

Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 25 July, 1922.

Printed Questions and Answers — Questions Without Notice — Royal Alexandra Hospital for Children (Ministerial Statement) — Murray Lands Settlement (Adjournment) — Female Employees' Wages Bill — Franchise Extension Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair.

PRINTED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

VOCATIONAL TRAINEES.

Mr. JAKES asked the PREMIER,—
(1) Will the Government use its best endeavours to absorb into its various departments — especially the Railways and Tramways—vocational trainees under the Federal repatriation scheme? (2) Will he obtain from the Hon. the Minister for Labour and Industry, for the information of hon. members, a report as to whether difficulties are put in the way of vocational trainees by reason of the fact that industrial unions will not allow them to become members?

Answer,—(1) Every endeavour will be made to absorb these trainees in the Government service, but the opportunities for doing so are very limited, owing to the obligation which rests upon the Government of finding suitable employment for those of their own employees who came back from the war with serious wounds and other disabilities which have impaired, to some extent, their previous efficiency. (2) I am informed by my hon. colleague, the Minister for Labour and Industry, that so far as information is available to him there is no reason to believe that any such difficulty exists. However, if the hon. member will supply specific particulars of individual cases they will be investigated with a view to ascertaining if remedial action should be taken. If any person considers himself to be aggrieved in the way suggested in the question, a remedy is provided by section 52 (1) of the Industrial Arbitration Act, 1912, as amended.

REMOVAL OF OFFICER FROM LANDS DEPARTMENT.

Mr. NESBITT asked the SECRETARY FOR LANDS,—(1) Is it a fact that an

officer of the Lands Department of German origin, and who changed his name during the war, was removed from the Orange Land Board Office, owing to complaints by returned soldiers and the townspeople to the then Premier? (2) Is it a fact that this officer was appointed to the parish map compiling branch, but did not take up duty owing to the officers of that branch petitioning against his appointment? (3) Is it a fact that this officer was subsequently appointed as an inspector, and that he has recently been instructed to inspect the various branches, which include a number of returned soldiers? (4) If such be the case, will he take the necessary action, in the interest of the department, to cancel such instructions, and place this officer in a position where he will cause less friction with the staff?

Answer,—(1) The officer referred to was born at Balmain, and has been continuously employed in the Lands Department since 1882. His mother was born in Ireland. His father was born in Mecklenburg-Schwerin in 1826, before it became part of the German Empire; came to Australia in 1854; became a naturalised British subject a few years later; and lived in New South Wales for over sixty years. Complaint was made in 1919 by the Returned Soldiers' League at Orange to Mr. Holman, the then Premier and the officer's transfer to Sydney was effected shortly afterwards. (2) The officer was so appointed, and did not take up duty in that position, as it was found advisable, apparently, to employ him temporarily as officer-in-charge of another branch. (3) Yes. (4) The disposition of officers and arrangement of work, as well as the smooth working of the department, are matters for the permanent head, subject to the Public Service Board.

AMENDMENT OF STANDING ORDERS: ELECTION OF SPEAKER.

Mr. GOLDSTEIN asked the PREMIER,—In view of the protracted and irrelevant discussions, leading to scenes which have reflected no credit on past Legislative Assemblies in connection with the election of Speaker, will he move an instruction to the Standing Orders Committee to prepare and submit to this House standing

orders investing the Clerk, while acting as Chairman, with plenary powers for the maintenance of order, and the putting of all questions which may be put with the Speaker in the chair?

Answer,—I shall be prepared to move a suitable motion when a favourable opportunity occurs in the direction mentioned by the hon. member.

VALUER-GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT.

Mr. GOLDSTEIN asked the MINISTER FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT,—Will he furnish the following information,—(1) Date of establishment of the Valuer-General's Department? (2) Cost of said department to date? (3) Total receipts from all sources? (4) Number of shires and municipalities in State? (5) How many valuations have been completed to date? (6) What is the estimated cost to complete all valuations? (7) What was the cost to municipalities and shires to date? (8) Estimated period for completion of all valuations?

Answer,—(1) January, 1917. (2) £96,877 ls. 4d. (This includes the cost of resumption, lease apportionment, and land-tax work). (3) £18,553 2s. 8d. (4) 136 shires, 184 municipalities. (5) 388,677. (6) Gross cost £60,000 per annum, of which £30,000 per annum or more will be recouped during the period of doing the work as direct revenue. (7) £9,326 17s. 2d. (8) Ten years.

RESERVES ON RICHMOND-TWEED RIVERS AND AT RAPPVILLE.

Mr. PERDRIAU asked the SECRETARY FOR LANDS,—In relation to various reserves at the head of the Richmond and Tweed Rivers, and at Rappville, at present under the control of the Forestry Department, and from which most marketable timber has been removed, will he take steps to have as much of this land as possible speedily thrown open for settlers, seeing that it is eminently suitable for closer settlement?

Answer,—I would ask the hon. member to indicate the particular reserves referred to. Certain areas have already been approved for settlement as soon as the marketable timbers are cut out, and this is being expedited as far as possible

PLANTING OF PINE TREES BETWEEN GRAFTON AND RAPPVILLE.

Mr. PERDRIAU asked the MINISTER FOR FORESTS,—Will he make inquiries as to the expenditure of public moneys by the Forestry Commission with a view to ascertaining whether or not public moneys have been wasted by expending same on lands totally unsuitable for the planting of pine trees, as on certain areas between Grafton and Rappville?

Answer,—The plantation referred to is part of the Saltwater Creek State forest, upon which a number of pines planted last season failed through abnormal rains, followed by fierce heat, before they were properly established. The area is considered suitable for the growth of coniferous softwood trees, and the difficulty experienced is being met by earlier planting.

HOUSING BOARD.

Mr. J. R. LEE asked the SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS,—(1) Is it a fact that there is great dissatisfaction among the purchasers under the Housing Board at Daceyville No. 2 and Bunnerong Village, on the following question:—"Difference in amount stated when offer to build was made by the board, and the amount now charged?" (2) Will he consider a proposal of allowing the original purchasers the right to have the houses at the price first agreed upon, plus $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., as further agreed by them at a later date? (3) If the adoption of this proposal should mean a loss to the State, will he sell the vacant blocks of land on these areas which have been improved by the buildings erected, and thus make up any probable loss, without calling upon the tenants to suffer any additional charges?

Answer,—(1) Yes. (2) Proposal already considered by Cabinet of the late Government, and not approved—solely a matter of policy. (3) See No. 2—a matter of policy.

NURSES' HOME FUNDS : MALADMINISTRATION.

Mr. WRIGHT asked the COLONIAL SECRETARY,—(1) Is it his intention to order the arrest of Mr. George Fitzpatrick

for maladministration of the funds of the Nurses' Home? (2) If not, will he institute an inquiry into the matter?

Answer,—(1) No. (2) At present I am not prepared to do so.

VALUER-GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT.

MR. BENNETT asked the MINISTER FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT,—Will he supply the following information:—The total expenditure, salaries, contingencies, &c., in connection with the Valuer-General's Department for years 1920-21, 1921-22; also receipts from all sources for the same periods?

Answer,—(a) 1920-21, £27,386 2s. 5d.; 1921-22, £33,010 18s. 7d. (This includes the cost of resumption, lease apportionment, and land-tax work.) (b) Receipts: 1920-21, £4,743 9s. 6d.; 1921-22, £10,475 15s. 2d.

BAKING HOURS IN NORTHUMBERLAND AREA.

MR. D. MURRAY asked the MINISTER FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY,—(1) Is it a fact that a report has been received from the judge in regard to hours for baking, in the Northumberland area, and that such report would not be put into operation pending the introduction of legislation, reverting back to forty-eight hours? (2) If so, will he lay the report on the table of the House?

Answer,—(1) The report referred to has been forwarded to me and is now, with others, receiving consideration in connection with the Government's legislative proposals respecting the Eight Hours (Amendment) Act. (2) A copy of the report will be laid upon the table of the House.

WYANGLA DAM.

MR. MAIN asked the SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS,—(1) Has the report of the departmental officers in connection with the proposed Wyangla dam been received? (2) If so, has it been considered by the Cabinet? (3) If the report has not been received, will he try to get it expedited?

Answer,—(1 and 2) No. (3) Yes.

NEW SOUTH WALES LOAN: SUGGESTION BY AGENT-GENERAL.

MR. MCKELL asked the COLONIAL TREASURER,—(1) Did the Agent-General suggest terms on which the last New South Wales loan might be floated in London? (2) If so, were they agreed to by the Treasurer, or were other terms laid down (on which the loan was floated) contrary to those suggested by the Agent-General?

