

the results desired by the Leader of the Opposition.

On motion by Colonial Secretary, debate adjourned.

MOTION—COMPENSATION, OCCUPATIONAL DISEASES.

Debate resumed from the 7th September on the following motion by Hon. P. Collier—

That in the opinion of this House the Government should introduce legislation during the present session for the purpose of providing compensation for workers affected by occupational ailments and diseases.

The PREMIER (Hon. Sir James Mitchell—Northam) [10.45]: Under the Miners' Phthisis Bill now before the House it is proposed to deal with those men who have been compelled to leave the mines because of the dread disease of tuberculosis. We realise that if these men are going to leave their occupation—and thank God there are not many of them—they have to be cared for. They cannot be compelled to leave the only occupation they know, and their homes, unless other provision is made for them. Under the Miners' Phthisis Bill I think we shall be able to make satisfactory arrangements for such people. We must face this responsibility, and we must see that those who have employed these men for some time contribute towards their support until they recover sufficiently to follow an occupation which will give them a comfortable living. I hope that such men can be transferred to suitable surroundings and will speedily recover. I want to assure the House that under the Bill we shall give to the miners—the workers most concerned—the protection and assistance required. It is quite another matter to ask us to mete out similar treatment to all workers in all industries, as suggested by the motion of the Leader of the Opposition. To do that would be very difficult indeed. I hope the House will agree that by making a start as the Minister for Mines proposes to do, we shall be doing enough for this session.

Mr. Marshall: Under the Bill there is no provision for those men.

The PREMIER: But the Bill will be amended to make the necessary provision. We cannot withdraw from their present occupational men who are suffering from tuberculosis and leave them stranded on the goldfields. The idea is to give them an opportunity to recover so that they can follow some useful occupation. The Minister for Mines proposes to make additions to the Bill under which provision can be made for these people. Although the Government may have to support them in the end, there will have to be a contribution by the employers and the Government, as is usual in such cases. I suggest that the debate be adjourned until we deal with the Bill. If we can take the step I have indicated this year, we should be satisfied with doing that much for a start. To suggest embodying all

workers is a very big question and one which should receive earnest consideration.

On motion by Mr. Mullany, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.50 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 26th September, 1922.

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

QUESTION—NATIVE PRISONERS AND ROAD WORK.

Hon. P. COLLIER asked the Colonial Secretary:—1, Is it a fact that the Chief Protector of Aborigines has submitted proposals to the Wyndham Road Board for the employment of native prisoners on road work under the supervision of the said board? 2, Does he approve of the policy of forced native prison labour in the manner contemplated? 3, What are the particulars of the scheme in question?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: 1, In order to minimise the heavy cost of maintaining in gaol natives convicted of cattle killing in the Kimberleys, the Chief Protector of Aborigines submitted a scheme to the Government, having for its object the transfer of such prisoners to the Aborigines Department, as contemplated by Section 35 of the Aborigines Act, and their employment upon work in the interior which would not otherwise be undertaken. The natives would thus serve their term of penal servitude in a useful manner at less cost to the country. The scheme was recently submitted to the Wyndham, Hall's Creek, West Kimberley, Roebourne, Broome, and Port Hedland Road Boards, and received the indorsement of each. It has been most favourably received by residents of the North, and is generally regarded as offering an improvement on the present system, being humane and beneficial to the aborigines, and useful to the country. 2, The matter is now under consideration. 3, Particulars of the scheme are attached. The scheme contemplates the care and employment of

natives convicted of cattle killing, by the Aborigines Department instead of by the Gaols Department. Native prisoners are now, and always have been, employed on work in and around our Northern towns, and the proposed change merely contemplates placing them where they can perform useful service in opening up new tracks, improving difficult river crossings, or clearing tracts of country for tropical agriculture under the supervision of the Aborigines Department, which would maintain them and their dependents for the term of their sentences in a manner more suited to their temperament and natural inclinations than is possible under the Gaols system. Prisoners married in accordance with tribal law would be accompanied by their dependents. The existing system takes no thought of these, and when a married native is apprehended abandons the dependents to eke out a miserable existence as best they can under a system of native customs which makes their lives a burden to them. The native party would be in charge of white employees, and would have with them their own stores and killing cattle, the latter being supplied free by station owners for the most part. A convicted native and his dependants would be entirely removed from the district to which they belonged, and be retained with the party until the sentence expired. In the Kimberleys, to remove a native from his district and prevent him from returning thereto is in itself a severe punishment, and escape is rendered difficult and unwise on account of the return journey having to be taken through possibly hostile tribes. The Aborigines Act permits native prisoners to be employed outside the limits of a prison in the service of the State, as the Governor may direct, and also provides that natives convicted of cattle killing may be released from prison and conveyed into some part of the State defined by warrant and retained there, so there is ample legal power to carry out the proposal. At present the wages of warders in charge of prisoners working in and around towns are paid by local bodies while the natives are working for those bodies. Likewise under the proposed system, the road board in whose district the native parties happened to be working would either supply a road foreman or contribute to the wages of the departmental employees. It is considered that if the scheme is put into operation the cost of maintaining native prisoners can be reduced by about half. Penal servitude is provided by law, and has to be worked whether the natives are gaoled or otherwise.

BILL—LICENSING ACT AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

Resumed from the 20th September; Mr. Stubbs in the Chair, the Premier in charge of the Bill.

Clause 29—Assessment of fees on returns of liquor purchased:

The CHAIRMAN: The member for Perth had moved an amendment to subclause I, that the following words be struck out—

“From the return so furnished, the Receiver of Revenue shall assess the fee payable for the license for the then current year at a sum equal to ten pounds per centum of the amount paid or payable for the liquor purchased for the licensed premises as set forth in such return, less the minimum annual fee paid on the issue of the license, and the fee so assessed shall be payable by the licensee on or before the 1st day of June next following.

This amendment was carried, and the hon. member then moved that the following words be inserted in lieu of those struck out—

“And together with each such return the person furnishing the same shall, on the delivery thereof, pay to the Receiver of Revenue a sum equal to six pounds per cent. of the amount so paid or payable for such liquors so purchased, less one-half of the minimum annual fee payable in respect of the licensee.”

The amendment to insert the words I have just read is now before the Chair.

The PREMIER: It is now a question whether the Committee will agree to a tax of 10 per cent. on the purchases of liquor, or 6 per cent.

Hon. P. Collier: The 10 per cent. has been struck out.

The PREMIER: The proposal is to make it 6 per cent. I hope to have it made 10 per cent. The hon. member's proposal will only bring in a revenue of £66,000, which I regard as totally inadequate.

Mr. A. Thomson: Are you sticking to the 10 per cent.?

The PREMIER: I am going to try to make it more than 6 per cent. Last year, because of the houses that were delicensed, we got £3,000 less revenue than in the year before. When the licenses reduction board is appointed other houses will be delicensed, and if we are not careful we shall be getting less revenue than we are receiving now. The trade ought to stand a fair impost. I do not know why members are so tender about it.

Mr. Underwood: Are you not getting a reasonable amount?

The PREMIER: It is the State's right to license houses and to permit people to sell liquor.

Mr. Mann: Do not overburden the trade.

Mr. MacCallum Smith: What is a fair return?

The PREMIER: Ten per cent. Members need not be alarmed about the price of liquor. It costs the country a lot to run the trade.

Mr. Mann: The Bill will relieve the State of a great deal of the cost; in fact the cost of the control of the trade.

The PREMIER: We shall certainly have one licensing court with the necessary officers, but we shall have just as many magistrates in the country as before. The cost of

controlling the trade falls upon the State Government, and not upon the Federal Government.

Mr. Underwood: Why not put a duty on machinery?

The PREMIER: That is not a State monopoly. We have the right to control the liquor trade, and to license people to sell liquor, and because this is a monopoly, we ought to be getting a reasonable amount of revenue from it. Some people have several hotels out of which they make big profits without any effort. The consumption of liquor per head of the population is less in Victoria than it is in Western Australia, but in the former State the people contribute £164,000 a year.

Mr. Mann: It was over £200,000 for last year.

The PREMIER: The turnover per hotel in Western Australia must be greater than it is in Victoria, and the trade ought to be able to bear a higher percentage of tax here than it does in Victoria. Ten per cent. paid here, as compared with six per cent. paid in Victoria, really means exceeding the Victorian percentage by $1\frac{1}{2}$, and no more. I ask the mover of the amendment to accept for this State what is really a lower rate than has been paid, and paid willingly, in Victoria.

Mr. Johnston: In Victoria it goes into compensation, and not into revenue.

The PREMIER: No.

Mr. Pickering: A third of it.

The PREMIER: That is so. If this tax is rejected, a corresponding amount of revenue must be got from some other source. I move an amendment on the amendment—

That the word "six" be struck out, with a view to inserting "eight."

Mrs. COWAN: I support the Premier's remarks, having regard to the cost, for instance, of our lunatic asylums, which are filled largely as a result of this evil—

Mr. J. H. Smith: That is not fair.

Mrs. COWAN: —the cost of our police force—

Mr. Mann: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman, have lunatic asylums anything to do with the amendment?

The CHAIRMAN: No.

Mrs. COWAN: I am speaking indirectly to the amendment. The revenue from this traffic has not been sufficient to cover the cost of the evils which it entails.

