

coal was not of the value it was represented to be. Surely it was necessary for the Government to satisfy themselves about the quality of the coal before advancing £21,000 for a railway! The value of the Griffin coal, in comparison with other Collic coal, should be definitely determined. I think I have said sufficient to justify the appointment of a Royal Commission, and I hope the motion will be passed.

Hon. Sir CHARLES NATHAN: On a personal explanation, Mr. Miles referred to some remarks I made. I should like to point out that those remarks were made on the original motion before the Chair, and not on the amendment which is now the subject of discussion.

Question, as amended, put and a division called for.

The PRESIDENT: As Mr. Stewart is remaining in the House, his vote must be recorded on the side of the Noes. He cannot change his place after the tellers have been appointed.

Division resulted as follows:—

Ayes	..	..	..	..	12
Noes	..	..	..	..	4

Majority for .. .. . 8

The PRESIDENT: It is quite competent for him to do so. It is equally competent for the hon. member to vote against it.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	..	4
Noes	..	..	..	..	12

Majority against .. .. . 8

#### AYES.

Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. Sir C. Nathan
Hon. G. Fraser	Hon. J. M. Macfarlane (Teller.)

#### NOES.

Hon. J. Cornell	Hon. Sir W. Lathlain
Hon. J. T. Franklin	Hon. A. Lovekin
Hon. E. H. H. Hall	Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. E. H. Harris	Hon. H. Seddon
Hon. J. J. Holmes	Hon. H. Stewart
Hon. G. A. Kempton	Hon. W. J. Mann (Teller.)

#### PAIR.

AYE.	NO.
Hon. C. B. Williams	Hon. F. W. Allsop

Question thus negatived.

House adjourned at 10.33 p.m.

#### AYES.

Hon. J. Cornell	Hon. A. Lovekin
Hon. J. T. Franklin	Hon. J. M. Macfarlane
Hon. E. H. H. Hall	Hon. W. J. Mann
Hon. E. H. Harris	Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. J. J. Holmes	Hon. H. Seddon
Hon. G. A. Kempton	Hon. Sir W. Lathlain (Teller.)

#### NOES.

Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. Sir C. Nathan
Hon. G. Fraser	(Teller.)

#### PAIR.

AYE.	NO.
Hon. F. W. Allsop	Hon. C. B. Williams

Question, as amended, thus passed.

**THE MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES** (Hon. C. F. Baxter—East) [10.27]: I move—

That the resolution be transmitted to the Legislative Assembly and its concurrence desired therein.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Has the Minister a right to move that motion?

## Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 12th November, 1930.

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

### QUESTION—FRUIT FLY.

Mr. SAMPSON asked the Minister for Agriculture: 1, Is he aware that a claim has been made by a metropolitan resident that

over 4,000 fruit-flies, approximately 80 per cent. females, were recently trapped in an Adelaide-terrace home orchard, the lure being clensel, an insecticide now used in some orchards as a fruit-fly lure? 2, If previously unaware of the foregoing, will the Minister take steps to ensure that efficient measures are immediately taken to deal with fruit-fly in both non-commercial and commercial orchards, in the city as well as in country areas? 3, In the absence of sufficient inspectors, has consideration been given to the advisableness of engaging a number of suitable members of the unemployed in order effectively to inspect orchards and trap fruit-flies throughout the metropolitan area?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE replied: 1, Yes. 2, Efficient measures are being taken to control fruit-fly. 3, This is not considered necessary.

#### QUESTION—WHEAT, SEED SUPPLIES.

Mr. WILLCOCK asked the Minister for Agriculture: 1, Is he aware that many farmers will have serious difficulty in purchasing at present prices supplies of pedigree seed wheat for next season's cropping? 2, In order that supplies may be available at a low cost to the farmer, will he have reductions made in the prices of such wheat, from the Government farms, to the present value of f.a.q. wheat plus the cost of grading, etc.?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE replied: 1, Yes. 2, Because of the great value of pedigree seed to settlers and the benefit likely to accrue to the State following upon the use of this seed, it has already been decided as a matter of policy to make very drastic reductions in the price of pedigree seed to bona fide farmers. The rates to be charged, including freight to settlers' siding in the wheat belts, are to be as follows: for 10 bags and over, 12s. per bag; for under 10 bags, 14s. per bag.

#### QUESTION—NORNALUP SETTLEMENT SCHEME.

Mr. SLEEMAN asked the Minister for Lands: 1, Has any allocation of blocks been made under the Nornalup settlement scheme? 2, How many intending settlers have refused to take up the blocks allocated? 3,

Was the reason given that the blocks, in their opinion, were unsuitable? 4, If so, does the department agree with that opinion?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: 1, Yes. Twenty-seven blocks. 2, None. 3 and 4, Answered by No. 2.

#### QUESTION—TOWN PLANNING COMMISSION, COSTS.

Mr. SLEEMAN asked the Minister for Lands: When was the Metropolitan Town Planning Commission appointed? 2, When is the official report of the Commission due? 3, What has been the total cost of the Commission to date? 4, What salary is being paid to the Town Planning Commissioner? 5, What is the cost to date of the Town Planning and Development Board? 6, Do the Government consider the expense of maintaining the Town Planning and Development Board justified in view of the financial position of the State?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: 1, 18th April, 1928. 2, On or before the 31st December next. 3, £2,947, one-fourth only of which has been provided by the Government. 4, £750 per annum. 5, The total expenditure under the Town Planning and Development Act to date is £1,984 11s. 1d. 6, Yes, as the members of the board, apart from the Commissioner, have agreed to act for the time being without fees.

#### BILL—INDUSTRIAL ARBITRATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Introduced by the Minister for Works and read a first time.

#### MOTION—COST OF LIVING.

*To Inquire by Select Committee.*

Debate resumed from the 30th October on the following motion by Mr. Millington:—

That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the cost of the necessities of life, particularly in regard to the disparity in the price received by producers for primary products and the price charged to consumers.

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY** (Hon. N. Keenan—Nedlands) [4.40]: The motion that has been submitted by the member for Mt. Hawthorn (Mr. Millington) may be

said to be an inquiry into the main factors which go to make up the cost of living. It is imperative to show some pressing necessity for such an inquiry. That pressing necessity can only exist on two grounds. The first is that we are at present faced with a financial position of such gravity as to warrant interference with the normal dealings of commercial life; and the second is that there is such a disparity between the price the producer receives, and that which the wholesaler gets and the consumer pays for the articles produced, as to warrant such an inquiry. Dealing with the first ground, that the people of the State are faced with a financial position of so serious a character as to warrant interference with ordinary commercial pursuits, I am prepared to admit that not only the present but the future does warrant action on the part of the Government, which under normal conditions we, on this side of the House, and I believe a majority of members on the other side of the House, would look upon as a matter entirely beyond the proper sphere of government. In normal times it is highly inexpedient that any executive should tinker with the prices charged for the sale of goods or commodities to the public. If the market is an open one, if it is free, if the competition between rival suppliers is not in some measure governed by trusts or other improper devices, no corrective measures that any Government might bring to bear upon prices would be so effectual as the competition between the parties I have just designated.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: What would you do if such actions arose as to constitute a restraint of trade?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: If the hon. member would listen instead of making interjections which are not pertinent, I might be able to give him some useful information.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: I thought you might dodge that.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I was saying, when the hon. member felt bound to interrupt, that in certain circumstances the proper corrective influence for high prices is the ordinary competition in trade. I am prepared to admit, however, that we are not living in normal times, and that action on the part of the authorities to secure to every consumer the benefit of the exceptionally low prices now ruling and paid to the actual

producer, would be action that would be fully justified. Leaving out of account for the moment the cost of marketing, which has been exceedingly high for a number of years past, I would say there was no real marked variance to be found in the wholesale and retail prices of foodstuffs during the period over which the present fall has taken place, with the exception of a few lines. To illustrate that point I shall give to the House some information of what has been the actual movement, both in retail and wholesale circles, between December, 1929, and the 1st October, 1930. I have taken the following articles for this illustration as being those that are usually to be found in the bills of the householder when he buys his goods from a grocer:—Flour, tea, coffee, sugar, rice, jam, oatmeal, raisins, candles, kerosene, soap, onions, cheese, butter, eggs, and bacon. In addition, I have taken from the butcher—beef, mutton and pork, and from the baker—bread. In the first place, before I give the figures that I will ask the House to listen to, I wish to warn hon. members that throughout the world, not solely in Western Australia or even in Australia, the wholesale prices are more subject to violent fluctuations than are retail prices. Not only does that indicate that the retail market is of greater stability, but it may also point to the fact that the retailers are able to provide for their requirements for a considerable time ahead. It may be that the retailer is able to contract for supplies for six months or a full year ahead. Therefore, he is not so disposed to an alteration in prices corresponding with the rise of price obtaining in the wholesale market. But on the other hand, when the wholesale market is falling, invariably there follows a fall in the retail market, which amounts to less than that experienced by the wholesaler. To those who have studied this question, that is known as "the lag." That is to say, in each instance the price charged by the retailer lags behind the price shown in the wholesale market.

Mr. Munsie: That is not always so when prices are going up.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I think it applies always when prices go up, though I admit not to the same marked extent.

Mr. Munsie: Some of the retailers are charging for the duty on tea, although none has yet been imposed.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I presume that may be on account of a shortage in tea supplies. At the same time, an individual instance cannot by any means be quoted as a criterion of what obtains in the retail market. One shop may sell some particular commodity extensively and the charges may be affected correspondingly. But one such instance cannot be taken as a guide regarding market prices, nor can we make from such special prices, any deduction as to what obtains in the retail market. If, as the member for Hannans (Mr. Munsie) has suggested, certain retailers are sufficiently dishonest to charge for a duty that has not yet been paid, no one would suggest in consequence that the price quoted by such traders can be taken as a criterion of the market price. It may be taken as established that, throughout the wide world, the retail market is always more stable than the wholesale market and the prices in the former always lag behind those charged in the wholesale sphere, whether the tendency be upwards or downwards. I desire to draw the attention of hon. members to the fact that the lagging of prices is more marked when prices are falling in the wholesale market than at other times, because a trader who has bought at high prices is likely to continue to charge higher retail prices as long as he is able to do so. The costs of some goods showed little or no fluctuation between December, 1929, and October, 1930. That applies to tea, coffee, candles, raisins, sugar and rice. The fluctuations in those lines are really not worth mentioning and I pass them by. It is quite possible that some people dealing in those lines have charged other prices, but that is no criterion as to the real market prices. As regards the other items, in December, 1929, flour brought, for a 25lb. bag, in the wholesale market, 39.54d. and that price dropped in October of this year to 30.50d., a fall of 9d. At the same time, the retail price fell from 53.70d. in December, 1929, to 42.60d. in October, 1930. I think it will be easier for the House to follow the figures I shall quote, if I give the wholesale prices first and then those charged by the retailers. Regarding jam, for instance, in December, 1929, the price was 6.86d. and that fell slightly in October, 1930, to 6.67d. Oatmeal fell from 3.35d. to 2.86d. Kerosene re-

mained normal with a slight increase, amounting to .63d. per gal. Soap remained almost stationary too. Butter fell from 21.75d. to 19.25d.; onions from 1.39d. to .97d.; cheese from 11.60d. to 9.60d.; eggs from 16d. to 9d.; bacon from 15.37d. to 12.96d.; and potatoes from 14.75d. to 11.15d. It will be noticed that if these falls are worked out on a percentage basis and compared with the percentage falls in the retail market, there is nothing very much that calls for criticism. One of the largest variations in the wholesale prices was in respect of flour, which fell from 39.54d. to 30.50d., a percentage fall of 22.86. In the retail market the fall in flour represented two per cent., roughly, between the drop in the wholesale market and the retail market. Regarding potatoes, the fall in the wholesale market represented 24.41 per cent., whereas the fall in the retail market was 19.37 per cent. That is a very considerable difference, but is to be expected inasmuch as the fall applied largely on account of the late potatoes. The price was taken in August when there was a very serious fall in the potato market. On the other hand, the wholesale fall in the price of butter represented 11.49 per cent., and in the retail market the fall was 13 per cent. Regarding cheese, the fall in the wholesale market was 17.24 per cent. and in the retail market 7.79 per cent. With regard to eggs, the wholesale fall was 43.75 per cent., and again the retail market showed a slightly greater fall, seeing that it was 46.15 per cent. With bacon, the fall in the wholesale market was 17.68 per cent. and in the retail market, the fall was 16.88 per cent. A study of these falls in prices shows that generally speaking the fall in the retail market corresponded nearly with that experienced in the wholesale market. Bearing in mind what I have already said about the lag, it is well to recognise that the figures I have quoted suggest nothing abnormal, and certainly nothing that calls for a special inquiry. When we turn from the grocery lines and consider the position regarding meat, we find a very different picture. The comparative falls in the retail and wholesale prices are interesting, and I shall give them to hon. members. Since December, 1929, there has been a fall in the wholesale market of 26 per cent. in connection with beef, whereas the fall in the retail market

has been 16 per cent. only. The fall in the price of mutton since December, 1929, has been 34 per cent. in the wholesale market as against a drop of only 21.25 per cent. in the retail market, while the respective falls for pork were: wholesale, 41.53 per cent.; retail, 24 per cent. It will be seen, therefore, that there are lines that I have indicated in respect of which an inquiry is undoubtedly justified. On the other hand, as I have shown, there would not be any such justification for an inquiry regarding the prices of groceries, unless there are facts that I have not been able to discover, such as would warrant the institution of an inquiry into the conduct of that class of business.