Answer,—Following the usual practice the Agent-General notified the terms proposed by the financial agents in London. I considered better terms should be arranged, and advised the Agent-General accordingly, the result being that the loan was floated on much more satisfactory terms than those first offered.

MURRUMBIDGEE IRRIGATION AREA.

MR. J. R. LEE asked the MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE,—(1) Has the Irrigation Commission purchased from a settler named Brock his farm or holding on the Murrumbidgee irrigation area? If so, at what price? (2) Why was this land purchased? (3) Did it not already belong to the Crown, being leased to Brock? (4) What need existed to buy back this land? (5) Was Brock a member of the advisory board on the settlement? (6) Is it a fact that many blocks set apart for soldiers are still vacant and unapplied for? (7) Will he place all the papers and Brock's record on the settlement on the table of the House?

Answer,—(1) Yes. £3,000 was paid to Brock for his tenant-right in improvements effected by him on his farm, after valuation made by expert officers of the Department of Agriculture and the commission, respectively. (2) Brock applied to surrender his farm under section 231 of the Crown Lands Consolidation Act, 1913. He had a claim against the Government for compensation in respect of alleged misrepresentation, in connection with which he lodged a writ in the Supreme Court. Purchase was in settlement of this claim, and in view of the fact that he was unable to continue working the farm by reason of ill health of himself and family. Similar procedure was followed in a number of other claims for compensation. (3) Brock's tenure was a perpetual lease.

(4) See answer to No. 2. (5) Brock was appointed by the Executive Council as a member of the special land board, constituted under the Crown Lands Consolidation Act, 1913, and was elected by settlers to represent them on one of the two executive boards appointed to act in an advisory capacity with the resident commissioner on the Murrumbidgee irrigation areas. The matter of surrender of his farm was not dealt with by either of these boards. (6) Blocks are at present available for application by discharged soldiers. Applications are being made by them daily. The area of 50 acres surrendered by Brock was subdivided; 25 acres were taken up by a discharged soldier, and the balance has recently been made available for application by discharged soldiers, and it is anticipated will be readily disposed of. I am informed that the Crown should sustain no loss by the transaction, and will secure two settlers instead of one. (7) The papers will be made available for perusal by the hon. member if he so desires.

GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE: PRINTING OF PROPAGANDA LEAFLETS.

Mr. DOE asked the COLONIAL TREASURER,—(1) Who gave the order to the Government Printer for the 18,800 A.L.P. propaganda leaflets referred to in answer given to question No. 28, *Questions and Answers* No. 8, of Tuesday, 18th July, asked by the hon. member Mr. Doe? (2) To whose account was the cost of the work charged, and on what authority? (3) Has the amount (£31 10s. 9d.) been paid? (4) If paid, by whom? (5) If not paid, why not?

Answer,—(1) The various orders were signed by, or on behalf, of the Secretary of the Premier's Department, who states that instructions to send the accounts to the then Premier (Mr. Dooley) as private work were verbally given to Mr. Mansell, Publicity Officer, and were verbally conveyed by him to the late Government Printer (Mr. W. A. Gullick). There is, however, nothing on official record to this effect. (2, 3, 4, and 5) No account for the cost of this work was presented either to Mr. Dooley or to the Premier's Department, but the amount was debited to the general vote of the Government Printer.

RETURNED SOLDIERS AND SAILORS EMPLOYMENT ACT.

Mr. LANG asked the PREMIER,—When is it proposed to appoint the board as provided for under section 6 of the Returned Soldiers and Sailors Employment Act?

Answer,—The question of the appointment of the board will be dealt with as part of the general question of the amendment of the Returned Soldiers and Sailors Employment Act, which is now under the consideration of the Government.

INCOME-TAX.

Mr. LANG asked the COLONIAL TREASURER,—What amount of income-tax due was left unpaid at 30th June last?

Answer,—The amount of income-tax due and left unpaid at 30th June, 1922, was £213,918 7s. 6d.

UNEMPLOYED: DECLINE BY DORRIGO SHIRE OF OFFER OF RELIEF.

Mr. GOSLING asked the MINISTER FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY,—(1) Is it a fact that the Dorrigo shire recently declined the offer of the Government to supply the sum of £4,000 for providing work for the unemployed? (2) If so, will he see that this money does not go back to the Treasury, but will he make this sum available for the repair of Woniora-road, in accordance with the assurance he gave to the Kogarah council deputation?

Answer,—(1 and 2) The Dorrigo shire failed to accept the offer made to it within the time limited, namely, the 20th June, and the amount was immediately re-allotted to works which would provide employment for unemployed in the Newcastle district, with a view to fulfilling the purpose which induced the original allocation to Dorrigo shire.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE.

AMENDED STANDING ORDERS.

Mr. LANG: I would like to know whether the Colonial Secretary has yet drawn up a minute for submission to the Standing Orders Committee as promised in regard to the framing of a standing order dealing with the powers of the Speaker in connection with submitting

the motion "That the question be now put." If he has not done so, will he, in framing his minute, also suggest to the committee that a standing order should be framed providing for the official recognition of pairs and for having them recorded in *Hansard*?

Mr. OAKES: I have not yet drawn up a minute for submission to the Standing Orders Committee but I intend to do so at the earliest possible moment and I will then take into consideration the suggestion with regard to having pairs recorded in the House, and also in *Hansard*.

MULLUMBIMBY SOLDIERS' SETTLEMENT.

Mr. PERDRIAU: Will the Secretary for Lands state whether he has yet arranged for the re-grading of the road through the Mullumbimby soldiers' settlement? Will he also indicate the nature of the report of the Surveyor-General upon the proposal?

Mr. WEARNE: The hon. member was good enough to notify me of his intention to ask this question. The following is the report furnished by the Director of Soldier Settlements:—

The main road through Mullumbimby soldier settlement was located by the district surveyor when effecting subdivision of the estate into farms. Since the inception of the settlement approximately £1,180 has been expended in the construction of the road. Complaints were made by a number of the settlers to the effect that the grades are in places too steep. After investigation by the Surveyor-General a deviation was decided upon, and it was approved that the department should contribute a further sum of £350 towards the construction of this deviation. It was a condition suggested by the settlers themselves that the settlers should themselves contribute something towards the additional costs. Tenders for the preliminary work were called for but without satisfactory results. Differences of opinion arose amongst the settlers as to the necessity or otherwise for the proposed deviation and the expenditure of further moneys and in the early part of the present year the then Minister informed the settlers that he would be prepared to (a) expend £350 on the proposed deviation, or (b) expend the same amount of money on the road in its present existing position on receipt of intimation from them as to the course they desired to pursue. It was upon the representations of the settlers themselves that they would be prepared to supplement the Crown's expenditure by an amount of £350 that the Minister gave the beforementioned approval to expend £350. The present position appears to be that settlers are

not prepared to contribute towards the cost of the work deemed to be necessary and that all of the settlers concerned in the question of the proposed deviation are not in favour of its construction. Certain settlers on the area have asserted that not one case of fruit has failed to reach market because of the condition of the road. The fact is that the settlement is situated on a rather pronounced slope, that difficulties of roading are inevitable under any circumstances, and that the department desires to meet the reasonable requirements of all the settlers concerned.

MURRAY LANDS SETTLEMENT SCHEME.

Mr. GREGORY MCGIRR: I wish to know from the Secretary for Lands whether there is any truth in the statement published in the press that the reports of responsible officials in connection with the Murray lands settlement scheme have been suppressed; and further, whether it is a fact that the Cabinet is divided on the question? Will the Minister give the House a concrete explanation of the position in regard to the so-called Murray lands settlement scheme?

Mr. WEARNE: To the first two questions the answer is "No." The answer to the third question is that the matter is now under consideration by the Cabinet.

Mr. DAVIDSON: Is it a fact that the Government has abandoned the proposed Murray lands settlement scheme? If so, will the Minister give the House the reasons, and state whether one of these is the pressure brought to bear on the Government by the right wing of the Nationalist party---the so-called Progressive party?

Mr. WEARNE: It is rather hard to know what hon. members are referring to as the Murray lands settlement scheme. If the hon. member wants to know whether the Government has abandoned its idea of settling people on the Murray lands, I say that it has not done so.

BROKEN HILL TECHNICAL COMMISSION.

Mr. DOE: I desire to know from the Minister of Public Instruction whether in view of his reply to my question on the business-paper last week with regard to the compensation recommended by the Broken Hill Technical Commission for

men who have been proved to be leaved he has made any further inquiries, and if so what is the position?