Mr. A. THOMSON: The Premier stated that this State receives about £34,000 per annum from the liquor trade, whereas the Commonwealth, for doing practically nothing, receives about £600,000 annually. The figures in connection with this State's domestic expenditure are as follows:—Education Department £559,000, Medical and Health £128,000, Police £168,000, Gaols £25,000, Lunacy and Inebriates £91,000.

The CHAIRMAN: I prevented the member for West Perth from going beyond the amendment.

Mr. A. THOMSON: My object is to draw a comparison between the service given to the State by the Commonwealth, and the money which the State spends on domestic services; and I wish to use that comparison as an argument why we should receive larger revenue from the liquor traffic. Police, Gaols, and Lunacy and Inebriates make a total of £295,000. On top of that there is £688,000 for Education and Medical and Health.

Mr. Piesse: That expenditure is not all attributable to liquor.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I have not suggested that for a moment.

Mr. Underwood: Why not put an extra tax on rails?

The CHAIRMAN: Order! If the member for Pilbara does not obey the order of the Chair to refrain from interjecting, I shall have to take steps to make him.

Mr. A. THOMSON: The member for Perth said last week that the trade could not carry any more taxation. In the last report of the Commissioner of Police it is definitely stated that practically 50 per cent. of the offences brought before our courts are directly attributable to the liquor trade.

The CHAIRMAN: I cannot allow the hon. member to continue on that phase. It has nothing to do with the Bill.

Mr. A. THOMSON: With all respect, Sir, I maintain that it has.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member will kindly resume his seat. If he desires to dispute my ruling, he has a proper method of doing so; but he must not argue with me across the floor of the Chamber. Let him put his objection in writing.

Dissent from Ruling.

Mr. A. Thomson: Very well, Sir, I will do so.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

The Chairman: The member for Perth has moved an amendment to add certain words to Clause 29. The member for Katanning began to speak on the amendment and he continued to discuss gaols, education, lunatic asylums, and other matters which, in my opinion, were outside the scope of the Bill. I called him to order and he has dissented from my ruling.

Mr. Speaker: I understand that the Chairman of Committees ruled the member for Katanning out of order on the ground of irrelevancy.

The Chairman: That is so.

Mr. Speaker: If that be the ground on which the member for Katanning has moved for dissent from the Chairman's ruling, I must uphold the ruling, because nothing can be discussed except the amendment before the Committee.

Mr. Johnston: That is, the figure "six."

Mr. Speaker: That is so.

Mr. A. Thomson: I am not disagreeing with your ruling, Mr. Speaker, but I want to put before you the phase of the question as

I wish to discuss it. I want to ask your opinion.

Mr. Speaker: I cannot allow the hon. member to discuss the matter, unless he desires to dissent.

Dissent from Speaker's Ruling.

Mr. A. Thomson: I dissent from your ruling.

Mr. Speaker: Does the hon. member intend to move to that effect?

Mr. A. Thomson: Yes.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member will put his motion in writing.

Mr. A. Thomson: You have it before you.

Mr. Speaker: That refers to dissenting from the Chairman's ruling. The hon. member must send up his motion dissenting from the Speaker's ruling in writing as well.

Mr. A. Thomson: I will do so.

Mr. Speaker: The member for Katanning has dissented from the Speaker's ruling on the following ground:—"In my opinion the matters discussed by me were relevant to the amendment under discussion." The amendment under discussion reads as follows:—

Insert the following words in lieu of the words struck out: "and together with each such return the person furnishing the same shall, on the delivery thereof, pay to the Receiver of Revenue a sum equal to six pounds per cent. of the amount so paid or payable for such liquors so purchased, less one-half of the minimum annual fee payable in respect of the license."

That amendment confines the discussion to the question of "six." I believe the Premier has indicated that he intends to move for the insertion of "eight." The debate, however, must be continued on the question of striking out "six." The member for Katanning says that he is in order; I say he is not. I rule that his remarks, in discussing all things under the sun, were irrelevant.

Hon. T. Walker: I regret that I must disagree with the Chairman's ruling and Mr. Speaker's ruling as well. It is all very well to point out that the discussion hangs on the word "six." But "six" has relation to the percentage, the percentage has relation to revenue and revenue, of necessity, involves expenditure and the use of it. Whether six, or eight, or ten per cent. is to be charged and levied upon the purchaser, is a matter involving what the State can manage upon, because it is revenue, and revenue only. If the Premier says ten per cent. is requisite because of the expense—and that is the argument all through regarding the administration of the Act—then everything that is relevant to the expense in connection with administration, everything that has reference to demands upon the funds that are sought to be collected by virtue of the amendment, everything of that kind is relevant to the issue. We cannot say whether five per cent., six per cent., eight per cent., or 10 per cent. is sufficient, unless we know

the demands against that fund. It might easily be said that the Premier could manage with two per cent.

The Premier: It would not be true.

Hon. T. Walker: But it could be said, and if the Premier denied it he would have to show what he would be called upon to expend. So the expense against the liquor traffic—police administration, administration of justice, licensing, breaches and failures, the cost of the lunatics who are created through the liquor traffic—all these are expenses in, as it were, patching up the evils caused by drink, and so all are relevant to this issue. It is not wandering all over the country to drag in every item of expense, because until we know the total cost, we cannot tell what is required to cover it. Therefore these matters, which might appear to be wanderings, are strictly relevant. It is becoming a serious thing if we are to hang around 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and talk 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 everlastingly. We must show that a thing is necessary.

Mr. Underwood: Must show cause.

Hon. T. Walker: We are a deliberative assembly supposed to bring rational thought to the support of our conclusions. We cannot do that if we are to be unduly limited and curtailed in the scope of our discussion. Whatever has the remotest relevancy to the issue should not be ruled out of order. Everything that can be shown as cost of administration has a distinct relevancy to the revenue we are seeking to impose. In these circumstances, I must vote against your ruling.

Mr. Pickering: We have reached an important stage in the history of the House. We are asked to decide on a ruling concerning relevancy. We have had instances of members being confined to such ridiculous discussions as the difference between five and six.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: We were dealing with another question then, and wider scope was not necessary.

Mr. Pickering: It was just as necessary the other evening when I was discussing the question of the number composing a board.

Mr. Speaker: Order! The hon. member must discuss the question before the Chair.

Mr. Pickering: I am giving my reasons why I disagree with the ruling of the Chair. We should state definitely the attitude of the House towards these extraordinary rulings. Too frequently are members ruled out of order on frivolous pretexts. The present instance reaches the height of frivolity. In an important discussion we are told we can consider only the stupid numbers six and eight. We are not to discuss matters relevant to the issue, such as the costs debitable to drink. How, then, can we arrive at the proper amount to be collected? What will it weigh with members if I get up and say, "Six, six, six, six, six, six, six," and the next member gets up and says, "Eight, eight, eight, eight, eight, eight, eight"?

Hon. T. Walker: Then we should be ruled out on the score of tedious repetition.

Mr. Pickering: It is time the House took a stand against these extraordinary rulings. I have been an unfortunate sufferer from rulings of this kind on more than one occasion. If we are to arrive at rational decisions on important questions, we should have reasonable freedom in discussion. If the cost of asylums and hospitals is not relevant to the issue we were discussing, I am at a loss to know what is. Only by considering such phases of the question can we decide whether the rate of tax should be six per cent., eight per cent., or 10 per cent. I hope hon. members will effectively declare their dissatisfaction with this ruling.

The Premier: It would be quite right to say that because we have to face certain expenditure on lunatic asylums, gaols, wharves, anything you like, we ought to have more revenue. But was the question being discussed in that way?

Members: Yes.

The Premier: Or was it being argued that because we have lunatic asylums, they must be maintained?

Mr. Pickering: No, no.

The Premier: It would be permissible for hon. members to say that because lunatic asylums are a charge on the State, and are to some extent necessitated as the result of excessive drinking, therefore, the introduction of such costs would be relevant to the issue. If the hon. member had put it that way—

Hon. T. Walker: I understood he did so.

The Premier: I did not understand him to connect his argument with the cost of asylums. It is the custom of the House on the second reading of such a Bill to declare that drink is an evil necessitating the maintenance of asylums. But such an argument would be quite out of order in discussing a clause. The question is, did the hon. member connect it with the cost to the State of the drink traffic, and the revenue required to meet that cost? I did not understand him to connect it that way.

Hon. M. F. Troy: I regret that I shall have to support the motion for dissent. The House ought to know where it stands. I had no doubt that the member for Katanning was illustrating a point. He was attempting to show that the lunatic asylum and gaols were filled with people who had excessively used liquor, and that because of it, the State was entitled to certain moneys. Nothing could be more pertinent to the question then before the Committee. The Chairman must have misunderstood the remarks of the hon. member, else he could never have given such a ruling. I feel sure that, on reflection, you too, Sir, will see that the ruling was not correct. The House ought not to be content to be stifled when a relevant argument is being used. If your ruling stands, free discussion in this House will be burked for all time.

Mr. Speaker: I ruled on the case put before me. I am now convinced that my ruling was correct, for even those members who were listening to the debate are undecided as to

how the member for Katanning was using his argument.

Mr. Pickering: Only one is undecided.

Mr. Speaker: According to the Chairman, the hon. member was wandering from gaols to prisons and all sorts of places outside the amendment, and so was called to order. The Chairman was not the only one who held that view. Members cannot legitimately accuse me—I was not here—of not knowing how the debate led up to the decision, when members who were present are not satisfied on the point.

