

against political interference, with the control vested in commissioners versed in the carrying out of drainage works.

On motion by Hon. J. Ewing, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 9.8 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 2nd December, 1925.

	PAGE
Questions: Kendenup, rail consignments ...	2352
Stock Inspection, pigs and cattle ...	2352
Bathing, safety regulations ...	2352
Bills: Weights and Measures Act Amendment, 1a. ...	2353
Swan River Improvement, 1a. ...	2353
Fire Brigades Act Amendment, 1a. ...	2353
Roads (Loire, 3a. ...	2353
Eight Hours 3a. ...	2353
Parliamentary Allowances Act Amendment, 2a., Com. Report ...	2353
Taxation (Motor Spirit Vendors), Message, 2a. ...	2367
Day Baking, returned ...	2379

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

QUESTION—KENDENUP, RAIL CONSIGNMENTS.

Mr. COVERLEY (for Mr. A. Wansbrough) asked the Minister for Railways: 1. What was the actual tonnage in truck lots credited to Kendenup siding, inwards and outwards, for the 12 months ended on 30th November? 2. What was the actual tonnage in small consignments, inwards and outwards, for the same period? 3. What did the small outwards consignments chiefly consist of?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, For 12 months ended 31st October, approximately 300 tons. November figures will not be available for three weeks. 2, 166 tons. 3, Fruit and garden produce.

QUESTION—STOCK INSPECTION, PIGS AND CATTLE.

Mr. GRIFFITHS asked the Minister for Agriculture: 1, Are inspectors engaged in inspecting pigs and piggeries in this State? 2, Is herd testing being carried out? 3, Is there a systematic inspection of cattle for tuberculosis? 4, Is tuberculosis being stamped out, or is it increasing?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE replied: 1, This work is portion of the duties of the officers of the veterinary branch, and receives attention as opportunity offers. 2, Yes; practically all the pure bred herds of the State are being tested; also, all the cows belonging to group settlers on the Peel Estate. 3, An inspector of the veterinary branch attends the weekly cattle sales, when clinical cases are ordered to be sold, subject to slaughter, and any doubtful cases tested. 4, During the period January to November, 1925, 90 cattle were subjected to the tuberculin test, of which 31 reacted. I am unable to say whether T.B. is increasing or decreasing, as figures are not available.

QUESTION—BATHING, SAFETY REGULATIONS.

Mr. NORTH asked the Minister representing the Chief Secretary: 1, Are the Government aware—(a) that precautions have been taken by the Cottesloe Life Saving Club to render a limited area of water reasonably safe for bathing during certain specified periods? (b) that certain individuals persist in swimming beyond the safety zone during such specified periods, and generally by their conduct attempt to flout the measures which have been taken? 2, If so, will the Government initiate legislation to clothe the various life saving incorporated societies with the necessary authority to enforce locally the regulations which from time to time may be instituted?

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE (Honorary Minister) replied: 1 (a) and (b), I am given to understand that such is the case. If individuals take needless risks, they do so upon their own responsibility.

BILLS (3)—FIRST READING.

1, Weights and Measures Act Amendment.

Introduced by the Premier (for the Minister for Justice).

2, Swan River Improvement.

Introduced by the Minister for Works.

3, Fire Brigades Act Amendment.

Introduced by Hon. S. W. Munsie (Honorary Minister).

BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.

1, Roads Closure.

2, Eight Hours.

Transmitted to the Council.

BILL—PARLIAMENTARY ALLOWANCES ACT AMENDMENT.*Message.*

Message from the Governor received and read recommending appropriation in connection with this Bill.

Second Reading.

THE PREMIER (Hon. P. Collier—Boulder) [4.40] in moving the second reading said: The Bill is introduced in pursuance of a motion recently carried in the House declaring that the allowance made to members was inadequate and should be increased. I do not think it necessary for me to traverse the ground covered during the debate on the motion a few weeks ago. The Bill proposes to increase the present allowance by £200 per annum, bringing it up from £400 to £600. It is not necessary to argue that the present allowance is insufficient. It is conceded on all hands, both inside and outside the Chamber, that £400 per annum is a totally insufficient allowance to enable members to properly and adequately discharge the responsible duties of their position. When we have regard for the decreased purchasing power of money during recent years it is readily understood that, relatively, the present allowance is not more than the allowance made to members prior to the increase of 1910. At that time it was conceded that the allowance was altogether insufficient. If members are to properly know the State regarding which they are called upon to

legislate, it is essential that they should do a good deal of travelling; and we know that the expense of travelling over large areas of a vast State such as ours is very considerable indeed. Altogether the allowance is entirely insufficient to enable members to do justice to their position. Although it may not be generally considered that the payment of an allowance to members to cover expenses incurred in the discharge of their duties should be regarded as salary, nevertheless there are in the Public Service many quite subordinate offices carrying practically no responsibility at all, but still rewarded by a salary or allowance much larger than that made to members of Parliament. I think there will not be much opposition to the Bill on that score, either in or outside the House. It is contended that it would be an improper thing for members themselves to increase the allowance that is made, and that any increase should date only from the commencement of the next Parliament. That is argued because it is held that the public should have an opportunity of approving or disapproving of the allowance, and to say whether it should obtain or not. I am not able to say whether that is so. It is possible for the electors to approve or express their disapproval of the increase only by a straight-out plebiscite or referendum. As I stated during the discussion on the motion, there would be so many issues that would confront the electors during a general campaign, that it would be impossible to single out any one point or question, and to say that the election of any member or number of members should be determined by the voters' attitude upon that particular question alone. There are many questions that influence the decision of the electors, so that no matter what the verdict might be the point would be still undetermined as to whether the electors approved or not of an increase in the allowance, unless, of course, they had a special vote on the subject. It seems to me it would be altogether unnecessary to take a plebiscite or referendum of all the electors of the State on a point of order of this kind. We do not take a referendum of the electors on matters of infinitely greater importance concerning their own interests and those of the State. We take to ourselves the right to decide the expenditure of large sums of money on public works, and in other directions, without any direct instructions from the electors, except what might have been ob-

tained at the previous general election. So it seems to me something like the action of taking a steam hammer to crush a fly, to say that we should remit the question of the expenditure of a few thousand pounds extra per annum, which will be involved, to a referendum of the people, when we do not give them that privilege on any other question of infinitely greater importance to them. The House will, therefore, be quite consistent, and will not be doing anything wrong, notwithstanding what may be said outside, in increasing the allowance. It is argued, too, that members made a contract, accepted an undertaking, when they were elected two years ago, to carry on for the life of this Parliament at the salary which then obtained. I do not view the matter in that light. The only member or members bound to adhere to the allowance in existence at the last general election, would be the member or members who definitely pledged themselves not to increase the allowance during the life of this Parliament. Because a certain allowance was paid at election time members are no more bound to adhere to that for the life of this Parliament than they would be bound on any other question, upon which they have the right to exercise their discretion, with regard to legislation during the life of this Parliament. So I say if the allowance is deemed insufficient, and it is admitted that it is so, there is nothing improper or wrong in increasing it to an amount that is considered to be fair, not even during the life of this Parliament.

Mr. North: There is no other way of providing it.

The PREMIER: No. The only argument advanced is that it would be an improper thing to do without the consent or approval of the electors first having been obtained. It is not possible, as the hon. member says, to get the approval of the electors. Even if it were made to apply only to the next Parliament the position would still be as uncertain then as it is now with regard to the attitude of the electors on this particular question. There is no way of ascertaining the views of the electors at a general election upon one isolated question.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: This will cause a lot of discontent amongst the civil servants.

The PREMIER: It ought not to cause any discontent amongst them.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: What have they to do with us?

The PREMIER: I venture to say that the civil servants, even the lowest paid member of the civil service, or the person on the basic wage in Government employ, are in the enjoyment to-day of a salary or income relatively greater than that of members of this House.

Mr. Stubbs: What have civil servants to do with Parliament?

The PREMIER: Having regard to the expenses attached to this position, which the ordinary person in the civil or private life of the community does not have to incur, I say that if the total amount of the expenditure of a man on the minimum or basic wage could be kept, and the expenses incurred by a member in the discharge of his duties could also be kept, the amount left to the member would be found to be not nearly as much as that which was drawn by the man on the basic wage.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Of course it would not.

The PREMIER: It may be argued in some quarters that this is only an allowance to cover a member's expenses, and that there is nothing to prevent him from adding to his income by business or some other means.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Or by neglecting his business.

The PREMIER: I am sure that any member who has a business must of necessity neglect it if he attends properly to his Parliamentary duties. We have only to look back upon the political history of Australia during the last 30 or 40 years to recall the names of scores of men who have ruined their own careers by entering politics. We know of men who would have been well off had they devoted their time to their own interests and those of their family, but who neglected their personal interests and have fallen into straitened circumstances because of the time they devoted to their public duties and the interests of the State.

Mr. Teesdale: There was a man in the Old Men's Home who would have been successful in life but that he came into this House, and he died a pauper.

The PREMIER: We know of men who after a long career of public life have left it infinitely poorer than when they entered it.

Mr. Wilson: That should not be expected of any man.

The PREMIER: No. After a man has served his country for upwards of 20 years it should not be expected of him that he should be forced into the position of having to make a fresh start in life, or fall back upon the good will and assistance of his friends. That is a position which exists in every State in Australia. The majority of the people of this country do not expect men to give their time to its service to the detriment of their own interests and welfare. It should not be expected of them, and I do not believe the majority of the people desire such a thing. There is nothing to excuse or explain away in deciding that to-day we are justified in increasing the allowance to that which will be something commensurate with the amount of time and expense involved in the discharge of members' duties. Members representing country districts particularly, have the whole of their time taken up for six months in the year in their service to the country. Whether they are farmers, agriculturists, or are in business in the country, their individual occupations must suffer because of the time they devote to State duties. Even though they may travel up to Perth in the course of each week, a great part of their time is lost to them. They also incur additional expense through having to live in the city during portion of the week, over a period of five or six months of the year. The whole position is unfair. It should not be asked of any man that he should do this. There is no need for me to say more. I have no compunction whatever on behalf of the Government, pursuant to the motion that was carried in this House, in bringing down this Bill. I do not believe for a moment that the amount set down, namely an increase of £200 a year, is excessive, having regard to all the facts and circumstances I have described. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. SIR JAMES MITCHELL (Northam) [4.55]: I was not in the House when the motion, which led up to the introduction of this Bill, was considered. I do not want the vote to be taken without stating my views on this question. I have already stated them outside the House. We must first consider whether the £400 a year allowance is adequate for members of Parliament. Undoubtedly it is not. So far as members representing country districts are concerned, whether those districts are far or near, this

allowance does not do more than cover their expenses, if it does that. The Premier has said that for five or six months of the year we sit here over the greater part of the week. I happen to live near Perth, and can come up in two or three hours. I am one of the fortunate country members in that regard. For the most part we spend the whole of our time in Perth whilst the House is sitting. We do not spend less than 200 days in the year travelling away from our homes on public duty. This cannot be done on £400 a year, the amount of the present allowance. There are many other expenses that are unavoidable, such as election expenses, and these and other things reach a considerable sum.

