praise, by all

means let us praise it and give it full credit for everything it has done. But, there is a reason for doing these things and there is a limit to which we can go; that limit is not set by how many new school buildings have been erected in the electorate of Wagin, Irwin-Moore, Mt. Marshall or any other country area in the wheatbelt. Nor can it be set by the number of new palings which have been put on broken fences or by the number of broken panes mended in school-rooms. When we are looking at the achievements of a Government we must take into account the promises it made. No other basis is worth while. It is not much use anybody setting out a number of achievements, of a minor character, without taking into account the major items which this particular Government, at any rate, promised to the people some two and a half years ago and, just as much as it has failed to achieve those promises, so it must stand condemned.

Whatever reasons or excuses the Government uses in respect of those shortcomings can just as well be found to be exactly the same reasons as the previous Government legitimately advanced in respect of things that it wished to do in regard to education, to new buildings and all the other improvements that were so necessary at the time. The circumstances that existed then, to a lesser degree exist today. They are the shortage of labour and the shortage of materials. They still govern all development, not only in education and public works, but also in everything else. Until such times as the State's resources can again be put into full harness, we must be prepared to accept the position that our progress, either in education or in any other Government activity, cannot be nearly so speedy as we would all hope. I say that for the Opposition as well as for the Government because all members of Parliament, never mind what their political colour may be, are most sincerely concerned with the thought of extending as quickly as possible the facilities in respect of education for the people of this State and the children of this State.

Judging from the speeches of members opposite, it seems clear to me that a great deal of this Government's activity has been spent in wheatbelt areas. I do not say that it should not be so, but considering the fact

that this State is still short of materials and labour, if not money, there are other areas in the South-West that had, under the previous Government, a particularly high priority and have necessarily suffered as a result of the change of Government.

The Minister for Education: You have not done too badly.

Mr. HOAR: I am not referring to Manjimup.

The Minister for Education: Nor Boyup Brook, I suppose.

Mr. HOAR: I am definitely referring to Boyup Brook.

The Minister for Education: What have you suffered there? They are getting on with the job.

Mr. HOAR: One of the statements made by the Government Parties when they faced the electors in 1947, derided the then Labour Government, and indicated that Tasmania was almost full of area schools but in Western Australia they were still only an idea; nothing but an idea. An impression was given to the people then—and carefully and determinedly done—that if the Labour Government were returned to office that situation would still obtain for a considerable length of time. That was definitely untrue because the previous Government had made plans in respect of the State's first area school and it had selected Boyup Brook as the area to be served. Almost everything was ready.

The Minister for Education: Everything except plans and specifications.

Mr. HOAR: There was probably only three months work necessary before starting the area school at Boyup Brook.

The Minister for Education: I cannot find them, and I have not altered a thing.

Mr. HOAR: I have seen them.

The Minister for Education: Then I do not know where they are.

Mr. HOAR: I cannot help that, but the Minister could not have taken over his present office without knowing very well the progress that had been made. The Minister must have been aware of the then Labour Government's policy in respect of the first area school in the State and also he must have been aware of the fact that it was to be

established at Boyup Brook. The present Minister took over the same officers as served under the previous Minister for Education.

The Minister for Education: You are having £44,000 spent.

Mr. HOAR: There was a great deal of delay in the establishment of the area school at Boyup Brook. So much so that the body of people in that area—representing some 2,000 to 2,500 people who normally vote a two to one majority for the Parties represented on the Government side of the House—have held many protest meetings and on one occasion threatened to refuse to send their children to school unless this Government did something about the policy that had been laid down and the promises it had made two and a half years before. Nevertheless the area school has not been built nor has one area school been built in the State.

It is all very well for the member for Irwin-Moore, the member for Wagin, and others to stand up in their places and praise the Government on the little things it has done. We must look at the promises the Government made and then see how far along the road it has gone. If we do that we will see that the members of the Government are not such a bright lot of boys as the member for Irwin-Moore would have us believe. I would like to tell him that I would not like to be in the Government's shoes for anything.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: The Premier doesn't look very comfortable in them either.

The Premier: I am sorry, I missed that.

Mr. HOAR: Without making a long speech, considering the Premier has imposed a time limit on the business to be discussed in Parliament in the future—

The Premier: That has all gone now.

Mr. HOAR: There is another thing which I am afraid the Premier will tell me and that is how much my speech will cost the country. A further promise the Government made during the last election was—

Arrears of additions to schools, and new schools, all over the country must be overcome and teachers better trained.

The answer to that is that the overtaking of those arrears has not kept pace with the ordinary normal demand and the position

is as grave as it ever was. Teachers are well trained, but not better trained than formerly. The Government also said—

As speedily as possible, classes will be reduced in numbers.

No noticeable change has taken place. The Government also said—

We will set up area schools where conditions are suitable, and give greater participation to local school boards and parents and citizens' associations in the affairs of their school.

Not one area school has been built. The greater participation referred to arises from enthusiasm evinced by such bodies and not from any Government action. It also said—

We will make provision for the actual raising of the school leaving age to 15 years, and will undertake an abundant supply of books and school equipment.

The answer to that is that the school leaving age has not been raised as promised, for the obvious reason of inadequate facilities. The supply of books and equipment is not more abundant, nor quite as good as normally anticipated. Another statement made by the Government was—

We will establish hostels at high school centres. No charge will be made beyond that for board, and suitable supervision will be arranged.

These have not been established. There was also the question of the establishment of an agricultural college. If I remember rightly that was mentioned in the speech by the member for Irwin-Moore. He said that he hoped the Government would not proceed with that plan but would extend the facilities now in existence at Muresk. I would point out to the hon. member that another agricultural college was definitely promised by this Government at the last election. There was no equivocation about it. There was no doubt in anybody's mind about that. The South-West people particularly said that if the McLarty-Watts Government took office they would have another agricultural college. In making an attempt to test the Government out along those lines, in keeping with its promises, I have a reply to a letter which I sent to the Minister for Agriculture that definitely refutes the idea. This Government not only has not built another agricultural college, but also it has no intention of doing so. I do not think it really appreciates, the difficulties that exist

in the South-West. I believe its mind is directed along other channels a little further north.

The Premier: That is remarkable.

Mr. HOAR: It is nevertheless true.

The Premier: Yet others accuse us of being a "South-West Government."

Mr. HOAR: I have something to do with candidates who wish to enter agricultural colleges now, and there are nominations which we get from either Narrogin or Denmark. Labour did not promise anything as to what it was going to do; but it built an agricultural college at Denmark. We need a similar college in another position offering opportunities for research and providing facilities by which all sorts of difficulties and problems that are facing farmers in the lower South-West can be overcome; for instance, problems in relation to animal nutrition and diseases. Farmers also have anxieties over pastures and the methods by which to improve them, and over different types of grasses and soils. These are things which could have been investigated and possibly overcome if the promises made by this Government to the people two and a half years ago had been fulfilled. But the Government has no intention whatsoever of fulfilling them.

When we start to assess the services it has rendered to the State during its two and a half years of office and when we look back over that period to review the promises which it told the people it would keep, if ever a Government has failed to keep those promises it is this one. It is really a "Donald Duck Government"—all quack. That also may have nothing to do with education but I have just mentioned it in passing. This has: Last year I called the Minister's attention to certain anomalies in one or two of the regulations relating to his department and on that occasion he told me he would investigate them to see whether something could be done to effect a remedy. Under this regulation 50 scholarships are provided each year to enable children to receive a higher education which will carry them through the Junior Examination, and at the end of five years, the Leaving Examination. The regulation governing these scholarships reads as follows:—

(3) A candidate for these scholarships shall—

(a) sit for the examination held in the year in which he attains his twelfth birthday;

(b) produce a certificate of industry and good conduct from the head teacher of the school at which he is attending when he becomes a candidate;

(c) have been resident in Australia for at least two years immediately preceding the first day of January of the year in which the successful candidates will enter upon the scholarship.

It is to that latter paragraph I want to make some further reference. Although the Minister told me that he would discuss the matter with the Director of Education I have received no word from him since. This State is anxious, as speedily as possible, to absorb as many migrant children as we can and preferably those from British stock. However, regardless of where they come from, children cannot sit for an examination in this State until they have been resident here for two years. That is to say that a child from England, irrespective of his age, after his arrival in Western Australia, must wait a further two years, and is therefore debarred from sitting for the examination because after that period has elapsed he will often be over age and will not be eligible.

The Minister for Education: You will find that that will be fixed up this year along the lines you have suggested.

Mr. HOAR: I am pleased to hear that and I will say no more about it.

The Minister for Education: It will be dealt with much along the lines you have suggested.

Mr. HOAR: There is another thing which I hope the Minister will fix up along the lines I suggest and that is in relation to Regulation No. 5 (a) which provides—

A number of scholarships, not exceeding one-fifth of the total number offered, shall be reserved for pupils from country schools, provided that candidates of sufficient merit present themselves.

I think that is an entirely unfair proportion and is leaning far too heavily towards the children of the metropolitan area, especially when it is considered that they get four-fifths of those scholarships and the country areas only one-fifth.

The Minister for Education: They do not get only one-fifth, but that is the minimum.

Mr. HOAR: Well, what do they get?

The Minister for Education: Varying proportions depending upon the circumstances. They cannot get less than one-fifth.

Mr. HOAR: They ought to get one-half because the population is split fifty-fifty between the metropolitan area and the country districts. That ought to be taken into account every year when making these scholarships available. I have put before the Government two points which I wished to make. I have said that I do not think it is a very good Government and I repeat that but at the same time I am not unduly critical of it because I realise the situation is still fairly precarious for any Government but people who were foolish enough to stick their neck out in 1947 to make all sorts of wild promises and then, when a miracle happened and they were returned to power were unable to keep them, are looking for trouble and they will no doubt get it.

MR. FOX (South Fremantle) [8.40]: I am afraid I cannot join in the chorus of praise to the Minister, following along the lines pursued by the member for Irwin-Moore. Evidently his constituency has received a proportion of the benefits that logically should have been available to other electorates. I agree with the Leader of the Opposition that education should not be dealt with as a political football. It was not always so. Many years ago the education of the masses was very sadly neglected and in the nineties a Royal Commission was appointed to go into the question of sweating in the factories in Melbourne. As a result, it was found that many children between nine and ten years of age worked in factories for the greater part of the day and half way through the night and had never been to school at all.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: That was under private enterprise.