Mr. Underwood: Mostly I support the ruling of the Chair.

Hon. P. Collier: Mostly by interjection.

Mr. Underwood: And also by my vote. In this instance, the influence of alcohol on human beings ought to be a legitimate subject for discussion.

Mr. Speaker: That should be discussed on the second reading.

Mr. Underwood: And also when we come to tax those who drink alcohol. Here it is proposed to tax only one section of the community. That being so, we should be able to discuss the effects, good or bad, of alcohol, and their relevancy to the tax. The member for Katanning was quite correct in putting up his proposition. This is a taxation measure, aimed at one section of the community as against all others.

The Premier: I do not think we shall ever get there.

Mr. Underwood: The member for Katanning is quite right in pointing out that gaols, lunacy, the Children's Court, etc., should be charged up to drunkenness, that is if it is correct. I could retort that a man might go mad from dry horrors. I claim that the member for Katanning was acting within his rights and that we should be permitted to discuss these matters.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I would not have spoken but for the remarks of the member for Sussex. I think the member for Katanning was pointing out the necessity for increasing the revenue, and showing why the 6 per cent. should be struck out. The member for Sussex the other night was doing something entirely different; he was discussing a clause which the Committee had not reached. I hope members will not be led astray by this. The question is whether the remarks of the member for Katanning were relevant.

Mr. A. Thomson: I regret having to disagree with the ruling, but I must fight for a privilege which is dear to every member of the House. The remarks of the member for North-East Fremantle bear out the statement that I was connecting my remarks with the amendment. The question was whether "six" should be struck out.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member is replying and his remarks do not apply to arguments which have been advanced. He should have made those remarks before.

Mr. A. Thomson: I wish to inform you of the arguments I was using to show that I was not out of order.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member should have done that when he moved the motion. He cannot do it in replying to the debate.

Mr. A. Thomson: Then I would have had to fill two or three sheets of foolscap.

Hon. M. F. Troy: On a point of order, the member for Katanning has not spoken to his motion.

Mr. Speaker: He moved it.

Hon. M. F. Troy: He may have given notice, but this is the first occasion on which he has spoken. He could not speak and reply at the same time. I maintain that the hon. member is quite in order.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member moved the motion to dissent, and should then have given his reasons in support of it. I put the motion to the House. The hon. member can now reply; he cannot break new ground.

Mr. A. Thomson: I do not intend to. The motion handed to you was accompanied by the following reasons—"In my opinion the matters discussed by me were relevant to the amendment under discussion." Surely I am entitled to give my reasons for disagreeing with your ruling.

Mr. Speaker: The proper time to do that was when you moved the motion. Now that you are replying to the debate, you can only reply to the arguments advanced; but you are breaking new ground, and I cannot permit you to do that.

Mr. A. Thomson: The Premier said he was under the impression that I suggested certain things in quoting asylums and prisons, and added that my argument perhaps was correct. The reason why I dissent from your ruling is that all the matters I was discussing, gaols, lunacy—

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member cannot deal with those matters now. I wish to give him all possible latitude, but I cannot allow him to break new ground in replying to the debate.

Mr. A. Thomson: The first time I read the motion and reasons was but a few moments ago.

Mr. O'Loughlen: You should have spoken when you moved the motion.

Mr. Speaker: I cannot permit the hon. member at this stage to make a speech which he should have made when moving the motion. If he failed to take advantage of his opportunity then, I cannot help it.

Mr. Willecock: On a point of order, is the motion properly before the House?

Mr. Speaker: Yes, the member for Katanning moved the motion and I stated the question.

Mr. Willecock: I do not know that he did move it. Of course if he did move it, that deprives him of his right of speaking. The hon. member says he did not move the motion.

Mr. Speaker: I stated the question and the motion is before the House. The member for Geraldton will resume his seat.

Mr. Lutey: I would like some information. We know the hon. member sent his motion up and that it was read, but is the motion before the House?

Mr. Speaker: Yes, I read it and it is before the House.

Hon. M. F. Troy: On a point of order, the member for Katanning gave notice of disagreement with your ruling.

Mr. Speaker: He moved it.

Hon. M. F. Troy: He handed it to the Speaker, but he could not move it until it was in possession of the House. How could the hon. member move his motion before it was read by the Speaker?

Hon. P. Collier: He said he disagreed and wrote out his reasons for disagreeing.

Hon. M. F. Troy: When a member moves a motion of dissent, he must write out his reasons. The one is consequent on the other.

The Minister for Mines: He cannot read the reasons until he moves the dissent. He moved the dissent.

Hon. M. F. Troy: The Speaker put the motion to dissent from his ruling. The motion was then in possession of the House. Until it is in possession of the House, no one can speak to it. The fact is that the member for Katanning gave precedence to the member for Kanowna.

Hon. P. Collier: Yes, to speak to his motion.

Hon. M. F. Troy: A motion he would otherwise have spoken to and which he intended to speak to.

The Minister for Mines: But which he did not speak to.

Hon. M. F. Troy: Not until now, and he has the right to speak to it while the motion is in possession of the House.

Hon. T. Walker: On a point of order—

Mr. Speaker: Permit me. The member for Mt. Magnet has held the position of Speaker.

Hon. M. F. Troy: Never mind that.

Mr. Speaker: The member for Katanning moved to dissent from my ruling. I told him to hand up his motion, and he handed up only the reasons for dissenting. That was the time when he had the right to speak in support of the dissent, instead of waiting until this stage and breaking new ground in reply.

Hon. T. Walker: After the question was stated from the Chair the member for Katanning was on the point of rising when I rose. I saw him and was inclined to sit down, but he gave precedence to me. By so doing, he waived his right. He apparently preferred that other members should state the case.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member will know I was not aware that he waived any right.

Hon. T. Walker: No, but he did.

Mr. A. Thomson: I did not intend to.

Hon. P. Collier: But that does not give him the right to go on.

Hon. T. Walker: Clearly after waiving his right, he has only the right of reply, and the right of reply prevents him from introducing new matter.

Mr. A. Thomson: Very well; I have nothing to reply to, because every member who has spoken has supported my contention.

Hon. P. Collier: The Premier did not.

Mr. A. Thomson: Then he is the sole exception.

Question put and passed.

Committee resumed.

Mr. A. THOMSON: The member for Perth when submitting his amendment said that the trade could not stand an impost of more than six per cent. I shall argue from another basis, and it is as to whether the State can afford to carry the trade at its present cost. Let me quote some figures which will show the expenditure involved on the State as a result to some extent of the consumption of liquor. The Estimates show us that the Lunacy vote is £91,753, that of our gaols £25,350, while our police force costs us £178,267. A reference to the report of the Commissioner of Police of last year definitely states that the offences attributable directly and indirectly to drunkenness total 47.67 per cent. of those of all classes. If that statement is correct, then to say that the trade should contribute only £68,000 to the revenue of the State, when the three departments I have quoted cost us £295,375, is absurd. Let us halve this huge total and we get £147,687, which we may say is our cost on account of the liquor traffic. We must take that half to be so, because the Commissioner of Police attributes nearly 50 per cent. of all the classes of offences directly or indirectly to drink. On top of that expenditure we find that it costs £1,368 for the inspection of liquor. The trade as a whole are prepared and quite willing to pay more than they have done in the past. After all why should they not? They can pass on the added cost.

Mr. O'Loughlin: There comes a time when the public protest against the passing on.

Mr. A. THOMSON: So far there has not been much protest. We realise that the Commonwealth Government are deriving over £600,000 annually from this trade, and we must remember what we spend in a domestic direction. We have to find over half a million annually for education and over £128,000 for medical and health services. In those two items alone we get over £688,000. We have never made a protest to the Commonwealth for taking too much.

Mr. Underwood: Why don't you put it on to silk stockings?

Mr. A. THOMSON: I am quite prepared to do that too. The hon. member knows that so far as silk stockings are concerned—

The CHAIRMAN: We are not discussing silk stockings.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I was just going to say about silk stockings—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! You must not say it. Stockings are not under discussion.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I have no intention of casting any reflection on the trade, but it is the only business in the State that is a monopoly, and the State has the right to expect greater revenue from it. We know that a certain class of hotel has dealt solely in liquor, while others have given special attention to the residential portion of the trade, and that the latter have not made the same profit as those which have devoted their attention entirely to the sale of liquor. Yet the residential establishments have to pay the same

license fees as those that are mere drinking shops. The Bill proposes to place the hotels generally on a better footing. In the country districts the licensing bench has, in some instances, imposed conditions which, in my opinion, are absurd. Some of the proprietors have been compelled to provide accommodation considerably in advance of requirements.

Mr. O'Loughlin: In the Albany district particularly. The best hotels in the State are down there.

Mr. A. THOMSON: The whole thing is a close preserve at the present time; no one can start a hotel in Perth or even at Kataning.

Mr. O'Loughlin: Why not?

Mr. A. THOMSON: Because you cannot. Anyone, however, can sell tea and sugar.