Mr. Panton: What about bread?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I shall deal with that in a moment. Bread is not sold by grocers, although some may sell it as a matter of convenience. It cannot be regarded as a proper line for sale in a grocery shop. I think it will be recognised that in respect of the list I have dealt with so far, and taking all the items into consideration, there has been an average fall of 10 per cent. in the wholesale market as against 7 per cent. in the retail market. That, therefore, again represents the "lag," of which I have spoken. It also indicates that there do not exist grave reasons for instituting an inquiry. If we carry our investigation further and consider the position regarding meat and wheat, mutton and also the butter market, we find that with regard to flour, bread and meat, the prices charged to the consumer are out of all proportion to the wholesale prices paid to the producers. It may surprise the House to know that the prices paid to-day to the producers of wheat, beef, mutton, pork, potatoes, and eggs are below those which the producers obtained in July, 1914, before the outbreak of the Great War. The actual prices now paid to the producers for those particular articles, are considerably lower than those that obtained in the earlier days I have mentioned. I propose to give the House a few figures to support that statement. In July, 1914, wheat was sold at 3s. 11d. per bushel: it is now selling at 2s. 11d. per bushel. The wholesale price of flour, however, has increased during that period from £9 to £10 per ton. Thus although wheat has fallen in price by 1s. on a charge of 3s. 11d. per bushel, which is roughly 25 per cent., the price of flour has actually increased by 1l.

We find that the same position has arisen with regard to beef. Perhaps I should mention at this stage that during the period I have been dealing with, the price of bread increased from 3½d. in 1914, when wheat was selling at 3s. 11d. per bushel, to 5d. in 1930, when wheat is selling at 2s. 11d. per bushel. Reverting to the question of beef prices, in 1914 the wholesale price was 5d. per lb., whereas it is now 4½d. per lb. These prices apply to the top of the market values. The retail price in 1914 was 7d. and now, although the wholesale price is lower, the retail price is 8¼d. per lb. Regarding mutton, the wholesale price in 1914 was 7½d. per lb. and now it is 3d. per lb. On the other hand, the retail price has fallen from 7½d. per lb. in 1914 to 5½d. per lb. to-day. It may be that the House would like to learn how the money paid by the consumer is actually divided in respect of beef. I have taken the price per lb. for beef and I propose to indicate the percentage of that price that goes to the different parties interested. The grower gets 23 per cent.; freight and commission amount to the enormous figure of 21 per cent., taken right through; the wholesale butcher's profit represents the exceedingly small total of 1.4 per cent.; waste, including bone and other matter that is useless and cannot be used as a by-product, accounts for 12.6 per cent.; the cost of distribution represents 37 per cent., which is excessive; and the retail butcher's profit amounts to 5 per cent. These percentages added together make up the 100 per cent., which represents the full amount. It will be seen from the figures I have submitted that while the return to the primary producer has been reduced to a large extent, and while the fall in the wholesale market is fairly well reflected in the retail market, yet there has been no commensurate fall to the consumer in the prices he has had to pay. There has been a fall of about 10 per cent. as compared with the prices charged in 1929. I think it will be agreed that nothing could be of greater importance than that the full benefit of the amount of shrinkage apparent in the decreased figures received by the producer, should be passed on to the consumer. I think there is no doubt whatever that the whole future of the State depends upon the cost of production, and in turn it must be admitted that the cost of production very largely depends, as the mem-

ber for Guildford-Midland (Hon. W. D. Johnson) will probably admit, on the cost of living. What is the position Western Australia stands in? Apart from our home consumption, and what each of us uses of what the other citizens of the State produce, Western Australia, for the year ended 30th June, 1930, exported goods manufactured or produced in the State to the value of £17,769,000. That is the whole of our wealth, that £17,769,000, and of that large sum only £1,100,000 was paid by the rest of Australia. All the rest of Australia was responsible for the purchase of only £1,100,000 worth. That means that we had to find in the world's markets purchasers for £16,650,000 worth. It may be interesting to know that of that £16,650,000 wheat was responsible for £6,129,000 and wool for £2,800,000. Between them, they were responsible for more than half the total. Wool and wheat produced over nine millions of the export trade of this State. It is clear that unless the producer can sell at a profit, the time must come when he will abandon production. Nobody dreams that wheat and wool can be produced at a profit on their present prices. Therefore it is necessary for us to realise what it is we shall have to do in order to enable our producers to sell at a profit; because nothing is more certain than that if a producer cannot sell at a profit, it is only a matter of time when he will no longer produce; his resources will come to an end and he will be forced to stop. And when he stops, what will be the position in this State? Yesterday the member for Mt. Magnet (Hon. M. F. Troy) speaking on another Bill, but pertinently to this issue, said the world was suffering from a glut in the world's markets and it becomes a question who will survive, and that the survivor, and the survivor only, will be able to reap the reward. I quite agree that that is a description, although not perfect in details, which does fit the case. The world's markets are glutted, and only those will survive who are able, by reason of the cost to them of what they are putting on the market, to incur only the smallest loss. It would be impossible to imagine that the markets' suppliers who are putting their goods on the world's markets at a loss which is very much greater than the loss incurred by other suppliers, are going to be the sur-

vivors. Without some hope of Imperial preference—and that appears to be an idle dream, for we have nothing to offer the Old Country in exchange—

Hon. M. F. Troy: And they have their own interests at stake.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes, and besides you would not find, however much the Old Country is devoted to the Dominions, any consensus of opinion in favour of taxing foodstuffs in the Old Country. But apart from that, we have nothing to offer them in exchange, and so I say it is merely an idle dream. But without Imperial preference there is no hope of any increase in the price of wheat, no hope of any increase in the price of wool in the near future. We have to face in an unprotected market the competition of the world. We have no hope of getting any protection in that market, so it is useless to imagine that a mere dream will cure this trouble. We shall have to find other cures for it. Reliance upon time as a cure will merely mean that we shall exhaust our resources in the attempt to maintain ourselves in the markets of the world. I am merely asking the House on what grounds it could base any hope for any increase in prices for our staple industries in the near future?

Hon. M. F. Troy: On no grounds at all.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: That emphasises the supreme importance of a reduction in the cost of production. Without that reduction there is no future for Western Australia. How can we go on losing steadily year by year and expect those making the losses to continue production? Therefore if one wants to be candid, not to disguise facts, we have to admit that without any prospect of a rise in the prices of wool and wheat for years to come it is a hopeless task to look forward to a continuance of those industries unless we can produce at a lower price. It is often said that those who advocate a reduction in the cost of production must contemplate some reduction in the wages paid to the works in those industries. I have no desire to evade the question; I do not admit that it has been evaded by anyone. Be that as it may. I desire to face the position and I candidly say that no mere reorganisation of those industries, no greater efficiency in the conduct of those industries, would be sufficient to relieve the

position. We have to face a possible reduction in wages, and it is no good pretending that any man when he knows that the cost of production must come down does not also know that there must be a reduction in the wages paid in the industry.

Mr. Kenneally: To get closer to the coolie standard.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: To get closer to the standard of things as they are. Does the hon. member contemplate an end of these industries? But there is this consideration which must govern any programme for the reduction of the cost of production: it must be accompanied by a reduction in the cost of living. The standard of living of the worker must be interfered with to the least possible extent, if at all. To me it seems extraordinary that the worker is not capable of understanding or is not asked to understand that he suffers no injury whatever if we reduce the cost of living and at the same time ask him to agree to a reduction in his wages. What difference does it make to the worker whether he gets £1 or 10s., provided he pays for what he buys exactly in the same ratio?

Mr. Kenneally: The Arbitration Court attends to that.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The Arbitration Court attends to many things, but we are here to attend to the business of the State.

Mr. McCallum: It would make a lot of difference to him, unless the interest rate came down too.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: But we must contemplate the facts as they exist. Unless we do, we are only keeping ourselves in a mere dreamland.

Mr. McCallum: If you were to organise to bring down wages without bringing down interest, you would place the community in a much worse position than before.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: But surely a programme of reduction all round, in every sense, is not an impossible programme. If it is, then the whole possibility of pulling Western Australia through is gone. We must attempt one or the other, and we have to try it. The only prayer I should like to offer up is this: That instead of being faddists, tied down to some belief which may or may not be a correct belief, but which has been inculcated into us all our days, we should look at facts as they are. Therefore if we know that the only

way to cure the troubles in which we find ourselves, the peril in which we find ourselves, is to adopt certain courses and carry them as far as the Acting Leader of the Opposition would suggest, surely we must try those courses. I have said it is utterly impossible in my belief to reach a point of reduction in costs to all the producers of this State which will enable them to continue in the markets of the world notwithstanding the prevailing low prices without unfortunately lowering the cost of wages. And I have said at the same time the only justification which we have for that course is that that reduction could be accompanied *pari passu* with a reduction in the cost of living. I do not look on that programme as being at all impossible; if it is, then God help us. If I may say so without desiring to be in any way impertinent to any member of the House, I feel bound to say that those who have taken upon themselves the duty of looking after the interests of the workers have unfortunately adopted a false ideal. What has been the idea of their policy? Merely to raise, and again to raise, the wages of the workers. And they were raised, side by side went up the cost of living.

Mr. Panton: A long way ahead, not side by side.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Sometimes preceding it. The result was inevitable. Suppose a tradesman of some standing in his craft was getting 30s. per day for his work. He would have to pay the plumber who repaired his roof an equally high wage; he would have to pay the milkman supplying him with milk an equally high wage; he would have to pay the tailor furnishing him with clothes an equally high wage; he would have to pay to everybody rendering him a service an equally high return. Where, then, would he be? I think it was the member for Fremantle who, on the Address-in-reply, remarked that in his opinion the worker to-day was worse off than in years gone by when he was receiving far less pay. The true ideal to be followed is to reduce the cost of living. Every time we reduce the cost of living we are increasing the paying capacity of the worker. We are then giving him more, but not in costs as against the outside world. It would not matter at all what wages we paid in Australia if Australia were a planet. It would be immaterial if we were a planet with no

relation to the outside world. But that is not the case. We are part and parcel of the great world, and the moment we go beyond our own borders immediately the cost of production in our planet prevents us from trading in the outside world. The work this committee will do will not be very useful for the purpose of dealing with that problem; it will only touch the very fringe of it. It is a grim problem on the solution of which depends entirely our whole future. It is one of such tremendous importance that I for my part gravely fear it cannot be solved by any party Government. It is a question that goes to the very root of our national life and demands to be treated and solved—if it can be treated and solved—by a Government of a national character. If the time arrives when this is recognised, members can be certain that I shall not stand in the path of the formation of such a Government by remaining on these benches. I shall be only too willing to stand aside and see a Government formed capable of dealing with a problem, upon the solution of which our very life depends. No doubt a select committee meanwhile will be able to do useful work, and I welcome its formation and will do all in my power, not only personally but through the departments I control, to assist in the work.