Mr. FOX: In my day, many of the fathers of the boys with whom I went to school could not read or write and, realising what they had missed, decided that they would do their utmost to see that their sons were not similarly disadvantaged. That gave rise to an agitation for free education. It was held that everyone, rich and poor alike, should have the same opportunities to secure a decent education that would give them a

chance in life after they left school. Even today the sons of poor people are sadly neglected. How many bright youths are missing their vocation simply because their parents have not sufficient money to keep them at school and put them through the University? How many brilliant doctors and how many eminent scientists is this country losing, simply because poor parents have not the money to give the young folk the education that their ability should demand?

I believe the Government should pick out a number of the brightest boys in our schools and provide them with an opportunity to enter one or other of the professions. There is always a shortage of doctors in Western Australia and the profession is a close preserve, with very few exceptions, for the sons of well-to-do people. There have been isolated instances where lads have risen from the ruck, possibly having gained bursaries that enabled them to derive an advantage from higher education, and have developed into brilliant men. We can go back over the years and note here and there some who have made a name for themselves in the history of Australia, and though they started from very lowly financial levels, they were able to win for themselves some of the highest positions in the land. Such an ambition is not implanted in the bosoms of everyone, and there are times when some driving force is necessary to lend encouragement rather than that the individual should be allowed to determine his own future. If the Government were to adopt the course I suggest, there would be more brilliant men to assist in promoting the State's welfare instead of having a lot of duds attending the University. I do not say that that description applies to all who go there, but it does in some instances, for the young fellows are there not for the sake of a University career, but from a social standpoint.

Dealing with a few matters affecting my electorate, I would remind the Minister that he promised a school at Hilton Park, but none has been erected. We are not so fortunate as the member for Irwin-Moore and some of the country members who have indicated that their wants have been largely attended to by the Minister in the short time he has been in office. At Hilton Park the population is steadily increasing.

We have the Melville Camp and a large number of houses have been erected on the other side of Carrington-street. Anyone proceeding to Rockingham will pass through the area and will of necessity realise that the population is increasing rapidly. Several factories are being erected there and they will further augment the number of people resident in the area. It is quite a long journey to the nearest school at White Gum Valley and that school is at present overcrowded. Although the Minister will have a very short time this session and may not have an opportunity when Parliament meets again to do much about it, I ask him to see, if it is not possible to make a start with the erection of a school at that centre.

Then again, I would like the Government to establish kindergarten schools, especially in the camps. The children in those areas have not the opportunity that is enjoyed by those living elsewhere and they are a source of worry to their parents in the Army camps. No fences are erected round the various flats and the mothers have to keep their eyes on the children all the time. Naturally, I do not suggest the establishment of kindergartens simply with the idea of taking care of the children, but the young people there should have similar opportunities to those enjoyed by children living in more settled areas. Then there is the Naval Base camp about seven miles from Fremantle. The transport facilities available are not very satisfactory and a kindergarten school should be established there.

That is all the more necessary now because the Defence Department or the Social Services Department, whichever is responsible, intends to remove the hall there to provide a training centre at Melville. In my opinion, a hall is absolutely necessary. I have brought the matter under the notice of the Minister for Education and the Minister for Housing. A hall is not required merely for a kindergarten school, but for other purposes as well. I have done my utmost to have the hall retained for the use of the people at the camp, but I was informed today that it had to be removed. I trust the Minister for Education will see that a kindergarten school is established so that the children may enjoy some of the amenities that are

available to the young folk elsewhere, and because it is not possible for them to attend one at any other centre.

During the course of the debate reference has been made to dental clinics in connection with schools. We have done a great deal in that respect in the Fremantle district. One was established in Fremantle upwards of ten years ago, mainly by the school teachers, including Mr. Gustafson, who was the secretary of the clinic for quite a long time and took a leading part in it. The clinic was subsidised by the Lotteries Commission to the extent of about £150 per annum, the City Council subsidised it to the extent of about £100 per annum and other local governing bodies to a lesser amount. The Government also paid a subsidy. Since the price of materials and wages has risen it has been found impossible to carry on the clinic full time and the man in charge is permitted to do private practice. It has done a valuable service to the community from Mosman Park to Rockingham, treating children whose parents are in receipt of an income of £8 per week and less. The Government will either have to take over the clinic itself or provide it with a substantial subsidy to keep it functioning, as it would be a tragedy to close it after it has been of so much benefit for such a long time to the people of Fremantle and surrounding districts. I would ask the Minister to take special notice of the requirements of this clinic and do his best to provide it with a subsidy sufficient to keep it open.

When the member for Mt. Marshall was speaking, he eulogised the Government for the work it did in providing education for spastic children. He gave the Government all the praise for introducing that system of education; but it is a well-known fact that the member for North-East Fremantle, when Minister for Education, established the first school for spastic children at the Children's Hospital. He appointed a teacher, who was doing excellent work. Later on, the member for North-East Fremantle, when Minister for Education, established one of the best schools in Australia which the present Minister had the pleasure of opening, the member for North-East Fremantle also being present. I do not object to this Minister getting all the

praise he deserves, but I do not think the member for Mt. Marshall should depreciate the work done by the previous Minister. He should at least give him credit for initiating the education of spastic children.

The member for North-East Fremantle, when Minister for Education in the previous Government, also did much work for Rubella children. He put their education on a sound footing. I do not know whether there has been any recurrence of the Rubella disease during the past two or three years, but about 1940 a considerable number of children were born deaf and dumb in this State and little or nothing was done for them until the member for North-East Fremantle established one or two schools for their education. Private persons also established schools for the same purpose. The member for Mt. Marshall spoke about the consolidation of schools and gave the Committee to understand that everything was proceeding swimmingly. But the previous Minister for Education started the consolidation of schools in the first place. I remember his telling me that he intended to take children from a couple of small schools at Bibra Lake and Jandakot and bring them in to Hamilton Hill or White Gum Valley. However, the parents did not think much of the proposal as they were not in favour of consolidation and the Minister said he would allow those schools to stand over for a time, but added that consolidation would have to come. After the speech of the member for Mt. Marshall on this subject, I happened to be looking through the "W.A. Teachers' Journal" of the 2nd September, 1949, in which there appears an article entitled "Consolidation in W.A." by "Investigator." I presume we can accept an article appearing in that journal as authentic and that the writer must have known something of the subject because otherwise the journal would not have published it. The article reads—

Having studied the consolidation problem from its many different angles, the outstanding features of present-day consolidation in W.A. appear to be that—

1. Bad roads exist generally;

I do not blame the Minister for Education for that—

2. Unsuitable busses are too numerous;

Perhaps the Minister for Education is not to be blamed for that, either, because it is exceedingly difficult to get busses.

3. Many routes are too long and badly planned;

He might have to plead guilty to that—

4. Overcrowded and understaffed schools are the rule, rather than the exception;

5. Classes generally are too large;

6. In some cases inexperienced and unsuitable teachers are being appointed to consolidated schools;

7. Equipment generally is meagre and poor in quality;

That is a very serious charge—

8. Many schools are situated in unsatisfactory surroundings. That consolidation has been introduced under such conditions is deplorable and cannot be condoned, even on the plea of economy, either of £s.d. or teachers. Consolidation in principle is sound and perhaps the only solution to rural education in W.A., but the past practice of indiscriminate consolidation is to be roundly condemned.

In view of the fact that consolidation was only beginning, none of those remarks can apply to the previous Minister—

I believe that consolidation offers the answer to many educational problems confronting both teachers and pupils in small rural schools, such as shortage of equipment and teacher isolation, etc., but it should be carried out only after complete preparations are made. Unless the pupil is going to make some educational gain, consolidation should not take place.

Under conditions as set out below I consider that consolidation offers distinct advantages when—

1. Adequate buildings are provided (Cunderdin standard);

2. Limited to half an hour's travel in good busses over bitumen or properly maintained roads;

3. A hot mid-day meal is provided;

4. Staffing is properly trained and adequate (class limit of 30, including also appropriate specialists);

5. Extra equipment such as M.T. room, Dom. Sc., projection, etc., provided by the Education Department and not by P. and C. Associations.

While on that subject, I may say that the Parents and Citizens' Association provided one of the schools at South Fremantle with all its equipment, but up to date the Minister has not given the association any subsidy, notwithstanding that it was promised by his predecessor. I am very concerned about his repudiation of that promise and have spoken about it on one or two occasions.

The Minister for Education: Have you ever made formal application?

Mr. FOX: I have asked the Minister in the House and he has intimated to me that nothing would be available, so what is the use of making formal application? I will make one, if he likes.

The Minister for Education: Do so.

Mr. FOX: Good!

Hon. A. H. Panton: You might draw a blank.

Mr. FOX: I hope I do not. The article continues—

6. Housing for assistant teachers is provided as for head teachers.

Until all the above conditions can be fulfilled I believe that consolidation on the whole offers no advantage—for example—a small school is consolidated under present conditions and a child of 9 or 10 becomes one of a large class with all its attendant evils. By the time new buildings, etc., are ready, he will be ready to leave school and so has gained nothing by consolidation.

Only the best is good enough and until it can be provided the small school should not be consolidated.

In conclusion, the closure of any but a one-teacher school is generally speaking not recommended, as a Class V school, as a unit, has a light teaching load, sufficient enrolment for satisfactory class groupings and all school social activities. The creation of V's out of VI's and VII's with short bus routes though much, of course, depends on local conditions.

Finally, I offer the following as "The Law of Consolidation":

#### PLAN · PREPARE · CONSOLIDATE.

I think that if the member for Mt. Marshall had read that he would not be so loud in his praises of the consolidation of schools. Evidently he had not read it.

We all admire the work that the domestic science schools are doing and the way in which they are teaching the rising generation how to cook. I see children in my district coming home from school once a week with the results of their efforts, and a very good job is being done. But, in addition to children being taught how to cook, one of the members of the Government—the Honorary Minister for Supply and Shipping—has said that people should be taught to eat. The Honorary Minister will have to make an explanation of that herself, if she so desires; but I want to refer to a report which appeared in the "Daily News" of a meeting in the Perth

City Council Chambers, at which apparently a civic reception was being given to an English professor, Mr. L. L. Davidson. The report states—

Australians were a nation of "gobblers and swillers," who needed to learn how to eat, Honorary Minister for Supply and Shipping Mrs. Cardell-Oliver said today.

She was speaking to visiting English Professor, L. L. Davidson, at a meeting in the Perth City Council Chambers.