The Minister for Mines: You cannot get a license within 15 miles of an existing license.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I do not blame the trade for trying to keep down their payments as much as possible, but taking into consideration the facts that I have disclosed and the requirements of the State, the Committee should permit the Premier to carry out his intention of taxing the trade in the manner provided in the Bill.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The points advanced by the hon. member are interesting. He has quoted the expenditure on lunacy, gaols and police, and as an afterthought, he said that he was not reflecting on those associated with the liquor traffic. I am at a loss to know why he quoted those figures unless it was to show that a portion, if not the whole of that expenditure was due to the existence of the liquor trade. What is the use of submitting the lunacy figures unless the hon. member is prepared to back them up with others from authoritative sources to show the percentage of the expenditure on lunacy which is due to the excessive consumption of alcohol? His figures are of no value unless he does that. To state on the authority of the Commissioner of Police that 40 per cent. of all cases of crimes were directly or indirectly due to liquor, seems to be a convincing argument that nearly half the police expenditure is due to the consumption of liquor.

Mr. A. Thomson: Absolutely.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The hon. member entirely misunderstands the figures, and I would point out to him that those police cases which arise chiefly from drunkenness involve very little expense to the State. It is quite possible that one, or even half a dozen cases of burglary would occur where the offenders were absolute teetotallers. Those offenders would probably receive, for the sake of argument, seven years' imprisonment. They would be the costly criminals, and the expense of their maintenance by the State would be greater than that incurred as the result of the minor offences committed by the 47 per cent. of intemperates referred to. We all know that the excessive consumption of liquor is an evil. A proportion of the expenditure in the direction indicated by the member for West Perth is due to the consumption of alcohol. She will, however, bear

me out when I say that 90 per cent. of those who are convicted of serious offences are careful and sober men. The man who gets drunk every second day will never reach the highest standard of crime, or belong to the aristocracy of the criminal profession. I intend to support the amendment of the Premier, but I wish him to know that if the six per cent. is struck out, I intend to ask the Committee to vote for five per cent.

The Premier: It is a damn shame.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I hope I shall not be let in by an amendment being carried to make it seven per cent. I fail to see why this particular business should be singled out for taxation.

The Premier: Because it is a monopoly.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It is not a monopoly. Under the Bill a sufficient number of hotels will be licensed in any district to supply the requirements of that district. True, there may be a form of monopoly about the trade. In Perth there is a monopoly for the sale of liquor to the hotels in the district, but there is keen competition between those who are engaged in the trade.

The Minister for Works: To see which has the smallest glass.

Hon. P. COLLIER: If the trade is an evil, as urged by members, the remedy lies in prohibiting it altogether. I cannot understand the argument of so-called liquor reformers. They would impose a heavy tax upon the trade, but do they not see how difficult it would be to induce any subsequent Treasurer, who was drawing a large sum of money from the trade, to bring in any legislation that might tend towards the abolition of so important an avenue of revenue. It is a legitimate trade carried on under the laws of the country. If we are going to adopt the principle of singling out an enterprise because of its supposed evil influence, or because it is not assisting in the development of the State, we should include all businesses which might be described as not being beneficial to the community. But we do not lay it down that because an industry is beneficial to the State the taxation upon it must be light, or that because another industry is of no value to the community, the tax must be heavy. Some members, however, hold the view that because of the nature of the liquor trade we are justified in singling it out for special taxation. Even if we make the tax five per cent. we shall be singling it out. On that basis the State will derive a revenue of £55,000, which would be £20,000 more than was received last year. The committee would be going quite far enough if it fixed the tax at five per cent. That amount will be an ever increasing one. The population is being added to year by year, and under the immigration proposals it should be added to very extensively in the near future. That must mean a greater consumption of liquor.

The Minister for Mines: But the demands made upon us in the way of providing increased facilities will also be heavier.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Increased expenditure in the direction of further public utilities will necessitate increased revenue.

Mr. A. Thomson: The trade has a monopoly.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Some monopolies receive Government assistance. Instead of the freezing works at Fremantle being called upon to pay taxation, they have received £90,000 of Government money.

The Premier: That is a co-operative concern.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It is a monopoly all the same.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. MANN: I am firmly convinced that the 6 per cent. is a fair and equitable tax. To inflict a heavier tax on the trade than it can bear, is not the right way to reform it. The licensee will not be able to pass on the tax to the consumers, because he will not be able to charge 1s. 0½d. for whisky and 6¼d. for beer.

Mr. Underwood: He will charge 1s. 3d. for whisky.

Mr. MANN: The Premier erred in quoting the figures of Victorian liquor taxation. For 1919 the tax was £164,000, for 1920 £197,000, for 1921 £257,000, and for 1922 £306,000. The Victorian tax is imposed upon duty and excise as well as the price of liquor. In 1914 the duty on spirits was 14s. per gallon. In 1918 it rose to £1, in 1919 to £1 5s., in 1920 to £1 7s., and then to £1 10s. The pre-war excise duty on spirits was 10s. It rose to 13s. in December, 1914, to 17s. in December, 1918, to 23s. in December, 1919, to 25s. in March, 1920, and to 26s. in September 1920. The excise on beer per hogshead has risen from 10s. 6d. to £4 11s. These figures account for the great increase in the yield of the Victorian tax. So large has been the increase there that the Victorian board have recommended the Government to introduce, and the Government are introducing a Bill to reduce the rate of taxation. In Victoria, however, none of the tax goes to general revenue. It is applied solely to the reduction of hotels and the compensation fund. During the discussion the member for Katanning quoted the cost of police maintenance. But in addition to their special duties our police have 60 odd functions to perform, none of which has anything to do with the liquor trade, or with drunkenness, or with crimes caused by drunkenness. Those outside functions include the collection of statistics relating to land, stock, and agriculture, the conduct of elections, the registration of births, deaths, and marriages, work for the Forests Department, the Fisheries Department, the Explosives Branch, the Lunacy Department, the Public Works Department, the Labour Bureau, and the Old Age Pensions Office.

Mr. A. Thomson: You know very well that as soon as an hotel is established in a district, a policeman must be stationed there.

Mr. MANN: But the hon. member quoted the police figures as if they applied only to drunkenness and crime the result of drunkenness. In Queensland the police have 64 functions outside those connected with arrests and ordinary police duty. The member for Katingann alleged that the whole cost of maintenance of our lunatic asylums was chargeable to drunkenness.

Mr. A. Thomson: A portion of the cost.

Mr. MANN: The hon. member did not say a portion.

Mr. A. Thomson: I said 46 per cent.

Mr. MANN: The correct figure is 8.7 per cent., according to the official departmental report for 1920-21.

Hon. T. Walker: That figure applies to cases of lunacy directly attributable to drink.

Mr. MANN: Other causes of lunacy are stated in the departmental report. The convictions for drunkenness in the Commonwealth are as follow, per 10,000 of inhabitants:—New South Wales 193, Victoria 205, Queensland 159, South Australia 69, Western Australia 111. The figures are not so large as certain hon. members would have the Committee believe. According to this morning's newspaper, the Government of the United States are asking for an appropriation of nine million dollars to enforce prohibition there. If that is the cost of prohibition, we certainly do not want it here. What we do want is very strict control of the trade. The evidence given before the Royal Commission was to the effect that 6 per cent. is a fair tax and one that the trade can bear. I hope the amendment will be carried.

Mr. PICKERING: I was a member of the Licensing Commission and during our discussions, we dealt with the question of the percentage for taxation purposes, but we were unable to agree on the rate to be charged. I considered that an equitable basis would be seven per cent., having in view the fact that in the original Bill the amount suggested was eight per cent. on the gross purchases. Seeing that we made a recommendation for the alteration from a tax on gross to one on net purchases, I believed seven per cent. would be fair. I was not supported by other members of the Commission and our recommendations went to the Premier without any definite percentage being mentioned. After hearing the arguments advanced in this Chamber, I am prepared to support a tax of six per cent. as moved by the member for Perth, who was the Chairman of the Commission. That percentage is equitable and the Committee can fairly impose it. I am not at all in sympathy with the amount the Premier had originally in the Bill, namely 10 per cent. The Bill is not one for revenue purposes only. The idea appealing to the Commission was the cleaning up of the trade, putting it on a good footing, providing necessary accommodation for the travelling public and doing these things without leaving an unpleasant taste in the mouths of the people concerned.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: It was not my intention to speak, but I desire to take exception to the remarks made by several members as to

"cleaning up the trade." Do they ask the Committee to believe that, in the past, men connected with the liquor trade who have endeavoured to cater for the public and have run their hotels for many years, have been the lowest type that Western Australia has produced? It annoys me when I hear these reformers speak! The member for Perth and the member for Sussex talk about cleaning up the trade. I am not ashamed of my association with the trade, and I regard it as a downright insult for these individuals to come along here—when they go to an hotel they expect the best and get it—with talk about cleaning up the trade. I believe the licensees cannot pay six per cent. The Premier is up in the clouds with his proposal for a tax of 10 per cent.; such a tax represents an absolute impossibility to them. The Committee will not "clean up the trade" by imposing such a tax or increasing the rate a man has to pay for his license. Such a proposal would tend to belittle the trade and drag it into the gutter, forcing licensees to do something shady to make both ends meet. It is time we put an end to these reformers! The trade is legalised by Parliament and I am not ashamed of it. The member for Perth and the member for Sussex who have spoken in this way regarding the trade have drawn their fees and their expenses as members of the Commission.

Mr. Underwood: Of course they got their fees.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: They wandered round the country and perhaps they got some bottles of whisky from the trade, yet they talk about cleaning it up! It gets "on my tripe."