**HON. M. F. TROY** (Mt. Magnet) [5.16]: The Chief Secretary has given the House a dissertation upon the existing economic position, and has expressed his opinion of what the future holds for us. It is very desirable to face the position and explain it, so that the community will understand it as we ought to understand it. I have come to the conclusion that the time has arrived when the community should know the position. It is of no use people attaching importance to phrases that have no particular meaning or no bearing on the situation. The people ought to understand the real facts. There are people who, when we speak of a depression, say that we are accentuating a position that does not really exist. Some people state that there is no depression at all, that it has been brought about by certain causes and that those causes might be removed by Parliamentary action. I am not going to claim that I know all about the question; I am not going to say that I know very much about it, but I am tired of hearing the economists tell us what ought to be done. We are all

prone to lecturing the other man. There is no doubt that we have to face the situation. We have to face the fact that the wealth of the community is diminishing. When I speak of the accumulated wealth of the community, I refer to the estate upon which we can draw. Any man who carries on any operations knows that the wealth of the community is diminishing. Every man on the land, if he does not need to come under the legislation agreed to on the second reading last night, is drawing upon his capital, and his capital is diminishing. We know that the public income of Australia will be reduced considerably as a result of the prices we are now receiving. We cannot escape the fact that our wheat, wool, timber, dairy produce, and other commodities on which we live have fallen in value. They have fallen to probably one-half of the value that ruled a few years ago, so what is the use of burking the facts? If the housekeeping purse contains only half the money, there is only half to go round. That is the position. There are certain people in the community who say, "Now that the money is scarce, the worker must set an example and bear the whole burden." That is what members on this side of the House resent and must resist to the very end. We are not justified in saying to the worker that he must set the example and accept less wages.

The Minister for Agriculture: Has not the farmer set the example already?

**HON. M. F. TROY**: I have been working for my living as an ordinary working man and I am running a farm to-day. The farmer is not in the same position as the worker. The farmer still has a home. We are passing legislation to protect him. He has a cow, a sheep to kill, a plough to till his ground, and can grow a bit of produce upon which to live. The man out of work lives from hand to mouth and has not a permanent home or anything else. The positions of the two are by no means analagous. Men engaged in farming say that the community are living on them, and regard the people in the city as parasites. Yet the farmers' chief concern is to be kept on the land. I said to one farmer, "If the community are living on you, as you say, why be so keen to remain on a proposition that is so bad?" The farmer has his home and his opportunity and is a pretty free man. What the Labour Party stand for is this: If the break must come, let it come to all alike. Members on the Gov-



ernment side must understand that. Perhaps before we surmount our troubles the position will become much more critical. Consider other countries. Look at the unemployment in Europe. I do not know whether our conditions can continue if our neighbours with whom we trade are miserable and poor. Look at the position in Great Britain, which has millions of unemployed. Were it not for the fact that in past years Britain was a great trading nation and her people saved and invested their money in other countries, she would not to-day have the money with which to carry on. But for the frugality of the British people in the past and their investments abroad, Britain to-day would be nearly bankrupt, because she does not produce enough to provide for the needs of her own people. The same position prevails in most other countries except America. The Americans can maintain their own people. They have a country of tremendous resources and can produce the foodstuffs and manufacture the commodities they need. With all their accumulated wealth, they are able to carry on their unemployed people without much effort, but there is a danger of the rot setting in there also. It is quite possible that the position will become more acute. Consequently, I point out that unless we are prepared to conform to saner conditions, the alternative may be a very unpleasant one. It is not likely that an intelligent and enlightened community in these days are going to revert to conditions under which they cannot decently live without making a very emphatic protest. If the position becomes accentuated, it will probably become a question actively discussed not only in Parliament but amongst the whole of the community. There are two things the community must face, the altered situation or an altered state of society in which their position might not be as pleasant as it is to-day, a state of society about which we might dream but about which we know very little. The Chief Secretary has lectured us from his point of view. He says that if we are going to survive, the worker must accept less. That may or may not be correct, but the class to which he belongs must also accept less. In fact, they must set the example.

Mr. Kenneally: They would view it from a very different angle then.

Hon. M. F. TROY: I do not suggest that the class to which the Chief Secretary belongs is a higher class than that to which we belong. I consider that I belong to the useful, stable class of the community, but his is the section of the community that has social pretences. We cannot take up an evening newspaper without seeing evidence of form of extravagance indulged in by that section, and such extravagance is not lost upon the rest of the community. Other people, if they had any brains whatever, would hold that sort of thing in contempt. The section of the people who are doing the talking are still spending money lavishly. I hope the Chief Secretary will not take my remarks as personal; I would not have him do that for a moment. When a section of the community, because of their wealth and professional status, say the great masses of the workers must accept, realise and acknowledge the altered conditions, they must set the example. The example would come better from them, because they enjoy positions that give them a certain social leadership in the community. That being so, it is up to them to set the example to the rest of the community. The worker resents this lecturing, telling him that he must bear the burden and that he is responsible for the trouble. If the rest of the community would set the example, I do not think there would be much difficulty about his following. No one desires that the worker should enjoy other than reasonable conditions. I hope we shall be able to maintain the present standard, and we on this side of the House will endeavour to maintain it, so far as the wealth of the community allows it to be maintained, for every man and woman in the community. That is my standpoint as a Labour man. I am going to insist that the people I represent shall enjoy as decent a standard in keeping with the wealth of the community as that enjoyed by any other section.

Mr. Sampson: No section has a monopoly of suffering.

Hon. M. F. TROY: The Chief Secretary says that the prices for our produce are not likely to increase for some time. The market has been deluged; the world has produced too much of certain commodities and we are suffering in consequence. That is correct, but there is no reason at all why we cannot compete. We have competed

against the cheap labour nations of the world. In our progress to the position we now hold and to the enjoyment of the comforts we now possess, we have moved from the state in which other less fortunate people now live, and we enjoy our present conditions because we have competed successfully. I believe that we can compete, because we produce more abundantly, more efficiently, and more intelligently, and that is why we have succeeded. If we get down to the coolie standard, we shall have to live the life that he lives. As a civilised people and a people with a high standard of industry, we can compete because we have developed our intelligence.

Mr. Angelo: How do you explain the fact that South Africa can borrow money at  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., whilst Australia—

Hon. M. F. TROY: I am not going to bother about explaining that.

Mr. Munsie: How do you explain it yourself?

Mr. Angelo: By cheaper production.

Mr. Munsie: Nonsense!

Hon. M. F. TROY: What has South Africa's borrowing at  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. got to do with the situation? Very little, except as showing that for the moment South Africa's position is considered better than ours.

Mr. Kenneally: The South African standard of living is two meals daily, costing 6d. per meal.

Hon. M. F. TROY: Certain conditions here in Western Australia give us a decent handicap in wheat production. We have the cheapest land in the world. The Government of Western Australia sell Crown land at 8s. per acre, and give the buyer 25 years to pay for it, the first five years free. We have a fine country, capable of producing wheat in large quantities and, with proper farming methods, on a fairly high average. I have said that we have an excellent climate. Is there any other country in the world which has not had a bad season for 16 years? Since 1914 Western Australia has not had a bad season. Can one point to any other country which has enjoyed 16 successive good seasons? With that fine climate we have land in which the wealth of Nature is still stored. It is all new land capable of high production. In comparison with Canada, we have land that can carry stock. We can carry on mixed farming. We can reduce our wheat production if necessary, and carry

sheep, pigs and cattle. We can do ever so many things that cannot be done in Canada. In comparison with the farmers of the United States, the position of our farmers is comparatively good, because our land is so cheap. If we apply ourselves intelligently to the task, we shall be able to compete with the United States and Canada. With the Argentine also we ought to be able to compete, and favourably, because the Argentine farmer is not a highly-intelligent farmer. Argentine wheat introduced into Western Australia in 1914 was of surprisingly poor quality, due entirely to bad farming. I do not think for a moment that we shall get Imperial preference, for the simple reason that the British people have to compete with the world in manufactured products and therefore want to buy their raw material and their foodstuffs as cheaply as possible. Some people in Australia have an idea that there is an obligation on the Old Country to buy Australian foodstuffs, that Australia ought to get preference from Britain. Britain treats Australia as Australia treats the Old Country. We want the best article at the lowest price for which it can be obtained, and the people in Britain have the same desire. Imperial preference will give us very little indeed. Perhaps I am not strictly in order in having made these remarks, and I thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the indulgence you have shown me. Investigations of the character asked for by the motion may yield excellent results. The cost of living is still too high in the cities, even having regard to the figures quoted by the Attorney General. The cost is coming down slowly, but it is evident that certain interests are still maintaining prices. There is not the slightest reason why bread should maintain its price. It may be reducing, but in country towns of this State it is still being sold at 6d. and 7d. per loaf. Speaking from my own standpoint, I would say that the producer of this country—even though he does not wish the present position to continue too long, because that would mean all-round bankruptcy—agrees to take his turn until the wheel has revolved again, so long as the rest of the community benefits. But what is the use of our people producing foodstuffs at a loss when the great mass of the people get no benefit from such production? If the carrying of the motion can hasten the time by which the con-

sumer will get the advantage of the prices being paid to the producer, we shall not complain if for a time we have to carry on under present conditions. But we shall feel the greatest possible resentment if we find that while we are losing, a section standing between the producer and the consumer reap a rich harvest. The carrying of the motion should hasten that fall in prices which we think the community should enjoy. Too many people regard what they call a standard of living as enjoyment like the races, picture shows, jazzing, cocktail drinking. I do not do much preaching nowadays, except in this Chamber, but may I be permitted to say that there was a time when we preached the higher ideals of this movement. We stand for a decent standard of life for the great mass of the community. With the 44-hour week the worker has the opportunity to build up a home and make it attractive, and if possessed of a literary bent, increase his knowledge so that he might be able to take pride in his home, in his surroundings, in his garden, in his family. If that ideal can be realised, we of this party would represent the most stable section of the community. What should a decent social state care about jazz parties, nights out, and such foolishness? To my great regret I have to say that while some try to live up to the ideal others do not. Look around the hotels on Saturday afternoons, and look at the mobs betting in the shops. Look at the crowds that go to the races. Look at the homes which show no evidence whatever of any attempt at refinement.

Mr. Kenneally: Are you keeping your eyes also on those who go golfing?

Mr. Angelo: Golfing does not cost half as much as betting.

Hon. M. F. TROY: Let it not be thought for one moment that any words of mine mean censure of any section. Any words of mine are the result of a desire that people shall have reasonable enjoyment, and that we shall secure the happy results we legislate for. I do not attach any importance to a standard of living which merely represents pleasures such as cocktail drinking, parties, or foolish extravagances. I do attach importance to a standard of living that gives every member of the community a decent home, opportunities for his children, and the opportunity to make provision for

old age. That is the standard of living I as a Labour man will do my utmost to secure for the people of Western Australia.

MR. McCALLUM (South Fremantle) [5.42]: I understand that the Chief Secretary has linked up his remarks with the motion on the ground that the subject matter into which the proposed select committee will be asked to inquire is the cost of living of the community. The hon. gentleman's idea is that if the cost of living can be reduced, there will be a material effect on the economic position of the country. I have not got to know the Chief Secretary too well yet. If I had known that he was going to stretch his imagination by embracing this motion in his argument, I would certainly have come armed with some interesting figures which I have at home, and which I think would place a different aspect on the case he has presented this afternoon. If the Chief Secretary has in his mind that the mere fact of reducing the cost of commodities now supplied to the community is going to be a lever towards the reduction of wages, he is greatly mistaken. He is quite mistaken also if he thinks that in the event of the cost of commodities coming down, lower wages will not have any detrimental effect on the community. I will put the proposition in a simple form. The average working man draws £6 per week. Of that £6 he spends £5 on food and clothing. The other £1 has to attend to his house rent or the interest on the purchase of his home, and so forth. If the cost of the commodities he buys out of the £5 comes down and his wages are reduced by £1 per week, he still has to find the other £1 per week out of the £5; and so he will be materially worse off. If the cost of the commodities he buys is reduced, and then because of that reduction his wages are reduced while the heavy load in the shape of interest and rent remains what it was, the standard of living of this community will be materially lowered.

Mr. Angelo: Do not forget that the worker gets a big rate of interest on his savings.