Australia was a land of milk and honey, yet past statistics of the health of school children and Army recruits showed that many suffered from under-nourishment.

I do not know what that has to do with eating properly.

What Australians needed to learn from Professor Davidson was "how to eat," she said.

We needed to learn how to eat in a more cultured and practical way. When we learnt this we would be able to do more physical work.

I wonder whether if a horse ate in a more cultured way—if, for instance, he ate with a knife and fork—he would be able to do more work!

"We need you to teach us to do the things we do not seem to know how to do—how to live," Mrs. Cardell-Oliver said to Professor Davidson.

I think that is a gratuitous insult to many Western Australians.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I hope the hon. member will connect this with the education Vote.

Mr. FOX: Certainly I will. I have spoken already about cooking being taught in the schools. The Honorary Minister says that after the food is cooked, people do not know how to eat it. What is more necessary, if that is a fact, than to teach the children how to eat? That is connecting my remarks with the education Vote. That is a suggestion made by the Honorary Minister and not by myself, because the people in my district know how to eat. The Honorary Minister can talk only about the people with whom she associates. I will read another extract, this time from "The West Australian" of the 5th February. It is as follows:

At last night's symposium of the Newspaper Intelligence Corps at the Wayzgoose Arms we asked Peggy's opinion of Mrs. Cardell-Oliver's much criticised statement that Australians are a nation of "gobblers and swillers." "I would not know," she confessed frankly. "In this hostelry we have a select clientele, and such things are of course

unknown. My only knowledge of gobblers and swillers has been gained on occasional visits to turkey runs and pig runs in the country. They were not so repulsive as I had expected though scarcely a model for human votaries of Bacchus and Lucullus."

If the people the Honorary Minister associates with have to be taught how to eat, that does not apply to the people with whom I associate. If the Minister would like to start a school to teach people in the Subiaco district how to eat, she might be conferring a favour on them but—

The Honorary Minister for Supply and Shipping: I would invite you to attend.

Mr. FOX:—there is no occasion for her to go down to the district represented by the three Fremantle members to teach people how to eat. We are as capable of eating our food properly as is the member for Subiaco herself—perhaps more capable.

## THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION

(Hon. A. F. WATTS—Katanning—in reply) [9.7]: I am indebted to members in the main for the review they have given of the operations of the Education Department, and I might not have made any considerable reply were it not for one or two observations with which I propose to deal. First of all I would like to refer to a remark of the Leader of the Opposition in which he regretted that education had recently become a Party-political matter. Since I have been Minister, I think it is on record that any observations that I have made have been of a factual nature, having no trace of Party partisanship. I am therefore somewhat at a loss to understand to what the hon. gentleman was referring if he were referring to me. If not, of course, I have no doubt there are instances to which he could make reference.

I would also like to refer to an observation by the member for North-East Fremantle concerning the hostel at Bunbury, the expenditure of £4,500 on which he regarded as bad business. That work was not proceeded with without advice from the Public Works Department officials, and I am informed that the building, if erected new, would cost £13,000. Today it is worth not less than £6,000 of anybody's money. So, in consequence, in order to fulfil a very necessary want—and it must be remembered that the Country Women's Association was under



notice of termination of tenancy of the premises it occupied—in those circumstances and upon those figures the enterprise cannot be classed as bad business. If the hon. member will take the trouble to inspect the premises in their present shape and as they are at present being managed by the C.W.A., I think he will find they are quite desirable.

I would like to make some passing reference to an aspersion made by the member for North-East Fremantle concerning an answer to a question on visual education. It is true that in response to my request he was good enough to withdraw the actual statement, so the only comment I wish to make is this: Not having been in the department at the time, I was obliged to obtain the information from the officers of the department, and it was supplied to me by the chief administrative officer and the question answered in the exact terms provided by that officer. In consequence, the aspersion, if any—although I admit now that virtually none remains—rests not on me but on the officer to whom I have just referred. I am perfectly certain that that officer gave the answer, as I subsequently explained, in perfectly good faith, not realising the full implications of what was in the hon. member's mind.

One member referred to teachers' quarters. In 1946, if I remember aright, the previous system of the department, in conjunction with the Public Works Department, of providing teachers' quarters was discontinued by the Administration then in office, and the whole matter placed in the hands of the Housing Commission. Hitherto, as I understand the position, the Education Department had determined where quarters were necessary or desirable, and had provided them at a very low rental, particularly at the smaller class 6 and 7 schools. Under the Housing Commission the system is that which is pursued in regard to rental homes, namely, the Commission has to be satisfied as to hardship, and that then either the economic rent or one-fifth of the family income has to be paid under the Commonwealth-State housing agreement. I do not regard the present position as very satisfactory.

It was unwise, I think, for the housing system to be changed; and I might say that consideration is now being given to means of improving the present position. In the meantime, the Education Department is en-

deavouring to relieve the position by approving of the removals of suitable quarters to Gnowangerup, Jardee, Pemberton and Pickering Brook at a total cost of £4,560. Another member referred to the question of renovations. I stated last year that 47 schools had been renovated that year at a cost of £70,000. During the financial year just expired there has been an expenditure of £73,431 on the renovation of schools, and there are others authorised at the present time.

I do not know that it can be logically stated that the reference to the speech I delivered before the last election campaign, that all over the State there were buildings and so forth requiring attention, could by any reasonable person be expected to mean that there would be a complete transformation in a period of two and a half years. I suggest that any reasonable person reading that observation would assume that a review of the whole position would be made and the job tackled in a workmanlike manner with the idea of converting the position into one considerably better, as rapidly as possible. That has been done to the utmost. I am advised that as at the 25th August, new buildings or additions to schools approved and completed since the 1st April, 1947, totalled approximately £390,000, that buildings approved but not commenced as at the same date amounted to £224,000, and that those since approved by the Treasury amount to approximately £64,000. It is true today that in many parts of the State there are extremely undesirable premises. They are, in the main, a relic, and an undesirable relic at that, of former days.

If the same rate of tackling this problem is maintained, year by year, as in the last two years, it will not be long before there is a full transformation. That is the aim and intention of this Government, and I think what has been done so far justifies me in saying that there has been a substantial carrying out of any reasonable interpretation of the reported statement which has been read so often in the Committee. I also told the member for Hannans, who virtually repeated what he said on the General Estimates—although at the time he was unfortunately absent—that a considerable amount had been approved for septic tank installations and ground improvements for schools

in the Kalgoorlie-Boulder area; that approximately £3,000 had already been expended on substantial renovations and repairs, and £2,100 on repairs and renovations of a general nature. It cannot be said, therefore, with any substantial degree of justification, that the Goldfields area has been neglected in that regard.

It is a truism that the greatest activity has naturally been where serious over crowding existed. Such a state of affairs did not obtain in the majority of the schools in the Kalgoorlie-Boulder area. I do, however, agree with the member for Kalgoorlie, that the rooms of the Central Kalgoorlie school, to which he referred, are sadly in need of the work he mentioned. When I returned from Kalgoorlie, as I told the hon. gentleman, I sought to have proposals made for remedying the situation. I now inform the hon. member that I shall investigate the reason why those plans have not, to the best of my knowledge, been supplied to me to the present time. I could, if I wished, elaborate this subject by reading to the Committee what was said on the 23rd August, 1945, at page 340 of "Hansard" of that year, by the Hon. W. R. Hall, a member for the province in which the Kalgoorlie-Boulder area lies, with reference to the condition of the schools there. If the member for Hannans or anyone else who has sentiments similar to his, will take the trouble to read those observations, they will find much to convince them that there has been some progress, at least, made since 1945-46, even in the Kalgoorlie-Boulder area.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Do not forget the war was on then.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I recommend the hon. member to read the remarks of Mr. Hall.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: But surely that makes a difference!

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Maybe it would have if the conditions existed long before the war. However, I do not wish to dwell on the subject, but I hope the hon. member will read those remarks later on. The member for Murchison mentioned children from his electorate going to Geraldton. It is not many weeks since the hon. member first spoke to me about this matter, and I have had some inquiries

made. From the information given to me by departmental officers who made the inquiries, it appears that there has been accommodation available in Geraldton for every child seeking it.

I would therefore suggest to the hon. member that he tell me the number of these children who would go to the Geraldton High School if accommodation were available. The fact that they do not now go there has probably induced the answer that I have received to my inquiries, but if the hon. member can tell me the number of those who do not go there now, but would do so if they could, and that shows—which the present figures do not appear to show, and that I think is the reason why no sponsorship of applications was originally forthcoming—that there is a number of children who should be accommodated at Geraldton in the circumstances mentioned, I shall be happy to reconsider the matter, because I shall then appreciate the point of view which the hon. member was anxious to put forward.

The member for Nelson made complaints about the paucity of activity, and presumably of expenditure, in the South-West area, and particularly that portion which he represents. Excluding the work authorised on the Pemberton school, which was authorised prior to my term of office and which I therefore do not wish to include, I find there has been authorisation of the expenditure of £61,934 on schools in the hon. member's electorate alone since the 1st April, 1947. Of those schools the Manjimup building is well on the way to completion, two or three smaller ones have been completed and the Boyup Brook school, which is to cost £44,000 apart from the earthworks that have been done at a cost of £3,000 or £4,000, is now being erected by the contractors. I therefore do not really think the hon. member's statement was justified, but rather to the contrary. I have never at any time sought to criticise or detract from the merits of that very desirable school which was opened during the term of the member for North-East Fremantle, at the Children's Hospital.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: It was not opened during my term, but during your own.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: When I said "opened" I meant "originated." I know that the actual opening took place

during my term of office. I did not make any reference to that school in relation to spastic children, but I mention it now because the children that school is meant to cope with are those who are in hospital, while the children affected by the proposals that I put before the Chamber last Thursday night are those who are not in hospital, and I think there is a much larger number of them. Therefore one does not want any conflict of opinion regarding this matter. The school at the Children's Hospital is there and offers a service that is invaluable, and will continue to do so, to those who are actually patients in the hospital and who are compelled to remain there for considerable periods.

The other school that is now proposed and upon which considerable expenditure has been authorised at the Thomas-street buildings, is for the children who are at home and who will have to be brought to that school by transport, as I have said, and returned to their parents' homes each day. So there is a great difference between the two things and there can be no conflict whatever as to the merits or demerits of one Party or the other in regard to this matter. I said that the matter had first been brought to my notice by deputations some 15 months ago and, it was in consequence of that and the evidence that was forthcoming as to the large number of children that were in the condition to which I have referred, that action began in this matter and it is true that, so far as governmental activity is concerned, a start is being made on that type of work in Western Australia.