The Minister for Mines: And travelling expenses.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I have referred to those. Members who have fought an election know what it costs to do so. If a man is in public life he has many duties of a public nature to carry out, quite apart from the work done here. Unfortunately there are not enough public-spirited men in the State to render public service, such as members of Parliament are expected to render. For that reason we have a great deal more to do than would otherwise be the case. It cannot be argued, if we are to have an allowance, that it should be sufficient only to cover out-of-pocket expenses, and leave nothing for lost time. The second point is how the increase is to be brought about. Those members who have been in the House for 20 years know that the first allowance of £200 a year was made by this House without reference to the people. The increase to £300 a year was made in the same way, and the increase to £400 a year was decided by Parliament without reference to the people. How could it be referred to them? If it is to be done it must be done in the way the Premier is doing it now. If the allowance were altogether out of proportion to the service we render, the people would soon decide the question against us. In the short Parliaments that we have and going to the people as we do every three years, ample opportunity is afforded to them of approving or disapproving our acts in this House. This Bill is the only means we have of determining whether the allowance is to be increased or not. I know that in another State a judge was appointed to determine what should be paid to members. That is not the right procedure at

all. We fix the salary of the judge, and is the judge to fix our salaries? It is our duty to consider what remuneration shall be paid to those engaged in the public life of this State, no matter what their positions may be. As regards the payment of Ministers, I have had some considerable experience. After all the deductions have been made, a Minister of the Crown has very little for himself. I am speaking of deductions which are absolutely unavoidable. I have worked the problem out many times, and I find that a Minister of the Crown really has about £500 a year more than an ordinary member; and a Minister has to take unlimited responsibilities. The people are not averse to paying members of Parliament and Ministers of the Crown reasonable allowances. To me it seems wrong that the Premier of this country should draw less than some of the men employed in the Public Service. It has to be remembered that the Premier must serve a long apprenticeship before attaining to the position. No doubt that should be so. The same thing applies to Ministers. It can be said of the men who have filled Ministerial office in this State that they have devoted their whole time and energy to the work of the country, and have given of their best to the country. It will be admitted by the people that good government is cheap even at a considerable price. Bad government would be dear at any price. Members do give of their best, and they render good service to the people, and they should receive at least an allowance sufficient to cover all unavoidable expenses. Some of my friends will say that the member who lives in the city is not under the same expense as country members, but one cannot discriminate. Because a few members do live in Perth, or must live in Perth, we cannot declare that the majority of members, who come from the country, shall serve the State without receiving sufficient to cover unavoidable expenses. It can be said with truth that there is not a member of this House, at any rate since I have been here, who has not lost money by reason of his position here. I have known men who came here having saved two or three hundred pounds. In a year or two their savings had disappeared. They had found it necessary to draw upon those savings in order to make good the expenses entailed by their representation of the people. Nothing can be said against the increase. At any rate, it

cannot be said that the present allowance is sufficient, or that the Premier's proposal will do more than bare justice. Having said these things I shall be expected by members to vote for the Bill without reservation and without saying anything further. But while I have stated publicly that I am in favour of increasing the Parliamentary allowance, I have also said, and I still say, that our taxation is so heavy that there should be some reduction of it before we pass this measure.

Mr. Stubbs: Has not taxation been reduced during the last two years?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It is possible to reduce taxation now that our finances are in a better position. I hope the Premier will agree with me that we can and ought to reduce taxation, particularly if justice is done to us as the result of the report of the Federal Disabilities Commission. In that case we shall get an allowance from the Commonwealth, and I am satisfied that we shall get it over a long term of years. The inquiry was made because the people of this country had to be taxed at a high rate, indirect taxation having been found insufficient to meet the ordinary expenses of government. That largely was the case put before the Federal Disabilities Commission. It was the argument I myself laid before them, pointing out the unfairness of having an income tax of as much as 4s. in the pound here while the highest rate that can be paid in Victoria is 1s. We shall undoubtedly be assisted to meet the difficulties by the fact of Western Australia having entered Federation as a community smaller in numbers and somewhat less wealthy than the communities of the Eastern States. I think a reduction of State taxation can be made and ought to be made. I have said outside the House that we ought to see our way to reduce taxation before we increase the Parliamentary allowance. I have to refer to a little meanness which I practised in not increasing the allowances to Mr. Speaker and to the Chairman of Committees when I introduced a measure for a similar purpose a few years ago. I am glad that that is being rectified now. The circumstances then, however, were very different. Still, I confess that it was not playing the game. I am glad the Premier is doing something to rectify my omission. There is still, however, an injustice being done, because the Speaker's allowance was originally £400 a year more than the allow-

ance paid to ordinary members, and the allowance of the Chairman of Committees was originally £200 more. I am not permitted to discuss the allowance to the Speaker, but I can discuss the allowance to the Chairman of Committees. I should be indeed sorry to fill the Chair at an allowance of only £100 more than that paid to the ordinary member. I plead guilty to having done the thing; I was responsible; but I hope that even now the Premier will see his way clear to rectify the wrong I did. Under the present proposal the Chairman of Committees will receive only £100 a year more than ordinary members. I do not think we should alter the proportion which applied up to the time when the allowance to members was raised from £300 to £400. However, that is a matter with which I cannot deal further.

MR. THOMSON (Katanning) [5.12]: I hope that as a result of passing this Bill—it seems that the measure is going to be passed—we shall not have the same result as followed on the last increase, when we had an indignant group of civil servants marching up to Parliament House with a demand for an increase of 33 per cent. in their salaries. Undoubtedly the annual increments of civil servants had been withheld from them for years, and when members of Parliament secured an increase of £100 there was an uproar.

The Minister for Works: Civil servants have had their increments during the last two years.

Mr. THOMSON: If the question were as to a Parliamentary salary instead of a Parliamentary allowance, the proposition would be different. I quite agree with the Premier's statement that undoubtedly many members of Parliament have ruined themselves financially by neglecting their private businesses in order to attend to their public duties. Evidence of that can be found on many sides. It applies particularly to country businesses conducted by members of Parliament. I understand that one metropolitan member has stated publicly that he can perform the whole of his Parliamentary duties in 20 minutes a day. He must have very contented constituents. Those of us who come from the country districts know our position to be very different. The Opposition Leader's statement that the Premier is receiving considerably less than some

of our public servants shows that there is something wrong. Such a position is certainly anomalous. An inquiry might have been set afoot with a view to a recommendation being made, but some people would argue that by placing the matter in the hands of an independent section outside we should be shirking our responsibilities. Probably that is so. The member for Wagin (Mr. Stubbs), who moved a motion on this subject, stated that by increasing the Parliamentary allowance we would probably get better representation. If that is a sound argument, I do not think the suggested increase will prove specially effective. The successful man who is making his mark in the world may feel that he has not arrived at the stage when he has sufficient behind him to be able to attend to public duties at the salary which is being offered to-day. From that aspect the present allowance is certainly inadequate. I would have liked a recommendation whereby we might have considered the possibility of reducing the number of members of the House. I believe a House of 30 members would provide just as good legislation as is obtained from a House of 50 members. I merely express my opinion and cast no reflection upon anyone. If it is desired to get a better type of Parliamentary representative, I think the minimum salary should be £1,000. I would prefer to see a House with a membership of 30 and a salary sufficient to encourage men of ability to stand for election, if it is a question of ability. I do not admit that members of Parliament to-day are lacking in ability. It is a pity that a suggestion such as I have made has not been considered. I take up the attitude that in my opinion, the present members of Parliament entered into a contract with the electors. The Premier touched upon that phase and traversed the whole of the arguments that have been used regarding this question. It seems to me that the members of this Chamber knew perfectly well the conditions that obtained when they decided to submit themselves to the people. I consider therefore that the present allowance should continue for members of the present Parliament, although I would have no objection to increasing the salaries paid, provided the increases took effect with the advent of the next Parliament.

Mr. North: Is there any precedent for that?

Mr. THOMSON: There is no reason why we should not make a start.

Mr. Sampson: We can establish a precedent.

Mr. Stubbs: That is what the Press has advocated.

Mr. THOMSON: I do not wish to be personal, but I believe I am entitled to as much salary as anyone in the House.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Not if you entered into a contract.

Mr. THOMSON: I did not say I entered into that contract. I said that members who submitted themselves for election knew what the salary was to be and the conditions that would obtain.

Mr. Withers: The sitting members may have.

Mr. THOMSON: They submitted themselves freely and voluntarily; they were not compelled to stand.

Mr. Corboy: You realise that some hon. members may have told their electors that they would vote for an increase.

Mr. THOMSON: I contend it would be more just and more honourable if an increase in the salaries were agreed to, higher even than that proposed, provided the new payments did not come into force until after the next general election. I indicate at this stage that it is my intention to test the feeling of hon. members on that point when we reach the Committee stage.

MR. STUBBS (Wagin) [5.30]: The member for Katanning (Mr. Thomson) says that every member here entered into a contract at the last election to serve the country on the existing salary. I differ from him on that point and on very good grounds too. I entered into no such contract; he may have done so. If he spoke for himself, well and good. He also said he would like to see a reduction in the number of members of Parliament. It would be a sad day for me if that were done because I formerly held a position that I believe I could have retained for the rest of my life. I represented the Metropolitan-Suburban Province in the Upper House. I was approached with a request to resign that position and stand for the then newly declared Wagin electorate. Prior to the passing of the memorable Redistribution of Seats Act which gave Wagin its birth in the legislative halls as a separate electorate, it was stated openly in that district that all roads and railways led to

Katanning and Narrogin where every kind of public expenditure was incurred to the neglect of Wagin. I hope the day will be long distant when Wagin will be tacked on to either Katanning or Narrogin.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: I hope so too.

Mr. STUBBS: I have a lively recollection of the discussions that took place when I resigned, but I am fully confident that the majority of the people in Wagin are quite satisfied with the representation they get from their present member.

Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. STUBBS: But that has nothing to do with the question of salaries. Whether there be few or many members, the question of salaries does not come into it, nor can any member fairly claim that such is the position, unless, of course, we have members who are independent of Parliament and would be prepared to do the work for nothing. The time has long since passed when the people would agree to representation in Parliament for nothing, and I hope that time has gone forever in this State. It has been stated in the Press that while an increase in salary in some directions may be justified, the increase should not apply to the members of the present Parliament. I cannot follow that line of argument. I believe that the majority of the people of Western Australia will not turn down any hon. member who records his vote in favour of a fair allowance to cover out-of-pocket expenses, because the present allowance is totally inadequate. One paper asked why, if a member of Parliament was not satisfied with the existing conditions, he did not get out of it. That referred to me. I ask hon. members if they ever heard a more puerile argument than that? If there is no more opposition to it than that voiced by the member for Katanning, the Bill should be agreed to. I do not blame that hon. member for voicing his opinions, because he belongs to a party pledged against this proposition. Therefore I could not expect him or other members of his party to vote for the Bill.

Mr. Teesdale: They are in the bag.

Mr. STUBBS: They could not vote for it honourably. On the other hand, however, I do not think there is one of them who will not jump at the extra salary if it is agreed to.

Mr. Davy: That is a cheap sort of jibe, anyhow.

Mr. STUBBS: I have pleasure in supporting the second reading of the Bill.

MR. HUGHES (East Perth) [5.25]: I was not able to be present when the motion dealing with the Parliamentary allowances was dealt with. If I had been present, I could not have supported it, though I realise in some instances the present allowance is insufficient. One does not need to be very astute to realise that a member representing a constituency in the North-West or in the country has to spend a large portion of his allowance in travelling. Therefore I agree that in some instances there is an urgent demand for a substantial increase in the allowances paid to those members. Whatever salary we may agree to pay to members, the man who represents a country constituency is entitled to an additional allowance to cover his travelling and out-of-pocket expenses. That principle is recognised in other legislatures in Australia. I am told that in Queensland members receive an extra allowance to cover these expenses, increasing with the distance a member has to travel. In some instances I think the allowance amounts to £50, while others receive £100. If a member representing a North-West seat or some other outlying district told me that he was entitled to £200 a year more than I was, I would not raise any objection, because, without the necessity for proof being furnished, I can realise that such a member must of necessity be put to considerably more expense than a member of Parliament representing a city or suburban constituency.