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Let us discuss the amendment.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I oppose the amendment for six per cent. because that tax is too high; the trade cannot legitimately pay it. If the Premier wants revenue, why does he not tax the land alongside existing railways—

Mr. O'Loughlen: Why does not your new party support it?

Mr. J. H. SMITH:—instead of making difficulties for the liquor trade?

Mr. O'Loughlen: It is all hypocrisy!

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The trade will pay anything in reason. I protest against members of the Commission talking about "cleaning up the trade." It is neither fair nor right.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The Bill has been drafted in such a way that we do not get to the clauses that are effectual and have particular bearing on this matter. The clause under discussion has a bearing on Clause 40; Clause 7, which has been adjourned, also have a bearing on this clause. The Bill is badly drafted inasmuch as members cannot deal with the principles affected. I wish to discuss the question of de-licensing and the tax of 2 per cent. for the purposes of the licenses reduction board. If that 2 per cent. tax be deleted, the Committee would strike a different rate of taxation in the clause under discussion. As a matter of fact, if we do not agree to the 2 per cent. tax as compensation for the de-licensed

houses, then we could have a smaller tax provided for in the clause, because it would not be necessary to have so high a tax here. We should be able to review the whole question, rather than by sections; we should be able to view it in its proper perspective. Before fixing the tax at all, I would like the Committee to decide whether we will allow 2 per cent. for the delicensing of houses.

Mr. Mann: How does that affect the question of taxation?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Materially, because if we do not agree to the 2 per cent. we will not require so much taxation under this clause. The Premier desires so much taxation and so much for delicensing houses; if we do not agree to the latter portion, then the Treasurer will not want so much taxation.

Mr. Pickering: He wants as much as he can get.

Mr. Lambert: And more.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: As to the imposition of taxation, the Bill is not one to secure reform, but to impose taxation. If we are to impose a tax, it is only right and just that we should impose one that will affect all members of the community.

The Premier: You never do that, as a matter of fact.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: If we wanted to do that, we would tax tea, because everyone drinks it.

The Minister for Mines: It is taxed now.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: There is no tax on tea. I drink as much tea as any other man in this Parliament. I also drink whisky. Some members do not drink whisky, but if the Committee impose a tax on tea, I will pay my share just as the member for West Perth and the member for Albany will pay their shares. If the object of the Bill is simply to impose taxation, let us impose a tax that will affect all persons.

The Minister for Mines: You can get out of paying this tax if you want to.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I do not want to.

The Minister for Mines: We are taxed on the water we drink.

Mr. Mann: And a heavy tax, too.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The water that is being supplied by the Minister for Works should not be taxed; it is unfair to tax it. We have heard a good deal about the Federal Government collecting £600,000 for excise and duty, respecting alcoholic drink consumed in Western Australia. If we desire to follow the Federal Government, why not follow them in other things such as the imposition of the land tax, the tax on machinery and the tax on railway materials? It is only just a few fanatics, and they are very few too, who do not drink alcohol and also want to punish everyone who does drink it. Because the Federal Government tax alcohol to the extent of £600,000 is not to say that we should tax it, unless we are prepared to follow their example also in taxing machinery, steel rails, land and many other things. I am quite used to this subject of alcohol. There is no other which can itself talk so much. The very thought, I was going to say the aroma, leads

to discussion. If you pull the cork out of a lemonade bottle it starts to talk, the gas escapes. When we look at this question soberly—

Mr. O'Loghlin: When did you look at it like that?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Much has been said about what has been done in Victoria. No two States could be more dissimilar than are Victoria and Western Australia. Almost all the Victorian hotels were built 70 years ago, whereas the hotels in Western Australia were built 25 years ago and in entirely different conditions. Victoria, a compact little State, has 86,000 square miles; Western Australia has 975,000 square miles.

The Premier: This is not a geography lesson, but a proposal for a tax.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Still there is no comparison between the two States. It is a tax which Victoria does not need to impose.

The Premier: But does impose.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: If it comes to the imposition of a tax, I ask why not tax all the people?

Mr. Lambert: All the time.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The Premier says this is a Bill to impose a tax.

Mr. Mann: To increase a tax; there is already a tax.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Let us impose a tax which will affect the whole of the people. The member for West Perth should pay just as much as I pay, in accordance with what she drinks.

The CHAIRMAN: The member for West Perth is not under discussion.

The Premier: What tax will you support?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: If you want a tax, and will assure me that you are going to spend it wisely, I will support a tax of 1s. a lb. on tea and 2s. a lb. on sugar.

The CHAIRMAN: Tea and sugar have nothing to do with the Bill.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: It is a Bill to impose a tax on liquor. Is not tea liquor?

The Minister for Mines: It is a pick-me-up.

The CHAIRMAN: Hon. members seem to be making a farce of the Bill.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I am doing nothing of the sort.

The CHAIRMAN: Some of the interjectors are.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Yes, perhaps. The tax should be on every citizen in the State.

Hon. P. Collier: You have said that 20 times. I am not going to sit listening to you much longer.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: You can always go out.

Hon. P. COLLIER: On a point of order: I contend the hon. member is indulging in tedious repetition. He has repeated himself 20 times or more.

The CHAIRMAN: The point of order is a good one. The hon. member has repeated himself over and over again.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I will come to some other point. It is proposed to devote part of the money raised by taxation to the closing of hotels.

The Premier: You are quite wrong.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: A percentage of it is to be devoted to the closing of hotels.

Mr. Mann: No, it has nothing to do with it.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The member for Katanning declared we should have the tax for the maintenance of police and other institutions. The member for West Perth has told us about the drunkenness which necessitates the holding of the Children's Court. The men who make that court necessary are not drunkards, but are mere miserable wasters who could not earn sufficient money to get drunk upon. The member for Perth has declared that the trade will pay this tax. I say the consumer will have to pay it. The hotel keepers of Perth may not feel the tax, but those in the country will be so severely affected that they will have to pass it on. I do not want that to happen. Notwithstanding increased costs all round, the hotels at Kalgoorlie have kept down their prices, both of liquor and of accommodation. If further taxation is imposed, it must be passed on to the people. The same applies to the hotels in the wheat belt. It is on behalf of the clients, and not of the trade, that I am speaking. Almost all hotels outside those in the metropolitan area will be compelled to increase their charges. Therefore I ask the Committee not to impose this tax. I would prefer taxation on sales rather than an increased license fee, because then those who did the biggest trade would pay most for a license. It is a question of how far such taxation should be carried. Taxation should be imposed on those commodities, such as tea, which everyone consumes.

The PREMIER: I am afraid I have no chance of getting eight per cent. I do not know why members object to it. It would be a very moderate tax. I believe a majority favour six per cent. If "six" is struck out, it cannot be reinserted.

Hon. P. Collier: You will then have a chance to insert eight per cent.

The PREMIER: Yes, Buckley's chance.

Mr. O'Loughlen: You are not going to twist on the six per cent., are you?

The PREMIER: If members favour six per cent., they will vote against my amendment. After hearing the debate, I may find it in my heart to vote against my own amendment. Those who vote to strike out "six" will do so with a view to inserting "five."

Hon. P. Collier: Not necessarily; those who support you will vote to strike out "six."

The PREMIER: I will excuse them on this occasion. I am surprised at the attitude of the Committee. It must be remembered that in addition to this tax we are imposing many charges on licensees. I might instance the amendment to provide running water in rooms. I hope that will be struck out on recommitment.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Would you favour substituting beer?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: A great proportion of the population earn only sufficient by way of wages or salary to enable them to live. A man who spends his money on liquor assists

to pay the license fees charged by the Government. A man who spends his money in other directions has to help to pay taxes perhaps as high as those charged in the liquor trade. No matter how money is expended, a certain proportion of it goes to pay taxation. Therefore to increase the license fees will not relieve one section of the community. The question, however, is the amount to be charged on liquor. The Premier originally proposed 10 per cent. on sales after the deduction of excise and customs duty. Later on it was thought the amount should be eight per cent., and now the Premier has changed his mind—

The Premier: You have changed it for me. You are responsible for reducing the percentage.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Anyhow he has changed his mind and he now thinks six per cent. will do. If members continue the discussion much longer, the Premier will be left with no percentage at all. But for the Federal charges, we in this State might have been able to increase taxation a little. As regards State taxation, Victoria is the lowest and Western Australia comes next, but we are the highest as regards Federal taxation. Therefore we have no opportunity to increase taxation, owing to the Federal charges being so heavy. We have to consider whether our people are in a position to pay any increase. If the Federal Government returned to us £100,000 more than was paid to the State last year, we would be on an equality with the other States of Australia. This shows how Western Australia is handicapped as regards taxation, particularly customs and excise. In Tasmania the Federal taxation amounts to £7 14s.; in Western Australia it is over £11, and in Victoria it is about £8. Throughout Australia it averages between £5 and £6.

Mr. MacCallum Smith: Are you in favour of cutting the painter?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It is doubtful whether that could be accomplished. I think it a pity that we ever went into Federation. If we wish to abolish the liquor traffic, the only way is to convince the people that it is better to do without liquor.

The Premier: You cannot do that to-night; it would take too long.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It is impossible to make men total abstainers by increasing the cost of drink. I have no time for people who preach liquor reform while they themselves are drinkers. It shows they are not genuine.