The member for South-Fremantle quoted an interesting article by someone who spoke about the consolidation of schools. My only comment is that the article is purely idealistic. I ask you, Sir, how much consolidation of schools there would be in certain parts of Western Australia in the next decade—even supposing the remainder of the ideas of that correspondent were put into operation—if we confined ourselves in this regard to a half-hour run over bitumen roads. The person who wrote the article therefore was either writing it with his or her tongue in his or her cheek or, alternatively, had no proper appreciation of the scattered nature of our population and the conditions that

exist in the outer areas of Western Australia, because if he or she had that knowledge, he or she would virtually have been saying that, in those areas, we shall never have anything but small schools.

The Leader of the Opposition referred to the need for teaching our young people citizenship and neighbourly goodfellowship.—I think that summarises his observations. A similar reference was made a few days ago by the member for Northam, and I entirely agree. I am happy to say that I expressed similar sentiments three or four weeks ago, when I was invited to open the conference of the New Education Fellowship in the Winthrop Hall, but I do not know that the attainment of that objective in a reasonable way requires any substantial alteration in the methods of the Education Department. I believe all the foundations are already there for teaching our young people along those lines.

Hon. A. H. Panton: We do not want to leave it to the teachers.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I think it requires only a little more emphasis to be placed on certain aspects in order that we might achieve very good results. I feel that the member for North-East Fremantle misunderstood me, in his reference to the better opportunities in other professions than exist in the teaching service. I think he had formulated the idea that I was of the opinion that there are better opportunities in other professions than there are in the teaching service.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: I do not think I said that, did I?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I may have misunderstood the hon. member but I took a note of it.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: You must have misunderstood me.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: If I have done so, then I regret it. The situation may be at present that other professions offer equal if not better opportunities than those available in the teaching profession. However, I do not think that state of affairs will last very long and the demand in the teaching profession will continue and increase, but I very much question whether it will continue, let alone increase, in certain other professions that are being some-

what overworked at present. There are, of course, one or two that will continue to require a considerable number of recruits. I have discussed this matter with the Director in recent weeks and, as members know, he has seen a good deal of the world in the last year or two. With the point of view that I have now expressed—that the teaching profession offers opportunities as good as any other, and possibly better—I understand he is in entire agreement. However, I consider that it remains for us to try to achieve a state of affairs where we can get a greater degree of contentment than that which we have in the teaching profession in this State.

It is true that conditions in the majority of cases are reasonably satisfactory. It is also true that in some instances they could be better and it should be our aim and objective, and I know that it is, that those conditions should be progressively improved so that we may attract into the profession people of the same high educational attainments, as we have in the majority of cases now, and to maintain their interest and endeavours.

Vote put and passed.

*Vote—Town Planning, £3,800:*

**MR. NEEDHAM** (Perth) [9.33]: I was hoping that the Minister would give some information to the Committee in connection with this Vote. The Vote for 1948-49 was £3,050 and the expenditure was £3,602. The estimate for the ensuing year is £3,800 which is an increase of £198 on the expenditure for last year. I am not so much concerned about the Vote as I am about gaining a little more information. The time is long overdue for a definite statement in regard to town planning. The matter is of great importance not only to the people of the metropolitan area, but also to the people of the State in general, and the time is opportune for a complete ministerial statement as to exactly where we are in regard to town planning and where we are going. Continued delay in this matter will undoubtedly mean danger in the near future.

Quite recently we had a visit from an eminent British town planner and also an exhibition of British town planning. Despite the fact that we received a visit from this eminent town planner who is renowned throughout the world, and despite the fact

that we had a British town planning exhibition, we are none the wiser as to what is in the mind of the Town Planning Board or the Minister for Local Government. When the question of town planning in the metropolitan area has been raised on previous occasions we have been told that we must be patient. We must wait until the board, or the Government, is in a position to present a complete blueprint of the metropolitan area plan.

The Minister for Local Government: Who told you that?

**MR. NEEDHAM**: I think it was in reply to a question I put before the Minister or submitted in this House. If those are not the exact words used, then that was the inference that could be drawn. I do not want the Minister to think that I am blaming him or his administration only as the blame can be laid at the doors of previous Ministers in previous Governments. So far as I can see our town planning system is fitful. We get a bit here and there and presumably portions of a complete plan. But, what is that complete plan? I hope that if the Minister does not give the Committee tonight some idea of what that complete plan is, he will do so some time later. Parliament is representative of the people and the State and as members we should have a little more information about this matter than we have at the moment. I understand that some little time ago there was talk about a regional plan for the metropolitan area. We have not heard much about that recently.

I realise that in the present Town Planning Commissioner, Mr. Davidson, we have a town planner of very high repute and undoubted zeal and energy. But still, the town planning system appears to work slowly. I asked some questions in June of this year as to what progress had been made with town planning in the metropolitan area. I asked if the Minister would give Parliament full information on the subject. I have taken a copy of the Minister's reply from "The West Australian" published the morning after the questions were asked. It states—

Under the Town Planning and Development Act it was not the responsibility of the Government or the Town Planning Board to prepare any metropolitan plan or other town planning scheme except in regard to Crown lands in townsites, the Minister for Local Government (Mr. Watts) said in the Legislative Assembly yesterday.

Mr. Watts was replying to Mr. Needham (Lab., Perth), who had asked what progress was being made with town planning for the metropolitan area, whether the blue print for the metropolitan area had been completed, or when it would be completed, and whether the Minister would give Parliament full information as to the nature and extent of metropolitan planning up to date. Mr. Watts said that the progress in town planning was that which had been made by those local authorities which had been willing to implement the Act. The basic plan for co-ordinating the schemes of local authorities in the metropolitan area had been ready for some years and the Government had authorised an aerial survey of the metropolitan region which was approaching completion and was available to any local authority undertaking the preparation of a town planning scheme.

If the Minister was satisfied on any representation that a local authority had failed to take the requisite steps to have a satisfactory town planning scheme prepared and approved in a case where a town planning scheme ought to be made, or had failed to adopt any scheme proposed by owners of any land, he could order the local authority to prepare and submit a scheme or to adopt a scheme.

One such order was served on the Perth City Council in 1937 but so far that authority had not complied. The Fremantle City Council had resolved to prepare a town planning scheme but it was not known when this would be presented to the Minister for consideration.

When schemes for the two cities were completed, and a decision made by the Commonwealth and State Governments as to the future railway gauge and location, the schemes existing and proposed by the other local authorities in the metropolitan area could be brought into conformity with the main road policy and other major public works of the various Government departments.

I suggest we shall have to exercise patience, and a considerable amount of it, before we can get any definite information on metropolitan area town planning. That reply by the Minister to the questions I asked indicates to me that with the present rate of progress we shall have to wait a considerable time. Nothing definite has been done nor can we get any definite information. It is a kind of Kathleen Mavourneen answer; it may be for years or it may be for ever, before Parliament and the people are informed as to the future of Perth. We had a National Safety Council conference a little while ago and I was present at the civic reception to members of that conference. The Minister for Transport was also there and we heard a statement from the Commissioner of Police which naturally caused a certain amount of anxiety because

it was in relation to the traffic congestion in the City of Perth. Of course, the traffic question must enter into any town planning scheme. The further we travel, the more dangerous the traffic position is becoming. The Commissioner of Police said that his department was compelled to administer the law more in the spirit than in the letter of the Act, because of the present lay-out of the city.

Business people had to have their goods delivered by motor trucks and if the letter of the law were enforced many more people would be brought before the Traffic Court than was the custom today. Traffic congestion was increasing. With the expansion of industry, to avoid this congestion, the problems of traffic and town planning should be co-ordinated, thus giving that of town planning a higher priority. I realise also, following the answers to my questions to the Minister a few weeks ago, that the standardisation of railway gauge, especially the line between Fremantle and Kalgoorlie, completely alters the picture. Further, the local authorities are somewhat dilatory in submitting their plans to the Minister. Surely there is some way of overcoming this delay in order to get a master plan published illustrating to the people what is being done, and stating what is contemplated in the future to avoid the dangers of traffic congestion and to give the people some guide as to the future of town planning. I hope that in the near future the Minister will be able to give us some definite information on the subject.

**THE MINISTER FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT** (Hon. A. F. Watts—Kating—*in reply*) [9.49]: To the member for Perth I say that less than a fortnight ago I attended a meeting of the Town Planning Board, at which all members were present, and the various matters implied in the remarks of the hon. member, or actually contained therein, were discussed at considerable length. It was necessary to go to a certain extent into past history to ascertain some of the fundamental causes for the present position, and also to find some way of altering the conditions which gave rise to that history, or in other words, which gave rise to the existing position in which, it is true,

not very much progress is being made, except in certain areas. The hon. member referred to the fact that in answer to his questions I stated it is not in the power of the Town Planning Board to prepare any Government plan except that in accordance with the provisions of the Act which applies to Crown land and town sites.

The position of the Town Planning Board is largely advisory to local authorities. The move should really come from local authorities except insofar as the Minister is empowered to direct a local authority to make up a town planning scheme. Obviously that power should be exercised with great discretion. The main purpose of my discussion with the Town Planning Board was to ascertain their considered view as to what action should be taken with regard to certain portions of the metropolitan area. I hope to receive their considered opinion in the course of the next few weeks together with suggestions as to how the difficulties that do arise and, I venture to say, are bound to arise, may be composed. Shortly after that, it is my intention to make some statement that will cover the ground in the way indicated by the hon. member. The situation, I would say, is by no means an easy one.

The plans that are available at the office of the Town Planning Board have been inspected by me. They await completion, as does the aerial survey to which I referred in my reply to the hon. member's question. When these documents are completed, they will provide a basis upon which this discussion can be furthered. I think at this stage that is all I am prepared to say. I repeat that the matter has been discussed at length by me with the Town Planning Board and I think some valuable information will be provided to me before the end of this year, in which case I will do my best to make use of it.

Vote put and passed.

[Mr. Hill took the Chair.]