Mr. Teesdale: It would never do. You would all be after my seat.

Mr. HUGHES: I suggest to the member for Roebourne (Mr. Teesdale) that he should take the additional £200 a year and accept the risk of being outed from his seat. In view of what I have heard of the North-West, I believe a member of Parliament would be more comfortably placed as a representative of a city seat at a slightly smaller salary. The member for Katanning (Mr. Thomson) was apparently afraid that I did not intend to speak, so he referred to a remark of mine. I did say that when the House was not in session, about one hour per day sufficed for me to attend to my Parliamentary duties. I am prepared to repeat that statement: I am prepared to go further and say that not only in regard to myself but to a large number of other members, the Parliamentary duties take up only a portion of our time.

Mr. Mann: Mine could not be done in an hour a day, anyhow.

Mr. HUGHES: I am prepared to substantiate my statement with proofs.

Mr. Stubbs: You cannot say that for country members.

Mr. Richardson: Nor for town members either.

Mr. HUGHES: I will submit one or two proofs in support of my contention. For the purpose of comparison I have selected two or three metropolitan-suburban constituencies, two North-West constituencies and two country constituencies. Take the Canning electorate with 14,000 electors and the Fremantle constituency with 4,000 electors. The Canning electorate has three times as many electors as the Fremantle constituency. From an area standpoint the Canning electorate has seven times the area of the Fremantle constituency. What constitutes the duty of a member? Is that defined or is the principle guided by the number of electors or the area of his constituency?

Members: Both.

Mr. HUGHES: If both represent guiding factors, the job of representing the Canning electorate is twenty-one times as great as that of representing the Fremantle constituency.

Mr. Clydesdale: Quite right, too.

Mr. HUGHES: I have cited Fremantle only because the figures suggested a suitable comparison for my argument. I am not out to boost the member for Canning at the expense of the member for Fremantle. I am merely dealing with constituencies. Members opposite have suggested that space and population determine the difficulty of representing a constituency.

Mr. Stubbs: Who said that?

Mr. HUGHES: Members opposite. Anyhow, I shall repeat the question. What determines the duties of a member? Is it the number of electors or the extent of the electorate? As members do not reply on this occasion, I conclude that once bitten they are twice shy.

The Minister for Works: It is a man's own energy.

Mr. HUGHES: Notwithstanding that Canning electorate involves so much more work than does Fremantle, the member for Canning runs a business which occupied the whole of his time before he entered Parliament.

Mr. Clydesdale: You forget that I employ men to do that work.

Mr. HUGHES: I know that the hon. member manages the business. If it takes the whole of his time to manage the business, he has been neglecting his parliamentary duties, but if it takes the whole of his time to attend to his parliamentary duties, he must be neglecting his business. As a matter of fact, he neglects neither. If I could get for East Perth one-tenth of the tramlines that he has secured for Canning, I should be delighted.

Mr. Sleeman: If you put in more than an hour a day on your parliamentary work, you would get the tramlines.

Mr. HUGHES: We have definite proof of a member conducting a business and representing a constituency that requires much greater attention than does any other constituency. Let me compare Guildford and Fremantle. Guildford has 9,600 electors against Fremantle's 4,600, so that Guildford has at least twice the population of Fremantle and roughly the same area.

The Minister for Works: I reckon that Guildford has three times the area of Fremantle.

Mr. HUGHES: It has seven times the area.

The Minister for Works: You said it was roughly the same area.

Mr. HUGHES: It has roughly the same area as has Canning. The member for Guildford can also run a private business. He can conduct a farm away out in the back blocks.

Mr. Clydesdale: Do you argue that a man should not do that?

Mr. HUGHES: Farms do not run themselves.

Mr. Sampson: What are you driving at? You do not suggest that members neglect their constituencies?

Mr. HUGHES: No; what I suggest is that parliamentary representation in many instances is only a part-time job.

Mr. Sampson: Let every man speak for himself.

Mr. HUGHES: Every member has a right to address himself to the question, and I am stating the case from my point of view. In practice, parliamentary representation constitutes only a part-time job. If it were not so, how could a man conduct a business and give his time to representing a constituency?

Mr. Clydesdale: Cannot a man conduct a business and employ men to do it for him?

Mr. North: A man can work overtime if he likes.

Mr. HUGHES: I am not here to advocate overtime. We are not restricted to city constituencies for comparisons.

Mr. Withers: You have not yet compared East Perth.

Mr. HUGHES: East Perth has 8,000 electors, situated within $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles of the Perth Town Hall.

Lieut.-Colonel Denton: You could walk around it.

Mr. HUGHES: One could walk from one extremity of East Perth to the other in 20 to 30 minutes. The electorate extends from a quarter of a mile north-east of the Mt. Lawley railway station to within half a mile of the Perth Town Hall. But it is a big constituency in point of electors. If a city member was the only one who could attend to his parliamentary duties in half of his time, there might be nothing in the contention, but let us consider the goldfields. I have selected two goldfields constituencies for no reason other than that they suit my argument. Coolgardie has 1,100 electors and Menzies has 334 electors, and Coolgardie has roughly twice the area of Menzies.

Mr. Panton: Nothing of the sort.

Mr. HUGHES: I have a plan drawn to scale showing that what I say is correct. Coolgardie has three times the population and twice the area of Menzies, and yet the member for Coolgardie is able to manage a private concern. If it takes the member for Menzies the whole of his time to represent his constituency, what is the position of the member for Coolgardie, who has twice the area and three times the population, if he carries on a business that occupies a lot of his time?

Mr. Panton: He must be five times as active as I am.

Mr. HUGHES: I do not wish to make any comparison of that sort. The point is that in practice representation in Parliament is only a part-time job. If there is one part of the State that should preclude a member from carrying on outside business, it is the North-West. The Roebourne and Gascoyne districts are of roughly the same area, but Gascoyne has 1,352 electors and Roebourne 551 electors. Yet the member for Gascoyne, with $2\frac{1}{2}$

times the population to represent, manages a business in the city in addition to carrying on his parliamentary duties. I wonder how a member representing a North-West constituency can do that, in view of the amount of travelling involved. This is proof conclusive that the work of Parliament is but a part-time job. Thus, we arrive at the position that if a member of Parliament is regarded as being employed in a full-time job, the present salary of £400 is niggardly.

Mr. Stubbs: It is an allowance, not a salary.

Mr. HUGHES: Then it is a paltry allowance. If a member is obliged to devote the whole of his time to the job, I say without hesitation that for the work demanded, and in comparison with other salaries paid, £600 is not out of the way for a member of Parliament. In one part of Australia it was thought that £600 was totally insufficient, and members who were receiving £600 a year raised their allowance to £875. If Parliament is prepared to say that the representation of a constituency demands the whole of a member's time, for which he shall be paid £600 a year, we ought to provide that unless he devotes the whole of his time to the work, he shall not receive the increase. I am prepared to take my chance with the rest.

Mr. Clydesdale: Some members might do as much in four hours as others would do in eight.

Mr. HUGHES: That is a very old argument.

Mr. Clydesdale: But a true one.

Mr. HUGHES: It is an argument used by every employer of labour. An employer says, "I have to pay these two bricklayers the same rate and yet one can do twice as much work as the other." Parliamentary representation is either a full-time job or a part-time job. If it is a full-time job, bearing in mind the responsibility it entails and the salaries paid elsewhere, £600 is a fair rate; but if it is a part-time job, and if a member devotes a half or three-quarters of his time to conducting some other business, he is not entitled to demand full pay. I have not heard of an employer who would pay full-time rates for half-time work.

Mr. Clydesdale: What about the difference in the cost of elections?

Mr. HUGHES: I would be glad if Parliament amended the Electoral Act to prohibit the use of motor cars on election day.

Mr. Stubbs: What has that to do with this question?

Mr. HUGHES: Motor cars constitute one of the main items of expense at elections. If a member is fighting an opponent who is shovelling money into his constituency, he is obliged to do likewise. If I had had to find the money that was spent in East Perth by my opponents at the last election, I should have received no salary for at least two years. I should be glad to cut out one item from election expenses—motor cars.

Mr. Richardson: It is largely a question of the opposition you get.

Mr. HUGHES: One cannot always put the money into a campaign that an opponent does sometimes. I do not contend that we should submit a question of this description to a referendum, nor could it be decided at a general election, because at such an election a question of this nature would become obscured. We on this side of the House have a tribunal to which the matter could have been submitted, the State Labour Congress, the supreme governing body of our party. If Congress had said "Yes," then we could have had our salaries increased by the people whom we represent. The question should have been submitted to Congress in the form of a motion.

Mr. Panton: Congress decided 10 years ago that it should be £500.

Mr. HUGHES: There could have been a plank in our platform dealing with Parliamentary salaries. It is very nice to have your salary increased. No person objects to that because an increase in salary means an improvement in the standard of living, and it is human nature to improve your standard of living. But should a member increase his own and his dependants' standard of living without regard to anyone else in the community? After all, every man that gets an advantage, gets it at the expense of one section or another of the community. Whilst it is difficult for members to get along on £400 a year, it is also difficult for a man to live on the basic wage. If one takes the view that he should consider self first, irrespective of how the matter will reflect

on the other section of the community, then the Labour Party have no need for existence. Our very existence depends on that. We, as a party, do not say that we object to you being rich or having a good standard of living. Our objection arises when it is done at the expense of the rest of the community.

Mr. Panton: I presume when you are a lawyer you will do work for nothing?

Mr. Clydesdale: Where will you get your work from?

Mr. HUGHES: Not from the hon. member.

Mr. Clydesdale: I don't think you will.

Mr. HUGHES: It is easy to convince yourself that you are worth much more than you are getting. I was amused at the suggestion that if the increase is granted it will cause a grievance amongst civil servants. It is a part of the nature of the civil servant to have a grievance. The civil servant will have a grievance irrespective of whether the Parliamentary salary is or is not increased.

Mr. Sampson: Don't you think that is a gratuitous insult?

Mr. HUGHES: No. The man who is living on the basic wage has a grievance. I know that it is a nice prospect to have your salary raised. I would make the basic wage £600 a year if such a thing were possible. To my mind it becomes a question of relativity. Is it advisable to remedy our wants first or those of that section of the community mostly in need? Every Labour man throughout the world would have no objection to working for millionaires if everyone else in the community had a decent standard of living. A number of promises were made at the elections. One I made was that we should institute long service leave.

Member: You made that off your own bat.

Mr. HUGHES: I did not. It was put up to this House, and I believe the hon. member who interjected voted for it. What is my position with the people to whom I made that promise? We know that funds will not permit of its being granted, and we now go to the people and say, "We had not enough money for that; we had only enough for ourselves." That is the position. Are we justified in raising our salaries while we have a promise such as that unfulfilled? I intend to vote against the second reading of the Bill.