Mr. BRUNTNELL: Last week the hon. member asked a question, and the hon. member Mr. Davidson also sought information. I am now in a position to state that a further report of the Broken Hill Technical Commission, together with the recommendations and suggestions contained in that report, is at present receiving the consideration of the Government. In the course of that consideration, which will extend to the question of taking the steps necessary to give effect to the recommendations and suggestions made, attention will be given to the suggestion that a conference should be called representative of the various parties concerned.

ALLEGED MEDICAL MALPRACTICE.

Mr. JAKES: I desire to know whether the Minister for Public Health has had brought under his notice serious charges of malpractice against a medical man which have appeared in a certain weekly newspaper, which has also called attention to the failure of the British Medical Association to take any steps in the matter? Will the Minister state whether he intends to take any action?

Mr. OAKES: Certain statements of supposed facts published in a weekly newspaper were brought under my notice to-day, and I was asked if I would take some steps under the powers reposed in me to send the matter on to the Medical Board of New South Wales for investigation. This proposal was made by the B.M.A., which has no power to carry out a satisfactory inquiry, whereas the Medical Board has such power. I have consented to do as requested.

PROPORTIONAL VOTING AT MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS.

Mr. MUTCH: I wish to know whether it is a fact that the Minister for Local Government recently informed a deputation representing a few municipal councils that he would endeavour to amend the Local Government Act so as to provide that 100 ratepayers would be sufficient to demand a poll on the question

whether municipal elections should be conducted under the proportional system? If so, has the Minister given consideration to the fact that section 73 of the Local Government Act already provides a method for the taking of a poll which meets all reasonable requirements? Is it not the Minister's opinion that the proportional system of voting remedies none of the difficulties associated with the straight out system of voting but rather multiplies them?

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: In answer to the first question, it is true that I made a statement to the effect that a bill would be introduced to enable 100 ratepayers, on presentation of a petition, to secure a poll of those constituting the voting power of any particular municipality or shire. Since then, I have been inundated with protests coming from the four quarters of the State in opposition to the scheme. I do not now intend to follow that course, not because of the protests, but because I have discovered a much better means, not of bringing about exactly the same result, but of achieving a result as far as those are concerned who desire, not to see proportional representation introduced, but to afford the people an opportunity to introduce it through the medium of their own vote.

Mr. MUTCH: Petitions are being signed at street corners!

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: No doubt you might find 100 or 200 persons throughout New South Wales who would even be prepared to sign a petition to remove the present National Government from power. I will introduce a bill to deal with the matter in another way at a later stage.

Mr. MUTCH: I desire to ask the Minister for Local Government a further question concerning the matter of securing a poll on the introduction of the system of proportional voting in municipal elections. Will the Minister take the House into his confidence and state the method by which he proposes to deal with the situation in view of the fact that it is already dealt with in section 73 of the Act?

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: The hon. member is entirely under a wrong impression when he suggests that I am

trying to impose the system of proportional representation upon the shires and municipalities. What is sought to be achieved is to afford an opportunity for the shires and municipalities to determine for themselves whether they shall elect their councils under the system of proportional representation or by the method in vogue at the present time.

Mr. Mutch: That is already in the Act!

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: The bill I propose to introduce in substitution of the one originally agreed upon will confer on the then existing council the right to determine under what system the next election shall take place.

Mr. LANE: I wish to ask the Minister for Local Government whether it is the intention to introduce an amendment of the Local Government Act, reducing, from one-fifth of those on the roll to 200, the number of electors required to secure a referendum for the purpose of introducing proportional representation?

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: I have already answered that question, and I would refer the hon. gentleman to my reply, which will be found in the next illuminating report of the proceedings of this House.

GAOL NEWSPAPER, THE — COMPENDIUM.

Mr. McKELL: In view of the very poor nature of the last issue of the publication called the *Compendium*, will the Minister of Justice reconsider his decision to excise sporting news from that paper?

Mr. LEY: No.

MR. LUCY, CHIEF MECHANICAL ENGINEER.

Mr. ANDERSON: I desire to ask the Secretary for Public Works whether he will tell the House if Mr. Lucy, Chief Mechanical Engineer for Railways, is the patentee of Lucy's superheaters which are fitted on the engines? If so, how much royalty does he draw from each engine?

Mr. BALL: I shall endeavour to obtain the information and make it available to the House.

GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE: PRINTING OF PROPAGANDA LEAFLETS.

Captain DUNN: I desire to ask the Colonial Treasurer whether he has inquired into the question of payments to the Government Printing Office in connection with the printing of party literature; and, if so, will he let the House know the result?

Mr. COCKS: In reply to the hon. member I should like to make a short statement. I promised the hon. member Mr. Dooley that I would have the fullest inquiry made in regard to the instructions that he was under the impression he had given in respect of party printing being charged to the party funds and not to the Government. In order to make the investigation as comprehensive as possible, I made inquiries of the Government Printing Office and also of the Premier's Department. This is the result:

The Government Printer reports that there is no record at the Government Printing Office that any literature printed for party purposes would be paid for privately. The written orders for printing "Hints to A.L.P. Speakers" were signed by the Secretary, Premier's Office, or by an officer acting on his behalf, but they contain no instructions to charge the cost to any private account. In March, 1921, an order was executed for the printing of 100 pamphlets entitled, "A summary of the Principal Legislative and Administrative Acts of the New South Wales Labour Government." The order was signed by Mr. Mansell, Publicity Officer, and instructions given to charge as private printing. The account for £54 was rendered and paid in May, 1921. A further 500 copies of the pamphlet were printed on an order from Mr. G. V. Childe, private secretary to the Premier, at a cost of £10. The instructions again were definite as to charging as a private account, but these instructions were overlooked, and the work regarded as departmental printing. In the circumstances an account for £10 was not rendered. The Secretary, Premier's Department, reports that Mr. Dooley's statement that he gave instructions that the cost of printing was to be borne privately from party- or Cabinet-funds is perfectly correct. Such instructions were given to Mr. Mansell, who was then Publicity Officer, in the presence of the Secretary, Premier's Office, and it was understood that Mr. Mansell duly conveyed them verbally to the late Mr. Gullick when he interviewed the late Government Printer with the type-script of the first issue of the series, and discussed the manner in which they were to be set up. Mr. Hay states that Mr. Mansell consulted him from time to time as to whether some of the brief references he made to matters were sufficiently explicit, the reason for the consultation being that Mr. Dooley wished to

keep down the cost of printing as much as possible, consistent with the proper presentation of his points, as it was to be borne privately. The fact that the Government Printing Office charged the cost of the printing to its own vote precluded the presentation of the account to Mr. Dooley, as he expected would be done. Had it been customary for the Government Printing Office to submit debit notes against departmental votes, the charge in respect of the work would have been passed on to Mr. Dooley, but under the existing system of charging the cost to the Government Printer's own vote, no such opportunity was afforded. Mr. Hay adds that it was only when he asked Mr. Spence, the present Government Printer, for an itemised statement of the cost of printing for the Premier's Department last year, that it was discovered that the cost of executing the orders had been charged as a Government work, and that he cannot say too emphatically that this was entirely contrary to the instructions given by Mr. Dooley at the time the work was put in hand.

Mr. ARKINS: In the statement which he has just made to the House I understood the Colonial Treasurer to say that a sum of approximately £30 had been appropriated out of the public funds for the printing of certain political literature by the late Government. If that is a fact has the Minister made any attempt to place the responsibility for that debt upon any person or persons? If the Minister has not done that, will he do so? Furthermore, will he see that the Government Printing Office is not again used for the purpose of misleading the public by the printing of political publicity matter such as that in question?

Mr. COCKS: I think the hon. member misunderstood my reply. At the request of the shorthand-writers I sent upstairs the statement I read, but speaking from memory, I might say that an account was rendered for the first £30, and that it was paid. Subsequently, an additional 100 pamphlets were ordered to be printed, the same instructions being given with regard to the rendering of the account. The Government Printing Office did not render that account, and, therefore, owing to the omission on the part of the Government Printing Office £10 was not collected. Assuming that an account had been rendered on the basis of the first account it would have been paid, but I suppose it was overlooked. The matter has only come under my notice since a question regarding it was asked in this House. In reply to the hon. member's

query as to whether I have made any attempt to place the responsibility for the debt upon any person or persons, I have to say that I have not asked anybody to pay it, but I have no doubt that the ordinary course will be followed—that an account will be rendered, and that it will be dealt with in the usual way.