Vote—Department of Industrial Development, £52,040:

**THE MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT** (Hon. A. F. Watts—Katanning) [9.53]: This Vote covers the activities of the Department of Industrial Development and during the year there has been a considerable amount of activity in

connection with its operations. The growth of secondary industries is continuing. Employment in factories reached a figure of 37,400, an increase of 1,400, in the last 12 months. This increase was mainly incurred in industrial metals, clothing, food, printing, fertilisers and the building trades. The net value of factory production—that is, the value added in course of manufacture—amounted to £18,384,197, which is an increase of 16.7 per cent. on the previous figure.

A number of new industries have commenced operations during the past 12 months, included in them being the manufacture of slag wool, using slag from the Charcoal-iron Works at Wundowie, and whaling, plant for the anti-corrosive treatment of steel, and one for protective coatings of metal; and now trawling is due to commence. Negotiations for the establishment of the steel industry; hardboard manufacture and the production of cellulose acetate and rayon and cement alumina are proceeding. I shall deal further with the steel question later on. The department has been constantly called upon for advice and assistance by industrial undertakings that are planning to widen the scope of their operations or to establish themselves in Western Australia. Information regarding mineral resources, availability of materials, power and water supplies has been given to a great number of inquirers both in Australia and overseas. The State alunite industry at Chandler and the wood distillation and charcoal-iron industry at Wundowie are, of course, the special care of the department.

The annual output at Chandler is 4,000 tons of fertiliser with a potash content of 35 per cent., which will be maintained until the new process, which will produce potassium chloride and sodium sulphate, is put into operation. Mr. Fitzgerald, the manager of the works, is at present in Chile gathering information concerning the application of refrigeration in the production cycle. He will also make some inquiries in the United States of America. It is reported that some French potash has recently been offered at £27 per ton f.o.b. Fremantle, which is below the production cost at Chandler. It would seem that this French company is following tactics similar to those pursued, so I am informed, by the Potash Cartel in America after the 1914-18 war, when it under-cut

American producers, all but one of whom went out of business. However, the American producers, with the assistance of the United States Government, have been placed on a very sound basis, and this may account for the attention now being paid to the Australian market. All we can do at the moment is closely to watch the position.

At Wundowie the plant has operated satisfactorily during the year in the production of pig-iron and sawn timber. The operation of the refinery was held up pending the delivery of certain vital materials but it is now in production. Certain complaints were made as to the effect of the effluent which had to be got rid of, during the time the refinery was not in working order, in the creek that runs adjacent to the Wundowie works and hence in certain rural areas. Investigations revealed that the complaints of the settlers regarding this water were substantially justified but the cause of it is now practically non-existent owing to the availability of the refinery and, in consequence, the absence of pyroligneous acid. It is not anticipated now that any further difficulty will be encountered. It has been decided on the recommendation of the Director of Industrial Development to set up a committee representative of the settlers and the management of the works to confer periodically and to take such steps as are necessary to ensure the preservation of the water supply in a reasonable condition. I think that proposition, which was only made a short time ago, will be readily acceptable to the settlers concerned.

Iron production has been at the rate of about 8,000 tons per annum and the output of sawn timber between 4,000 and 5,000 loads per annum. The annual value of the acetic acid and methanol production is estimated to reach £70,000. At present there are no reliable figures regarding sales of any quantity upon which we can work. It is believed, however, that there is a ready sale for the output and certainly there is more than a ready sale for the iron that is being produced. During the last three months, in addition to supplying local requirements, it has been possible to export 2,000 tons of pig-iron to Victoria and South Australia, which, on account of the shortage there, followed the cessation of iron production by the Broken Hill Proprietary.

As members are aware, in October, 1947, this House passed legislation conferring upon Messrs. Brasserts certain rights, subject to very stringent conditions, to half the Koolan Island iron-ore leases. The benefits that would result from the establishment of a large-scale iron and steel industry in Australia are fully recognised by all sections of the community. In fact, it is contended that the establishment of the industry would ensure beyond doubt the industrial future of the State. With this in mind the Government has pursued its efforts to encourage the establishment of the industry. There were also negotiations with a more or less local enterprise, which was registered as Western Steel Enterprises. This concern met serious difficulties in the raising of its capital and consequently no progress in its venture has been made. On the other hand, Messrs. Brasserts arranged for parcels of Koolan iron-ore and Collie coal to be sent to their New York research laboratories for testing under what I think is known as the direct reduction process. I understand the ore was successfully reduced by gas from Collie coal.

Following this research a Mr. Lenart, the vice-president of the Brassert Corporation, visited this State in May of this year and conferred with Government departments regarding raw materials, site location and markets. After visiting Wundowie and the South-Western district, he expressed himself as satisfied with the prospects of the establishment of a large-scale iron and steel industry at a suitable location. He was also given a considerable amount of geological and other information concerning iron-ore deposits on Koolan Island. In addition to the production of ordinary iron and steel, the prospects of establishing a large-scale charcoal-iron plant could be considered. On his return to America the directors of Brasserts decided to proceed immediately with the investigation and planning of a large-scale industry provided the Western Australian Government would share half the cost of the investigation, which was estimated at £50,000. It was further stipulated that £12,500 of the State Government's contribution was to be convertible to dollars.

The State's contribution, £25,000, was to be returned as shares in any company floated for the development of the industry. Brasserts is one of the world's foremost steel

companies and would be able to attract the necessary capital. It should also be in a position to acquire a large portion of the necessary equipment. Unfortunately, despite repeated representations at the highest levels the Commonwealth Government has up to the present refused to supply the £A12,500 in free American dollars. This attitude of the Commonwealth Government is difficult to understand in view of the great importance of the steel industry to Western Australia and the comparatively small amount of dollars involved. Furthermore, owing largely to the activities of the department and in some instances in spite of the Commonwealth Government, Western Australia's dollar earnings have recently been considerably increased as, for example, by the crayfish tail industry, so that today I think we have a substantial dollar credit balance so far as this State's trade with the United States of America is concerned. The Commonwealth attitude has considerably delayed the commencement of investigations. I have been given to understand, however, but only today, that Brasserts intend not to delay further and propose to despatch their experts to Western Australia within the next few weeks, trusting that the State Government will be able to induce the Commonwealth Government to adopt a more reasonable attitude, which we are prepared to continue to try to do.

Last year 389 acres was sown with linseed by 15 farmers under agreement with the department, by which they were guaranteed £2 per acre sown, less the cost of seed. The season was not satisfactory and harvest results were disappointing. However, much useful information as to methods to be followed has been gathered. It was hoped to plant 1,100 acres this year but owing to the late season that will not be possible. I hope we will get as high as 800 acres planted. In response to a suggestion which was made by a deputation from Wiluna, action was taken to test the suitability of Wiluna as a centre for peanut cultivation. A local company planted a small experimental plot last season and this indicated that average yields of one ton per acre could be expected. The company aims at planting 200 acres this year and the Government has made available £1,000 for further tests of available water supplies and for carrying out an exploratory boring programme. The remainder

of the Commonwealth munitions establishment at Welshpool was taken over by the State on the 16th May last. These buildings cover an area of nine acres and have a total floor space of 85,000 sq. ft. They have been subleased to two firms for use in expanded and more efficient production of fibro cement products and for anti-corrosive treatment of steel.

The Welshpool area now houses a total of 20 industrial concerns, the largest of which is Chamberlain's tractor factory. This company has experienced considerable difficulty on account of power shortages, industrial troubles elsewhere and the like, but is now in production. At present about one tractor per day is being produced, but production is gradually being stepped up until the maximum production of eight tractors per day will be reached. The factory uses much electric current, which was the reason why the proposal for the establishment of a 1,000 K.V.A. diesel generating set at Welshpool was approved. This will lighten the load on the already overloaded East Perth power station and we hope will ensure that production at the tractor factory, and probably elsewhere in the Welshpool area, will not be disturbed if trouble ensues. The foundations for the plant have already been completed and it should arrive from overseas during this month.

The Government has purchased the Boyup Brook flax mills from the Commonwealth—included in the purchase being the land, buildings, plant, consumable stores and flax straw—at a cost of £51,000. That I think was a very good bargain. A growers' co-operative company has been formed and is now operating the industry. The land, buildings and equipment have been leased to the company and it is purchasing consumable stores and flax straw as required.

As is well-known, the Government has joined with two fertiliser companies operating in Western Australia to erect a plant at Albany capable of manufacturing at least 40,000 tons of super. per annum. The operation of these works will ensure better supplies of super. in this area and should materially assist the development of the Albany district. It is not expected, however, that the works can be operating inside of the next 24 months. The Commonwealth Government's equity in the factory



at Donnybrook, used for dehydration, has been acquired for £20,000 and efforts are now being directed towards interesting a company which is an Australian-wide producer of canned fruits and allied products to take over this factory.

As is also well-known, the Collie power alcohol distillery has been purchased from the Commonwealth and it is expected that an industry for the treatment of wheat into synthetic rice will be instituted. Here again, finalisation of this matter must depend on negotiations that are taking place between the company and Commonwealth departments. Naturally a very large quantity of wheat is involved and there are also other considerations on the financial side, as well as on the technical side, which have to be satisfied. Undoubtedly the bran, which would be a sort of by-product of this industry, would be very valuable in Western Australia for two of our major primary industries, and I do not doubt for one moment that the industry will start at Collie and, given satisfactory markets—which I am informed exist in countries such as Pakistan, India and the Philippines—there will be little doubt of its success.

Much progress has been made in the fishing industry in Western Australia during the 12 months ended the 30th June. The most important event during this period was the successful reopening of the Point Cloates whaling station after years of inactivity. Up till Monday, the 9th August last, 60 whales had been caught and processed. At present the plant is capable of treating only two whales a day—that is about the rate at which they have been caught—but further reconditioning is now under way and the processing capacity will be increased. The catcher vessels are converted Navy Fairmiles and it is expected that the factory will produce about 1,500 tons of oil this year, which approximates the present Australian requirements. There will also be produced 1,500 tons of meat-meal which I think is in urgent demand in this State.

Unfortunately, here again considerable difficulty was experienced with the Commonwealth. The State was definitely prepared to grant such whaling license as was necessary for fishing within State territorial waters, the lease of the land at Pt. Cloates,

the preparation of the necessary short distance of road which was required, and to make any other arrangements which would assist in the early commencement of the industry. But it looked at one stage as though the industry would not commence owing to the reluctance of the Commonwealth to issue the whaling license that was necessary in order to allow the company lawfully to function.