MR. DAVY (West Perth) [5.55]: I am sorry to find myself opposed to one portion of this Bill; I am sorry because I find, not only the Premier, but the Leader of the Opposition taking an opposite view to myself, and I also sense that the majority of the members of the House are taking an opposite view. I cannot disagree with what the member for East Perth (Mr. Hughes) has said on the question of this being a part time job. It appears to me that one only has to look at the Treasury bench and consider the fact that the gentleman who occupy that portion of the House are in command of very big Government departments, and some of them in command of more than one Government department, and that they nevertheless continue to represent their constituencies. It is recognised that the occupants of the Treasury bench have to do a good deal more than the ordinary member, and therefore they are paid a larger salary. One has only to look at those gentlemen to realise that it is absurd to say that in all cases the representation of a constituency amounts to a whole-time job. It is not a whole-time job. For my part I am satisfied that many members representing metropolitan constituencies are not engaged on a full day's work when the House is not sitting. I know that some of the metropolitan members have embarked on other businesses in order to supplement their allowance, but I do not notice that those gentlemen pay any less attention to the interests of those constituencies than the members who attempt to do nothing else. On the other hand, as I said when I was speaking to the motion, I am satisfied that there are some members who must necessarily devote the greater part, if not the whole of their time, to carrying out their Parliamentary duties, and on that occasion I instanced the member for Kimberley (Mr. Coverley). It must be very difficult for the hon. member to find time to engage in any other occupation than that of representing his constituency. Further, I questioned the adequacy of his allowance and compared it with that of the man who represents a metropolitan constituency who possibly is engaged in some other method of earning his living, and who therefore may be adequately remunerated by the State at £400. It is perfectly obvious that the remuneration paid to the representative of a constituency like Kimberley, is entirely inadequate. It can scarcely do more than pay his out-of-pocket expenses and leave little or

nothing for the support of his wife and children, if he should be so blessed. There is an unanswerable case made out why, in such an instance, there should be a greater allowance than that paid at present. On that line of argument, naturally I would be expected to say that the allowance should not be raised equally for all. I recognise that it might be a difficult thing indeed to say that whereas one man might be adequately remunerated at £400, another should be paid £600, £800 or even more. It might be difficult to draw the line, so I am content that the remuneration should be raised uniformly. But my objection to the Bill is that it proposes to give to sitting members of the House a rise and pay them forthwith, and so the people will not have even a theoretical chance to object. When the matter was previously before the House it was said there was no practical way whereby the people could raise an objection to what is done. I say that is wrong. To reduce it to an absurdity as a test: suppose the House voted itself £2,000 per annum as a normal allowance. Is anyone in doubt that when we stood up before the electors next March not one of us would be returned?

Mr. Wilson: You speak for yourself.

Mr. DAVY: I know that for myself if I were to raise my allowance to £2,000 and insisted before the electors that I should get it, I would not be returned here for West Perth—nor, in my opinion, would the member for Collie in like circumstances come back.

Mr. Wilson: I will come back all right.

Mr. DAVY: Yes, but the hon. member would not have the same chance if he were to vote an allowance of £2,000 for himself.

Mr. Thomson: He knows he has a pocket borough.

Mr. DAVY: Very few, if any, of us would come back if we were to take that action.

Mr. Sleeman: How would the electors decide it?

Mr. DAVY: They would take such action as would serve to firmly and freely express their views.

Mr. Chesson: They would go to the other extreme in point of allowance.

Mr. DAVY: But whatever their action, we would already have had a year of the difference between £400 and £2,000. That would be gone beyond recall before the electors could express their views on the ques-

tion. So, as I say, there is a theoretical possibility of the people checking this increase of salary if it be not paid until after the next election, but there can be no check upon what is already paid before that election comes around. When we are considering our own interests we should watch ourselves very carefully and see to it that the people are given at all events a theoretical opportunity to check our action. It is a maxim of social life that when a man's interest leads in a direction that can be in conflict with somebody else's interest, he has to be very scrupulous in what he does. For instance, a trustee may never buy the trust property, except under very careful investigation. So, too, in ordinary business dealings an honourable man where he has the slightest possible interest in his own judgment, is always extremely careful to see to it that someone else shall express an opinion by way of checking that judgment. I am not going to use expressions such as have been used by people outside the House when they have said this proposed increase of allowance is dishonourable. Hon. members have to decide this for themselves. I have decided for myself that it would be wrong in us to vote ourselves an increased salary before the beginning of the next Parliament, and so I propose to move an amendment to defer the payment until next Parliament. It is not pleasant to have to take up this attitude. It will be said by some that I am trying to make of myself a hero; or that it does not concern me very much, because I happen to be fortunate enough to be engaged in a more or less lucrative profession. And of course I have already been warned that all those so unwise as to oppose measures like this in the past have been dropped by the electors. I understand that the sole surviving opponent to the so-called "Federal salary grab" was defeated at the last elections. If that is to be my fate, I have to stand up to it. It is said also that this method of arriving at what is desired has been the method adopted on every previous occasion.

Mr. Stubbs: It is.

Mr. DAVY: I believe it is. But I am surprised to find that argument used here, where, during last session and this session, we on this side of the House have been accused of being entirely unresponsive of new ideas. The Minister for Works would have it that we are all conservative Tories, if not Tory reactionists. I suggest as a new idea

that what has been practised in the past has been wrong. Certainly it has provoked in the minds of a number of people strong indignation.

Mr. Panton: You would hardly argue that way in a court; there you would be in favour of following precedent.

Mr. DAVY: If a good precedent, it is always followed. But then our law provides that the judgments of certain courts are in effect laws until upset by Parliament. But that is entirely different from this. I am suggesting that because certain legislation has been along certain lines for a certain length of time is not to say that it is wrong that any change should be made. What has been done in the past has provoked great indignation. It has been used by the public as a stick with which to beat the poor Parliamentarian. I am not sure that the fact that we have done it that way in the past has not provoked a lot of very unfair and ridiculous criticism of members of Parliament. It is the commonest thing in the world to hear people speak slightly of us. The idea of a great many is that we are a lot of barbarous, ignorant, lazy hoodlums, to associate with whom would soil the hands of the critic. One constantly hears that sort of silly talk, and possibly this method of doing things has encouraged that criticism. I submit that on this occasion, in the interests of our own reputation, in the interests of a better feeling towards ourselves from members of the public generally and in the interests of the greater efficiency that would result from our being held in greater esteem, we ought to be prepared to make that sacrifice and deny ourselves the £200 we shall get under the Bill if we be paid immediately, as against deferring the first payment until after the next election.

MR. SLEEMAN (Fremantle) [6.10]: I would not have spoken to this had not the member for East Perth (Mr. Hughes) made so many comparisons. It is admitted that for anyone who makes of it a whole-time job and does not have any other work, it is a niggardly allowance. Well, I am one of those drawing a niggardly allowance. If it takes the member for East Perth only one hour per day to look after 8,097 electors, and if it takes me 44 hours per week to look after 4,500 electors, I should like to know what is the difference in proportion of the time that each of us devotes to his electors.

The member for East Perth, although engaged at the law courts or studying for the law, does not agree that other people in receipt of a niggardly allowance should get a little extra. He says also that our electors are far worse off than are we. I agree with that. Almost ever since I left school I have been trying to do something to better the lot of the working man, and when I get a chance to do a little bit for myself I am not going to turn down my workmates. What I mean is that, as a member here, I am free to regard other members of the House as my workmates for the time being. They are going for some extra money. They think they are entitled to it, and I think so too. Even if I did not think so, I would not turn them down. I know what I should be called outside the House in the hurly-burly of the industrial world if I were to do so, and in any event I am not going to attempt to checkmate their efforts. When first I came to Parliament I thought £400 a reasonable allowance. Now, however, I know that it is far from being our own. Members are called upon every day of the week for subscriptions, and if we do not subscribe we are described as being amongst the tightest things in the State. Only the other day I had a letter from a cricket club, not domiciled in my electorate, notifying me that I had been appointed a vice-president. I wrote back thanking them for the honour done me. A few days later I met a prominent member of the club in the street. He said, "We had your letter last night. You forgot something." I said, "No." He retorted, "Oh yes, you left out something." Thereupon I spoke up. I told him it was people like him that would keep a man dog poor. Most certainly if one has to put in a few shillings every time a subscription list is placed before him, and if at the same time he has to make a full-time job of it, then £400 is not by any means sufficient for the work. I do not think the electors of Fremantle will ever turn down a man for fighting for what he thinks right.

MR. NORTH (Claremont) [6.14]: I support the Bill. For some time past I have realised that there is great need in this community to encourage the best brains to come into public life. Whilst I do not say that this increase in salary will do that, still it is a step in the right direction. There should be greater attention focussed

upon public life than there is to-day amongst those who are making their own money in their own way and ignoring public affairs. The greatest problem before civilisation is, not how to handle private businesses, but how to settle social questions. So long as a Parliamentary position is regarded as a joke or a hobby, so long will the best intelligences in the community sheer off the job and confine themselves to their own private affairs. I therefore confine myself to supporting the measure on the ground that it is important at the present juncture to encourage men to enter public life. Whilst this Bill will not go all the way in that direction, it will be a step towards that end. I hope in the next 20 years there will be a great improvement in the attractiveness of the public life of the State. I feel that a great many troubles are ahead of us which will need the serious attention of the Parliaments of Australia. Unless we encourage the best men in the community to take this position seriously and enter into this arena, there will be a stormy time ahead of Australia. I support the Bill for these reasons.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

THE PREMIER (Hon. P. Collier—Boulder—in reply) [7.31]: Whilst I recognise that this is a question upon which members will exercise their individual judgment, I should like to refer to a point raised by the Leader of the Opposition, namely, the propriety of our increasing the allowance to members whilst the taxation remains so high. It is admitted that taxation in this State is very high, and that because of this the State has suffered some disability. I would point out, however, that the income tax was last year reduced to 7½ per cent., and after the 30th June next another 7½ per cent. will disappear, so that in the course of the two years the taxation will have been reduced by a total of 15 per cent.

Mr. Thomson: You are more than making that up on the land tax.

The PREMIER: That is not correct. The hon. member is obsessed with the land tax, but does not take the trouble to prepare correct information with regard to it. The amount we are getting from the land tax does not compare at all with the amount that will be given up by the reduction of 15 per cent. The Treasury is not gaining any-

thing from the land tax, for it has been given away in reduced railway rates. I do not know whether the public are getting any benefit from the reduced taxation. It may be that the reduction is so small that it is not reflected in the price of commodities. The fact is the Treasury has not benefited at all by the increased land tax. What I am getting by way of increased land tax is being eaten up by reduced railway rates. The reduction of 15 per cent. on the income tax during the two years is a direct loss to the Treasury.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It was a super-tax. It was not intended to be permanent.

The PREMIER: No, only so long as the financial position of the State required that it should be imposed. I think we have reached that stage when we might well forego the 15 per cent. If the Commonwealth Government make the grant of £450,000, which after all is £350,000 having regard to the special grant that is paid to the State to-day, and make that over a period of years—

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: They will and they must do so.

The PREMIER: I see no reason why we should not be justified in assuming—

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: We have been promised it.

The PREMIER: —that the Commonwealth Parliament will make that payment of £350,000 in accordance with the majority recommendation of the Royal Commission. As the Federal Government have accepted the majority recommendation as applied to this year, I have no doubt and I think we are entitled to assume, that this sum will be paid over the period of years recommended by the Commission, namely, 25 years.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: They have all promised it.

The PREMIER: Practically all parties have agreed.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: I hope you will not refuse to accept it now.

The PREMIER: I will gladly accept it in the circumstances. I am not overlooking the fact that it is necessary first to catch your hare before cooking it, and that you cannot count your chickens before they are hatched, but without committing myself or the Government in any way as to the disposal of that money, but presuming on the good faith of members of the Federal Parliament towards this State, I say we might

well devote a portion of that money towards a further reduction in income taxation.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: I should like also, when the opportunity arises, to reduce the charges for services rendered in other directions. These are directions in which the people of the State might expect some relief, as well as a reduction in taxation as soon as the financial position of the State permits of it. When that money comes along portion of it should be utilised for the reduction of taxation, and that will bring us, not on even terms with some of the Eastern States with regard to taxation, but will lessen the difference between their maximum taxation and ours.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Yes, considerably.