Mr. Lambert: That is a poor argument.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I have heard the hon. member bark often enough but he does not practice this doctrine. It would not be wise to charge too high a license fee. The charge is out of proportion to other license fees issued by the State. If the Premier wishes to increase the revenue, there are other avenues to which attention could be directed.

The Minister for Mines: Everyone says that when a tax is suggested.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Increasing the cost in this way will not bring about reform. One

thing we ought to see to is that there are no false bottoms in the bottles and glasses. If we could prevent that, we should be cleaning up the trade far better than by placing upon it a heavy tax. Speaking generally, I should say our object ought to be to decrease taxation rather than increase it, in order that we might show other parts of the world what we can do here.

Mr. LAMBERT: The member for North-East Fremantle was rather personal in his remarks. There are many members in this Chamber who, although not total abstainers, are genuine in their desire to see reform in the liquor trade. The proposed tax will undoubtedly be passed on to the public, and I am opposed to a sectional tax of that nature. There are other avenues which should be exploited by the Government if they want to increase their revenue. Apparently their desire is to sandbag the trade out of existence. If that is the desire of the Government, they should accept the responsibility. I cannot help feeling, however, that many of the publicans are not deserving of much sympathy, on account of the undue profit they are making out of the sale of liquor. The State has given them a valuable asset in the shape of a license, and in many cases advantage is taken of that monopoly. This applies specially to centres where there are only one or two hotels. There are also many hotelkeepers who are working for their landlords, who should be made to pay for the privileges they enjoy.

Mr. Willecock: Some hotelkeepers have to break the law in order to pay the rent.

Mr. LAMBERT: There is no doubt the rents are too high in many cases. An unlicensed hotel might only be worth £3 a week, but with a license the landlord might obtain £30 a week from his tenant. That being so, he should pay a reasonable amount for the valuable asset he holds from the State. If the tax is placed upon the tenant, it means that the consumer has to pay for it.

Amendment on the amendment (to strike out "six") put and passed.

The PREMIER: I move a further amendment on the amendment.

That the word "eight" be inserted.

If this amendment is carried the Treasury will receive a revenue of £88,000 as against the £34,000 it is receiving to-day.

Mr. Lambert: Will you provide the machinery for getting the money out of the landlords?

The PREMIER: I do not think we can do that.

Mr. Lambert: I will point out the way if you will do it.

The PREMIER: I do not agree with the view that there are other avenues from which we should derive taxation rather than from the trade. I hope the amendment will be agreed to.

Amendment (to insert "eight") put and negatived.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I move a further amendment on the amendment—

That the word "five" be inserted.

Amendment on the amendment put and passed.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I move a further amendment on the amendment—

That the following be added:—"Such sum to be extra licensing fee for the then current half-year."

As the member for Bunbury pointed out last week, whereas the Premier's clause showed clearly the extra period which the licensing fee covered, the amendment of the member for Perth does not show that. The licenses have been issued for the whole of the year, and I take it that the Committee do not intend to increase the licensing fee during the currency of the license. Early in July the licensee will send in a return of his purchases for the previous half-year, together with five per cent. on the amount of such purchases, less half the licensing fee; and that will be the extra licensing fee he will pay from the 1st September to the 31st December of next year. I move my amendment in order to show that the extra amount the hotel keeper has to pay on his purchases from the 1st September to the 31st December shall be taken as part of the license fee for next year.

Mr. Mann: You want to make it extra licensing fee?

Mr. JOHNSTON: Yes. On the 1st January of this year every publican got a license for this year. Is it the wish of the Committee now to say, "We will charge an extra fee for the period from the 1st September to the 31st December, in respect of which you have already paid a licensing fee"? Unless some such amendment as this is inserted, the Government may interfere with the licenses issued for the year 1922 by adding an extra fee of five per cent. on purchases for the period from the 1st September, less half the amount of the license fee.

The PREMIER: There is absolutely no need to add the words suggested. Whatever the hon. member has already paid will be his licensing fee for the year.

Mr. Munzie: You will be short of two months if you let the amendment go through.

The PREMIER: The amendment is totally unnecessary.

Amendment on the amendment put and negatived.

Amendment as previously amended, agreed to.

Mr. MANN: Referring to Subclause 2, which deals with a spirit merchant's license, I desire to secure the insertion of a provision which appears on the Notice Paper. Accordingly I move an amendment—

That Subclause 2 be struck out, with a view to inserting other words.

The PREMIER: I hope the House will not agree to the amendment. I do not know

why the member for Perth objects to the clause as it stands. The reference to 10 per cent. becomes one to five per cent. as the result of the recent amendment, but otherwise the clause is perfectly clear.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I have heard a good deal about monopolies and there is a tendency to provide another in the amendment by the member for Perth. The Committee will go a bit too far if they agree to the amendment. They should not adopt a penalising provision compelling the names of persons receiving liquor from brewers or spirit merchants, to be supplied to the receiver of revenue. I have heard that hotel keepers not far from Parliament House have raised an objection to persons getting a case of liquor from a brewer. If that be so, Parliament will do wrong in agreeing to the amendment suggested. Why should we place restrictions upon persons getting a case of beer or a gallon of whisky from Perth people and having it sent to their premises? If this proposal originated from hotel keepers in the city or the country, I hope Parliament will reject it. I have heard no argument in favour of its inclusion. While I am prepared to give the trade a fair crack of the whip, I am not prepared to give them exclusive rights, such as are indicated by the amendment. The member for North-East Fremantle indicated to me that possibly teetotallers might be getting little consignments.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: No, I did not.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Should there be such cases, their names would have to be submitted and they would become public property. To agree to such a provision, would be to go beyond our functions as a Parliament.

Mr. Mann: To what do you take exception?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: To Paragraph (c) of your amendment on the Notice Paper, which sets out that the names and addresses of the persons to whom the various kinds of liquor were sold or supplied, have to be furnished to the receiver of revenue. What right have we to say that a person requiring a keg of beer or a gallon of whisky should be penalised to that extent?

The CHAIRMAN: That paragraph is not before the Committee.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: It is portion of the amendment.

Mr. MONEY: Hon. members have spoken about a tax for four months; that is to say, the last four months of this year. It is clearly not so. It is purely a question of returns on which the assessment is made of the tax for the next year. At any rate, the position is not at all clear. If the amendment be carried, I desire to move an amendment on that amendment, to provide that the holder of a gallon license shall furnish to the receiver of revenue similar details to those demanded of a spirit merchant or brewer. There are cases where licensees draw supplies from the holders of gallon licenses, and the clause should be amended to deal with that aspect.

Mr. MANN: Reference has been made to Paragraph (c). I am not keen upon that paragraph being inserted. It was merely proposed

with a view to having a check on the returns submitted by brewers and spirit merchants.

Mr. PICKERING: The objection raised by the member for Forrest is not a sound one. If a return such as that covered by paragraph (c) be not furnished to the receiver of revenue, how is it proposed to secure a check on the returns furnished by these people to that official?

The Minister for Works: That means a statement of the whole of the business of a man for a year.

Mr. Willecock: The same thing applies to the income tax.

Mr. PICKERING: If there is already provision for the check I indicate, then paragraph (c) is merely duplication; unless there is some such provision, I do not know how the Government can expect to get their full revenue from brewers and spirit merchants.

Mr. Munsie: You will not get it if you strike out paragraph (c).

Mr. PICKERING: That is my contention. The member for Perth will be wrong if he agrees to the deletion of paragraph (c). I support the amendment with a view to inserting the new clause set out on the Notice Paper.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The member for Forrest is to be complimented upon drawing the attention of the Committee to paragraph (c). It will be a disgrace if we agree to a provision compelling such names to be supplied.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The member for Bunbury desired to move an amendment to deal with gallon licenses. He will not have that opportunity if the clause be agreed to as it stands.

Mr. MONEY: I propose to move an amendment to the amendment indicated by the member for Perth.

The CHAIRMAN: That amendment is not before the Chair. The one under discussion is for the deletion of Subclause 2.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The amendment is to strike out Subclause 2. If the Committee decide to strike it out, the member for Bunbury cannot amend it. If the Committee retain Subclause 2, he will have an opportunity of amending it.

The Minister for Mines: The only way for the member for Bunbury to deal with the matter is for the member for Perth to withdraw his amendment.

Mr. MANN: I have no objection to withdrawing, but if I withdraw and then move for the deletion of the subclause, will not the amendment by the member for Bunbury become deleted? On the other hand, he can attain his object by moving his amendment on any subsequent amendment to insert certain words.

The Minister for Mines: But if your amendment to delete the subclause be not carried the subclause must stand as printed.

Mr. MANN: If I withdraw to allow the member for Bunbury to move his amendment, I shall be able later to move for the deletion of the subclause.

The CHAIRMAN: No, you will not then be able to go back.

Mr. MANN: Then I must insist on my amendment being considered.

Mr. MONEY: I first intimated my desire to move my amendment before the member for Perth moved his. I was then ruled out of order on the score that I was too early, whereas now I am told I am too late.

The CHAIRMAN: Before you rose, the member for Perth moved to delete Subclause 2.

Mr. MONEY: No, I rose first. I said I wanted to insert an amendment after the fourth word of the first line, but the hon. member said he wanted an amendment from the very first word.

Mr. WILLCOCK: If you, Sir, put the question that the subclause stand as printed, the member for Bunbury can then move his amendment.