Representations were made through all available channels—Federal Ministers, Federal members, Federal members in Western Australia who are Ministers, the normal State Channels of the Premier's Department and elsewhere. At one stage it appeared as though this license would never be issued. The Commonwealth officers who deal with the matter were apparently of the opinion that the converted vessels, costing about £15,000 each, would be entirely unsuitable for the industry, whereas they have been established, to be quite suitable for the purpose; and also, in the back of the minds of the Commonwealth officials was the intention of the Commonwealth to start a whaling industry on the Western Australian coast itself.

However, about the time that the State had resolved to tell the applicants to go ahead, the license was issued, and since that time the industry has been comparatively successful. I hope there will be a ready market for its product—that is to say, the oil in particular—and I am sure that its catch of whales will very considerably increase as the treatment facilities at the station are developed. It must be remembered that these people took over something which had been disused for a considerable period, and which had to be very heavily reconditioned. The Commonwealth Government has since indicated that it proposes to erect on the North-West coast a large modern shore whaling station which will commence operations next year. I am given to understand that it is suggested this industry should start quite close to the town of Carnarvon. I do not think it is any part of my business to criticise the intention of the Commonwealth to begin such an industry, but I do feel it might consider more carefully the place at which to start it.

I understand that the quantity of water that would be required by a whaling station would be about 100,000 gallons a day for

such a station as is proposed, and in difficult years I think the effect on the banana plantations might have to receive some consideration. In addition, it is a well-known fact that a whaling industry in close proximity to a township is liable to be most unsavoury in certain weather conditions; and when it is realised that there are other places on the coast—I think Port Gregory might be mentioned as one—where suitable harbour accommodation, water supplies, and other conditions are to be found, perhaps it might be desirable if the Commonwealth were to consider those aspects. I think we might be justified in at least bringing these alternatives under the Commonwealth Government's consideration. I wish it to be clearly understood that I have no desire to prevent the establishment of an industry on the Western Australian coast but I think we are all entitled to make representations to ensure that it is placed in the most desirable position.

The fish canning industry has continued to expand, and I think the expansion will continue. There are, as members know, quite a number of factories situated round the south and west coasts. They are carrying on moderately successfully. During the past 12 months over 1½ million pounds of frozen crayfish tails were exported from the State, to a total value of £290,000. Several new freezing plants have been installed at Geraldton, and five freezer boats are operating at Lancelin Island. In August last, Seafoods Ltd., which produces the Snowman fish pack—it is wrapped in cellophane and is becoming extremely popular—and whose factory, I may say from a personal inspection, is a credit to the company, commenced operations at Albany. Owing to the shortage of supplies of fish, the plant, which is the most modern of its kind in Australia, has not been used to capacity. Sufficient supplies, however, are being produced to satisfy the local market. It is expected that next week a parcel will leave for the Eastern States.

It was quite obvious that the supplies could not be maintained in sufficient quantities to keep the factory fully employed and to work up an export market unless much larger quantities of fish could be brought in. So, two trawlers are due to arrive from England during this week, and they will

greatly augment the supply so that the factory will be capable of processing over one million pounds of filleted fish per year. This year two companies were formed whose intention it was to purchase and equip in England two trawlers which were to be brought to Albany from where they were to conduct trawling operations in the Bight. Those vessels—300 tonners—are equipped with the most modern trawling equipment and are manned by crews of 16 men each, specially picked from 2,000 applicants willing to migrate to Australia. Here again, Commonwealth departments did not facilitate the arrangements. The Capital Issues Board was unwilling to give the necessary permission for the floating of a company of a total capital of £50,000. That is why, finally, two separate companies were floated because it was understood by the promoters that no permission was required to float a company whose capital did not exceed £25,000. It would, however, in my opinion have been much more desirable had one company been floated with the permission of the Capital Issues Board.

The efforts made by the department to expand the production of building materials have, to some extent, been offset by the unfortunate series of interruptions to electric power supply which have caused a direct loss of about five weeks' production. At the same time, manufacturers generally are constantly improving their methods, mainly by mechanisation, and the production of building materials will increase steadily with continuous operations. The department has rendered all possible assistance by advising on improved layouts, and the introduction of mechanisation, to offset rising costs and scarcity of labour. That has been specially necessary in brickworks where manufacturers are eager to avail themselves of modern methods. There are now seven works handling bricks mechanically, and an increasing number with their own excavating machines in the pits. The department has been able to secure the necessary plant and equipment for the mechanisation in addition to advising on application and use.

The department is also working with the local cement company on a proposal to install at those works, grinding mills from the Goldfields which, within about six

months, should result in an appreciable increase in cement production. In addition to securing plant and short supply materials for works expansion, the department maintains some liaison with the Department of Labour and National Service, and has been able to assist in the placing of displaced labour to mutual advantage. It has been necessary to obtain early expansion of various works to provide financial assistance by way of guaranteed bank overdraft, as a matter of Government policy to increase production. Some 14 applications for assistance have been investigated, or are under consideration, and assistance has been recommended and arranged for 10 concerns making bricks, tiles, or joinery in both city and country areas.

Every effort is also made to keep in touch with recent developments in the production of new building materials and to encourage the production here of those which appear suitable to our conditions. The department can advise intending manufacturers regarding markets, availability and cost of plant and buildings, and operating costs of the production of most building materials. The display window in Barrack-street is still available to manufacturers for the purpose of exhibiting locally manufactured goods. A building on the Royal Show grounds has been taken over by the department. It will be another avenue through which publicity can be given to its activities. That covers the main activities of the department during the year. It does not deal, of course, with the thousand and one small matters which come up for attention from time to time in the department's efforts to expand existing industries, to maintain those already established, or to encourage people to investigate the desirability of opening new ones.

We have had representatives of English companies here, and they have been advised of what facilities could be made available to them, and of the Government's desire, if they decide to establish large-scale industries here, to make them such reasonable concessions as would facilitate their enterprise. But we are not, unfortunately, in a position to know the result of their investigations, nor, until we are advised in that direction, are we at liberty to say who they are. I, therefore, do not know what

the effect of their inquiries and our suggestions will be, but I do know that everything that is reasonably possible has been done to advance the claims of this State, in connection with their industries, against the other States of the Commonwealth where, of course, equally good facilities are no doubt available and where, unfortunately, the majority of the population of Australia still lies, and, therefore, I presume in most cases, the majority of their market. I shall be prepared to answer questions on the departmental expenditure.

I trust that the co-operation that we shall receive in future months from the Commonwealth authorities will be a little more ready, in regard to some of these projects, than it has been in the past. The Director and I were discussing this matter only a day or so ago and it occurred to us that there surely could be no better judges of what is desirable for the development and expansion of Western Australia than the experts in the Government service, on the one hand, and the representatives of the people in conjunction with them, on the other hand. Yet it is obvious that circumstances surround us with restrictions that require us to obtain the approval of Commonwealth officials, and ultimately of Commonwealth Ministers, before these schemes can proceed. Generally speaking, there has been no difficulty about it, but in the three major matters that I have mentioned this evening we have felt a little grieved at the attitude that has been taken up or, alternatively, the delays that have ensued before we received favourable decisions. It is with great pleasure that I submit these Estimates to the Committee.

**HON. A. R. G. HAWKE** (Northam) [10.32]: Mr. Deputy Chairman, in accordance with the gag motion that the Government, with its supporters, was able to pass recently, members of this Committee have two sitting days remaining upon which to complete consideration of the departmental Estimates yet to be dealt with. They constitute easily a majority of the Estimates and among them are many of the most important. It is easy, therefore, to see the impossible position into which members of the Committee are being forced and will increasingly be forced as a result of the gag motion put forward by the Government and carried on the votes of members of the

Government and its supporters. It has been interesting to notice the trend of debate in connection with the departmental Estimates, following the carrying of the motion to which I have referred. Whereas Ministerial supporters were previously almost completely silent in the sittings of this year, they have, since the passing of the motion, become quite vocal, with the result that those who voted for the gag motion have, since its being passed, had, I believe, more to say than those who opposed the motion. However, we have no option at this stage but to accept the situation, which is unfair almost to the extent of being intolerable and which will become absolutely intolerable as we more closely approach the deadline, which is 9 p.m. on Tuesday of next week.

In introducing the Estimates associated with the Department of Industrial Development, the Minister told us something about a number of matters but, unfortunately, has not been able to give to the Committee a record of any very solid actual achievement covering the 12 months from the 1st July, 1948, to the 30th June, 1949. The Director of Industrial Development, Mr. Fernie, delivered an interesting address to members of the Progress Association in February of this year. A report of that address was published in the "W.A. Mining and Commercial Review" in March of this year. Among other things, Mr. Fernie, as reported in this journal, said—

In 1939, the Department of Industrial Development was strengthened and a definite policy was defined and vigorously implemented. This policy aimed at—

(1) Replacing by local manufacture within economic limits all imports of manufactured goods from the Eastern States. The manufactures which received special attention were processed foodstuffs, clothing, footwear, furniture and engineering supplies.

(2) Special publicity and efforts to raise the standard of locally produced goods to overcome the prejudice of the buying public against local manufactures, which was very strong at the time.

(3) The provision of financial assistance and technical advice to expand existing industries and establish new industries.

(4) To assist development by establishing basic pioneering industries which, because of their experimental nature, were not attractive to private investors. In addition to the expansion which occurred in existing industries, the following new industries have been established:—

- (1) Electric motor manufacture (two factories).
- (2) Electrical equipment (five factories).
- (3) Plastics (two factories).
- (4) Steel containers (one factory).
- (5) Wool tops (one factory).
- (6) Engines, petrol and kerosene (three factories).
- (7) Rock-drill parts (one factory).
- (8) Slagwool and cork (one factory).
- (9) Plywood (two factories).
- (10) Cornflour and starch (one factory).
- (11) Canned fish and meats (six factories).
- (12) Implement handles (two factories).
- (13) Linseed oil (one factory).
- (14) Woodworking machines (one factory).
- (15) Slipper manufacture (one factory).
- (16) Special leathers (one factory).
- (17) Machine tools (two factories).
- (18) Hand tools.
- (19) Casein.
- (20) Vegetable fibres.
- (21) Charcoal-iron.
- (22) Acetic acid.
- (23) Methanol.
- (24) Potash.
- (25) Sodium sulphate.
- (26) Heavy-duty farm tractors.