The PREMIER: I have no hesitation in saying I consider that a proportion of the money should be utilised for that purpose.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Hear, hear!

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

Ayes	..	..	..	30
Noes	..	..	..	9

Majority for .. 21

AYES.

Mr. Angelo	Mr. Maley
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Marshall
Mr. Clydesdale	Mr. McCallum
Mr. Collier	Sir James Mitchell
Mr. Corboy	Mr. Munzie
Mr. Coverley	Mr. North
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. Pantou
Mr. Davy	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Denton	Mr. J. H. Smith
Mr. Heron	Mr. Teesdale
Mr. W. D. Johnson	Mr. Troy
Mr. Kennedy	Mr. A. Wansbrough
Mr. Lambert	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Lamond	Mr. Withers
Mr. Lutey	Mr. Wilson

(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Brown	Mr. J. M. Smith
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Thomson
Mr. E. B. Johnston	Mr. C. P. Wansbrough
Mr. Lindsay	Mr. Richardson
Mr. Sampson	

(Teller.)

PAIRS.

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Angwin	Mr. Barnard
Mr. Millington	Mr. Maley

Question thus passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Lutey in the Chair; the Premier in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Amendment of Section 3:

Mr. DAVY: I move an amendment—

That in Subclause (1), line one, the words "this Act" be struck out, and "the next general election for members of the Legislative Assembly" be inserted in lieu.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	11
Noes	..	..	..	29

Majority against .. 18

AYES.

Mr. Brown	Mr. Sampson
Mr. Davy	Mr. J. M. Smith
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Thomson
Mr. E. B. Johnston	Mr. C. P. Wansbrough
Mr. Lindsay	Mr. Richardson
Mr. Maley	

(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Angelo	Mr. McCallum
Mr. Chesson	Sir James Mitchell
Mr. Clydesdale	Mr. Munzie
Mr. Collier	Mr. North
Mr. Corboy	Mr. Pantou
Mr. Coverley	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. J. H. Smith
Mr. Denton	Mr. Stubbs
Mr. Heron	Mr. Teesdale
Mr. W. D. Johnson	Mr. Troy
Mr. Kennedy	Mr. A. Wansbrough
Mr. Lambert	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Lamond	Mr. Withers
Mr. Mann	Mr. Wilson
Mr. Marshall	

(Teller.)

Amendment thus negatived.

Clause put and passed.

New clause:

Mr. DAVY: I propose to move a new clause, on which I shall not, however, divide the Committee. My object is to raise a point which ought to be raised. The principle that the allowances shall be increased has now been definitely laid down. Section 3 of the principal Act provides that one member of the Legislative Assembly, namely the member who for the time being is recognised as the Leader of the Opposition, shall receive an additional allowance at the rate of £200 a year. At the time that section was enacted, the salary of the ordinary member was £300, and it was evidently deemed that the proportions of energy and

ability required for the position of Leader of the Opposition, as compared with the position of an ordinary member, were as five is to three. Since then the ordinary members and the Opposition Leader have been granted increases, but the proportions have altered entirely. To-day the Opposition Leader receives £600 as opposed to £400. The Premier might well consider whether the original proportions should not be preserved. If an ordinary member is to receive £600, is not the position of Leader of the Opposition worth at least £1,000? The Opposition Leadership is essentially a whole-time job. I move—

That the following new clause be added:—
 “The proviso to Section 3 of the principal Act is hereby amended by the deletion of the word ‘two,’ in the last line thereof, and the substitution of the word ‘four’ in lieu thereof.”

The carrying of this amendment would preserve the proportions.

The CHAIRMAN: I think such an amendment must come from the Government.

The Premier: I do not think the hon. member can move that new clause.

The CHAIRMAN: The amendment is not in order.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: At the time when the separate provision for the Opposition Leader was made, there were only two parties in the House. Now there are three. Members may laugh, but I am of opinion that the Leader of the Country Party has a position just as important and arduous as that of the Leader of the Opposition, and one requiring as much time and attention. Frequently it seems to me that the real leader of the opposition to Government proposals is the Leader of the Country Party.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Heaven help the country then!

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: The Leader of the Country Party should receive extra remuneration on the same scale as the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Angelo: Has your executive approved of that suggestion?

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

BILL—TAXATION (MOTOR SPIRIT VENDORS).

Message.

Message from the Governor received and read recommending appropriation in connection with this Bill.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. A. McCallum—South Fremantle) [8.0] in moving the second reading said: Hon. members will recollect that in the Main Roads Bill which was before the Legislative Assembly last session and is now before the Legislative Council, provision was made for the licensing of vendors of motor spirit. It was set out that they should pay a license fee according to the quantity of motor spirits they sold. It is suggested now that we withdraw that portion of the Main Roads Bill and levy a tax on motor spirit by means of a separate Bill. Some difficulty has been experienced in bringing the measure within the Constitution. A constitutional point was raised as to whether a tax of this description did not really amount to excise, and as such came within the functions of the Federal Parliament, and was ultra vires of the State Parliament.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I should say it was.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I discussed the question with representatives of the Governments of New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia, when I was in the Eastern States in June last. Those Governments were then discussing the advisability of introducing a law of this description, but all were puzzled on this particular point. It was agreed to secure the best legal advice possible, and the South Australian Government put up their case to Mr. Owen Dixon, one of the leading constitutional authorities of the Commonwealth, for his opinion. We submitted our Bill to Sir Edward Mitchell for his opinion. These two lawyers are regarded as the leading constitutional authorities in Australia, and as a result of their opinions the Bill before hon. members has been drafted. Such a Bill is also before the South Australian Parliament now and the measures are held by the lawyers I have mentioned to be within the four corners of the Constitution. No doubt was expressed by them

upon the point. They held that it was within our powers to impose taxation in the form of an income tax but that if we provided for any such impost in the nature of excise we would be going beyond the functions of a State Parliament. The Bill provides that the vendors of motor spirits are to register with the Commissioner of Taxation and are to send in quarterly returns of their sales and pay an income tax at the rate of 3d. a gallon according to the quantity of motor spirit sold by them. The Bill really applies the same principle that we had before us last session, but arrives at the same end by different means.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Rather devious means, I should say.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The means adopted represent perhaps the fairest method of obtaining money for main road construction. The whole of the income is to be spent by the Main Roads Board and will be paid into the main roads trust account. It is the one means that we can use to provide for a tax based on payments according to the use of the road by individuals.

Mr. Maley: Will this Bill apply to power kerosene as well?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No. Provision is made for the filing of an affidavit setting out that the spirit was not for use for propelling a vehicle on the road. If such an affidavit is filed showing that the petrol is used for a boat on the river, for a stationary engine, or for any purpose other than propelling vehicles on the road, those concerned will not have to pay any tax, provided the Commissioner of Taxation is satisfied that the statements in the affidavits are correct.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: That is about the only safeguard in the Bill from the constitutional standpoint.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No. We got over that difficulty by making the impost take the form of income tax instead of a tax on the spirit itself.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: I have my doubts about it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We have received the opinions of the leading constitutional authorities in the Commonwealth and I do not know that we can go beyond that.

Mr. Richardson: Does this mean double taxation, one tax for the vendor and one for the consumer?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No, the consumer will not pay.

Mr. Thomson: Indirectly he will.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That may be so, but the idea is to collect from the vendors. It must be remembered that the motor car owner will be saved expense in respect of tyres, and his car as well, by having good roads to drive over. With good roads it will not mean so great a petrol consumption.

Mr. Sampson: Is the specific gravity of kerosene such as will render it not taxable?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes. That point was left to the experts to deal with and to frame a definition. The same definition appears in both the South Australian Bill and our Bill.

Mr. Thomson: What if a substitute for petrol is used?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We have reserved the right to extend the definition of petrol. A new spirit may be invented and we do not want to be in the position of seeing a substitute for petrol used that will be free from taxation. The scientists have got as close as possible to a definition of petrol which is made to cover all spirits used for propelling vehicles on the roads, and that required for the purpose of engines not used for propelling vehicles on roads will be exempt. It may be that in some instances we will not collect all the tax we will be entitled to. Some people may be able to dodge the law, but I believe the Commissioner of Taxation has a sufficient organisation so that it will be difficult to get past him. The trouble will come in when a man owns a motor boat on the river and a motor car as well.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: In that case the motor car will go on air.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes; in such a case we may have some difficulty in determining what the Taxation Department is entitled to. The Commissioner of Taxation, however, will see that everything possible is done to get what we are entitled to.

Mr. J. H. Smith: What if a man imports 100 cases direct, and not through an agent?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: That position is also dealt with. I do not know that there will be much chance of importations taking place. One company imported a large consignment, but the experience was such that I do not think another attempt will be made. It cost the company much more than if they had bought locally. Then there is the position that arises when a big concern imports motor spirits and use a good deal themselves in the running of their motor trucks. Those people will be at once importers and consumers.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You will have boats pulling up outside the three-mile limit and selling motor spirit.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: So long as the spirit comes ashore it is all right, because anyone who brings spirit into the State has to register.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You tax the vendor?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, the man who brings it in and sells it. We tax only the first sale.

Mr. Sampson: Will you be able to reach the motor buses that use crude oil?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, according to the experts that position is covered in the definition. We do not propose to tax kerosene at all. The great bulk of the farm tractors may be started with petrol, but they use kerosene. The principle embodied in the Bill has been generally accepted as the fairest system by which money can be raised for the construction of roads. We must have a substantial amount in view of the wear and tear by motor vehicles on roads.

Mr. Thomson: How much do you expect to raise by means of this tax?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is estimated that we will get about £90,000.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Another tax!

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have had quite a dozen deputations asking for improved road construction, and on each occasion this method of taxation was suggested. The deputationists suggested that if an equitable system of taxation were evolved and so long as the money raised was expended on the roads, there would be no objection to the tax. It will probably mean a shilling per tin and as there has been a drop in the price of petrol to the

extent of about 2s. 6d. a tin, the tax will not be felt.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I wonder your moderation. I wonder that you did not take the 2s. 8d.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have been thinking of that myself. The proposal in the Bill, however, will be a start and will give us a fair income. The tax of 3d. is the same as is proposed in South Australia. Every safeguard has been taken in the Bill to protect those who do not use the roads, and at the same time we have made sure that everyone who uses our highways will pay towards the construction of our main roads. The House agreed to the principle last year without much difference of opinion apart from the question of how best the tax could be collected and the most effective way of levying it. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. SIR JAMES MITCHELL (NORTHAM) [8.15]: Last year we increased the tax on motor vehicles and made it a very substantial tax. To-day the owner of a moderate-sized motor car faces an expenditure on insurance and license fees of about £20 before he can run his car. That is a fairly considerable item. The Minister cannot go on taxing people to an unlimited extent. If he thinks he can take £90,000 from people who run motor cars, after having already taken a considerable sum by increasing the license fee, I think he will find he is mistaken. There is a limit to taxation. The Minister seems to think that 3d. per gallon or 1s. per tin, £90,000 in a year means nothing to the people who run motor cars. I doubt whether this House will be justified in approving of the measure unless license fees are reduced. On every possible occasion the Minister exacts the last farthing that can be paid by people. Many people with motor cars use them not for business but for pleasure, and the tax on them is fairly heavy. A man must insure his motor car, first against fire, then against accident, and against third party risk; otherwise people injured would not be able to recover damages. Many of the motor cars, too, are purchased on terms. We are asked to impose an additional £90,000 on people fortunate enough to own motor cars.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: It will not apply to motor cars only.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It will apply to motor transport vehicles of all kinds used on the roads. If we could legally impose a tax on motor spirit, it would be a fair way to collect the fees we need from these vehicles, but it is not fair to charge a higher license fee and then impose this tax. We have drifted into the way of taxing what we call luxuries to an extent that almost makes one blush. If a man be a smoker who wishes to smoke a pipe, he has to pay not a moderate but a very high tax. If a man wants a glass of whisky, the Federal Government say he must pay 1s. per bottle, or 5s. per gallon, in excise duty. A great many people run motor cars really for pleasure and earn nothing at all by them.