Mr. McCALLUM: But he has not big sums of money in the bank on which he can draw heavy rates of interest. He does not belong to that section of the community that is concerned about the question of interest,

that section that lives on rents and on values created by the community. Unless those values are attacked, it is not much use attacking other values, if costs are to come down, without affecting the whole standard of living. The Chief Secretary said that on account of wages that had been going up from year to year we had reached the position that we were in. But if he examines the figures relating to the banks, he will find that prior to the war it took a tremendous time for the banks to accumulate any substantial reserves, and that during the war the assets over liabilities leapt up tremendously, and that since the war they had bounded up at an even greater rate, until to-day we find that they stand as monuments of the tremendous increase of assets over liabilities. In short, during the war and since the war, the banks have done what it took them 50 years to do prior to the war. The hon. gentleman inferred that the efforts of members of the Labour Party had been directed merely to increasing wages and reducing hours, in other words, to promote a higher standard to provide more comfort for those who toil for their living. But he is stating only one side of our programme. We have no misgivings at all about that being only one side of the picture. The other side needs attention, but we are not a revolutionary party; we do not stand for revolution; we have been gradually attacking the other side and what we have has been secured by evolution. If we had been a revolutionary party we would have attacked that side of the problem more forcibly in the years gone by. But we never deceived ourselves that we were able to accomplish much in that direction in the few years that we have been taking part in the political life of the country. It is only a quarter of a century since this movement acquired any influence. To say that our efforts have been directed merely towards increasing wages and improving hours and conditions is merely to state one side of the picture. I have no wish to misinterpret the hon. gentleman, but it appears to me that the logical outcome of his argument is that with less wages and a lower standard of living, we shall have a more prosperous country.

The Chief Secretary: No.

Mr. McCALLUM: How does the hon. member compare the position in India with our own? India is a wheat-producing coun-

try. He cited wheat and wool and said that it was impossible for the wheat growers to carry on without a reduction of the cost, and then he argued that a reduction of wages would be the solution. How do the wheat growers in India get on when the wages paid there are somewhere in the vicinity of 3s 4d. a month? Are the wheat growers in India better off than are the wheat growers in Western Australia? Recently I have attended meetings of wheat farmers and have heard arguments in favour of lifting the heavy burden of protection. That is all they want, and if they got that, the whole world would smile. But read this morning's paper and note the position of the wheat growers in freetrade England with the market at their doors! There the wheat growers are no better off than the wheat growers in Australia. Can they produce wheat at the price it is bringing and with the market at their doors? They cannot do it. In high-protection America, the wheat growers are no better off than in freetrade England or in revenue-tariff Canada. The problem is not going to be solved by attacking tariffs or wages either. I did not intend to pursue this line of argument, but I had no idea that such a case would be presented in relation to the motion before the House. I do, however, wish to put this to the hon. member, and I think it will weigh considerably with the community when that phase of the question is being considered. The people of Australia have established a high standard of living. It is not to my idea the highest standard of any nation in the world. I think the American standard is considerably ahead of the standard established in Australia. But the people of Australia have been proud of the standard they have established and it can be taken as certain that the great masses of this community will fight strenuously to retain it, that they will not let it slip from their grasp without a very severe struggle. The position here is that a great percentage of the people have an interest in their homes, they have small deposits in the savings banks of the States, they have pride in their country and generally speaking, have so established themselves as part of the nation that they give this country the stability that the party on this side of the House stands for. They also give the nation that security that very few other nations possess. Take what has happened

in the South American Republics. At the moment, they have not that stability that we have. The workers of those countries have not enjoyed the standards that we have enjoyed; they do not possess the interests in their homes, or own homes as our people do: they have not the bank deposits or the same interests that our people have. In those republics, revolutions and disturbances occur periodically, and no one will say that because the cost of production in the South American Republics may be lower, investments there are more secure than are those in this country, or that one can look forward to the future of that nation with a greater degree of certainty than in our own country. I am not looking upon the present crisis through which we are passing as altogether extraordinary, because the world has gone through such crises before. Australia has gone through similar experiences before and got through them, when we had to face them. There have been turmoils to upset the economic life of all countries. They come along periodically, and the present is only one of the cycles, and it is happening in our period. I have no doubt that we shall be able to face it and get through it successfully, and it will be faced successfully because of that security that has been created amongst the great masses of the people of the nation. I hope we shall not limit our outlook to the extent of saying that merely reducing the cost of food and clothing and forcing down wages, will end the difficulty. Before that is accomplished in this continent, there will be tremendous opposition and a solid fight will be put up by those who have enjoyed the existing conditions for many years. What we have today has been our pride. The working man in this country is entirely independent. He has his own home and rears his family under decent conditions and gives them a sound education. The nation is proud of him; he is the greatest asset any nation can have. I was amazed while travelling through Canada to find that education there is not compulsory in any of the States. Though it is free, it is not compulsory, and no one will argue that the standards in Canada are in any way equal to the standards we have here. No one will argue either that we are not able to compete with Canada even with our methods of farming. I was surprised to hear from those in charge of the wheat pool in Winnipeg that from the time the

wheat was grown until it was marketed in the markets of the world, the cost was higher in Canada than in Western Australia. That is to say, that from the time wheat is in the field in our country until it reaches the markets in London, the cost is cheaper than the cost from Canada to London, notwithstanding the fact that in Canada there is bulk handling.

The Minister for Lands: Because of the higher railway rates?

Mr. McCALLUM: I am coming to that. I got figures from the Canadian wheat pool that amazed me. From the time the wheat is ripe until it is marketed in London—and I am not forgetting their waterways, their cheap transport and their bulk handling—their costs are higher than ours. It takes a boat at Montreal just about as many hours to load as it does days in Fremantle, but giving all that in, the wheat pool people assured me that our handling charges are so much less than theirs. The explanation is that we harvest our wheat out in the field, and our transport with all its disadvantages, is cheaper. They have three handlings; we have only one. We have 10,000 miles of transport against one week's transport at their end. In addition, their land is snowed under during four or five months of the year. If our outlook is not bright, what about that of the rest of the world? Listening to the Chief Secretary, one would imagine that all the problems were confined to Australia, but if our problem is black, and our outlook anything but satisfactory, what must be the position of other countries where they are producing the same commodities as we are, and competing against us in the markets of the world that are unable to produce under favourable conditions such as ours? If there is to be any going under so far as the nations are concerned in the different industries, I do not fear for a moment that it will be this Continent because we can grow wheat and wool here cheaper than can any country on the face of the earth. We have no doubt about that, but we do not know what is happening in Russia. I should like very much to know that, in order to find out precisely what the position of that country is. I do know that in the year when I crossed the United States, agents of the Soviet Government were buying up every tractor that America would sell and were paying for those implements in gold. They did the same

thing in the following year. Every farm tractor the United States would sell them, they paid for in gold, chartered ships for them, and took them to their own country. They also engaged scientists and industrialists from the United States because of their knowledge of agriculture and agricultural implements. They took those men over to Russia to supervise the manufacture of agricultural implements there. There were all kinds of agitations in the United States to the end that the Federal Government should stop that sort of thing, and prevent the scientific and industrial brains of the country being used by the Soviet Government to enable Russia to compete with America in the manufacture of agricultural implements. This has been going on for the last three or four years. For two years in succession every tractor the United States would sell was being bought by Russia. That country must be producing enormous quantities of wheat. The authorities there have linked up the lakes with the Black Sea by a system of locks, and as a result of this enterprise it is possible to convey cargoes through the Dardanelles at a cheap rate all the year through. The north is frozen in throughout the long winter, and is open only for a few months in the year. The wheat growers, however, are no longer hemmed in and confined to the outlet in the north for a few months, nor do they have to rely upon the railway system for the transportation of wheat to the south. I am more concerned about the position of Russia in competition with us than I am about the rest of the world. We know what that country produced prior to the war, but no one seems to know to-day what the position there is.

Mr. H. W. Mann: Can Russia's standard of living be compared with ours?

Mr. McCALLUM: As far as we can learn, it is not comparable with ours. On the other hand, the standard of grain she is producing is not comparable with ours. It is quite inferior. Only to-day I received a letter from our Agent General, who told me he had gone to one of the ports in the north of England to watch the unloading of Russian wheat. He described what he had seen. I had the privilege of talking with a gentleman who passed through a week or so ago. He is one of the directors of the Cresco Fertiliser Co., and saw a lot of Russian wheat. He said that in Australia it would only be used for pig-feeding, and

that in England it was used mainly for the feeding of stock, and could not be used for the manufacture of flour.

Mr. H. W. Mann: That statement was made by a commercial man in London recently.

Mr. McCALLUM: I received a letter this morning from the Agent General, giving me his views upon that point. It is not a question of the community locally being affected. The trouble is confronting other countries too. The Chief Secretary seemed to indicate that the outlook was one to be despaired of unless the standard of living was reduced in the community. I cannot subscribe to such sentiments. The Minister can rest assured that the people of Australia would put up a strenuous opposition before they agreed to any reduction in the standard of living.

MR. H. W. MANN (Perth) [6.5]: I wish to give some reasons why I am supporting the motion. I followed closely the speech of the Chief Secretary. I hardly think the member for South Fremantle (Mr. McCallum) has understood the Minister's intentions aright. My idea is that he was not suggesting a reduction in the standard of living, but in the cost of living.

Mr. Panton: You do not need to apologise for him. We know him.

Mr. H. W. MANN: The Chief Secretary requires no one to apologise for him. He is well able to look after himself. In my opinion he desired, not to reduce the standard of living, but to reduce the cost of living so that we might retain our standard of living with a reduced cost of production. Recently I had in my possession a journal issued by the North Western Millers' Association of the United States of America, but I have since lent it to the Leader of the Opposition. This contained reports following upon an investigation similar to that which is sought by the member for Mt. Hawthorn (Mr. Millington). One inquiry made was into the cost of bread. That commodity was costing 8 dollars 20 cents for 112 lbs. weight. An inquiry was held to ascertain what the cost would be if the farmer gave his wheat for nothing, and if it was railed to the mill for nothing. A further investigation was made to ascertain what the cost of bread would be if wheat was milled for nothing, and the flour was railed to the bread factory for nothing. It was found that the cost worked out as follows:—For 112 lbs.

of bread, 8 dollars 20 cents, and if the wheat was grown for nothing, raised for nothing, milled for nothing and transported to the bread factory for nothing, the cost was 2 dollars 80 cents, and the cost of bread would still remain at 5 dollars 40 cents.

Mr. Piesse: How much of that represented the cost of distribution?

Mr. H. W. MANN: The greatest margin in that cost was in the distribution.

Mr. Pantou: That costs 1¼d. in Perth.

Mr. H. W. MANN: That point was made by the member for Mt. Hawthorn. Bread is costing here for distribution over 1d. per loaf. That is a question it is very difficult for a Committee of this House to deal with. Every trader has the privilege of selling in what districts he likes, and every consumer has the right to purchase from what trader he likes. We find bakers from Cottesloe delivering bread in East Perth and Mt. Hawthorn; bakers from Mt. Hawthorn delivering bread in Victoria Park, and those from Victoria Park delivering in Leederville. That will always remain as a cost against the article produced.

Mr. Pantou: Not necessarily so. Some men will surely get some sense.

Mr. H. W. MANN: It will remain unless the difficulty is overcome by some tyrannical law.

Mr. Pantou: There is no tyrannical law in this State. How does the "West Australian" manage to do it?

Mr. H. W. MANN: That is the case of a monopoly. The hon. member cannot make a reasonable comparison between the article that is produced for one company under the sole control of that company, which is able to say to its agents, "That is your area, and you shall not sell outside it"; and the production of bread.

Mr. Hegney: The Minister for Railways says he is going to establish bread depots so that bread may be bought at a cheaper rate by those who cannot afford to pay more.

Mr. H. W. MANN: That is a sound proposition. There is always an inducement to get credit when bread is delivered to the house. When a person must go to a store or depot for it, the transaction is usually a cash one. There is always an inclination on the part of a buyer to obtain credit.

Mr. Pantou: There is a good deal of compulsion about it, too.

Mr. H. W. MANN: I do not know that there is.

Mr. Pantou: You are lucky if you do not know. I know it.

Mr. H. W. MANN: We all know that the wage earner pays his way while at work, and may have done so for several months, but when he gets out of employment he has to ask for credit at the hands of the traders. Probably he has not been able to amass a sufficient reserve of cash to continue to avoid the credit system.

Mr. Pantou: There are many cases in which sickness causes a man to ask for credit.