The CHAIRMAN: I was under the impression that the member for Perth moved to strike out the whole of Subclause 2 before the member for Bunbury said he desired to move his amendment.

Mr. MONEY: No. I said I wanted to move an amendment after the fourth word in the first line, but the member for Perth said he wanted to move an amendment to the first word.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: If the member for Perth will temporarily withdraw his amendment, the member for Bunbury will be able to move to insert certain words. Those who favour the deletion of the subclause will vote against the amendment to be moved by the member for Bunbury, and will afterwards vote for the deletion of the subclause.

Mr. Mann: I am not prepared to withdraw my amendment.

The CHAIRMAN: Then that amendment is before the Chair.

Mr. MUNSIE: I hope the Committee will not strike out Subclause 2. The hon. member will be putting a penalty on the very people he is trying to support. He does not realise what his amendment really means.

Amendment put and negatived.

The CHAIRMAN: We have now passed everything down to "following" at the end of Subclause 2, and we cannot go back.

Mr. MONEY: I move an amendment—

That after "license" in line 1 of Subclause 3, the words "and a gallon license" be inserted.

Apparently all reference to the gallon license has been omitted under the impression that the trade was not served by the holder of such a license. In point of fact the trade was so served, and the provision should be inserted.

Mr. JOHNSTON: On a point of order: Did you say that "10 per cent." in the subclause we have just passed will be altered as being consequential?

The CHAIRMAN: Yes, it will be altered.

Mr. Johnston: If not, we shall be taxing some people 10 per cent., and others five per cent.

Mr. Pickering: It is a different license.

The PREMIER: We have passed the subclause, and cannot go back. However, justice will be done to everybody. The 10 per cent. will be altered.

Mr. RICHARDSON: The amendment will require an alteration of the whole of the clause, because as it stands it is dealing with wholesale business. The gallon licensee will have to pay a tax on his purchases, and if we are going to tax him on what he sells, we shall be taxing him doubly.

Mr. Money: He is in the same position as the hotelkeeper.

Mr. RICHARDSON: No. The hotelkeeper is paying on what he purchases. If he were charged again on what he sells to his customers, he would be paying a double tax.

Mr. MONEY: The clause opens with the words "Save as otherwise expressly provided." The ordinary licensee pays tax on his purchases, whereas the spirit merchant pays on what he sells. All these people have to make their returns for assessment. We are putting the gallon license in the same category as are the brewer's license and the spirit merchant's license.

The Minister for Mines: No, the gallon licensee pays on his purchases.

Mr. MONEY: We have express provisions for the gallon licensee. What is the use of those express provisions if they are not to be acted upon?

The Minister for Mines: The brewers' and spirit merchants' licenses are expressly provided for. The other is not, but will have to pay on the purchases.

Mr. MONEY: My amendment is to put the gallon licensee on the same footing as the spirit merchant because the business is the same. "Every licensee" includes the spirit merchant and the brewer, and I want to put the gallon licensee on the same footing. The express provisions are made later on, as anticipated in the very first line of the clause. The general licensee makes his return for the 12 months, and from that return so furnished by the general licensee, the Receiver of Revenue assesses the fee payable. Now we come to the express provisions anticipated in the first line. A spirit merchant's return must give particulars of liquor sold to persons other than those licensed to sell liquor, and the same applies to a brewer's return. All liquor sold is subject to the tax. What is the difference in trade between a two-gallon license and a gallon license? I fail to see any provision for a gallon licensee to make a return unless he is placed in the category of every licensee. If this were done, he would put in returns for all the liquor he supplied to licensed houses, and that liquor would be taxed twice over.

Mr. O'Loughlen: No.

Mr. MONEY: He would be taxed on all the liquor purchased, and the hotelkeeper on purchasing from him would pay on it again.

Mr. McCallum: If an hotelkeeper was foolish enough to purchase in those circumstances, he would deserve to be taxed twice over.

Mr. MONEY: I fail to see why he should be penalised merely because he purchased

from a one-gallon licensee holder instead of a two-gallon licensee holder.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Do you know of any instances where that is done?

Mr. MONEY: Yes, many.

Mr. Simons: Name them.

Mr. MONEY: What is to prevent a gallon licensee from supplying liquor to an hotel, just as a two-gallon licensee might do? Whatever be the position of the two-gallon licensee, the spirit merchant or the brewer, that of the gallon licensee should be the same.

Mr. Pickering: Subclause 3 applies only to sales to private individuals.

The Minister for Mines: Why should the holder of a gallon licensee make a return of every customer to whom he sells liquor?

Mr. MONEY: Why should a two-gallon licensee do so? If the gallon licensee does not come under this category, the holder will be assessed on all he purchases.

Mr. Munsie: So he should be.

The Minister for Mines: Why should he not be so assessed?

Mr. MONEY: Because he serves public houses with a lot of liquor.

Mr. O'Loughlen: When this Bill becomes law he will not serve public houses. They will get their liquor through the ordinary channels.

Mr. MONEY: Why should he not serve public houses if he so desires? No one desires to impose double taxation.

The Minister for Mines: Would you ask him to make a return of 500 persons simply because he made one such sale?

Mr. MONEY: I cannot follow the Minister's argument. I am stressing this provision because it is important, and apparently its importance is not appreciated. The hotel-keeper buys liquor to sell to his customers, but a gallon licensee may supply two-thirds of his liquor to licensed houses, and the latter would pay taxation on that liquor, notwithstanding that the gallon licensee had already paid the tax on it. The draftsman obviously appreciated the position.

The PREMIER: Every licensee has to supply a return. Special provision is made for the spirit merchant and the brewer, and that is going far enough. If by any chance the hotel-keeper sold to another, an adjustment of the tax would be made. A spirit merchant's license is not a license to retail. We have the wholesale license and the retail license, the latter including the gallon license. The clause is clear as printed.

Mr. RICHARDSON: The clause is quite clear. Brewers and two-gallon licensees do not pay on their sales to licensed houses. The gallon licensee, however, pays on his purchases either from the two-gallon licensee or the brewer. All he is required to do is to pay on his purchases. When the brewer or the two-gallon licensee sells to people outside the trade he has to send in a return, and the tax is paid on that.

Mr. MONEY: If the holder of a one-gallon license is doing the same trade as a two-gallon licensee, why should he not be placed on the same footing with regard to the inci-

dence of taxation? The holder of a gallon license should not be called on to pay a higher tax than the other. That would be a rank injustice.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: A two-gallon licensee is looked upon as a wholesale man, whilst the gallon licensee is regarded as a retailer. If the former sells to any person, who does not hold a license, he must make a return. We must tax either on purchases or sales; we cannot do both. Does the hon. member expect the holders of a one-gallon license to furnish returns of possibly thousands of small sales they may have effected during the year?

Mr. Money: They would not object.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: For the purpose of drawing the line, a publican's general license is looked upon as a retail license. The one-gallon license also is looked upon as a retail license. The two-gallon license and the spirit merchant's license are looked upon as wholesale licenses.

Hon. P. Collier: And under those conditions you get everybody.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes.

Mr. MUNSIE: In the back country there are numbers of hotels which get their total supplies for the year through gallon licensees.

The Minister for Mines: Such an hotel-keeper will pay tax on what he purchases.

Mr. MUNSIE: There are dozens of hotels in this State which have as their agent a man with a gallon license.

Mr. Willcock: The object of that is to minimise freight on the railways.

Mr. MUNSIE: Yes. But where do the Government come in as regards revenue from the hotel-keeper who obtains his supplies by gallon license?

The Minister for Mines: The Government get their revenue from him twice. The single gallon man would pay on his purchases.

Mr. MUNSIE: But where does the hotel-keeper supplied by the agent come in? How do the Government know at all that he has an hotel?

The Minister for Mines: He has to pay the license fee.

Mr. MUNSIE: The man who has the gallon license will then have to make the return.

The Minister for Mines: Both will have to make returns.

Mr. Money: Then there will be double taxation?

Mr. Mann: The Premier has promised to reconsider that matter.

Mr. MUNSIE: In that case the difficulty may be got over.

Mr. RICHARDSON: I quite agree with the member for Hannans. The amendment of the member for Bunbury does not touch the difficulty. There is a liability to create double taxation. The amendment of the member for Bunbury runs in the wrong direction.

Mr. MONEY: My amendment puts the one-gallon licensee on exactly the same footing as the two-gallon licensee. If the return for 1922-23 had to be furnished on a turnover of, say, £5,000, it would be an unjust imposition, because a lot of that liquor would be included

also in the returns of hotel-keepers, and thus would be taxed twice. To differentiate as proposed between the man with a one-gallon license and the man with a two-gallon license would be unconstitutional. I fail to see any objection to the amendment.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: The question is where we shall commence to draw the line between a retailer and a wholesaler. The hotel-keeper has some sort of a claim to be regarded as a wholesaler, because he sells some liquor wholesale. If the holder of a one-gallon license desires to conduct his trade as a wholesale business, all he need do is to change from a one-gallon license to a two-gallon license. If, on the ground that each of them does some wholesale and some retail business, the one-gallon license is to be placed on the same basis as the two-gallon, or vice versa, why should not the hotel-keeper's license also be placed on the same basis? However, the chances are that if this Bill becomes law, there will not be so much purchasing between licensees, because both purchaser and seller will be taxed on their purchases. The difficulty which has been disclosed can be adjusted without such an amendment as that moved by the member for Bunbury.