Mr. Marshall: I believe they are the people who should pay.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: But I do not believe what the hon. member believes; I see things from a different angle. People are entitled to have a little pleasure.

Mr. Marshall: In the main I agree with your argument, but persons who can afford to run cars for pleasure can afford to pay.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I do not know that they always can afford to pay. They often make some sacrifice to get a car and run it for the pleasure of the family, and we can applaud them for so doing. Unless the Minister is prepared to wipe out the license fees and adopt this method, I am not prepared to support an additional impost of 3d. per gallon. This would be a fair way to collect from the owner of a motor vehicle all that the Minister needs for the use of the roads. Under the present tax, whether a man uses a car a little or a lot, whether he runs 1,000 or 10,000 miles a year, he pays the same amount of license fee. That is not reasonable and it is not fair as one would like it to be. Still, it is not always possible to strike the happy medium. By taxing the petrol, the Government would get a similar amount for every mile of road used, but we cannot be expected to agree to put a double tax on motor cars. We have gone far enough with taxation this session. We have been asked to approve of tax after tax. While it is nice to collect money for road making, it is difficult to see how people can go on paying these taxes without hampering them in their ordinary avocations.

The Minister for Works: We cannot make roads without money.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Minister gets a great deal of money now. The fact that we have imposed so many taxes is having a serious effect upon employment. Of course the Minister cannot make roads without money, but to-day we have more money for this purpose than we have ever had. Last year the Minister had not only the year's grant of £96,000 from the Federal Government, but also a considerable portion of the previous year's grant to spend last year. To that was added loan money, for which the people pay, and altogether he spent over £300,000 on roads last year something less than half of which was supplied by the Federal Government, and he had £48,000 special grant. The Minister has been in a position to spend money because the Commonwealth Government have recognised that it is right to help us. I suppose it would be right if the Commonwealth could give the Minister the amount collected in taxation on spirit and on motor cars, too, for the maintenance of roads. Since the Commonwealth collect far more they need to meet their ordinary expenditure, they might well meet some of the road expenditure—as they are doing to some extent—from the taxation they derive because of the motor industry. Still, this desire to tax, this willingness to tax, and the utter disregard of the interests of the people is becoming ludicrous. First the Government collect an enormous Customs duty on motor cars and parts, though they cannot be made in Australia. A motor car that in England costs £250 in this country costs £400, and all the tax and profit on the tax is passed on. If a man puts his money into oil and trades it away, he puts his profit on to the gross cost of his purchase. We should realise that motor cars are useful in business and that people are entitled to have some pleasure from their use. The Government or the road boards are entitled to get a fair return from the motor cars that use the roads. If the Minister can see his way to reduce the license fee, we might agree, if it be legal, to give him this tax, but to add this tax to a substantial and recently-increased license fee is wrong, and I hope the House will not agree to it. Unless the Minister consents to a considerable reduction of license fees, I shall vote against this tax. Obviously, the Minister and the Government have some doubt about the legality of the tax.

The Minister for Works: Not now.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It is called an income tax, which is really a quibble. The Minister has submitted the point to learned gentlemen and they have suggested a way out. This is obviously excise, though it is called income tax.

The Minister for Works: I think excise is strictly an imposition on production. This is not a tax on production.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I do not know that the Minister is correct. If we impose a duty on oil after it has been received into the State, it cannot be called a Customs duty. It would rank as excise. Anyhow, it cannot be called income tax. What the Minister proposes is really a sales tax. On every gallon of spirit sold he wants 3d. per gallon. Does the Minister realise that if he can impose a tax on oil, he can impose indirect taxation on the clothes we wear and on everything that is imported? After goods have passed the Customs barrier, the Minister will be able to erect another barrier and say that before they pass through the second barrier, another contribution must be paid to the Government. Thus indirect taxation could be imposed upon everything that is brought into the country and that now pays Customs duty. If it can be done with one thing, it can be done with other things.

The Minister for Works: The tax will be paid on the quantity sold.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: The license fee is based on the consumption.

The Minister for Works: No, it is based on the sales.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: This is based on purchases. The Minister is wrong.

The Minister for Works: No, I am not.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I did not expect the Minister to admit it. Distributors of spirit will have to produce their invoices and pay on the invoices.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: What is the difference?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: There is a great difference. The sale of liquor is a State monopoly. The Government say that if a man wishes to sell liquor, he must pay for the right. But this is a different matter. This principle of imposing a second tax before a man can get oil into his motor car is a dangerous one, and we should hesitate before agreeing to it. I admit that a petrol tax is the fairest tax unless we could tax the owners of motor vehicles on the

mileage run, which would be very difficult. The Minister will be able to operate only by a legal quibble, and I am sorry we have to resort to these devious ways to collect a reasonable amount from the users of motor vehicles. The Minister must realise that if people have to pay a special tax and continue to pay the taxes already in force to cover the same services they will very soon find life made difficult for them. We pay taxation to-day for the upkeep of hospitals, which is included in the taxation already collected, and yet under the Road Districts Act Amendment Bill road boards are given power to impose another tax in order that they might establish and maintain their own hospitals. Where are we getting to? It seems to me we are imposing taxation on people in the most reckless fashion, and I do not see how they can go on paying. I shall not vote for the double taxation against motor cars; it is already heavy enough. People have complained to me about the existing taxes. The charge of £20 to which I referred does not go to the Government; it goes to the insurance companies, but it is additional to the taxes imposed by the Government. The Minister spent a lot of time in devising this means of getting over a very difficult situation.

The Minister for Works: I made pretty sure that I was right.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes, because the Minister referred the matter to a capable lawyer who told him that if he did it in this way he would be all right.

Mr. Marshall: Are you going to advise him to change his lawyer?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: No. I heard the name, and I entirely approve of it. All the same I would not mind betting that if the Minister gets his law he will not be able to enforce it. This is imposing a tax upon a tax for the same purpose, and therefore it is wrong. The Minister at the present time has command over a considerable sum of money. We have never before had a Federal Government that has been so willing to help with the work of constructing roads. I have no fault to find with the road-making policy; I approve of the making of good roads, but we are considering the question of imposing a further tax on motor vehicles and I am not prepared to vote for this measure unless the Minister will modify the license fees now charged. The Minister will, I think, find that the cost of petrol was one of the stumbling-blocks against the

greater use of motor vehicles. In America where petrol is about half the cost that we pay for it, they are to some extent abandoning the use of motor vehicles and going back to horses for heavy loads over short distances.

The Minister for Works: I noticed the other day that a deputation in America asked that the petrol tax be doubled. That deputation, too, was from owners of cars.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: But petrol costs mighty little in America. All the same they are going back to horses for heavy loads over short distances. I believe that in Sydney the same thing is taking place.

The Minister for Works: We must have money for roads.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: And people must have roads for the money they pay. I admit that the cost of road construction to-day is greater. All the same, this tax on top of an already heavy license fee is too much for the person who cannot pass it on. Before I support the second reading I want to be assured by the Minister that he will reduce the license fee.

Mr. Marshall: The Treasury is being taxed by virtue of the damage done to the roads; that is overlooked by you.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I have not overlooked anything; not even the hon. member.

MR. THOMSON (Kalaning) [8.37] I do not intend to oppose the Bill. When the Main Roads Bill was before us last year a select committee was appointed and it approved of the imposition of a tax upon petrol. That Bill is now before another place and a select committee there has investigated it thoroughly and has also recommended that a tax should be imposed on petrol. That seems to me to be one of the fairest methods by which to raise revenue. As one who has owned a motor car for a considerable time, I may mention that until comparatively recently we were paying as much as 35s. for a case of petrol. To-day the price is about 22s. 6d. in the country. Many owners of motor cars are willing to pay a little more provided they get good roads. If we provide good roads on a long journey, I guarantee that a car owner will more than save the amount of money he pays by the extra mileage that he will get out of the car, and in wear and tear generally. Less damage will also be done to the car

by reason of the good surface. I am prepared to admit that this is a new tax, a special tax for a special purpose, and for that reason I am pleased to note that it is proposed that all money to be collected shall be paid to the credit of an account at the Treasury to be called the Main Roads Fund, and shall be expended in such a manner as the Minister may determine, in the maintenance and repair of main roads as he may think fit. I am also pleased that it is provided in the Bill that where petrol is being used for tractors and stationary engines on farms, motor boats and aeroplanes, it will be exempt from taxation. The Bill is as fair and reasonable as can be put before the House, bearing in mind that two select committees have dealt exhaustively with the question. Under the proposed legislation the more a man uses a road, the more he will have to contribute. The man who uses his car purely for pleasure will pay pro rata on the mileage that he covers. Commercial travellers will contribute to a considerable extent, because whereas in the past they made use of the railways for most of their work, to-day they use motor vehicles and get over the country with greater ease, calling at three or four towns on the one day. When in Committee, I will ask for further information upon one or two points. The cost of collecting the tax should be very small, since there are only half-a-dozen importing firms. Probably, therefore, the Minister will explain why he did not determine the amount to be charged for collection. Taking the Bill as a whole, I think it is very fair and reasonable. The tax is to be raised for one specific purpose. In that it is very different from other taxes that we have. I will support the second reading.

MR. BROWN (Pingelly) [8.47]: This is the most equitable tax we could impose on motor vehicles using the roads. At the same time I should like to see the license fees for motors reduced to a nominal sum, and the tax on motor spirit raised to 1s. per gallon. We have keen motor competition against the railways, and the only way we can get at the motor trucks engaged in that competition is to put a substantial tax on the petrol they use. Take a motor truck travelling, say, 30,000 miles per annum. A tax of 1s. per gallon on petrol used by such a truck would return approximately £80 per annum. At present these trucks are

paying from £12 to £15 in license fees, and under the Bill they will pay only some £18 tax on the petrol they use. No matter what the rate of tax, nobody can complain if the sum collected under the tax is expended on the roads. However, I do not know that a tax of 3d. per gallon on petrol will do much good. These motor vehicles get so many miles to the gallon these days that, in respect of a private car, the tax would be very little indeed. On the other hand, if we made the tax 1s. per gallon and reduced the license fee to a nominal sum, it would be of great advantage to the State. I will support the Bill.