In the discussions that took place on the Estimates of the Department of Education, we had, as between members on one side of the House and members on the other side, a fair amount of disputation as to which Government was responsible for doing this and which was responsible for doing something else. This list of achievements in the field of industrial development since the year 1939, as recited by Mr. Fernie in his speech, covers practically all the achievements in the field of industrial development from 1939 to the beginning of this year. I would say that 95 per cent. of the achievements were made by the previous Government, or at least planned by it. Therefore it is impossible not to express keen disappointment at the failure of the present Government to achieve—actually achieve—something of a substantial character in the field of industrial development.

I know the present Minister, supported by the Government, has been putting in a fair amount of work in regard to this field for

the purpose of trying to achieve, in a practical way, something of a major character. I know something of the efforts which have been put forward in the endeavour to establish a large-scale iron and steel industry. I know, too, that the ideas and proposals in that regard, or some of them, had been developed before the previous Government left office; and that one of those remaining major objectives in the field of industrial development was to try to establish the iron and steel industry in Western Australia on a large-scale basis with a production of approximately 100,000 tons of iron per year, plus the steel fabricating plant which would be necessary to treat that iron and to fabricate it into steel products.

It was certainly unfortunate that one of the groups which had hoped to establish a steel fabricating plant in Western Australia was not able, because of a number of circumstances, to raise all of the capital necessary to enable the proposed industry to be established on the basis planned. As a result of that failure—about a year ago if I remember rightly—nothing at all could be attempted, in a practical way, to establish the proposed industry. The Minister told us tonight that this group is still making endeavours, and still intending to make further endeavours, for the purpose of trying to reach a stage where it might be able to go ahead with its original plans. He told us also of the investigations already carried out by or on behalf of Messrs. Brasserts Ltd. The people of Western Australia might very well be advised to repose the greater share of their hopes for success in this matter in Messrs. Brasserts Ltd. I say that for several reasons, the main one of which is that Messrs. Brasserts Ltd. are a very solidly established firm with a great deal of practical organisation already in existence supported by a large measure of technical skill in the very field of iron and steel in which we are so anxious to make additional progress in Western Australia.

It is certainly not an easy matter for a group which does not possess any large-scale practical organisation to achieve what it is desired to achieve in this matter. I know that such a group might succeed in interesting some established organisations in a proposal to take part, in practical form, in an endeavour to establish a large-scale iron and steel industry in this State. Nevertheless,

the firm which already has that organisation, and has years of successful practical experience behind it, has easily the better opportunity. If we are, as a State, to obtain success from either one of these directions then it would seem to me to be most likely to come from the direction of Messrs. Brasserts Ltd.

I think it is very well understood that the previous Government, in establishing the charcoal-iron industry and related industries at Wundowie, had, as one of its greatest hopes in connection with that enterprise, the idea that the enterprise when established and successfully operating would prove the economics of the production of charcoal-iron in this State to such an extent as to justify the Government, and the people of the State, in proceeding to the ultimate stage of establishing a completely integrated iron and steel industry with a production of at least 100,000 tons of charcoal-iron per year.

The proposal we had in mind, at that time, was to establish the intended large-scale industry somewhere in the South-West. The iron-ore was to be shipped from Koolan Island to Bunbury, and the timber resources of the South-West were naturally to be drawn upon for the purpose of producing the required charcoal and for the further purpose of producing the by-products which come from the processes of wood distillation. I was naturally pleased to hear the Minister in his speech tonight make such praiseworthy reference to the continued progress of the charcoal-iron and wood distillation industry at Wundowie. When we remember the history of the industry at Wundowie we, and in that I include the whole of the people of Western Australia, have every reason to be extremely pleased at this stage at the measure of success achieved by that industry. One reason for that is that some three years ago, two and a half years ago and even two years ago a number of malicious rumours were spread against this industry and against the possibility of its ever succeeding. I know that most of the rumours were spread for political purposes, particularly through the district which I then represented, which I still represent and which, by the grace of Providence and the support of the majority of people in the district, I hope to go on representing.

When the Government of the day was defeated in early 1947 and the present Government came into office, the rumours which had previously circulated against the industry were intensified by the decision of the present Government to appoint a Royal Commission to investigate the industry to ascertain whether it had been properly established and for the further purpose of ascertaining whether the industry as established could possibly operate at all, and if at all whether it could operate successfully. The work of that Royal Commission is now past history. It will be recollected by members that the report was 100 per cent satisfactory, and its publication had the very desirable effect of killing all the malicious rumours which previously had been deliberately circulated against the industry and the Government which was responsible for its establishment.

Earlier this year the Institute of Engineers of Australia held their Australia-wide conference in Perth. During the time the conference was being held, 220 members of that Institute visited Wundowie to inspect the charcoal-iron and wood distillation at that centre. According to a report which appeared in the "Northam Advertiser" they expressed amazement at the size of the industry and how well it had been thought out, as well as the method employed in the use of waste materials. Therefore the impression gained by those engineers confirmed completely the report of the Royal Commissioner in which he found the industry to have been safely and efficiently established. In the address which Mr. Fernie gave to the progress associations and to which I referred earlier, he discussed what he considered to be the foremost outstanding new industries to be introduced into Western Australia during the previous ten years. The four industries he mentioned were wool top manufacture by Wool Combers Ltd., tractor manufacture by Chamberlain's Industries, the Wundowie charcoal-iron and wood distillation industry, and the alunite industry at Lake Chandler.

All of these industries were either started directly by the previous Government or most of the arrangements for their commencement were made by it. I think every member knows that the alunite industry at Chandler and the charcoal-iron and wood distillation industry at Wundowie are

socialised industries which, after some deep thought on the part of the member for Irwin-Moore, has brought a smile to his face. I mention this fact only for the purpose of indicating how really extremely silly is a lot of the talk and the propaganda against socialism that we hear and read about. I do not think there is any person in Australia completely against socialisation. There is not one person in Australia who does not grab with both hands any measure of socialisation which is likely to give him some benefit.

The fact that the present Government has carried on these two socialised industries at Lake Chandler and Wundowie proves completely that members of the present Government and their supporters are not opposed to socialisation of industry when the situation is essential if the State is to develop and make that measure of progress which is necessary. It is stating only the bare truth to say that neither of these industries would have been established if it had been left to private enterprise to establish them. Therefore, is there anyone in this House foolish enough to say that he opposes socialisation; that he will have nothing to do with socialisation of any kind?

[Mr. Perkins resumed the Chair.]

The Honorary Minister for Supply and Shipping: Yes, I do.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: There is another one over there in the corner.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: It is very interesting to have a statement from the Honorary Minister, the member for Subiaco, that she is opposed to socialisation in every shape and form. If she earnestly is of that opinion, the least she should do in this debate is to rise in her place and heartily condemn her own Government for continuing these socialised enterprises at Lake Chandler and Wundowie.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: You are an optimist.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: She should also get up and advocate and strongly advocate the sale of the State Saw Mills.—

The Honorary Minister for Supply and Shipping: Not likely!

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: —the State Brickworks, the State Shipping Service, the State Railways and many other State organisations and instrumentalities—

The Honorary Minister for Supply and Shipping: How much do they pay?

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: —which are carried on by the State of Western Australia and by a Government of which the Honorary Minister for Supply and Shipping happens to be a member. I am not concerned at the moment as to how much they pay or as to how much they do not pay.

Mr. Rodoreda: That is the only criterion, according to some people.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I am concerned at the moment, as I have always been, with the ultimate progress and development of Western Australia as a State. I am intensely concerned in trying to establish in Western Australia as many industries as possible, provided each such industry is established upon a sound technical basis and that it has a reasonable prospect of being operated successfully in every respect, including the financial respect. However, if a large scale industry can be established only by the State undertaking to meet each year some measure of loss in respect of its operations, I would still be in favour of establishing it. A person who measures the worth of a large scale industry to the State only on the basis of its own profit and loss account, is a person possessed of no vision at all. Such a person has no right to be in the public life of the State, let alone a member of its Government. In giving consideration to the possible establishment of large scale industries, we have to try to measure the benefit that would accrue to the State therefrom.

We, perhaps more than any other State in Australia, need population. I suggest it would be worse than useless to bring large numbers of additional people to Western Australia if the prospect in the future for them and for us is uncertain in respect of the measure of regular well-paid employment which might be made available to them. We would not only be doing a disservice to those already in Western Australia and to its Government, but we would to some extent be committing a crime against the people we would bring from other countries, if the basis of our industries were such as to offer prospects

of only partial employment for those individuals. Therefore I think any Government charged with the control of the affairs and future destiny of the State should be courageous in this matter, even to the extent of taking a fairly large-scale financial risk.

We have to remember that we start off a long way behind scratch in Western Australia with regard to the establishment of secondary industries. We would be in that position even if we went back as far as 1939 or even to 1930. At that period we would have had to start off a long way behind scratch when compared with New South Wales, Victoria and, to some lesser extent, South Australia. When manufacturers established their enterprises in New South Wales and Victoria, they did so not only on the basis of producing the full requirements of those States but indeed in most instances on the basis of supplying the full requirements of the whole of the States of the Commonwealth. Therefore Western Australia, because it concentrated for so many years on primary production and goldmining, missed many opportunities that were available in the earlier years of the century, to establish secondary industries in this part of Australia.

I know very well that the activities in our primary and goldmining industries and the production therefrom were reasonably sufficient to meet our needs and to provide a fairly reasonable measure of constant employment for most of our people. However, the world trade depression years from 1929 to 1935 high-lighted the very dangerous weakness in the economic structure of this State. It was as a result of that experience that Governments from 1936 onwards determined to develop assets upon which the State could tackle in a practical way the problem of trying to establish secondary industries in Western Australia in order that our economic structure might become more broadly based, that our production might become more diversified, that we might become more self-supporting in every way and that we might be able to absorb a greater population in a manner that would be advantageous to the people brought here and beneficial to the State as a whole.

I admit that the present Government, because of its Party affiliations and its alleged policy of opposition to socialism and also

because of its alleged policy of leaving everything to private enterprise, is at some disadvantage in connection with this task of developing more secondary industries in Western Australia. I say that because the Government has to play a very important part if secondary industries are to be developed on an increasing scale in this State. The Government itself has to become directly interested in any such attempts and in such enterprises. If any Government here sits down or stands aside and waits upon private enterprise to establish the increasing measure of industrial development which we urgently need, then that Government and the people generally will wait in vain for any worthwhile extension of our secondary industries. It is a Government responsibility.