Captain DUNN: Following on the question asked by the hon. member Mr. Arkins, I ask the Colonial Treasurer is it not a fact that Mr. Dooley asked that the account should be submitted to him, and that he said he was under the impression that no account was outstanding?

Mr. COCKS: I think it is quite plain from the statement I have read that Mr. Dooley acted in good faith right through.

Mr. ARKINS: Following upon the Treasurer's statement that the Government Printer has accepted contracts for printing for political parties, I desire to ask the Treasurer whether he will see that this form of political propaganda shall not be allowed in future?

Mr. STUART-ROBERTSON: On the same subject I should like to ask the Treasurer whether it is not a fact that pamphlets of a similar character have been printed for various Governments during the past fifteen or sixteen years?

Mr. COCKS: With regard to the last question, the facts are not within my knowledge, and therefore I cannot answer definitely "yea" or "nay." In reply to Mr. Arkins, I can assure him that under the new control of Mr. Spence I feel that the keenest supervision will be exercised, and that everyone who gets work done at the Government Printing Office, if it is outside that allowed to a member of Parliament, will have to pay for the work.

Captain DUNN: I desire to ask the Colonial Treasurer whether he will ascertain whether Sir Joseph Carruthers, in 1907, Sir Charles Wade, in 1910, and Mr. Holman, in 1913, 1917, and 1920, used the Government Printing Office to print party pamphlets and literature, and whether the practice has not obtained for years? Will he make inquiries and see if that is so, in order that he can establish the fact that it has been the practice, but a practice of course, that should be discontinued, in order that such work should be paid for from party funds?

Mr. COCKS: The hon. member does not expect me to answer that question off-hand. I will have inquiries made, and give the hon. gentleman the result of those inquiries.

STOCK BRANDS: CANCELLATION.

Mr. MISSINGHAM: I desire to ask the Minister for Agriculture whether it is a fact that stock-owners who are desirous of preserving their rights in registered brands cancelled by the provisions of the Registration of Stock Brands Act, are required to make a declaration and fix thereto a duty stamp of 2s. 6d.? If so, is it the intention of the Government to honor the promise of the last Government that the rights of owners would be preserved without cost to such owners?

Captain CHAFFEY: In regard to the first part of the question, it is a fact that a declaration is required, but no fee is charged by the department. There is a charge of 2s. 6d. for stamp duty, imposed under the Stamp Duties Act, but it is not imposed by the department. In regard to the second part of the hon. member's question, if he will give notice of it I will obtain the information.

VOCATIONAL TRAINEES.

Mr. HOSKINS: In connection with a question on the business-paper by Mr. Jaques I desire to ask the Minister of Public Instruction whether it is not a fact that there is a committee which has been appointed to deal with returned soldiers undergoing vocational training. If so, how many times has the committee sat during the last twelve months under the chairmanship of Mr. Connelly, how many applications have been dealt with, and how many applications are there in hand still to be dealt with?

Mr. BRUNTNEILL: I may say that full inquiries are now being made into the whole matter of vocational training, and at a later stage I hope to be able to give the hon. member full information.

MR. SKELTON, M.L.A.

Mr. LAZZARINI: I desire to ask the Premier if his attention has been drawn to a statement which appeared in the *Newcastle Sun*, some few days ago, attributing to Mr. Skelton, M.L.A., the

statement that if he sat on the Government benches he would undoubtedly get a portfolio? Will the Premier say if it is a fact that Mr. Skelton has been appointed to join the Cabinet?

Sir GEORGE FULLER: I would ask the hon. member to put that question to Mr. Skelton himself.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I must again point out to hon. members that the only object of questions without notice is *bona fide* to elicit information. This question does not come within that category.

SCHOOL QUALIFYING CERTIFICATE.

Mr. GOLDSTEIN: I desire to ask the Minister of Public Instruction whether it is a fact that he has abolished the qualifying certificate, and, if so, why he has taken such action?

Mr. BRUNTNEILL: It is a fact that we have abolished the present method of obtaining the qualifying certificate. This certificate I may say was introduced to mark the dividing line between primary and secondary education. It indicated that a child had passed successfully through a primary course, and was available and suitable for more advanced instruction. Some 34,000 children were examined last year under that system. This involved the compilation of about six separate papers for each child, and each of those papers had to be examined. The inspectors found that they were utterly unable to cope with the amount of work involved, and it became necessary for the department to engage other persons to assist in the examination of the papers, at a cost to the department of about £25 per 1,000 papers. It is now proposed to obtain what is practically the same result by referring to the result of the examinations which are held three times a year in each school. The result of those examinations by the head of the school will be reviewed by the inspector, and certificates issued to children upon them at very much less cost to the department.

Major CONNELL: In view of the reply given by the Minister of Public Instruction with regard to the abolition of the qualifying certificate, is the hon. member in a position to give the House

an assurance that no obstacle will be placed in the way of any child desiring to go for a bursary or a high school pass?

Mr. BRUNTNEILL: Yes. The idea of altering the method of obtaining the necessary certificate is not in any way coupled with the suggestion that we want to act as a deterrent.

NEW TRAMWAYS.

Mr. McTIERNAN: Will the Secretary for Public Works say whether it is his intention to make any provision on the forthcoming Loan Estimates for the construction of new tramways?

Mr. BALL: Provision has been made on the Estimates, but to what extent I am not able to say at the present moment.

THE ROCK TO PULLETOP RAILWAY.

Mr. KILPATRICK: Will the Minister for Railways have placed on the forthcoming Loan Estimates sufficient funds to build The Rock to Pulletop Railway?

Mr. BALL: That matter is under consideration in connection with our railway system.

INTEREST ON LOANS.

Mr. DAVIES: In view of the fact that there will be an increase this year of about £500,000 in the interest bill, which will benefit only the wealthy classes, whilst at the same time there is a reduction in the basic wage, will the Colonial Treasurer consider the advisableness of increasing the income-tax on large incomes, so as to get this money for the purpose of assisting in the payment of higher wages?

Mr. COCKS: The hon. member has evidently asked that question under a misapprehension. It does not matter how much you increase the income-tax to holders of Government bonds, these latter are issued free of both State and Federal taxation. Moreover, most of the money comprised in the interest bill is payable to English investors, and therefore the hon. member's suggestion would not operate.

LAND SETTLEMENT.

Mr. LOUGHLIN: In view of the fact that the Government has now had over

three months in which to formulate a policy, can the Secretary for Lands indicate when this House will be favoured with a statement showing the Government's intention with regard to securing closer settlement along existing railways, and also when we shall have an intimation of the Government's intention regarding the development of the Murray region?

Mr. WEARNE: I cannot say definitely when such statements will be placed before the House, but the hon. member may rest assured that it will be as early as possible.

MURIEL WATER SUPPLY.

Mr. DOE: Owing to the water shortage at Muriel, will the Secretary for Public Works have investigations made with a view to giving an adequate supply to that goldfield, which appears to be a permanent one?

Mr. BALL: I will have inquiries made as to the position, and let the hon. member know the result.

POWELL-SPITHILL BAIL CASE.

Captain DUNN: In view of the uncertainty and doubt in the minds of the citizens and the public generally regarding the reasons for the detention and differential treatment of the two boys, Powell and Spithill, will the Attorney-General make a statement to the House to clear up once and for all whether there has been differentiation in their case as against others?

Mr. BAVIN: Of course, I cannot explain why there is some idea in the minds of the public. All I know about the matter is that an application for bail was made by these two accused after the magistrate had refused it. The application was made to a judge, and a judge, within whose province it is to determine the question, determined, on the evidence before him, that bail ought not to be granted under the circumstances. If there is in the minds of the public any idea that there has been differentiation in the treatment of these lads from the treatment accorded in ordinary cases of applications for bail, the idea is a wrong one, and it ought to be dissipated. So far as I know, and so

far as I am able to ascertain, this matter has been dealt with on the ordinary principles that apply to the granting of bail, and I do not think there is any ground whatsoever for any apprehension in the minds of the public that there has been differential treatment in regard to Powell and Spithill.

Captain DUNN: May I put to the Attorney-General a further question bearing on the one I asked a moment ago? Is it not a fact that in cases similar to the one under review bail is invariably granted, and that in this case it was refused on wholly unsupported testimony relating to another case? If it is a fact that bail is invariably granted in these cases and it was not granted in this case, then it does bear the appearance of differential treatment.

Mr. McTIERNAN: Will the Attorney-General also be good enough to inform the House whether he issued instructions to his representative to oppose the granting of bail, and if so, will he please state the reasons why he gave such instructions?