Mr. H. W. MANN: It all affects the system of purchasing. Another piece of information given in the journal was that certain States in America reduced rail freights on flour intended for export to Europe in order to assist the exporter. At the end of the season the committee controlling the export of flour reported that the reduction in rail freights had been of no assistance. It was found that other countries with which they were competing on the European market had resorted to other means to combat this reduction in freight. They stated that the millers of Australia were implicated in this. It was suggested that the millers were receiving such a high price for their flour for home sale and home consumption, and such a high price for their offal, that they were able successfully to invade the European market and compete against American millers who were trying to dispose of their flour in the same market. I take it the great bulk of that Australian flour was from the Eastern States, but I trust a fair proportion of it came from this State. It was contended that the Australian miller had been able to sell against the American miller by reason of having obtained a high price for flour consumed locally and a high price for offal. I put forward these few facts to show that the same condition is prevailing in America as is prevailing here. Costs are high, and people have not the wherewithal to purchase. The cost of production is high, and it is difficult for the producers to obtain a market for their goods. I have here a publication issued by the Imperial Economic Committee. I understand the Minister for Railways is endeavouring to obtain a copy of this, and has sent to England for one. Some members have been receiving these reports from time to time. This

particular document does not deal with wheat or the cost of flour, nor, as the member for Mt. Magnet said, with the ups and downs in the price of primary products. It does, however, deal with fluctuations in the price of pig and bacon produce. It shows that in England five years is the longest period without great fluctuations in values. That period is now reduced from five years to three. There used to be a steady continuity of values over a period of about five years. That was first reduced to a period of four years, and now it is found impossible to get a steady continuity of prices over a longer period than three years. Prices then come down, and after a while rise again. In America, the period is about four years. In Germany, from 1896 to 1914 the same condition of things prevailed. The cycle of even prices was about three years. The authorities have now so organised their trade that from 1927 onwards there has been a similar continuity of values.

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

Mr. H. W. MANN: The point I was making before tea was that similar disadvantages to those apparent in this State exist in other parts of the world regarding the food supplies for the people. It has been claimed by American shippers of flour that the Australian shippers are able to compete with them in the European markets because higher prices for local sales and offal are charged within the Commonwealth. Probably some information under that heading will be obtained by the select committee and attention will be given to the question as to whether that procedure is in the best interests of the country. Is it in the interests of our people that they have to pay more for local supplies in order that the millers may be able to compete with other countries in the overseas markets? Is it in the interests of our people that higher prices for offal shall be charged here? We must remember that high prices for offal work to the detriment of the dairying industry, with the result that the butter manufacturers are placed in the same invidious position. The action of the millers in charging higher prices locally than they charge overseas, in order to secure the market, means that other primary producers here are placed at a serious disadvantage, and their commodities are unable to compete in other markets. It will

be seen that the present procedure has far-reaching effects.

Mr. Piesse: The higher prices for local supplies were charged in order that flour could be exported and sold overseas.

Mr. H. W. MANN: I have made that point.

Mr. Piesse: In some instances the flour was sold at a loss.

Mr. H. W. MANN: I understand that was so. The fact remains that, while the present practice enables the exporters of flour to compete in the markets of the world, other industries of the State are suffering in consequence.

The Minister for Agriculture: If flour were not gristed here, no bran and pollard would be available locally and supplies would have to be imported.

Mr. H. W. MANN: There is a reply to that argument, too. It is interesting to note that the nail has been driven in so far that it is impossible to drive it further. The result is that the dairymen in the Fremantle district have decided to secure supplies of crushed oats, because they cannot continue to pay the high prices for local offal.

Mr. Millington: That is what they are actually doing now.

The Minister for Agriculture: That is because of the low price of oats.

Mr. H. W. MANN: The Minister can have it that way if he likes. The position is that the Fremantle dairymen have been forced to take that action. The strange thing about it is that prices are so fixed that the margin between South Australian prices and local prices is just about equal to the added cost of importing supplies from Adelaide. I know a buyer of offal who ships supplies to Singapore for horse feed. He buys all his supplies in Melbourne and Adelaide and ships the consignment through Fremantle and on to Singapore. That question can be investigated by the select committee and they may consider whether that practice is in the best interests of the State. It is unnecessary to touch on many other points that I could deal with. Many phases have been dealt with by hon. members, not one of whom has yet spoken against the motion. It is evidently unanimously agreed that there should be an inquiry, and I hope much good will result.

Question put and passed.



*Select Committee Appointed.*

Ballot taken and a committee appointed consisting of Mr. Lamond, Mr. H. W. Mann, Mr. Parker, Mr. Patrick and the mover, with power to call for persons and papers, to sit on days over which the House stands adjourned, and to report on the 28th November.

**BILL—BEES.***Council's Message.*

Message from the Council received and read notifying that it disagreed to the amendment made by the Assembly.

**BILL—METROPOLITAN MARKET TRUST ROAD.**

Returned from the Council without amendment.

**BILL—HOSPITAL FUND.***In Committee.*

Resumed from the previous day, Mr. Richardson in the Chair, the Minister for Health in charge of the Bill.

Clause 9—Contributions in respect of salary and wages (partly considered):

The CHAIRMAN: The member for Fremantle has moved an amendment as follows:—"That the following words be added to paragraph (a) of Subclause 1:—'provided that such employee shall have earned over £52 in the year.'" The temporary Chairman of Committees, Mr. Angelo, has drawn my attention to the fact that paragraph (a) has already been submitted to the Committee and carried. Therefore I must rule this amendment out of order. The intention of paragraph (a) is really very definite, and if I were to accept this amendment it would, if agreed to, nullify the paragraph carried by the Committee last night. Therefore I must rule the amendment out of order.

*Dissent from Ruling.*

Mr. Sleeman: Your ruling, Sir, is remarkable, because the Bill provides that employees earning only £22 per annum shall be exempt from the tax, until they reach £52 per annum. It was to put the para-

graph in order that I moved my amendment, which you now rule out of order. I move—

That the Committee dissent from the Chairman's ruling.

*[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]*

The Chairman stated the dissent.

Mr. Sleeman: I moved to include at the end of paragraph (a) of Subclause 1 certain words to provide that until such time as an employee shall have earned £52 in a year no taxation shall be imposed upon him. Even in the Bill it is not intended that employees shall be taxed until they earn £52 in a year; but without the amendment a casual worker in receipt of his first £2, which may be his only £2 earned during the year, will have to pay tax. I contend I am in order in moving to protect the interests of casual workers until such time as they earn £52. The Government, I understand, admit that my amendment is in order, for they are coming along with a counter amendment.

The Minister for Health: Not for that reason.

Mr. Sleeman: The Bill provides that anybody earning an amount below £52 shall pay the tax and get a refund. It is ridiculous to say that people earning less than £52 in a year shall pay the tax on whatever they earn and at the end of the year go through the procedure of getting a refund of three or four shillings. Clearly the Bill intends that a person earning less than £52 shall be exempt; yet when I try to make it quite clear that such a person shall not be taxed until he earns £52, my amendment is ruled out of order.

Mr. Speaker: According to the Chairman's ruling, which I think is correct, the Committee have already decided that paragraph (a) of Subclause 1 shall stand.

Mr. Sleeman: That has not been carried.

Mr. Speaker: Not been carried? The Chairman has said it has been carried, and that therefore he could not admit your amendment. The Chairman has ruled that it has been decided by the Committee that paragraph (a) shall stand. Therefore I uphold the Chairman's ruling in declaring the amendment out of order. It is obvious that the addition of the amendment would make it impossible for paragraph (a) to stand, for the reason that the employer

could not deduct any tax until the employee had earned £52 in a year.

Mr. Sleeman: The clause has not been passed.

Mr. Speaker: The paragraph has been passed. I uphold the Chairman's ruling. The hon. member may move to disagree with my ruling if he likes.

*Committee resumed.*

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I propose to carry out the desire of the member for South Fremantle by giving people whose salaries do not reach £52 a year the right to a refund. At a later stage a new subclause will be moved. The point raised by the hon. member is fair and I hope he will assist to provide for the necessary refund.

Mr. SLEEMAN: The proviso to paragraph (b) declares that a fraction of a pound of not less than 15s. shall be reckoned as a pound. If a girl was drawing 15s. 6d. she would be taxed as on £1, while a girl receiving £1 15s. would have to pay on £2. We cannot approve of that.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: This provision was accepted when the previous Bill was before us. There must be a starting point and a finishing point.

Mr. SLEEMAN: The fact that it was in the previous Bill does not influence me. Members now sitting on the Government side had a good deal to say against that Bill.

Mr. H. W. Mann: And generally supported it.

Mr. SLEEMAN: Whenever a member on this side objects to anything in the present Bill, the Minister taunts us with having supported a previous Bill. Why does he not bring down the identical Bill that was introduced by the Labour Government?

Mr. MUNSIE: Paragraph (c) (i) reads—

A person paying salary or wages shall collect on behalf of the Commissioner contributions to the fund under this section by a deduction from the salary or wages payable by him, separately shown on a pay sheet.

Clause 10 provides that if any employer or employee objects, the tax cannot be deducted, but must be collected through the income tax channel. Last night the Chief Secretary and the Minister for Health said that only a Commonwealth employee could object to paying.

The Minister for Health: I suggested that a Commonwealth employee might object.

Mr. MUNSIE: I could legally object and not one penny could be deducted. It would have to be collected through the Income Tax Department. Unless there is an agreement between the employer and the employee, the tax cannot legally be deducted, but the employer must pay the employee his full wages. If this provision be passed, the Minister will lose half his revenue.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I think I have been misunderstood. Last night when replying to the member for South Fremantle, I said that if an employer withheld any portion of a man's pay, it would be an infringement of the Truck Act. Years ago a claim was made on behalf of Commonwealth servants that they were not liable to taxation by State Governments because it would impair Commonwealth activities. The High Court upheld that view, but the contention was abandoned, it was said, as a matter of grace. Clause 10 seems to presuppose that that contention might be revived, but I do not think it is possible. No Commonwealth officer can now claim that it is an infringement of Commonwealth activities to call upon him to bear in the State in which he happens to be located those burdens that other citizens are called upon to bear. The Minister might consider whether Clause 10 is worth retaining. The chief point I want to make clear is that my intervention last night was simply confined to the point raised by the member for South Fremantle, whether the Truck Act, a State Act of our own, would prohibit an employer from taking, by direction of this measure, a certain proportion of wages by way of stamp tax. The employer would not be retaining any money for himself, but retaining money as the agent of the Commissioner of Taxation.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I move an amendment—

That after the word "employer," in line 9 of paragraph (c) of Subclause 1, there be inserted "forthwith."

The object of the amendment is to prevent the employer from retaining money collected on behalf of the Commissioner of Taxation.

Amendment put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I move an amendment—

That the following be added to the clause, to stand as Subclause 5:—"If, during any period of twelve calendar months computed, as

regards the first of such periods, from and including the day of the commencement of this Act, any person shall make contributions to the Fund under this section in respect of his salary or wages, and at the expiration of such period proves to the satisfaction of the Commissioner that the amount of the salary or wages received by him during such period is less than fifty-two pounds in the aggregate, such person may apply for and the Commissioner shall make to such person a refund of the amount of the contributions to the Fund made by him as aforesaid during the said period."

I hope the amendment will meet the wishes of hon. members opposite. Probably the employer who gives a man a casual day's work will in most cases pay the 1½d. himself.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I shall not oppose the amendment, though it is merely camouflage. By this Bill the Government provide that every person earning over £1 per week shall be taxed. The amendment is about the clumsiest I ever saw. The man wrongly taxed is to go about from Government department to Government department at the end of the year seeking a refund. I am disappointed that the Government cannot devise some better means of repayment.

Amendment put and passed; the clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 10—In certain cases salary or wages to be treated as income for the purposes of contributions to be paid by contributor:

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: This clause represents a new departure, and I do not want to leave any loophole in the Bill. I move—

That consideration of Clause 10 be postponed.

Motion put and passed; the clause postponed.

Clause 11—Benefits to contributors:

Mr. SLEEMAN: As this clause was not in the previous Bill, I may have better luck in attempting to improve it. I move an amendment—

That in Subclause 1, paragraph (a), the following words be struck out:—"who satisfactorily proves that he or she is in receipt of income, salary, or wages totalling less than £230 during the 12 months preceding admission to hospital of any such person."