HON. W. D. JOHNSON (Guildford) [8.52]: I agree with the view that this is the most equitable and certainly the easiest way of raising revenue for the purpose of making and maintaining main roads. That good roads are essential to modern development of transport goes without saying. But I question whether the easy way adopted by the Minister is going to prove the effective way of actually getting the cash. One hesitates to express an opinion contrary to that of prominent constitutional lawyers. Yet, during the last election this question of a petrol tax was raised and I expressed the view that there were no means by which such a tax could be imposed. When the Minister was introducing his Traffic Bill last session I raised the point, and he told me he had ample authority behind him for making the proposed impost in that Bill. He has had to reconsider that. As a layman with very little knowledge of constitutional law, but still as one who has followed with a great deal of interest the various decisions of the High Court on constitutional matters, I am always struck by the fact that that court seems to take the common sense view on constitutional questions. To take the common sense view of this, one must realise that whatever way we try to impose this tax, it is a contravention of the Commonwealth Constitution. If we have power to do this thing, then there is practically no limit to what we can do. For instance, if we as a State can place an impost of 3d. per gallon on petrol brought from South Australia into Western Australia, of course we can do the same in respect of many other things. It is of no use saying that petrol is a special commodity subject to some special limitation in the Constitution. The Constitution,

of course, applies broadly, and so we have to recognise that if we try to impose this tax, by whatever means we attempt it, it is nevertheless in conflict with the common sense view of the Federal Constitution. That I look upon as the most serious attempt on the part of the Minister to raise revenue, namely that by which he calls upon the consumer of petrol brought from beyond the State in quantities of more than 10 gallons to pay a tax of 3d. per gallon. That is a most serious attempt. The other proposition, which will furnish the major portion of the revenue he expects to get, is the impost he proposes to make the importers pay on petrol. Of course he does not say that the importer shall pay; he says the vendor shall pay; but he cannot draw any fine line like that. In most cases the vendor is the importer, and when an impost is placed on petrol by the Commonwealth, to say that we can place another 3d. per gallon on it is to ignore the Constitution. The Minister says he has good authority for making this impost. But we know that these authorities will attempt to do things in the hope that their opinion is right, and that when the opinion is tested we have to pay the same authorities big fees to defend their own opinion. I do not think there is a shadow of doubt that the Bill, if passed, will be tested. For, after all, it discriminates. Petrol in Western Australia will be 3d. per gallon dearer to the user than petrol in the other States.

Mr. Sampson: Plus the extra charges levied at the Fremantle wharf.

Mr. Lambert: Why did not you take exception to that when you were a Minister?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: If the Bill becomes law, the price of petrol will be 3d. per gallon more in Western Australia than in the other States. The Minister says the other States contemplate introducing measures such as the one before us. They may or they may not do so. Possibly they will take the safe course of waiting to see whether this Bill proves to be effective.

The Minister for Works: In South Australia a Bill has been passed.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Then I should have advised the Minister to wait and see how the South Australian measure gets on. In any case, if the legislation be tested it will be possible for South Australia and Western Australia to combine in defence of the State point of view. While I hope they will be successful, I still must express

the opinion that it will be proved that this legislation is not permissible under the Federal Constitution, and that the High Court will ultimately declare against it. There is one saving feature that may assist the Minister: that is the fact that he does not place the tax upon all petrol, but only upon petrol used for motor vehicles on roads. It cannot be stated that it is a general impost of 3d., but that it is a limited impost for the purpose of maintaining roads. That may give the Minister an opportunity of getting it through. Again, he is risking that point of view by actually imposing the tax and making a refund. He is taking an unnecessary risk. Instead of imposing it and making a refund, and by that means directly imposing the tax, it would be better to impose the tax and make the payment on the spirit that is used for vehicles running on the roads. Then he could argue that the impost was purely a limited one for the maintenance of roads and not a general impost upon spirit used generally. Although it is an equitable means of raising money, the Minister will find that the very fact that it is so equitable, and is so easy to get, the Bill will not prove effective. The other States have been struggling to maintain their roads and have never attempted to impose this tax. This makes me think, apart from the view I hold, as one who has read a good deal about High Court decisions on constitutional matters, that the Bill will prove ineffective, and that the High Court will declare against it.

MR. LAMBERT (Coolgardie) [9.2] : I have not had much opportunity to peruse the Bill, but the main principles of it have been discussed this evening. I am distinctly opposed to this principle. I do not believe in sectional taxation for any single service where it can be avoided. In some countries I have been in many kinds of special taxes are imposed. In Bolivia there was a tax upon matches for the building of a Roman Catholic cathedral. That is their idea of raising money for a particular service. There are special imposts in other republics of South America where they pledge the revenue from nitrates and from salt, and many other things, to meet the interest and sinking fund upon loans for special purposes. There is a great deal in the contention of the member for Guildford (Hon. W. D.

Johnson) that this is constitutionally unsound, and will be found to be a contravention of the Commonwealth Constitution. Every member, knowing the limited amount of revenue we have, and the enormous mileage of roads we have to construct in this young and undeveloped country, must be in sympathy with the Minister in his desire to raise additional revenue. I have yet to be convinced that the whole of the revenue should be found by those who use petrol-propelled vehicles. It is rather a narrow and limited conception of our natural obligations towards the opening up of the State. It is a rule of thumb method of making people who use petrol and drive motor cars or motor lorries pay for this by way of a tax of 3d. a gallon upon all petrol used. It is a simple way of raising money. As this is applied to motor vehicles, so may it be applied to a thousand and one other services that are being rendered to the people. The matter of building and maintaining our highways should be a first charge upon revenue, and should be met by taxation in the ordinary way. I am not at all convinced that we should be right in making this departure. If we single out those who use petrol-propelled vehicles, we can go on indefinitely, and a great part of the money so raised will be the means of building up another branch of our public service. We can go on incessantly increasing the numbers of our public servants. We will find that the actual quota of cost will be in proportion to the quota of cost that we must, as taxpayers, pay for all the other services, and for the garnering of revenue in every other branch of State activity. I understand that approximately £90,000 will be raised by this tax. I cannot quote the actual amount it will cost for collection, but possibly we shall find that with the creation of another department it will be charged up to the extent of 10 per cent. I am prepared to believe that before a yard of stone is laid upon any of our highways it will cost 10 per cent. for the collection of the money and the rendering of the service. The Deputy Leader of the Country Party shakes his head. We know from bitter experience, wherever the opportunity has presented itself and another department is created, however insignificant it may seem in its infancy, that in little or no time the

department reaches almost colossal proportions. It is unsound and wrong for a Government to introduce sectional taxation of this kind. Surely the Government must know, having regard to our population, our revenue and our commitments, the number of miles of road per annum we can build.

Mr. Griffiths: Why did you not oppose this tax last year on the Main Roads Bill?

Mr. LAMBERT: I am not discussing that Bill. If the Government, instead of imposing this tax upon the users of these vehicles, were prepared to recast the whole system of municipal Government, giving effective control over the expenditure and the money the ratepayers have to pay to road boards and councils, a greater argument could be used in favour of the proposal. We are the most obsolete municipally governed people on God's earth. We see the bungling bumbles in charge of a city like Perth, that is growing to dimensions almost undreamt of. There should be in charge of it men of vision, with technical knowledge, and men who are seized of the importance of this great State, and are able to visualise the future of this city a century hence. Under our municipal laws the city could be governed by three tailors of Tooley-street, one publican, one estate agent, and someone else with no special knowledge or qualifications. Such people can be elected to the council and decide the future of this great and growing city. In the continental and American cities of big dimensions great foresight is shown for three or four centuries ahead. Men are appointed to control them who are possessed of special knowledge and qualifications. These men carry out their functions as men with technical knowledge should do. Probably £150 a year is wasted by municipal councils and road boards. I do not say it is their fault, because many of the members are carrying out a useful and unselfish work. I was a councillor at the age of 21.

Mr. Lindsay: Can you prove these statements?

Mr. LAMBERT: Throughout this State we have no co-ordinated system of road making.

Lieut.-Colonel Denton: What did you do?

Mr. LAMBERT: When I was a councillor the road-making policy was better carried out by men who possessed the necessary qualifications for the work.

Mr. Marshall: Did you resign from the council then?

Mr. LAMBERT: You, Mr. Speaker, have often asked me to temper my sarcasm to the capacity of the younger members of this House; therefore I will not reply to the interjection. We can better serve the country by having a clearer vision of our own municipal laws. Are we getting effective expenditure by delegating powers of a subordinate nature to a town council or a road board, and are we doing a fair thing by those local authorities in doing so? There are many duties that local bodies can carry out, duties of an unselfish and useful nature. When it comes to the spending of a large sum of money on a properly co-ordinated system of building byways and highways in a prosperous State like Western Australia, that is not the duty of laymen. The generation of to-day is the generation of specialisation. In olden days—feudal times—when Parliaments were unknown, people met and sat and settled territorial and religious differences in their own districts.

Mr. Sampson: They never imposed a petrol tax in those days.

Mr. LAMBERT: Nor even a tax on those who push their hair back as the hon. member does. In this way our present system of municipal government has been evolved; it has been evolved in a crude way and has no application to present-day requirements. Before the Government are justified in placing an additional impost upon the people, they should review that phase of the question, they should inquire whether 50 per cent. of the revenue of local government is being wasted by following a system that is obsolete. As I said previously, by the appointment of qualified commissioners which would mean the adoption of a properly ordered plan of national road construction, we should save more than we are likely to get from the impost that it is proposed to make by means of the Bill. I hope initiative will be shown and that legislation will yet be introduced along these lines. I drive a motor car, but it matters little to me whether I pay an extra 3d. per gallon on petrol. I do not know whether this indirect challenge to those who own petrol-propelled vehicles to-day is the result of their challenging the supremacy of the railways. I do not know that it is the function of government to provide reasonably good roadways. Unfortunately we have been impoverished by the impost placed upon us by the Commonwealth Government. They have handed out in niggardly fashion an amount

of money to enable us to develop our roads. They have surrounded that grant with all sorts of restrictions and stipulations, but I think the time has arrived when at least we should expect the national Parliament to be seized of their obligations to Western Australia and to realise the necessity for opening up our roads with a greater view to future requirements than has been shown to date. Apart from the qualified opposition that I am showing towards the Bill, I have no other objection to it. I claim that my criticism of the Bill as it stands is reasonable. All the same, the Bill is in direct contravention of the Commonwealth Constitution and will be found to be totally unsound in practice. If members desire a Bill to levy a special tax for a special purpose, I commend this to them. If a special tax on petrol is required to construct roads, then we shall be asked to pay a special tax to provide water supplies.

Members: We have that already.

Mr. LAMBERT: Only where a special service is given, and there is no guaranteeing that if we pay 3d. per gallon on petrol we shall have a special service returned to us.

Mr. Thomson: Yes, it is provided for in the Bill.

Mr. LAMBERT: I want to shift between 10,000 and 15,000 tons in the not distant future, and the first thing I will have to do in that district will be to make a road, because if I wait until the road board carry out the work I shall be too old to have sufficient energy to carry on the business that I am engaged in. I shall probably have to pay 3d. a gallon on the whole of the petrol I use in carrying out that service, and that will affect every primary producer in the State besides myself.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Would you tax the man that walks on the road?

Mr. LAMBERT: He is taxed to-day.

Lieut.-Colonel Denton: How about the man on tramp?

Mr. LAMBERT: I do not know that I could be sufficiently bitter to feel that the hon. member should tramp.

Lieut.-Colonel Denton: I have tramped.

Mr. LAMBERT: If you were foolish enough to tramp when you could have avoided doing so, you should be taxed; in fact I would impose a super tax on you.

Mr. SPEAKER: Super!

Mr. LAMBERT: Only to-day the member for Williams-Narrogin gave me illum-

inating evidence that in various parts of the State he is familiar with, petrol-petrolled vehicles are successfully competing against the railways.

Mr. Lindsay: On high-priced freights.

Mr. LAMBERT: True. But they are apparently carrying out a service. I do not say they are competing on an equitable basis, but the fact that they are patronised shows that many people are prepared to avail themselves of the service rendered by these vehicles.

Mr. Stubbs: It may hit back like a boomerang.