The Government has to show very great initiative and must, at any rate, be prepared to take financial risks. The previous Government did that. As a matter of fact, it is no exaggeration to say that we took our fate as a Government in our hands when we tackled the establishment of the alunite and potash industries at Chandler and subsequently when we tackled at Wundowie the establishment of the charcoal-iron and wood distillation industry. If for any reason those industries had failed, or had been found to be incapable of operation, I can imagine the abuse which would have been heaped upon us by those who were opposed to us in politics and by some of the newspapers in the State. The abuse would have been such as to have made it impossible for some of us to survive in politics for any great length of time. Mr. Fernie, in his address to the members of the Progress Association in February of this year, said—

The epic struggle to develop this industry

....  
He is referring to the potash industry at Chandler—

... during war time with its associated difficulties in regard to supplies of materials, equipment and manpower, together with those of mounting costs, will, some day, form a brilliant page in Australia's industrial history.

For the sake mainly of the Honorary Minister, I wish to say that our Government was assisting private enterprise, or free enterprise as she might prefer to call it, to develop an industry at Chandler for the production of potash from the huge deposits

of alunite at that centre; but private enterprise, or free enterprise, whichever one cares to call it, fell down on the job and found it impossible to continue. I am not condemning the concern for its failure, because there were special circumstances brought into existence entirely as a result of the entry of Japan into the war which made it exceedingly difficult for it to proceed. However, it could not proceed and the Government, rather than see the industry disappear, decided to develop it itself, and it is now established and operating.

I think the Minister told us this evening that fertiliser is now being produced at Lake Chandler at the rate of 4,000 tons per annum. He also told us that potash is being imported into Australia at present from French sources and being sold at a price which might make it rather difficult for the industry at Chandler to compete. However, I have no doubt the Minister is taking action which is open to him to prevent unfair competition by the imported potash. We know how easy it is for powerful overseas companies to indulge in this practice, as our State has suffered in past years from the same practice by large concerns in the Eastern States. It is the same story in a bigger way.

I should hope the Minister and the Government would find the Commonwealth prepared to do something in a practical way to make sure that the potash industry in this State is not unfairly prejudiced because of competition from overseas, when that competition was unfair and mainly for the purpose of trying to destroy the local industry. We all know what happens when a big competitor succeeds in smashing a small competitor by underselling for a period. The small competitor is driven out of the business and the big firm becomes a combine or a monopoly, quickly making up all the loss it sustained in the price war, with interest added in large volume. I am perfectly satisfied to leave that problem with the Minister, convinced that he will do everything in his power to ensure that the local industry is given reasonable protection, which is all that it can expect and with which I think it will not only survive but survive to succeed and to continue for many years to come.



The production of charcoal-iron at Wundowie at the rate of 8,000 tons per annum is indeed of great value to the State. Its value has been high-lighted in recent months during which it has been almost impossible for foundries in this State to obtain their pig-iron requirements from eastern Australia, if they have been relying upon that source of supply, as they would have been had the Wundowie industry not been established. Therefore, it is true to say that all our iron foundries have been enabled to continue in production because they could obtain supplies of pig-iron from Wundowie. The Minister told us that this industry had not only made it possible for our iron foundries to continue, but had also made it possible for a number of iron foundries in Victoria and South Australia to continue, as those foundries, like ours, were not able to obtain their supplies from the Broken Hill Proprietary Company's works at Newcastle, New South Wales.

Now that the large-scale timber mill at Wundowie is in full operation, or fairly so, and now that the large-scale distillation refinery is coming into production, the industry should within a reasonable period reach the stage when it will be in full production. The financial position of the industry should then rapidly improve until it is operating profitably, which should bring even slight joy to the bitterly anti-Socialistic mind and the bitterly anti-Socialist heart, if any, of the Honorary Minister for Supply and Shipping.

The Honorary Minister for Supply and Shipping: I can take that, but I believe socialisation is a curse to Australia.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: When the previous Government planned to establish the industries at Wundowie, it included the timber mill proposal and the wood distillation refinery proposal because it realised that the charcoal-iron industry could not possibly succeed financially of itself. The belief we had at that time was that the industry could be built up to a satisfactory financial state only if a large-scale timber mill were to be established and if a wood distillation industry were to be established to recover the by-products from the timber which was being turned into charcoal so that commer-

cial timber and the products of wood distillation would be available for sale to bring greatly increased revenue to the industry.

There are many other matters I would have liked to discuss in connection with this department, and to discuss at some length. However, I have no desire to monopolise the time—the miserable amount of time—left to members to deal with the items of this department and the items of two or three of the succeeding departments, although no blame could properly be attached to me if I were to follow my natural inclination and say as much about the detailed Estimates of this department as I thought would be justified. It is most unfair and most unsatisfactory, too, that members of this Committee should be driven into a position where they have to discard much of what they would have liked to say in connection with the items of the particular department in the operations of which they are respectively interested. That is not a proper situation for members of Parliament to be forced into at all.

It is a complete negation of what should be the proper parliamentary procedure. It is a complete negation, too, of democracy in its best and purest form. We are being forced, as members of this Committee and of this Parliament, into a position where we do not say all the things we consider should be said; and when a member of Parliament suppresses some of the things he considers he should say in the best interests of the State, he is to that extent falling down on his job and proving recreant to the trust which is upon him and letting down his own electors and the people of the State generally. However, we have no choice in that, because of the action of the Government in bringing forward the gag motion and the action of the supporters of the Government in supporting that motion and thus having it carried.

I would like the Minister to convey to the officers of this department the best wishes, I am sure, of everyone in the Committee, in relation to the work which they do. I have not an expert knowledge of every Government department but I have a close knowledge of several of them and a passing acquaintance with all the others; and I say without hesitation that I have not known a Government department like this one—Commonwealth or State—where so few

officers attempted so much in the way of work and achieved so much in the way of beneficial results for the State.

**MR. ACKLAND** (Irwin-Moore) [11.25]: There is only one item under this heading about which I would like to have something to say, and I will not take up very much time. The item regarding the synthetic rice factory at Collie is naturally one of considerable interest to me, and I do hope that the company which intends to operate there can do so satisfactorily. I understand the intention is to process some 3,000,000 bushels of wheat per year; and that, being 10 per cent. of the average marketable crop in Western Australia, is a considerable amount. We can do nothing more than hope that the company will make a success of it.

**Hon. F. J. S. Wise:** What is the limit of price per bushel?

**Mr. ACKLAND:** I will mention that before I sit down. When we realise that the company expects to make some 17,000 or 18,000 tons of offal—bran and pollard—available to the dairy and poultry industries of this State, that renders the proposition more attractive. I am very pleased to hear that the State Government is not interested in this concern other than as the landlord and that it is leasing this factory to the company. I do not know whether members are aware of the fact, but during the war there were 18 factories in Australia which made a produce called rycena, and they had markets which were available because of war conditions. However, it was found impossible to carry on those factories unless wheat was bought at concessional prices. At that time, the price for wheat consumed within Australia was 6s. 3d. a bushel and the price for oversea wheat was somewhere in the vicinity of 19s.—certainly not below 18s.—a bushel.

The Commonwealth Government was approached for concessional wheat to fill contracts, particularly in the Mediterranean countries and India, and even with wheat at 6s. 3d.—and I believe they received some at that price—they found it impossible to compete. If my information is correct, the only factory now operating is one in Western Australia, which is producing for the home market. Naturally, they

are entitled to get wheat at the home consumption price for the local market. But in America I believe there were many factories producing this synthetic rice. Those that are more conversant with the wheat trade than I am tell me that they have now gone out of production.

**Hon. F. J. S. Wise:** Is the price factor the only cause?

**Mr. ACKLAND:** I believe it had a lot to do with it. One person interested in one of these firms is in Western Australia today, and intends establishing the factory at Collie. Well, I wish him every success, but as a wheatgrower it is only natural that I should expect him to pay the oversea price for the wheat that is used in connection with the portion which he intends to export. It is interesting to know what he should pay for it today. Of last season's crop of 173½ million bushels, 57¼ million bushels are being used within Australia for flour, stockfeed and processing. That wheat would return to the grower 6s. 8d. per bushel free on board at ports. I find that the wheat which was exported either in the way of flour or as wheat up to the 30th April of this year represented nearly 25 million bushels. That wheat brought, on the oversea market, approximately 14s. 7½d. per bushel.

It was anticipated that up to the end of July—the figures I am quoting were compiled in May—another 38½ million bushels would be exported, and they were to fill firm contracts in round figures at 14s. 9½d. From the 1st July it was anticipated that the International Wheat Agreement would come into existence. Australia was under an obligation to sell another 35-1/3rd million bushels at 11s., the maximum which could be obtained for wheat under that agreement. That left 17½ million bushels for which the oversea open market was 13s. 8d. per bushel. The futures for wheat have risen considerably since then. No doubt wheat on today's market would be nearer 13s. 9d. or 13s. 10d. per bushel. If the factory at Collie can process the wheat and export it oversea at that price, we can do nothing less than wish it every success.

I can assure the Minister, and of course the Commonwealth Government, who are the only ones that can make the conces-

sion, that there will be a large outcry from the producers if they are asked to sell their wheat at less than the oversea market price, which is the open market value. I say that because this 17½ million bushels is free wheat, outside the International Wheat Agreement, and the grower is entitled to get the value of it. Should the factory be able to operate, it will be of great benefit to the State. At present we are only manufacturing, in round figures, some 70,000 tons of mill offal whereas the primary producers want 100,000 tons of it. Those 17,000 or 18,000 tons would be of tremendous value to the people who want to use the concentrates. The offal is sold at home consumption price. I rose more particularly to stress the fairness of the wheat being sold at its true value, and to say that the wheat industry should not be again asked to make concessions so that processors in this country can compete on the oversea market to the disadvantage of the wheatgrower.

Progress reported.

### ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

**THE PREMIER** (Hon. D. R. McLarty—Murray-Wellington) I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till 2.30 p.m. tomorrow.

Question put and passed.

*House adjourned at 11.36 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 14th September.

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 2.30 p.m., and read prayers.

### QUESTIONS.

#### HOSPITALS.

*As to Provision at Midland Junction.*

Mr. BRADY asked the Minister for Health:

(1) Can he state whether there is any possibility of the Government building either of the following hospitals in, or near, Midland Junction, in the near future:—

(a) a maternity hospital;

(b) a general hospital?

(2) If the answer is "No," can some indication be given regarding the Government's intentions in connection with a hospital for Midland Junction and districts?