If the amendment is carried, paragraph (a) will read, "Every married person contributing under this Act, or a dependant of such

person; and." Had it not been for the action of the Government in taking away the amount of £104,000, the hospitals would have been able to stand up to their job.

Mr. H. W. MANN: I have two amendments to move in this clause. If the amendment of the member for Fremantle is defeated, will I still be able to move them?

Mr. SLEEMAN: Under the provision as it now stands, a man without a family and earning £229 per annum would be exempt, while on the other hand a married man earning £231 and having a family of 12 children would not be exempt. Everyone should receive some return for the money he pays by way of taxation.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: The amendment which the member for Perth desires to move is highly important. It provides for people who desire outdoor treatment.

The CHAIRMAN: The member for Perth will have an opportunity of moving that amendment later.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: If this clause goes, the whole Bill goes. The new departure made in the clause is owing to the financial position. If the amendment is carried, there will be no opportunity whatever for persons to receive free treatment. We desire to give people the right to enter hospitals for the upkeep of which the fund will be responsible. Financial changes have been so rapid during the past 12 months that I doubt whether the member for Hannans would have had the necessary funds to carry out his desires, because he estimated that for the purposes of this clause he would have £217,000, plus what he was getting from Consolidated Revenue and from the entertainments tax. The £217,000 has been reduced by £61,000, to £156,000. The man with a large family will not be harassed any more in the future than he has been in the past. I think the member for Fremantle recognises that, and I hope he will not press his amendment.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I shall press the amendment to a division. The ex-Minister for Health having been mentioned, let me express my opinion that if that gentleman was in office at present, he would not agree under any circumstances to the Treasurer taking away £104,000 from the hospitals and thereby starving them, while camouflaging his action in the eyes of the people.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	14
Noes	..	..	..	19
				—
Majority against	..	..	5	
			--	

## AYES.

Mr. Corboy  
Mr. Coverley  
Mr. Cunningham  
Mr. Hegney  
Mr. Lamond  
Mr. Lutey  
Mr. McCallum

Mr. Millington  
Mr. Munzie  
Mr. Sleeman  
Mr. J. H. Smith  
Mr. Walker  
Mr. Withers  
Mr. Wilson

(Teller.)

## NOES.

Mr. Angelo  
Mr. Barnard  
Mr. Brown  
Mr. Davy  
Mr. Doney  
Mr. Ferguson  
Mr. Griffiths  
Mr. Keenan  
Mr. Latham  
Mr. Lindsay

Mr. H. W. Mann  
Mr. J. I. Mann  
Mr. McLarty  
Mr. Patrick  
Mr. Plesse  
Mr. Sampson  
Mr. J. M. Smith  
Mr. Thorn  
Mr. North

(Teller.)

## PAIRS.

## AYES.

Mr. Collier  
Mr. Kenneally  
Mr. Panton  
Miss Holman  
Mr. Troy

## NOES.

Sir James Mitchell  
Mr. Scaddan  
Mr. Parker  
Mr. Tenedale  
Mr. Wells

Amendment thus negatived.

Mr. H. W. MANN: I move an amendment—

That after "to," in line 5 of paragraph (a), the words "or at the commencement of treatment at" be inserted.

As the Bill reads, free treatment will be given to those who are in-patients. It is the intention that those who have to take advantage of hospital treatment as out-patients should also be considered. The average daily attendance of out-patients at the Perth Hospital is 250, and 80 of that number are on or below the basic wage. If the clause is passed as it is, they will not be permitted to get free treatment in the out-patients department. At the Children's Hospital the average daily out-patients attendance is 110 and 90 per cent. of those are children of people under the basic wage. My amendment will bring all those within the scope of the Bill.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. H. W. MANN: I also desire to insert a similar amendment in paragraph (b). I move an amendment—

That after "to," in line 5 of paragraph (b), the words "or at the commencement of treatment at" be inserted.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. MUNSIE: As I have said repeatedly, there is an aspect of this Bill which members do not appear to recognise. I realise that this clause is the Bill; it will afford the only benefits that the Bill provides for the individual. I have no objection to the amendments that have just been carried at the instance of the member for Perth, but I am desirous of seeing that when a man is compelled to contribute to a hospital, that he will have a hospital to go to. I am satisfied that if the Bill goes through, the Perth Hospital will be in a worse position than it occupies to-day. The Fremantle Hospital and the Children's Hospital will be similarly situated, and all country hospitals, with the exception of Government hospitals, will be closed. I make that statement believing it to be true. I have been supplied with information from the Perth Hospital to-day. The member for Perth told us that the average daily attendance of out-patients at Perth is 250. The figures I have are for the year and they set out that last year the number of out-patients treated was 75,100. The great majority of them pay 1s. registration fee and 2s. per visit. The executive officers of the institution expect that at least 75 per cent. of the out-patients, if the Bill becomes law, will be entitled to free treatment. I contend that is right if they are going to be taxed for the upkeep of the hospital. The Perth Hospital's average collections are in the region of £2,518 per annum. As a matter of fact, that is the figure that was collected last year. If the Bill becomes law, the Perth Hospital expects to lose £1,800.

The Attorney General: What you are contending can better be dealt with under Clause 13.

Mr. MUNSIE: No; this is the clause. If the Bill becomes law, sweeps that are being run now, and appeals that are made annually will still be made, but personally I do not believe we should get more than £1,000 a year from those appeals. I want to do something to assist the hospitals as

well as the people of the State. The X-ray department at the hospital, which is expensive to run, costs £6,090 a year. Last year there was collected for this branch £660, and if the Bill becomes law the authorities expect to lose £200 of that. Last year the collections from in-patients at the Perth Hospital totalled £17,891 and if the Bill becomes law the authorities expect to lose £9,000 in revenue from that source alone. From the free treatment scheme the Perth Hospital collected last year £5,400. If the Bill becomes law that sum will be lost. The contributions under that scheme have been 1d., 3d., and in some cases 6d. a week. These contributions have been made by those earning as low as 15s. a week, and as I said from that source there was derived £5,400 last year.

Mr. H. W. Mann: What was the total upkeep of the hospital last year?

Mr. MUNSIE: Just on £80,000. Then there were subscriptions and donations which totalled £3,356. Those will go too. It means that the Perth Hospital next year will be £19,756 worse off; in other words, the Minister will have to make up that amount out of his fund of £156,000, for the Perth Hospital alone. Moreover, he will not get the whole of the money that he expects to raise. It is estimated that there will be collected £36,000 from patients. He will be £30,000 short there. My desire is to protect the hospitals as far as I can. I would vote for the defeat of the Bill, because I am satisfied that unless it is amended it will cripple all the hospitals. Meanwhile I desire to insert something that will save the situation. I ask the Minister to carry out the purpose of his own Bill. Certain people are to be entitled to free treatment. Many of those below the basic wage, who have been treated in the Perth Hospital, have refused to allow their debts to be wiped off. There are others below the basic wage who have been treated in country hospitals, and these have insisted on paying their way as fast as they could, even to the extent of only 2s. 6d. a month.

The Minister for Health: We have sent some of that money back.

Mr. MUNSIE: Under the Bill such people may get hospital treatment without having attached to them the stigma of poverty. They can demand such treatment. But how will the hospital committees get along without revenue? All kinds of appeals have been launched in Perth for the support of hospitals. We remember the Queen Carnival,

with which the member for Perth was closely associated, and out of which £10,000 was raised. That had a detrimental effect upon the appeals that were launched for many country hospitals. The total collections for seven years back have been approximately £30,000 a year. Unless the hospitals can be sure of getting that much they cannot keep going. I move an amendment—

That at the end of paragraph (b) of Sub-clause 1 after the word "section," the following words be added:—"and the department shall pay to the hospital authority a subsidy at the prescribed rate not being less than 6s. per day for the treatment in a public hospital of every patient who is a contributor to the fund or the dependant of a contributor or, subject to the regulations, a person who, under the proviso of Section 4 is exempt from liability to contribute, and who proves his claim under paragraphs (a) and (b) of this section."

I am not asking the department to pay for anyone who can pay. The Minister has admitted that a married man with dependants, earning less than £230 a year cannot afford to pay more than the tax, and should be entitled to free treatment. The single man who can prove to the satisfaction of the hospital authority that he has not earned more than £156 in that year can also demand free treatment. All above that will have to pay the hospital fees on top of the tax. I want the Minister to pay something to the hospitals so that they may have a chance to exist. He should pay something for the maintenance of those who are exempt from payment. Out of the fund it is proposed to create he should be able to pay 6s. a day to the hospitals for these people.

Mr. H. W. Mann: He should do more than that.

Mr. MUNSIE: Under the Bill he need not pay anything.

The Minister for Health: What about Clause 13?

The Attorney General: This does not deal with payments. Your amendment is to make the Government pay, apart from the Bill altogether.

Mr. MUNSIE: Nothing of the kind. My amendment is part of the benefit clauses which I had in the Bill that I brought down myself, but it does not go nearly as far as that.

The Attorney General: From which source is the money to be paid?

Mr. MUNSIE: I do not care where it comes from, so long as the hospitals get it, but it should come out of the tax. It is no use getting benefits for people if they have no hospitals in which to enjoy them. With the exception of the Government institutions there will not be any unless the Minister pays the fees. The Bill provides that if people are not earning a certain amount they shall be treated free in public hospitals, which means every committee-run hospital. That is a laudable object. But what about the committee hospitals? The Minister should stretch his generosity a little further, and express his willingness to pay for those who are entitled to free treatment at the rate of 6s. a day. The money it is proposed to raise will not pay the subsidies and the other moneys the Bill takes away from these institutions.

Mr. H. W. Mann: What was the Government subsidy to the Perth Hospital last year?

Mr. MUNSIE: It was £37,000. The Minister must realise that many of the hospitals will lose as a result of the Bill. Would the member for Perth attempt to raise another £10,000 this year on top of the tax the people will be paying? The public will not pay the tax and respond to button days and all the other appeals that are made in the street.

The Attorney General: The same old team will come up for duty.

Mr. MUNSIE: Not when the people are paying the tax, and if the collectors did come out they would not get the money. I question whether, if I were paying the tax, I would respond in any way to a street appeal. If the Bill becomes law, then God help the hospitals, for they will have to close up.

#### *Point of Order.*

The Minister for Health: On a point of order. I wish to ask your ruling regarding the amendment and I will take two points. The first is that the amendment appropriates revenue, and I do not know that the hon. member is able to move in that direction.

Mr. Munsie: I am not seeking to appropriate revenue.

The Minister for Health: It will mean the spending of revenue. I also draw your attention, Mr. Chairman, to Clause 13 which provides for the appropriation of

funds and certainly the amendment, if agreed to, will amount to the appropriation of funds. If the amendment can be moved and is to be inserted in the Bill, I contend it should be moved when we are dealing with Clause 13. I ask for a ruling on the two points I have raised.

The Chairman: I rule that the amendment is in order.

#### *Dissent from Chairman's Ruling.*

The Minister for Health: Do I understand, Mr. Chairman, that you rule that the amendment does not mean an appropriation from Consolidated Revenue? The clause does not deal with the appropriation of revenue at all. Therefore, the money referred to in the amendment must come from Consolidated Revenue.

Mr. Sleeman: On a point of order. Is the Minister in order in debating your ruling unless he is prepared to move to disagree with it?

The Minister for Health: I propose to do that. If the amendment does not seek to appropriate revenue, then it should be moved to Clause 13, which does deal with the appropriation of the fund. On these grounds I move—

That the Committee dissents from the Chairman's ruling.

#### *The Speaker resumed the Chair.*

The Chairman stated the dissent.

The Minister for Health: The member for Hannans moved his amendment which the Chairman of Committees ruled was in order and I have moved to dissent from the ruling. If the amendment means an appropriation from Consolidated Revenue, I would point out that the hon. member cannot move such an amendment under the provisions of the Constitution Act or of the Standing Orders. If it is to appropriate revenue from the hospital fund, then the amendment should be moved to Clause 13.

The Attorney General: To supplement the remarks of the Minister for Health, Clause 11 deals merely with certain exemptions from the provisions of Section 33 of the Hospitals Act, 1927, which provides that persons who enjoy treatment in a hospital shall pay for it. The clause exempts certain persons from that obligation.

Mr. McCallum: But the marginal note refers to "benefits to contributors."