Mr. LAMBERT: It may hit back on all of us; we may have to increase railway freights as the result of the general evolution of transport. The whole question of the cheapening of transport in a country like this is a matter outside the province of geniuses, outside the province of even the Commissioner of Railways. On the subject of railways we know that they have been badly laid. Nine-tenths of our lines require regrading and if we are to compete in the markets of the world the whole system will have to be altered.

Mr. Lindsay: And you will expect the users of the railways to pay.

Mr. LAMBERT: Of course. There is no analogy whatever between the State ownership of railways and the imposition of a special tax for the building of high roads. Wheat producers must have the cheapest possible rail freights, and the same thing applies to miners. They cannot go on paying for an obsolete system such as we have. The Government of the day, whoever they happen to be, that have the necessary money must regrade our railways. I hope that for the sake of economy in Western Australia there will be no legislation which will add still further to the Public Service.

Mr. Stubbs: You must vote against the Bill, then.

Mr. LAMBERT: The Minister is to do the collecting, and no doubt he will have a dozen officers to assist him. The Machinery Department, for instance, is overmanned; the inspectors are falling over each other. They are constantly inspecting a small engine at a little factory I control. They are looking for a fee of a guinea or two per annum from an engine of 1½ horsepower. Perhaps 50 per cent. of our effective taxation is eaten up by payments to unnecessary officers.

MR. LINDSAY (Toodyay) [9.32]: I am rather surprised at the opposition to the Bill, particularly in view of the attitude assumed towards last session's measure. I have a vivid recollection of standing up here and asking the Minister in charge of that measure how far he was going. He replied, "I am going to put the Bill through to-night." I then retorted, "Not while I can stand on my feet." I was opposed to the passage of that Bill in view of the passage of a previous Bill, as I wanted to be assured regarding the probable revenue to be derived from the latter. The Minister then told us that the petrol tax would yield £30,000 a year. I said at the time that I thought the yield would be a great deal more. Now the estimate is £90,000. Last year I stated that I was not opposed to a petrol tax. Members who did not voice any opposition last year, oppose the present Bill.

Mr. Panton: They have bought motor cars since.

Mr. LINDSAY: I had a "Tin Lizzie" last year and still have it, and so my position has not altered. The petrol tax is a proper tax. Having driven a motor car for many years, I am quite prepared to pay the tax if the roads are provided. Taxation was increased last year by the Traffic Act, but so far the traffic fees have been collected and spent by the local bodies. The purpose of the present tax, however, is to make main roads. Last year's tax was not for that purpose. The motor lorries which run in great numbers into the country districts are undoubtedly making the roads worse week by week. The principal damage is caused by heavy motor traffic. The Railway Department certainly do not ask anybody to pay upkeep or sinking fund unless he uses the railways. Therefore those who are competing against the Railway Department should certainly pay their share of the cost of the roads they use, and therefore I say the petrol tax is a just tax. I am indeed pleased to find that the Minister has discovered a means of granting exemptions. Those who, while not using the roads at all, do use petrol will not be called upon to pay the tax. Last session I was prepared to accept the Minister's explanation that exemptions were impracticable because of the trouble they would cause. From my experience of the Commissioner of Taxation, I fear that very few exemptions will be granted under this Bill. I do not want to follow the member

for Coolgardie (Mr. Lambert) on the Bill. I have to support the Government on this occasion. From the way some of their supporters speak, it looks likely that the Government will be defeated. The reason for that opposition from the Government ranks may perhaps be found in the last Bill dealt with, though I do not think a dissolution is desired just yet. I am glad to find that when I opposed the corresponding Bill last year I was right in my statement that the amount to be collected under it would be far greater than the figure suggested by the Minister.

The Minister for Works: Importation has gone up since then.

Mr. LINDSAY: My words at the time were, "How do you estimate what this tax is going to yield?" The Minister replied that the amount was based on the importation of the previous year. I said, "Then you are legislating for the future while basing your estimates of revenue on the past." It has turned out that the statements I made on that occasion were thoroughly well-founded. I support the Bill.

MR. SAMPSON (Swan) [9.40]: If motorists could be assured that, as the result of this proposed tax, there would be a material improvement in the roads, they would have no great objection to the tax. I fear, however, that there is no certainty of improvement being brought about. When the ordinary license fees on cars were increased, a similar understanding existed. To-day roads are as bad as ever, although I readily admit that under the Federal-State grant many new roads have been constructed. As a matter of fact, the promise of improved roads is something of a will-of-the-wisp. Time after time we have been promised that if more money is provided by the motorists of the State, everything will be well, and that what is spent additionally in license fees or, as under this measure, in motor spirit, will be saved in cost of repairing springs, and straightening up of chassis greater longevity of tyres and various other economies. I can only say I hope such will prove to be the case here. It has never proved to be the case yet. A few years ago the license fee charged was 5s. per wheel and that charge applied not only to wagons spring carts, and so forth, but also to motor vehicles. That was in the early days of motoring. To-day the tax has increased in the case of motor vehicles. Taking the Dodge motor car, one of the most popular

motor vehicles, as an example, the increase is eightfold, the license fee to-day for a Dodge car being £8. I understood last year, when an additional land tax was imposed, that a half-penny of that tax would be utilised for the purpose of road making and road improvements. The money was to be expended through a main roads board. The imposition of £8 as license fee for a motor vehicle is excessive, if not for a vehicle used exclusively for business purposes, then for a car that is used at week-ends for comparatively small journeys for the sake of recreation. Many employees in factories in the city of Perth use motor cars for week-end outings, and that is perhaps their best means of assuring the maintenance of good health. When added to the £8 license fee, there is approximately £12 for insurance, the cost before the car is used at all, and without taking into account the cost of motor spirit, oils, and running repairs, becomes very heavy; and consequently many people are prevented from using their cars as much as would otherwise be the case. Now it is suggested that 3d. per gallon should be imposed on motor spirit, representing a shilling per tin, which contains approximately 4 gallons or $4\frac{1}{2}$ gallons when full. Every time a motorist empties a can of benzine or spirit into his car, there is a shilling towards the roads. I hope full value will be obtained for that shilling. Personally, I consider that the suggested utilisation of the halfpenny of land tax was a proper and reasonable method of applying the tax. I gathered from an interjection made by the Premier some nights ago, that it is not proposed to use that tax this year for the purpose originally suggested. It is a fact that because of motor vehicles land values have increased not only in the metropolitan area but throughout the State. I was hopeful that I would have an opportunity of looking into the estimate submitted by the Minister as to the amount the tax will produce. I have made some calculations which I believe to be reasonably accurate. I have worked them out on the basis suggested by the Minister that the tax will produce £90,000. I believe that the money that will be derived from this source will be considerably in excess of that sum. In the metropolitan area there are approximately 10,000 motor cars and I estimate that there are not less than 20,000 cars outside the metropolitan area. The number of motor cycles probably totals 4,500, and on the basis of three

motor cycles of reasonably high power being equal to one average motor car, that represents 1,500 vehicles. Motor lorries total not less than 4,000 and as the mileage per gallon is much less with the motor lorry as compared with the motor car, I have put down the lorries as the equivalent of 8,000 motor cars, thus giving an aggregate total of 39,500 vehicles. On the basis of £90,000, at 3d. per gallon, the quantity of petrol used totals 7,200,000 gallons. That would give an average petrol consumption per vehicle of about 180 gallons per year, or less than four gallons per week per vehicle. Probably $3\frac{1}{2}$ to four gallons of petrol would be ample for a vehicle used for the purposes of pleasure, but if used for business purposes that weekly quantity would not be nearly enough. Therefore, I am of opinion that the amount to be derived from the tax will be considerably more than the Minister suggested.

Mr. Corboy: What do you regard as the average car mileage per year?

Mr. SAMPSON: From between $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 2½ miles to the gallon.

Mr. Corboy: I meant the mileage per car per annum.

Mr. SAMPSON: I should say about 5,000 miles per annum.

Mr. Corboy: On the Minister's figures, it would work out at about 5,600 miles per annum, so that your estimate and that of the Minister are not far out.

Mr. SAMPSON: That would apply only on the basis of the cars used for pleasure. They are used mostly at the week-ends. On the other hand the motor vehicles used for business purposes are constantly employed for six days during each week.

Mr. Corboy: There are many on farms that are not used for a fortnight.

Mr. SAMPSON: I cannot conceive of that being so. If there are many such cases, it must be that the owners are well advanced in years or are in hospital.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Domestic differences would come into it as well.

Mr. SAMPSON: In which case the car would be used to a greater extent.

MR. COVERLEY (Kimberley) [9.52]: I do not oppose the second reading of the Bill because it is essential that we should have good roads for the use of motor vehicles.

During the Committee stage, however, I will move an amendment to relieve the position of people resident in the Kimberley area and other portions of the North-West. I realise that they will be penalised under the measure, for the declaration of main roads there will be something in the nature of a Kathleen Mavourneen act. It may be years or it may be never; at any rate, the people using motor vehicles to cart goods up North will have to pay taxation without deriving any benefit in the upkeep of the roads for many years to come. In my opinion, the roads will be first constructed in the metropolitan area and the country districts.

MR. GRIFFITHS (Avon) [9.55]: The point raised by the member for Guildford (Hon. W. D. Johnson) is an interesting one. I note that the Minister informed the House that South Australia had already passed a Bill of a similar description. I understand that the other State Governments contemplate passing such Bills as well. It seems inconceivable that the Minister would introduce the Bill without having satisfied himself that the Federal Constitution would not be overridden. One hon. member stated that the users of the railways had to pay for the services rendered and that the users of the roads, including those driving heavy vehicles that cut the roads up so appreciably, should also pay for the services rendered them in the provision of good roads. The member for Coolgardie (Mr. Lambert) declared that there was no analogy between the two classes. I consider it a sensible conclusion for anyone to arrive at when they suggest that those who cut up the roads should contribute towards the upkeep of those thoroughfares. Although the Minister objected to certain exemptions being granted last year, I am pleased to see that he has included them this year. Together with other members I have been rather amused at noticing the sudden opposition that has sprung up since the introduction of the measure. Last session we seemed to be in agreement that, provided the tax was imposed along proper lines, it was an equitable way of making those who use the roads pay for their upkeep. I support the second reading of the Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

BILL—DAY BAKING.

Returned from the Council with amendments.

House adjourned at 9.58 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 3rd December, 1925.

	Page
Absence of President	2379
Address: Death of Queen Alexandra, reply ...	2379
Questions: Seamen's trouble, Fremantle Harbor	
Trust claims	2380
Drunken woman, Trotting Grounds	2380
Water Supply, Harvey Weir	2380
Bills: Brookton Recreation Reserve, 3A. ...	2380
Vermis Act Amendment, Recom.	2381
Industries Assistance Act Continuance, 2A., Com.	
Report	2383
Roads Closure, 2A.	2384
Land Drainage, 2A. Com.	2385
Parliamentary Allowances Act Amendment, 1A.	2399

ABSENCE OF PRESIDENT.

The Clerk announced that owing to the absence of the President through unavoidable cause, it would be necessary to appoint a Deputy President.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [3.1]: I move —

That the Chairman of Committees be appointed Deputy President during the temporary absence of the President.

Question passed.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT took the Chair at 3.5 p.m.

ADDRESS—DEATH OF QUEEN ALEXANDRA.

Telegram in Reply.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I have to report receipt of the following communication from His Excellency the Governor:—

The Hon. the President of the Legislative Council. The Governor has the honour to inform the Legislative Council of Western Australia that he has this day received the following telegram from the Secretary of State