Mr. BAVIN: In answer to the question put by the hon. member Mr. McTiernan I may say that I gave no such instructions. The matter took the ordinary course; I was not asked for instructions. With regard to the question put by the hon. member Captain Dunn I think it is undesirable that we, in this House, should canvass the decision of a judge; but I am quite unable to say that it is the invariable practice to grant bail in cases such as the one now under review. There were certain circumstances brought before the judge in connection with this case.

Mr. MURCH: Certain suspicions entirely unsupported!

Mr. BAVIN: The hon. member does not know the facts or he would not make that statement. Certain facts were brought before the court in connection with the case before the judge which, according to the decision of the Supreme Court, justified the judge in refusing bail. I assume that Mr. Justice Owen acted in accordance with this decision, therefore there is no occasion for the statement made by the hon. member.

LAW OF EVIDENCE AMENDMENT BILL.

Mr. JAKES: Will the Attorney-General inform the House whether the bill to amend the law of evidence of which he has just given notice, contains any provision to make privileged communications by patients to their medical advisers?

Mr. BAVIN: I might inform the hon. member that the bill of which I have given notice does not contain any provision with regard to the matter he has referred to.

SOLDIER SETTLERS: REAPPRAISE- MENT OF HOLDINGS.

Mr. CAMERON: Can the Secretary for Lands give the House any information as to when he is going to give effect to the promise made to returned soldier settlers that their holdings would be re-appraised, that a fresh allotment of areas would be made in cases where the present areas were too small for living areas, and that, where possible, the living areas would be increased?

Mr. WEARNE: I have not personally made any promise in that respect that I have not carried out. I would point out that returned soldiers have the right of appeal in this matter. With regard to the increasing of areas, returned soldiers are most sympathetically dealt with, if it can be shown to the Minister that they are battling along on insufficient areas.

IMMIGRATION.

Mr. BIRT: In the event of the State obtaining immigrants under the Commonwealth scheme, will the Premier see that unskilled labourers, tram-guards, clerks, shop-assistants, and men following other dead-end occupations are not brought to New South Wales?

Sir GEORGE FULLER: The idea of the present Government in connection with immigration is to bring out people to settle on the lands of our country, and that course is being followed.

OLD-AGE PENSIONERS.

Mr. DOE: Is the Colonial Secretary aware that when old-aged pensioners go into a State-subsidised hospital their pensions are stopped during the time they

are there? If that is so, will he make representation to the Federal authorities with a view to having those pensions paid to the committees of the hospitals which are rendering service to these people?

Mr. OAKES: I will undertake to supply the hon. member with a full detailed answer to-morrow.

SUBSIDY FOR LIFE-SAVING CLUBS.

Mr. O'HALLORAN: In view of the splendid work performed by members of life-saving clubs—work which, if not performed voluntarily, would have to be done by the Government—at great personal risk, will the Premier, so far as he is able, make provision to place upon the forthcoming Estimates a sum of money for the purpose of subsidising these clubs?

Sir GEORGE FULLER: I understand that matter has already been attended to in compiling the Estimates.

EMPLOYMENT OF RETURNED SOLDIERS.

Mr. BRUNTNEILL: The hon. member Mr. Stuart-Robertson drew my attention last week to a statement appearing in the press in contravention of an answer I gave to a question he put to me with regard to returned soldiers. I wish to reply that on the 8th June a personal visit was paid by officers of the Department of Labour and Industry to the shelter where the soldiers were residing, and everyone willing to accept work was engaged. On the 9th June forty men were selected to leave for certain work, but only twenty-eight of these men reported themselves for work, and arrangements were then made to send two officers from the department to the camp to secure twelve additional men. After those men had been engaged, Major Moyes, the officer in charge of the camp, intimated to the department's officers that he was unable to arrange for any further men to be sent to employment made available by the Government. On two other occasions application was made to the shelter for forty and twenty men respectively, but only twelve and eight could be supplied. On the 10th June a communication was sent to Mr. Lipscombe, the general secretary, informing

him that his officers at the Elizabeth-street shelter had been notified by the State Labour Exchanges on the 7th June that work was then available for 300 labourers, and that those in residence at that camp willing to accept this work should present themselves at the Labour Exchanges at 10 a.m. on the following day. The result of this notification was that only twenty men reported at the appointed time. On the 13th July Mr. Lipscombe forwarded a communication to the department formally advising that he was unable to supply from those in residence at the shelter any further men for the employment made available by the Government; but he drew attention to the fact that there were many returned soldiers not resident at the shelter who were registered with the league, and were still available for employment as labourers through the State Labour Exchanges. On the following day, 14th June, Mr. Lipscombe was informed that consideration would be given to the men referred to if they were referred to the Labour Exchanges for registration. By the 26th June every married returned soldier registered with the Labour Exchanges for employment had been offered employment; and on the 13th July an advertisement published by the department in the daily newspapers invited all single returned soldiers to report for employment to the Labour Exchanges. Every single returned soldier who was prepared to accept work through the Labour Exchanges as a labourer on the 13th July was offered work.

Mr. DAVIES: What about the men in the country?

Mr. BRUNTNEILL: I was referring to the question as it regards the men who are returned soldiers and whose names are registered in the books of the bureau. These facts clearly establish the correctness of my previous announcement.

CONVEYANCING CHARGES.

Mr. BAGNALL: I wish to ask the Attorney-General whether, under recent legislation, the Chief Justice is given power to prepare a scale of charges for solicitors in carrying out certain work, particularly in regard to mortgages,

transfers, and so forth? Is the Minister aware that since the Chief Justice adjusted the scale of charges they have been particularly heavy upon persons purchasing homes or buying land, and is he aware that they have had a serious effect upon these small buyers? Will the Minister go into the whole question with a view to approaching the Chief Justice again in order to have the scale of charges reduced?

Mr. BAVIN: I am aware of the fact to which the hon. member refers. The whole matter is under the consideration of the Government with a view to the revision of the charges.

STATE TIMBER-YARDS.

Mr. GREIG: I desire to ask the Secretary for Public Works whether it is a fact that last week fifty men were discharged from the State timber-yards, and, if so, by whose instructions were they discharged, and for what reason?

Mr. BALL: I understand it is a fact that fifty men were discharged. I did not know of it at the time. They were discharged by the management who explained that it was due to the fact that there was no further work for the men.

Mr. GREIG: In view of the statement of his predecessor in office, Sir Thomas Henley, that it was the intention of the Government to offer the State timber-yards for sale, and the fact that such statement has caused a large number of builders and others to abstain from entering into contracts with the yards, will the Secretary for Public Works, with a view to preserving the industry, issue a statement that it is not the policy of the Government to offer the timber-yards for sale?

Mr. BALL: The question of a continuance of the industry is now under the consideration of the Government.

Mr. LANG: Will the Premier take into consideration the desirability of the Government arriving at an early decision in regard to the disposal or otherwise of the State timber-yards at Uhr's Point?

Sir GEORGE FULLER: The matter is under the consideration of the Government, and it will not be very long before a determination is arrived at.

PARENTS AND CITIZENS' ASSOCIATION

Mr. NESBITT: I desire to ask the Minister of Public Instruction if he will consider the advisableness of introducing a bill to give certain powers to the Parents and Citizens' Association such as were outlined in a bill introduced by one of his predecessors years ago?

Mr. BRUNTNEILL: A general council of Parents and Citizens Associations has recently been formed, and a conference will be held with that body shortly, when the matter will be discussed.

COUNTRY SILOS.

Captain DUNN: I desire to ask the Minister for Agriculture, who I understand recently inquired into the matter, whether he will make a statement as to the progress of the construction of country silos and what silos will be available for the coming wheat harvest?

Captain CHAFFEY: The whole matter is under consideration, and I hope to be able to make a full announcement on that important question at an early date.

THE UNEMPLOYED.

Mr. STUART-ROBERTSON: I desire to ask the Minister representing the Minister for Labour and Industry if he can give the House any further information with regard to the position of the unemployed, showing how many have been absorbed during the last month and how many are now on the books of the Labour Bureau?

Mr. BRUNTNEILL: The figures for last month have already been supplied. Those for the present month will be supplied as soon as the month is ended.

VENEREAL DISEASES.

Dr. ARTHUR: I desire to ask the Colonial Secretary whether his department has received a subsidy from the Federal Government in connection with the compulsory notification of venereal disease? Will he see that the notification is carried out in this State? I understand that the sum received is about £4,000.

Mr. OAKES: I am not aware that we have received that amount, but I shall obtain the information.

ELECTRIFICATION OF TRAMWAYS.