The Attorney General: I am afraid that the marginal note to the clause is not an adequate description of it. The clause deals solely with exemptions as I have indicated. The member for Hannans made it clear from his remarks that he desired to compel the Government to pay more than we shall derive from the fund because, he said, it would not be sufficient to keep the hospitals going and he wished to impose an obligation upon the Government, irrespective of whether the fund proved to be adequate or not, to make certain other payments. If that is the meaning of the amendment, it is clearly an attempt to appropriate revenue and it would be out of order, wherever it was to appear in the Bill. If, on the other hand, it does not mean that, but seeks to compel the fund to be distributed in certain directions, then I submit the amendment is irrelevant to the clause and should be moved to Clause 13, which lays it down how the fund is to be expended.

Mr. Munsie: The Attorney General has put up a very weak case indeed. I had no intention of moving an amendment that would appropriate any funds from Consolidated Revenue. The Bill does not appropriate one penny from Consolidated Revenue, but only the money collected by taxation and put into the fund. I was responsible, while Minister for Health, for the Hospitals Act which is on the statute-book to-day. Section 33 of that Act provides for the collection of fees for services rendered at public hospitals. The clause we are now dealing with repeals that section, or prevents its application to certain people. That being so, this proposed legislation is taking away revenue from the hospital authorities. I cannot deal with that, for I am a private member, but I have a perfect right to move the amendment which the Chairman has declared to be in order. Under certain conditions, all these committee hospitals must treat certain people free. What I am seeking is that, where patients are entitled to be treated free, the Minister shall pay to those hospitals 6s. per day for the maintenance of those patients. I believe I have moved my amendment on the right clause. Clause 13 deals with appropriation, and I do not think I would have any right to move the amendment there. In my view the Chairman's ruling is perfectly correct, and Clause 11 is the only clause where this amendment could go, for this

clause repeals the only means the public hospitals have of making collections. All I ask is that when Section 33 is repealed and the hospitals cannot make collections, then out of the proposed fund they shall be paid for the maintenance of patients entitled to free treatment.

Mr. Millington: This clause prohibits a hospital from collecting fees from certain patients. Why? Because the Bill provides for a tax to establish a hospital fund. So the hospital is prevented from collecting its just dues because the Government are taxing the people in order to establish a hospital fund. In the one instance the Government collect the money and stick to it.

The Minister for Health: No.

Mr. Millington: Well then you will make good from the fund the amount you prohibit the hospitals from collecting?

The Minister for Health: Yes, under Clause 13.

Mr. Millington: Under Clause 11 you prohibit a hospital from collecting its just dues because you are going to make that good.

The Attorney General: Of course.

Mr. Millington: The member for Hannans in his amendment is doing it in a straightforward manner. Surely you must pay when your law prohibits the hospital from collecting fees from the patients. If you do not propose to stick to the money in the fund, what is the objection to the amendment?

The Minister for Health: Because it is proposed on the wrong clause.

The Attorney General: It should go into Clause 13.

Mr. Corboy: Do you agree to its going there?

The Attorney General: We will argue it when we come to Clause 13.

Mr. Millington: Your law will alter the whole policy of the hospitals. The hospital authorities will look to the Government to pay, but the Government will say, "No." The amendment makes it clear that payment shall be made from the fund. How can the hospitals treat patients if the Government say there shall be no collection from those patients and no recoup from the fund? The amendment is an obviously just one.

The Chief Secretary: There can be no question that the amendment directs a payment by the Minister. What is the Minister to pay out from? If out of Consolidated

Revenue, then the amendment cannot be moved. If on the other hand the payment is to be made out of the fund, then obviously the amendment must be made on Clause 13. Undoubtedly the amendment is out of order.

Mr. McCallum: It does not matter to the member who moved the amendment where the money comes from. The Bill sets up the collection of a fund and imposes certain obligations. The amendment sets out that those obligations must be respected. It will be for the Government to determine where the money is to come from. The Minister for Health himself has said that if this tax does not raise sufficient funds to meet this obligation the Government will stand up to the obligation, just as previous Governments have done.

Mr. Piesse: I am doubtful what effect the amendment will have on country hospitals.

The Chairman: Country hospitals are not concerned in this. This is a point of order.

Hon. T. Walker: There is no other course but to agree to the Chairman's ruling. This is a provision, which it is perfectly legitimate to make in the Bill, to pay out of the fund collected under the Act. If there be any necessity to make it conform to Clause 13, that can be done subsequently; but this is the particular stage at which to make the provision for payments to private hospitals for the treatment of patients out of the funds collected under the Act.

Mr. Sampson: Private hospitals are not referred to in the Bill.

Mr. Munsie: No, but committee hospitals are.

Mr. Sampson: The amendment calls on the department to pay the hospitals certain moneys. Since the disposition of the fund is referred to only in Clause 13, it is obvious that the amendment must seek to secure payment from Consolidated Revenue.

Mr. Speaker: If the money that it is proposed should be spent is to be paid out of Consolidated Revenue, undoubtedly the amendment is out of order because a private member is not empowered to move in that direction. There are many rulings by previous Speakers on the point, including one by the member for Kanowna. The proper time for the hon. member to move the amendment is when Clause 13 is being con-

sidered, and in my opinion the Chairman's ruling is incorrect.

#### *Committee resumed.*

Mr. PIESSE: I am anxious to know the probable effect on country hospitals. How will the loss suffered by country hospitals through having to give free treatment to certain contributors be met? The secretary of one hospital writes—

The Bill, as far as I can see, will give no relief whatever. We may get what we are now getting; there is no security for even that in the Bill. Per contra, we shall be paying for the maintenance of Perth, Fremantle, and Government hospitals, and those outside will receive nothing. Even worse, Clause 11 of the Bill relieves certain patients of payment of any fees. How can the State do anything so unfair? If it says a patient shall pay no fees, certainly it should make the payment itself.

The Minister should set such doubts at rest.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: When we reach Clause 13 I shall explain how it is proposed to meet deficiencies.

Mr. CORBOY: I move an amendment—

That after "widower," in line 2 of Sub-clause 2, the words "or other person" be inserted.

The effect will be that where a single person is the breadwinner, he or she will be regarded as a married person and the dependants will be entitled to the benefits.

The Minister for Health: I agree to the amendment.

Amendment put and passed; the clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 12—Proot that a patient is a contributor:

Mr. H. W. MANN: I move an amendment—

That after "authority," in line 3, the words "within seven days" be inserted.

When a person is taken to hospital injured or ill, he should not be interrogated as to whether he is a contributor. It is not considered that the authorities would do that. When about to leave the institution he would be asked for his certificate. A limit should be provided and reasonable responsibility should be imposed upon the patient. Otherwise the hospital authorities will be chasing patients all over the country for an unlimited period in order to obtain certificates.



The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: The amendment is unnecessary. When a patient is leaving a hospital, he will be handed an account, and that will be the time for him to justify his coming under Clause 11.

Mr. MUNSIE: The amendment will not attain the hon. member's object.

Mr. H. W. Mann: It is made at the suggestion of hospital authorities and they know their job.

Mr. MUNSIE: They do not want to wait until the person is leaving the hospital for proof that he is entitled to the benefits. They want to know as early as possible. Other clauses of the Bill make it necessary for the patient on demand to produce proof that he is a contributor to the fund. The hospital desires some reasonable time within which a patient should prove that he is entitled to come under Clause 11.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 13—Appropriation of the fund:

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: This is the clause under which we can provide what the member for Hannans desires. It is admitted that all hospitals will lose some of the revenue they are getting now. It is expected that there will be £40,000 to £50,000 in excess of what was spent last year. We estimate that under the Bill we shall receive £156,000 as against £217,000 estimated by the member for Hannans last year when conditions were much better, together with the sum which we shall collect from patients' fees and which last year balanced within £2,000 what the hon. member received from the amusement tax. We estimate to receive £192,000 from all other sources. Last year we expended for the benefit of hospitals £142,000. The difference represents a fair margin to meet losses which the member for Hannans fears will be made by hospitals. It is not advisable to insert in the Bill a fixed sum, because city hospitals can be run more cheaply than country hospitals. I dare say the time is not far distant when the control of the fund will be in hands other than mine, and I have no hesitation in believing that then the fund will be well administered. As regards this Bill, two sections of the community entertain fears on totally opposite lines. City people fear that the hospitals will not be maintained, and country people

fear that all the benefits will go to the city. The hospitals will be maintained, and the benefits will be distributed on a pro rata basis. I do not desire that hospitals throughout the State should become Government hospitals. If the general public throw down the gauntlet and say, "We have no more concern with the sick," good results cannot possibly accrue. However, I do not think the general public will adopt that attitude.

Mr. Withers: In Bunbury the hospital has already been dropped for this year.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I do not anticipate that the Bill will alienate public sympathy from the hospitals.

Mr. MUNSIE: Clause 13, among other things, legalises the subsidies now being paid. I move an amendment—

That the following be added to paragraph (a):—'and shall pay to the hospital authority a subsidy at the prescribed rate not being less than 6s. per day, for the treatment in all public hospitals of every patient who is a contributor to the fund, or the dependent of a contributor, or subject to the regulations a person who under the proviso to Section 4 is exempt from liability to contribute and who proves his claim under paragraphs (a) and (b) of Subclause 1 of Clause 11.

The Minister will have £192,000, provided he gets what he has budgeted for. In this Bill he has cut out much of the revenue I was supposed to collect under the previous Bill. The Western Australian public should realise that the present Government are taking from the pockets of the people £156,000 in extra taxation and then will not have as much money to distribute among hospitals as the previous Government had. I want to ensure that this fund will pay to the semi-Government hospitals at least as much as they are now receiving, and to the committee hospitals compensation for the means of raising revenue which are to be debarred to them.

Mr. Lamond: Will the amendment include hospitals operating in the North-West?

Mr. MUNSIE: Yes. Owing to financial stress the Health Department have recently come to an understanding with nurses, in one instance with a doctor and a nurse, for the leasing of hospitals in country districts. The lessees believe that they will have the right, existing to-day, of charging; but they will not have that right if the Bill passes. I suggest that the Government pay 6s. per day in respect of those patients from whom

the Government will not permit hospitals to collect.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I cannot accept the amendment. The hon. member is going a long way too far with the proposal. If we did what he proposed, we would have no control over our funds. Very often there is misappropriation of funds by certain hospitals to the disadvantage of others. I give the hon. member an assurance that we appreciate the fact that there will be some loss of revenue and that we shall make it up from the £42,000.

Mr. Munsie: Do you think you are going to collect £36,000 in fees?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: We shall collect a little more. It will probably surprise the hon. member that there will be a reduction this year in the cost of running the hospitals. The cost of living is coming down considerably and tenders for this quarter are much lower than they have been for many years past. Of course supplies will be a little greater, but in some instances prices will be down 50 per cent. so that there should be a fair saving in some of our big hospitals. It is admitted that the Government will accept the responsibility of seeing that there is a fair distribution. If we ask the hospitals to do certain things for us we will pay them for it. If we accept the amendment, it will take the control of the funds out of our hands because we cannot control committee hospitals sufficiently. They are under the management of committees and there is no check as to who goes in and who does not go in. The member for Hannans should at least have sufficient confidence in the administration of this fund seeing that it will be in the hands of an officer with whom he was associated for a long time and who did very good work for the hospitals. The hon. member knows that the Minister cannot possibly do this allocation and that it must be left to the officials. I am going to be most careful that there is no undue expense in the collection of this money. I have already gone into the matter with the Commissioner of Taxation to see that there is no waste. It will be raised for the hospitals and will be used for the hospitals. I ask members to accept my assurance that the country hospitals will not suffer any disadvantage.

Mr. SLEEMAN: It is hard to understand why the Minister will not agree to the

reasonable amendment of the member for Hannans. If he does not do something in the direction suggested, he will have less control over those hospitals than in the past, because those who are conducting them will give up the job and throw the hospitals back on the Government. No place in the State has done more for its hospitals than Fremantle, and notwithstanding all the valuable work carried out there, the authorities have been obliged to close two wards, and even then have gone to the bad to the extent of £5,000 in the year. What the member for Hannans desires is reasonable and I hope the Committee will agree to it.

Mr. PIESSE: Country subsidised hospitals are in a different position for the ordinary central hospitals. We are aware that country hospitals have been carried on under great difficulty and disabilities because in many instances they have not arrived at that stage that the older settled districts have reached, whereby buildings have been provided. I am prepared to take the Minister's assurance that the country hospitals will not suffer under the Bill.