Mr. BAGNALL: I desire to ask the Secretary for Public Works whether he is aware that the Chief Railway Commissioner is repeatedly telling local bodies that he cannot electrify the tramway system because of the lack of funds? Is the Minister aware that continued use of steam trams is imposing a very heavy loss on the Railway Commissioners? Will he bring the matter before Cabinet at the earliest moment with a view to having special funds provided to enable the electrification work to be gone on with?

Mr. BALL: It is true that the Railway Commissioners say they cannot carry out the electrification of the tramways because of the want of funds and for other reasons. The matter is now under consideration.

LITTLE BAY HOSPITAL: X-RAY APPARATUS.

Mr. MUTCH: I desire to ask the Colonial Treasurer whether he can yet make a report upon the question asked by me some time ago respecting the installation of an X-ray apparatus at the Little Bay Hospital?

Mr. OAKES: I cannot make a report to-day but shall do so later on.

FALLOWING ALLOWANCES.

Captain DUNN: I desire to ask the Minister for Agriculture whether he has yet made arrangements with regard to fallowing allowances, because it is rather important that the point should be decided?

Captain CHAFFEY: I have gone through the papers in regard to that important question. I have also referred certain questions to the departmental officer and to the Rural Bank with a view to the formulation of a scheme to provide for the necessary assistance being given under a new method. I have not yet received replies.

KOGARAH POLICE COURT.

Mr. ARKINS: I desire to ask the Minister of Justice whether he is aware that serious congestion exists at the Kogarah police court owing to the number of cases awaiting hearing? Will he consider the appointment of extra court days?

Mr. LEY: The congestion at the Kogarah court is well-known to me. It was brought under my attention last week. Steps are being taken to appoint extra court days until it is overcome.

METHOD OF PUTTING QUESTIONS.

Mr. SPEAKER: I must direct the attention of hon. members to standing order No. 77 which has been violated several times this afternoon. It is as follows:—

In putting any such question no argument or opinion shall be offered nor any facts stated except so far as may be necessary to explain such question.

The long prefatory averments in which hon. members often indulge are quite out of order.

SYDNEY HARBOUR TRUST.

Mr. SCOTT FELL: Can the Colonial Treasurer inform hon. members if it is a fact that the Government intends to introduce a bill this session to amend the law relating to the management and control of the Sydney Harbour Trust?

Mr. COCKS: It is not the intention, in this session, to introduce a bill on the subject referred to.

CLYDE ENGINEERING COMPANY.

Mr. DRUMMOND: Will the Premier lay upon the table of the House the papers in connection with the agreement with the Clyde Engineering Company, Limited, which, according to recent statements, has just been finalised?

Sir GEORGE FULLER: As soon as the matter has been finalised, which is not yet the case, full information will be given to hon. members.

LOANS FOR SCHOOL BUILDINGS.

Mr. MUTCH: Can the Minister of Public Instruction inform the House whether Cabinet has yet decided upon the question of providing loan funds for the building of public schools? If so, and if the Cabinet has decided in favour of such a course, what amount is it proposed to make available, in this year and succeeding years?

Mr. BRUNTNEILL: No decision has yet been arrived at, and the matter is still being seriously considered by the Cabinet.

NEWCASTLE SEWERAGE SCHEME.

Mr. BADDELEY: I wish to ask the Secretary for Public Works if he will make inquiries in regard to the necessity for proceeding with the sewerage scheme for the southern suburbs of Newcastle, in order that that work may be put in hand for the purpose of absorbing a number of unemployed workers?

Mr. BALL: The question of the sewerage of Newcastle is now under consideration. I will make inquiries into the matter.

PAYMENTS FOR 1916-17 WHEAT POOL.

Mr. LOUGHLIN: Can the Colonial Treasurer inform the House whether he has yet made available sufficient money to pay the value of the wheat which the committee of investigation reported was lost in the 1916-17 pool, owing to Government negligence?

Mr. GREGORY MCGIRR: On the same question, I desire to ask the Colonial Treasurer whether, in giving consideration to this matter, he will take also into consideration the fact that most of the scrip holders are rich Jews of this city, who never grew any wheat in their lives, and consequently do not deserve any compensation?

Mr. COCKS: I do not think that the question asked by the hon. member Mr. Gregory McGirr was put to me seriously, and I therefore propose to ignore it.

With reference to the question addressed to me by the hon. member Mr. Loughlin, I wish to say that the scrip holders in regard to the 1916-17 wheat are in the happy position of not only having been paid, in effect, the £549,000 which was allocated for the purpose named, but they have been paid the sum of £700,000 over and above that which they were entitled to. Consequently, the larger amount absorbs the smaller.

Mr. MUTCH: Following upon the question just answered by the Colonial Treasurer, I wish to ask whether he will make inquiries to ascertain what percentage of scrip is held by persons other than the original owners and growers of the wheat?

Mr. COCKS: Who the holders of scrip are is not a matter that concerns me, but if the Government has entered

into obligations with regard to negotiable documents, clearly the Government has to honor those obligations, wherever the scrip may be.

Mr. LOUGHLIN: I wish to ask the Colonial Treasurer, with regard to the £700,000 which he said was overpaid to the wheat farmers, whether the amount was paid out of the 1s. 3d. guarantee given by the Government under the guarantee arrangement, or was it an overpayment from some of the earlier pools?

Mr. COCKS: I am informed very distinctly that it was an overpayment of the money allocated in connection with the 1916-17 pool.

Mr. LOUGHLIN: It had nothing to do with the guarantee!

Mr. COCKS: I do not know anything about the guarantee, and I will not say whether this had anything to do with it or not. That is a matter which is not within my knowledge. It is overpayment in regard to that pool in respect of which £549,000 was to be paid through certain responsibilities assumed by the Government.

Mr. MUTCH: Is the Minister for Agriculture prepared to lay on the table of the House a return showing the number of persons who are not the growers of the wheat who hold scrip in connection with the various pools?

Captain CHAFFEY: I will investigate the matter, and let the hon. member know.

Captain DUNN: I would like the Colonial Treasurer to say whether it is not a fact that, although the holders of scrip in connection with the 1916-17 wheat pool were overpaid, the money used for the overpayment was drawn from the other pools, and that compensation will have to be made to the other pools before matters can be finalised?

Mr. COCKS: I must ask the hon. member to give notice of his question, not because I have not a desire to answer it, but because I cannot follow its trend.

Mr. GREGORY MCGIRR: I might be permitted to explain that, in referring to scrip held by brokers of this city, I used the phrase "rich Jews" merely colloquially, and that I had no intention of passing any affront upon members of that particular race. What I wished to

say was that the scrip was held by men in the brokers' line of business, and not by the actual growers of the wheat.

KOGARAH GIRLS' HIGH SCHOOL.

Mr. ARKINS: I desire to ask the Minister of Public Instruction whether it is a fact, as stated in the press, that after his inspection of the Girls' High School at Kogarah he said that the authority which allowed girls to be housed under such conditions should be given five years? Does the Minister intend to carry that out, and does he intend also to carry out the very necessary alterations which should be made in that important school?

Mr. BRUNTNEILL: I should be very pleased to be in a position to carry out the very necessary alterations required at that school. With regard to the school itself, I think that at the commencement of its operations it is utterly and entirely unsuitable for its purpose.

FLOODS AT TEMPE, UNDERCLIFFE, AND MARRICKVILLE.

Mr. ARKINS: Will the Secretary for Public Works inform the House whether his attention has been drawn to the serious state of the low-lying lands at Tempe, Undercliffe, and portions of Marrickville, which have been inundated by the overflow from Cook's River? Is he further aware that this is mainly caused by the lack of dredging facilities on that river? Will the Minister in view of the fact that the dredge *Tempe* for some considerable time was utilised in dredging that river, see that that dredge is replaced, or will he promise the people of that area that he will place some other dredge on the river, to prevent any further devastation of the kind that has taken place, and which to-day is rendering the whole of that area absolutely insanitary and unhealthy?

Mr. BALL: I will have inquiries made with a view to ascertaining the facts.

MURRAY WATERS SCHEME.

Mr. DAVIDSON: Has the Premier's attention been drawn to a statement made by the Prime Minister in the Federal Parliament that it would be necessary

for this Parliament to pass certain ratifying legislation before the Murray River water scheme could be proceeded with?

Sir GEORGE FULLER: Yes. The matter has been under consideration by the Cabinet. The proposition is a very serious one so far as New South Wales is concerned, and we are not going to arrive at a determination except after the fullest inquiry.

STATE CHILDREN RELIEF ALLOWANCES.