Mr. WITHERS: I do not know why the Minister will not accept the amendment. With the member for Hannans I fear that the position will be serious and that it will not be long before there will be more Government hospitals than committee hospitals and then the Government will be forced to pay the full amount to those hospitals. At Bunbury we have one of the most up-to-date hospitals outside the metropolitan area. All the conveniences are there than can be obtained in private hospitals and these have been established principally through contributions from the people of Bunbury. Three months ago we decided to get information with a view to arranging a contributory scheme under which people would pay 6d. per week to assist the institution in caring for those people who could not afford to pay. But when this Bill was mooted we decided not to proceed further for the time being. Now the Bill has settled our scheme. With the member for Hannans I am worried because money is not forthcoming, and it is not now in the district to be collected to the extent that it was in the past. I take it that in districts more remote than Bunbury it will be even more difficult to collect money now than was the case formerly. Therefore, we want an assurance from the Minister that he will assist the country hospitals.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	..	14
Noes	..	..	..	..	18
Majority against	..	..	..	..	4

## BILL—AGRICULTURAL BANK ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

### *Council's Amendments.*

Message from the Council received and read notifying that it had agreed to the Bill subject to a schedule of amendments.

### *Standing Orders Suspension.*

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS** (Hon. C. G. Latham—York) [10.20]: I move—

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended to enable this message to be considered in Committee forthwith.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have counted the House and find there is not an absolute majority of members present. The bells will have to be rung.

Bells rung.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have again counted the House and find there is an absolute majority of members present.

Question put and passed.

### *In Committee.*

Mr. Angelo in the Chair; the Minister for Lands in charge of the Bill.

No. 1. Clause 1—Delete "(No. 2)" and insert the words "and shall be read as one with the Agricultural Bank Act, 1906, and amendments, hereinafter referred to as the principal Act."

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

The striking out of the words "No. 2" is necessary because of the Bill presented by the member for Fremantle having been defeated in another place. The Bill under discussion now therefore becomes No. 1. Another place also proposes that the Bill shall be read as one with the Agricultural Bank Act, 1906.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I should enter some objection to this. I do not suppose I can do anything, but I hope the people will take notice of the action of another place which has shown no desire whatever to assist local industry.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

No. 2. Clause 4: Delete the words "which (hereinafter or heretofore during the finan-

### AYES.

Mr. Corboy  
Mr. Coverley  
Mr. Hegney  
Mr. Lamond  
Mr. Lutey  
Mr. McCallum  
Mr. Millington  
Mr. Munsie

Mr. Raphael  
Mr. Sleeman  
Mr. J. H. Smith  
Mr. Walker  
Mr. Withers  
Mr. Wilson

(Teller.)

### NOES.

Mr. Barnard  
Mr. Brown  
Mr. Davy  
Mr. Doney  
Mr. Ferguson  
Mr. Griffiths  
Mr. Keenan  
Mr. Latham  
Mr. Lindsay  
Mr. H. W. Mann

Mr. McLarty  
Mr. Patrick  
Mr. Plesse  
Mr. Sampson  
Mr. Scaddan  
Mr. J. M. Smith  
Mr. Thorn  
Mr. North

(Teller.)

### PAIRS.

#### AYES.

Mr. Collier  
Mr. Cunningham  
Mr. Panto  
Miss Holman  
Mr. Troy

#### NOES.

Sir James Mitchell  
Mr. J. I. Mann  
Mr. Parker  
Mr. Teesdale  
Mr. Wells

Amendment thus negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 14—Recovery of contributions:

Mr. MUNSIE: Why has the Minister limited the power to take action for the collection of debts to the Commissioner of Taxation? Perhaps a firm will pay an amount in direct for the whole of its employees, but one may be overlooked. Must the Commissioner of Taxation take action for the recovery of that debt?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: The department will not take any action. It will be done only by the Commissioner.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 15 to 19—agreed to.

Progress reported.

cial year which commenced on the 1st day of July 1930) shall be or has been" in lines 18, 19 and 20.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

This provides for the striking out of portion of the clause which made it retrospective to the 1st July last. Another place thinks this legislation should not be retrospective.

Mr. McCallum: They passed a Bill recently which was retrospective.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I understand they wanted to make it more so. I am sorry another place has done this, but I propose to agree to the amendment.

Mr. Corboy: Why not fight them?

Mr. SLEEMAN: The Council have set up the precedent for many years of standing against retrospective legislation. Notwithstanding this, they recently passed without compunction a Bill that was retrospective in character. They have now reverted to their old principle. We should return the message and insist upon the clause being passed as it left us. They are not consistent in their attitude. I will not allow another place to run over us like this. We should send the Bill back.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: It is pleasing to note now Ministers can change their coats in such a short period. I had the pleasure of moving an amendment dealing with the question of legislation being retrospective. The supporters of the Acting Premier must be pleased to know that he now agrees to stultify himself when he says that in no circumstances can any legislation be made retrospective.

The Minister for Lands: I did not say that.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The Minister did, and I tested the Committee with an amendment. Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

No. 3. Insert after "made" in line 21 the words "at any time hereafter."

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

This limits the operation of the Bill to future operations instead of covering those which have taken place this year.

Mr. MUNSIE: I am afraid I do not understand much of the Council's amendment merely from the reading of it. I understood last night, when the Standing Orders

were suspended, that the urgency of the Bill was such that it was necessary to pass it, because certain money had been made available but could not be lifted by the Government until the Bill authorised the payment of 6 per cent. instead of 4 per cent.

The Minister for Lands: That is so.

Mr. MUNSIE: Now I understand that the operations of the Bill have been limited. Does it mean that the Government cannot lift that money?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Clause 2 is the vital portion of the Bill, and it makes provision as indicated by the member for Hannans. That is to say, we shall be able to lift the money when we have authority to sign mortgage bonds at the rate of 6 per cent. instead of 4 per cent. The Bank trustees have made advances for fertiliser, interest, and other matters, and in respect of those advances already made, the desire was to issue debenture loans. The object was to make the Bill retrospective to the 1st July of this year.

Mr. Munsie: To cover advances already made.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That is so, and that applied to cornsacks as well. I understand the Leader of the House in the Legislative Council got into touch with the General Manager of the Agricultural Bank, who said that the Bill was of such importance that he was prepared to forego the retrospective application of it in order to secure the passage of the Bill as a matter of urgency. The effect of the Council's amendment is to make the Bill apply as from the date of assent instead of as from the 1st July.

Mr. MUNSIE: I am perfectly satisfied with the explanation of the Minister, particularly in view of his statement that the Council's amendment will not interfere with the lifting of the money that is available. I wish to enter a vigorous protest against the hypocrisy of the Legislative Council. The Agricultural Bank has made a definite arrangement along lines that have been adopted for years past. The Government have introduced a Bill to legalise what they have done this year. That is what the position amounts to. The Legislative Council has refused to legalise the actions of the Government on the ground of the retrospective application of the Bill. Only a little while ago, a Bill was introduced to legalise

something that was done 2½ years ago. That was retrospective legislation, but the Council did not object. Now, when it is a matter affecting the Agricultural Bank, the main institution engaged in carrying on the industry of primary importance to Western Australia and a question of legalising something the Government have already done, the Legislative Council cannot lower their pride and dignity by passing the Bill, because it is retrospective in its application. I will vote against the Council's amendment and I hope the Government will have backbone enough to send it back to the Council.

Mr. Corboy: Let us have a united committee on that ground.

Mr. MUNSIE: Are we to bow to the Council's ruling merely to suit them? One day they will pass a Bill that is retrospective for 2½ years and the next day they refuse to pass a Bill because of its retrospective clause. They may like to be hypocrites; I will not be a hypocrite to suit them.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I am sorry the member for Hannans is so emphatic because the Bill is one of the utmost importance, and I am not desirous of holding it up at this stage.

Mr. Munsie: You will accept anything from the Council in order to get the Bill through?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Nothing of the sort. I will stand up for the rights of this Chamber as much as any other man.

Mr. Sleeman: Well, show it now.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The Bill is far too important for that. I hope the hon. member will not force the matter to a division.

Mr. Munsie: Why not?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: After all, it is only a matter of four months and we have little to lose. I hope the hon. member will not carry out his threat.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I hope the Committee will agree to the suggestion of the member for Hannans. We should take a definite stand against the Legislative Council, that expensive luxury that we have put up with for so long.

Mr. Withers: Luxury!

Mr. SLEEMAN: Fancy listening to a few old geysers in another place who have

turned down what this House considers should be done.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member must not reflect upon another place.

Mr. SLEEMAN: That is not reflecting upon them! This Bill was regarded as of so much importance that the Standing Orders were suspended to pass it quickly. Now the Legislative Council has sent it back to us with a frivolous amendment, and is prepared to hold up the Government of the country in consequence. It is a paltry amendment, but another place regards it as involving a principle. Members there are prepared to adopt that attitude when it suits themselves. We should put the members of the Legislative Council in their proper place and show them we will not put up with this nonsense any longer.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I hope the Committee will divide on the question so that we may show the Government and the people how insincere the members of the Legislative Council are, and what they have done in the past. After all, it is what we might expect from the Council. Is it not remarkable that we should have the Minister for Lands, as Acting-Premier, suggesting we should accept something with which he does not agree? I shall have to support him because I am opposed to anything of a retrospective character. I hope the matter will be taken to a division and we will then see how other members on the Government side of the House will cast their votes. I trust that several members on this side will cross the floor on this question and so show their sincerity. A short time ago we on this side said there would be no retrospection. Where are those stalwarts to-night? They must support the Ministry in this motion, and must be true to their religion. The Agricultural Bank is the only institution carrying the farmers to-day, yet we are told that these fees cannot be collected from the 1st July. Another place sent back the Bill with the announcement that there must be no retrospection, and the Acting Premier is spineless enough to say he will agree with what the Council has decided. I wonder what the Country Party are going to do about this. Talk about hypocrisy! Another place sends back the Bill with a message that we must accept the amendment, and so this provision cannot be made retrospective.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	..	19
Noes	..	..	..	..	12

Majority for .. .. 7

## AYES.

Mr. Barnard	Mr. Patrick
Mr. Brown	Mr. Plesse
Mr. Davy	Mr. Richardson
Mr. Doney	Mr. Sampson
Mr. Ferguson	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. J. H. Smith
Mr. Latham	Mr. J. M. Smith
Mr. Lindsay	Mr. Thorn
Mr. H. W. Mann	Mr. North
Mr. McLarty	

(Teller.)

## NOES.

Mr. Corboy	Mr. Raphael
Mr. Hegney	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Lamond	Mr. Walker
Mr. Lutey	Mr. Willcock
Mr. McCallum	Mr. Withers
Mr. Munsie	Mr. Millington

(Teller.)

Question thus passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

No. 4. Clause 4—In line 1 of paragraph (a) of Subclause 1 delete the words "or heretofore" and in line 3 the words "or has been."

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I move:

That the Council's amendment be agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

Resolutions reported, the report adopted and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

*House adjourned at 10.50 p.m.*

## Legislative Council,

*Thursday, 13th November, 1930.*

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

## BILL—STIPENDIARY MAGISTRATES.

Read a third time, and returned to the Assembly with amendments.

## BILL—ROADS CLOSURE.

*Second Reading.*

**THE MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES** (Hon. C. F. Baxter—East) [4.35] in moving the second reading said: Following the usual procedure, lithos in explanation of the proposals in this Bill have already been laid on the Table of the House. The measure relates to the following purposes: Those portions of Crowther and Francis streets, Geraldton, shown in blue on litho No. 1, are within the area required for harbour works. The land to the north of those streets has been resumed for the harbour works railway, and it is desired that the said portions of Crowther and Francis streets shall be under the control of the harbour authority. The Geraldton Municipal Council have no objection.

By arrangement with the Albany Municipal Council, the Commonwealth Government have agreed to transfer to the State that portion of the Albany rifle range area shown in red on litho No. 2, for a new road on condition that that portion of North-road shown in blue on the same litho is closed and handed to the Commonwealth Government for inclusion in the rifle range. There is no departmental objection to the proposal, and both the Albany Road Board and the Albany Municipal Council have agreed to it.

The Royal Agricultural Society, having purchased part of location 2105 for an ad-