Mr. LANE: I wish to ask the Minister of Public Instruction whether it is a fact, as has been stated, that he has reduced the payments under the State Children Relief Act, and, if so, why?

Mr. BRUNTNEILL: I would like to make a brief statement in reply to the hon. member's question. It is not a fact that I have given any orders or instructions that the per-head grant under the State Children Relief Act shall be reduced. It is a fact that, on assuming control of the department, I found that four years ago the expenditure was £87,000 per annum, while to-day it is £287,000 per annum. I have asked that a very careful investigation shall be made. I find from the returns supplied to me that we are paying allowances under the Act to 4,437 mothers in respect of 11,864 children. The maximum allowance for a child is 10s., and in respect of 6,596 children this maximum amount is being paid. Obviously such a fund cannot go on increasing its expenditure unless particular attention is paid to making reductions wherever practicable, and the very competent board which deals with this matter is, under my direction, looking carefully into the whole of the cases. There can be no doubt that cases have been brought before the board and grants have been allowed where it has subsequently been found that the claims were based on what were practically impositions. The time has come when the people of this State have a right to know that the money granted as State relief is not being paid away as if it were a perpetual pension. The department is only what it is called—a State Relief Department—and where the officers find

that parents have money in the bank or other avenues of income it is perfectly legitimate for the department to take up the attitude that until the resources of the parents are exhausted they shall not be permitted to come on to the fund. If a parent has £60 in the bank, she ought not to apply to the State Children Relief Department, because the fund is intended to give relief only in cases of dire distress.

Mr. DAVIES: What do you mean by dire distress?

Mr. BRUNTNELL: I mean that if a parent has £60 in the bank she ought not to come on the funds of the State for relief. Unless that position is taken up the fund will break down of its own weight. I am firmly of the opinion that the time has arrived when some very strict investigation should be made into the whole system of charitable relief in connection with which there is a good deal of imposition and overlapping.

ROYAL ALEXANDRA HOSPITAL FOR CHILDREN.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT.

Mr. OAKES: I wish to make a short statement in regard to the administration and control of one of our metropolitan hospitals—the Royal Alexandra Hospital for Children. Many hon. members will probably remember some of the facts which have been published. Early in 1910 an ex-employee of the hospital named Peters made certain charges against the management. The board of management had the matter investigated by the Audit Department a year or two ago, and on a second occasion the senior inspector of the Audit Department made certain inquiries. Peters persisted in his charges against the administration, and the board of management enlisted the services of Mr. G. Mason Allard to make an independent investigation. His report has been supplied to the board of management, which has sent it on to me by way of courtesy only—I have no control in the matter. I forwarded the report on for the comment of the Auditor-General, and that comment having reached me, I now place the whole of the papers on the table so as to give the fullest publicity to the matter in justice to the hospital authorities.

MURRAY LANDS SETTLEMENT.

ADJOURNMENT.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have received a notice from the hon. member Mr. Gregory McGirr that he desires to move the adjournment of the House to discuss a definite matter of urgent public importance, namely, "The suppression of responsible officers' reports in connection with the Murray lands settlement scheme of the present Government."

Five hon. members having risen in their places,

Question proposed.

Mr. GREGORY MCGIRR (Sydney) [5.53]: This is a question of public importance, and, therefore, in the interests of the public generally, I raise the issue in order that we may have some definite clear statement from the Secretary for Lands on the question. In almost every newspaper that circulates in the country districts we find contradictory statements by one Minister or another. The whole scheme is wrapped in mystery. It is circulated in the city that Sir Joseph Carruthers proposes to resign from the Cabinet on this subject under certain conditions. It is generally rumoured that responsible officers' reports have been, if not suppressed, at any rate excised or toned down. Whether or not that is so I am not here to state, but I am here to have some definite explanation as to how the situation in connection with this great scheme stands, which involves the expenditure of public money. We are told that millions of money are going to be spent on an arid area. We have a statement by Sir Joseph Carruthers to the effect that he will stand or fall by this scheme. On the other hand the Secretary for Lands makes a definite statement that his responsible officer does not stand for the fertility of the soil.

I have here the short report obtained by the Minister for Agriculture, which has been laid on the table. It is of a somewhat startling character when it is considered that some millions of the people's money are going to be spent on such an area. I have only had time since the paper was laid on the table to glance through it, but I find passages such as these:

The main portion of the area is, however, composed of a rather dense alluvial

silt, and, with the exception of one or two small areas of comparatively recent alluvial deposits, appears to be not suitable for irrigation, according to its density.

Mr. DOE: What part does that refer to?

Mr. GREGORY MCGIRR: To the part west of the Darling. The report goes on to state:

The soil is red, but of a harsh character. Practically the only vegetation is blue bush.

We find from the report that the rainfall, which is 11.77 inches per annum in Balranald, is such that this area is not at all suitable for settlement or wheat-growing.

Mr. DOE: You are jumping hundreds of miles!

Mr. GREGORY MCGIRR: Exactly, and that is why I want a statement from the Government. Where does the Government propose to spend the money? Where does it stand in connection with the officer's reports, and in connection with the statement by a member of the Cabinet, Sir Joseph Carruthers, who says that he will stand or fall by this policy?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I must draw the hon. member's attention to the rule that, in discussing a motion for adjournment, he must confine himself to the one subject in respect of which the motion is made. I ask him to deal simply with the subject-matter of the motion, which is the suppression of certain reports. I will not permit the hon. member to go into the merits of the question referred to in the motion. He must confine himself to the matter of the suppression of the reports.

Mr. GREGORY MCGIRR: I recognise that, after all, the question at issue is whether there has been a suppression of certain reports in connection with this particular area or not? Are there any reports in existence which have not been made public? Where do these reports stand in connection with statements made by various responsible Ministers? In what way, for instance, does the Attorney-General obtain the right to say that this particular area will settle 8,000,000 settlers, while the reports of responsible officers state that the area is arid. In what manner does the Cabinet condone the statement of one of its leading members to the effect that he will

[*Mr. Gregory McGirr.*]

stand or fall by this proposal, when we have nothing in the statement submitted by Mr. McDonald, the responsible officer, to substantiate the fertility or otherwise of the soil? I did not give notice to the Minister in charge of this question, as no notice was necessary for such a procedure, because the paper was laid on the table this afternoon. The question has been well ventilated in the press, but, so far, it is enshrouded in mystery. In view of the amount of money which is to be spent on this scheme the public has a right to know where these reports begin and where they end, what reports are in existence, what the facts are in connection with this area, and what the Government proposes to do.

Mr. ARKINS: Is it a fact that the report has robbed you of your thunder?

Mr. GREGORY MCGIRR: No, it has supplied me with it. It is really a statement of a flying trip made by some gentleman, who went with some members of Parliament and had a look at the district, and was told that the land was better than he thought.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: I think, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member must realise, in view of your ruling, that the whole proposition he has to argue is whether the reports have been suppressed or not. It is not a question as to the contents of the reports, or the character of the land, or anything apart from the one proposition as to whether the reports have been suppressed or not.

Mr. SPEAKER: I may call the attention of the hon. member further to the fact that it is not a question of whether the reports have been suppressed or not. I could hardly allow the hon. member Mr. Gregory McGirr to discuss that matter on this motion for adjournment. If the hon. member wishes to discuss the matter of the suppression of responsible officers' reports, I must assume that those reports have been suppressed. The hon. member puts that forward as a fact—a definite matter of public importance. I can only allow the hon. member to pursue the matter of the suppression of the reports. I cannot permit him, by the exercise of a little ingenuity, to travel beyond that matter, namely, the suppression of the reports.

Mr. GREGORY MCGIRR: I have no desire to pursue the matter further, because, as you have said, sir, it is narrowed down to the question of whether reports have or have not been suppressed. I do not state definitely that reports have been suppressed, but it is stated as lately as in this afternoon's paper that the report of the Secretary for Lands has been suppressed. These statements are being published daily, and the public desires to know the truth. Let us know where we stand, and what is going to be done. I am here now to show another suppressed report.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. GREGORY MCGIRR: I refer to the following statement in the press:

Another Suppressed Report.

A "statement from Sir George Fuller" reached this office ten minutes after we had gone to press yesterday, but it reached another evening paper in time for publication in its afternoon edition. In that statement Sir George Fuller said that, "The statement in the *Evening News* that the Government has decided 'as a result of Mr. McDonald's adverse report, to drop the West Darling country from its Murray lands scheme'—"

Mr. WEARNE: On a point of order, does what the hon. member is reading refer to the report of an officer of the department?

Mr. SPEAKER: That is not a question for me to answer. So far I have not been able to ascertain whether it does or not, but I am waiting for the hon. member to connect it with the subject-matter of this motion for adjournment.

Mr. GREGORY MCGIRR: The report goes on:

and, further, 'that in order to save its face the Government will announce that this section of the scheme will not be proceeded with on account of the disinclination of the South Australian Government to co-operate in the extension of railways into New South Wales territory,' is a misrepresentation of facts."

Mr. WEARNE: Is it not the Minister's report you are reading from?

Mr. GREGORY MCGIRR: It is Sir George Fuller's report sent to the press.

Mr. WEARNE: That is not a departmental officer's report!

Mr. GREGORY MCGIRR: More or less it is. If the Minister's report has been suppressed—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I do not want to curtail the hon. member's remarks unnecessarily—I am quite sure that he will recognise that—but if that statement refers to some report by Sir George Fuller, he must see that it has no bearing on the subject-matter of this motion for adjournment, which is "The suppression of responsible officers' reports in connection with the Murray lands settlement scheme." The term "responsible officers" certainly does not refer to Sir George Fuller.

Mr. GREGORY MCGIRR: This statement is that a further report has been suppressed. I do not know whether reports have been suppressed or whether they have not; but the floor of this House is the place to find out.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! All I can say is that if the hon. member does not know whether reports have been suppressed or not, he has done a most improper thing in making the suppression of reports the subject-matter of a motion for adjournment. The adjournment of the House can, under the standing order, be moved only to discuss a specific matter; if the hon. member says he does not know whether the reports have been suppressed or not, I do not see how legitimately he can make the suppression of those reports the subject of a motion for adjournment. The subject of such a motion should be a definite matter or a specific act of recent occurrence. The hon. member is responsible for the framing of his own motion, and I do not want unnecessarily to curtail his remarks; but I must observe the rules of the House.

Mr. WEARNE (Namoi), Secretary for Lands [6.6]: I do not wish to take up time unnecessarily, neither do I think I am called upon to make a speech in reply to the hon. member's remarks. I do not know why he brought his motion forward. There has been no suppression of reports by any officer or other person.

Mr. GREGORY MCGIRR:

Mr. WEARNE: I do not see why I should make a speech to feed you with information on which to make another attack, but there has been no suppression of the report of any officer or other person in connection with the Murray trip, so far as I know. A trip to the Murray River was arranged, and was carried out.

I myself made a report, as any other Minister would, to his Cabinet in regard to the matter. The Minister for Agriculture has made an explanation to the House, and I cannot understand what the hon. member Mr. Gregory McGirr is driving at.

Question resolved in the negative.

FEMALE EMPLOYEES' WAGES BILL.

Mr. BAGNALL (St. George) [6.8] moved:

That leave be given to bring in a bill to provide that there shall be no discrimination in the rates of pay of males and females performing work of the same character; to amend the Acts relating to industrial arbitration; and for purposes consequent thereon and incidental thereto.

He said: This is a proposal which I brought before the House during the last Parliament. It succeeded in reaching the second-reading stage, but owing to Parliament being dissolved it is necessary for me to take it through the preliminary stages afresh. I ask the indulgence of hon. members in order that I may reach the same stage at the earliest possible moment. The principle involved in the motion is I think pretty well understood by hon. members. I believe there is a general appreciation of the necessity for doing something to bring about the establishment of the principle of equal pay for women who are employed in occupations in which they do the same class of work as men, but receive very much lower rates of pay. In this country a white Australia policy is the cornerstone of our nationhood; and one of the principal reasons why we have adopted that policy is to remove the danger of cheap labour in opposition to our own white workers. I cannot understand why it is that we have not very much earlier seriously taken up the question of removing a blot upon our national life whereby we permit our industrial conditions to be injured and lessen the prospect of the men of our community securing employment because of the fact that by legislation we permit women to come in and do the same work for lower pay. I am not one who is desirous of securing a revolutionary change in this matter all at once. I realise that if legislation were brought in to-morrow to make the conditions of pay equal immediately, it would

inflict a very serious hardship upon large numbers of our women workers. I have made provision in the bill which has been drafted so that undue hardship will not fall upon the women who are engaged in industries. I have provided that a period of five years shall elapse before the equal conditions fully apply, and that annually one-fifth of the difference shall be added to their wages until at the end of the fifth year the pay of female employees will be equal to that of male workers.

Captain DUNN: If women are doing the work equally as well and as efficiently as men, why should they wait five years?

Mr. BAGNALL: I admit that the point which the hon. member has made is a very sound one, but I think he will see that the position exists frequently where to do the right thing immediately would do more harm than is desired by the party making the move in the matter. There are some 50,000 women workers in our various industries to-day, and thousands are being added to their number each year. More and more the young girls of our community are going into the various avenues of industry, and more and more they are shoving the manhood of the country out of many industrial occupations.

Captain DUNN: Because they are cheaper!

Mr. BAGNALL: There is no question that one of the principal reasons for this is that the labour of women is cheaper. It is an extraordinary thing that while we are so guarded against the importation of cheap labour from overseas, whilst we are so opposed to the importation of coloured labour, because we recognise the certain fact that such labour would reduce the economic conditions of our people, we are apparently content to go on without making any move against cheap labour by women here, although we have a very real position existing in our midst. It seems strange that up to the present time we have permitted our womenfolk to go into our industries, and, so to speak, be made the slaves of our economic position. Therefore, I believe we are called upon to move in this matter, so that this state of affairs shall be remedied at the earliest possible moment. Surely hon. members must, if they contemplate the problem which is arising

[Mr. Wearne.

in Australia, as well as in other parts of the world, recognise that the evils arising out of this position not only bear hard upon the women themselves, but have a serious effect upon the prospects of the nation as a whole, because through the performance of the same class of work as men do they are gradually driving the manhood out of three-fourths of the industries of the State, and soon we shall reach a position in which the manhood of the country will only be employed in performing the heavier manual tasks, because all the forms of labour that can be undertaken by our women-folk will be completely in their hands, owing to the economic factor that their labour is considerably cheaper. When these facts are brought home to hon. members they should be aroused to the necessity for taking action immediately to correct this very serious position. I am anxious that this bill shall become law at the earliest possible moment. At this stage it would be unusual to take up too much time discussing the details of the proposal, and all I ask is that the House will give me leave to introduce the bill, and on the second reading more detailed information will be given as to the ramifications of its operations and the very serious position disclosed.

[*Mr. Speaker left the chair at 6.16 p.m. The House resumed at 7.15 p.m.*]

Mr. BAGNALL: I was just concluding my remarks on the introductory stage as I am anxious to reach the more important stage when I shall have an opportunity to submit to the House full details of the measure I have had drafted. I ask hon. members to allow the motion to go without further discussion, because the opportunity will occur on the second reading for a full-dress debate.

There being no seconder the motion lapsed.

FRANCHISE EXTENSION BILL.

Mr. BAGNALL (St. George) [7.17]: I move:

That leave be given to bring in a bill to provide that the Parliamentary Electorates and Elections Act be amended to make provision for the extension of the franchise to permit of parents having additional votes on behalf of their children; and for purposes consequent thereon and incidental thereto.

Hon. members not appreciating the necessity for taking action in the direction indicated in the motion which has just been dealt with, I hope that I shall have better support for this motion.

This is also the preliminary stage, therefore it will not be in order for me to deal with the matter in detail. But the question of doing something to introduce a more stable note in our franchise is one which must appeal to all who are considering the difficulties of democratic government in our time. Historians tell us that all democracies have destroyed themselves. In recent years we have witnessed very substantial evidence of the truth of this claim that the democratic form of government appears to be so inherently weak in its foundation that it is practically impossible for such a government to continue for any lengthy period. I believe that here in Australia we have an illustration of the weakness provided by a franchise which does not go far enough in the direction of appreciating the principle upon which adult suffrage was brought into being.

Notice taken that there was not a quorum present,

Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House at 7.22 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Wednesday, 26 July, 1922.

Member Sworn—Leave of Absence—Legislative Council Reforms—Income-tax Assessments—Dubbo-Werris Creek Railway—Tubercular Dairy Cattle—Basic Wage: Profits of Companies—Bank of New South Wales Bill—Encroachment of Buildings Bill (second reading)—Adjournment (Soldiers' Street Bands).

The PRESIDENT took the chair.

MEMBER SWORN.

The Hon. Sir Edward Owen Cox took the oath and subscribed the roll.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

The PRESIDENT announced the receipt of a message from his Excellency the Governor intimating that he had granted leave of absence during the currency of the session to the Hon. F. Jago Smith.