Amendment put and negatived.

Several members rose; the Chairman called on Mr. Mann.

Mr. Pickering: Is he the only member allowed to move amendments?

The CHAIRMAN: I think that is a very impertinent remark of yours, Mr. Pickering; and I take strong exception to it. I think you ought to apologise for it. Do not let it occur again, or I will report you.

Mr. MANN: I have an amendment to move for the striking out of the word "ten" in Subclause 3.

The CHAIRMAN: That would be a consequential amendment, and would be made, as already stated by the Premier.

Mr. MANN: Very well; I will not move that amendment. I will, however, move this amendment—

That the following be added to stand as Subclause 3:—"In the year 1922 the return made as on the 31st day of December shall not include purchases of liquor, or, as the case may be, liquor sold or supplied prior to the first September, 1922."

The Minister for Mines: Why?

Mr. MANN: Because that will be in keeping with the amendment agreed to at the last sitting of the Committee for the taxation proposals to date as from the first of September this year.

The Minister for Mines: That has nothing to do with the amendment.

Mr. MANN: It has.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: One is a question of taxation, the other is a question of making a return. The returns will be for the 12 months, but the tax will be imposed only as from September. Returns could be prepared which would have the result of exempting the

bulk of the business from taxation seeing that the business would be transacted before the 1st of September. The subclause deals merely with the question of returns, showing the total sales and purchases as from the commencement of the year. The amendment agreed to dealt with a tax as from the 1st of September.

Mr. Mann: These returns should be as from the same date.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: There is no reason why the returns should not be for the year. The information will be of value in future years for the purposes of comparison. This has nothing to do with the tax. The position is very simple.

Mr. PICKERING: I support the amendment. It is consistent with an early amendment we agreed to. It is only fair that the return should be for the period upon which the licensees will be taxed.

The Minister for Mines: Taxation will not be retrospective.

Mr. McCALLUM: The Minister for Mines objects to the returns being limited to the period on which the tax will be assessed on the score that the details submitted may not represent a true record of the business transacted.

The Minister for Mines: Not quite that; these people have known for some time that the proposal would take this form.

Mr. McCALLUM: I take it that the returns are desired for 12 months but the tax will only be levied on the business as from the 1st of September to the end of the year.

Hon. P. Collier: It can only be taxed on the business transacted during that period.

The Minister for Mines: It does not affect the tax at all.

Mr. McCALLUM: The Minister apparently is afraid that the returns may be faked. If there should be any desire to fake the returns, that can be done whatever period is stipulated. The proposal in the Bill merely involves extra work and casts further obligations on the licensees without serving any good purpose for the Government.

The Minister for Works: The returns for the full year will be a guide for the assessment for the succeeding year. That is what the return is required for.

Mr. McCALLUM: The Government cannot know how trade will be from year to year, because business fluctuates.

The Minister for Works: The returns will be analysed and equalised.

Mr. McCALLUM: That is a poor argument. To be logical, the Government should go back for two or three years to find out where they stand.

The Minister for Mines: Whether the amendment be agreed to or not, it does not alter the position one iota.

Mr. McCALLUM: It makes this difference that the Government asks licensees to go back for a year in connection with their returns, but those returns will be of no use to them. The amendment should be accepted.

Mr. MONEY: I understood the Minister for Mines to say that the tax would start as from the 1st September. The Bill simply

provides for returns up to December, 1922. The license for 1922 is not affected at all. Next year the fee will be assessed on the returns furnished. I cannot follow the debate to-night because it is on entirely different grounds. The Premier gave hon. members an assurance that the license for 1922 was exempt from taxation and that if necessary he would put a clause in to that effect.

Mr. Munsie: In any case, it is exempt.

Mr. MONEY: The member for Perth says that the tax starts from the 1st September this year. That is not correct.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. PICKERING: I move an amendment—

That Subclause 4 be struck out.

The returns from the holder of a temporary license are not necessary, because the business transacted under such a license will be included in those dealing with his general license.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Under a temporary license, a licensee may take stock from that purchased under his general publican's license for purposes of sale in connection with his temporary license, and he will not make any return, because he has already made a return under his general license.

Mr. Pickering: Why should he have to pay twice?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Without this provision he could purchase direct from the brewery and make no return at all of what he sold under his temporary license.

Mr. JOHNSTON: Could not the Minister drop this provision and insert a clause providing that the holder of a publican's general license in his return shall include any liquor which he may sell under a temporary license? That would be more convenient. It will be almost impossible for a man who sells at a booth a few bottles out of his ordinary stock to prepare this special return.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member is reading the clause wrongly. If the licensee purchases liquor for sale under the temporary license, he must make a return.

Mr. Pickering: But he has to pay under his general license. Why make him pay also under his temporary license?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: If he buys direct for sale under his temporary license, he must make a return.

Mr. PICKERING: The whole basis of the Bill is payment on the net purchases. If, under his publican's license, he is compelled to make return of all that he purchases, it will include what he purchases for sale under his temporary license.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: If the hon. member would read the clause he would see its purport. The licensee has to make return of liquor purchased for sale under his temporary license. If he draws for sale under his temporary license liquor from stock held under his general publican's license, he will

make no return of it. If he purchases liquor for sale under his temporary license, it will not be shown as liquor purchased under his general publican's license, and so without this provision he will escape tax on it.

Hon. P. Collier: But under his general publican's license he has to make a return of all liquor that he purchases.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: In many cases the liquor taken to a racecourse is taken direct from the brewery or the merchant and sold under temporary license.

Hon. P. Collier: But is there not already on him an obligation to supply that return?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Not without this subclause, and so he could get out of payment of tax on the liquor sold in a booth. Under this provision if he purchases for sale under his temporary license, he has to make a return.

Mr. PICKERING: Subclauses 2 and 3 provide that returns must be made under his general license. Subclause 4 is not required, because if the licensee is not caught under the general licensing provisions, he will be caught under Subclauses 2 and 3.

Mr. McCALLUM: Subclause 4 provides that tax shall be levied on the amount paid or payable for liquor purchased, excluding the duties thereon. Is it intended that these duties shall embrace customs and excise? We do not want to impose a different tax on this class of license.

Mr. MONEY: The fact of a temporary license being granted would make the premises licensed premises. There might be some confusion where a man supplied a booth from his own premises.

Hon. P. Collier: Licensed premises mean any where liquor is being sold temporarily.

Mr. MONEY: That is so.

Mr. McCALLUM: Have I the assurance of the Premier that customs and excise will be covered by the reference "excluding the duties thereon"?

The Premier: Yes.

Amendment put and negatived.

On motion by Mr. Mann, Subclause 7 amended by inserting after "person" in line 5 the words "or to any registered club."

Mr. MANN: I move an amendment—

That in line 5 of Subclause 7 "twelve" be struck out and the word "four" inserted in lieu.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Is not there a danger of the amendment proving absurd? Later on the Treasurer might require particulars for the 12 months.

Mr. McCALLUM: The Treasurer, instead of being bound to a certain period ended the 31st December, should have the choice of a longer period. I suggest that the member for Perth ask leave to withdraw his amendment.

Mr. MANN: I ask leave to withdraw my amendment.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

Mr. McCALLUM: I move an amendment—
That in lines 5 and 6 of Subclause 7 the words "twelve months ended the thirty-first day of December then last preceding" be struck out and "period mentioned in such order" inserted in lieu.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. McCALLUM: I move a further amendment—

That in line 9 the word "fourteen" be struck out and "thirty" inserted in lieu.

Amendment put and passed.

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 36 to 37—agreed to.

Progress reported

House adjourned at 10.56 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 27th September, 1922.

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

QUESTION—MINISTERIAL ORDER OF PRECEDENCE.

Hon. P. COLLIER (without notice) asked the Minister for Works (in the absence of the Premier): Having regard to the statement made by the Premier, and published in the Press to-day, and to the fact that nothing has appeared in the "Government Gazette" altering the order of precedence of Ministers, will he inform the House who is now the second senior Minister of the Cabinet?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: It is a funny question to ask; I do not know whether I am in a position to say. I believe I am, but I do not know. I probably shall know shortly.

Hon. M. F. Troy: And great will be the fall thereof.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not know about that.

BILL—WYALCATCHEM-MOUNT MARSHALL RAILWAY (EXTENSION No. 2).

Second reading.

Debate resumed from the 29th August.

Mr. JOHNSTON (Williams-Narrogin) [4.35]: I know something about the district through which this proposed seven-mile extension will pass. Under ordinary circumstances, if the Government were doing their duty with regard to the construction of railways authorised since 1914—

The Minister for Works: The Government always do their duty.

Mr. JOHNSTON: If the Government were doing their duty, I might have assisted to pass this Bill, believing that the district is a good one. I have always supported the construction of agricultural railways, but the attitude of the Government recently towards railway authorisations and construction is such that I do not propose to give them any more power to build railways without very careful consideration and scrutiny. The other evening I referred at some length to the breach of faith committed by the Government in connection with the Narrogin-Dwarda railway. We all know how, after having spent £3,000 on the survey and clearing, they suddenly decided to stop the work.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! That matter is still before the House.

Mr. JOHNSTON: Yes, but if we give the Government power to build this line, I wish to know whether they intend to deal with it in a similar manner. If we pass this measure, do they intend to waste another £3,000 of the people's money by starting its construction and then holding up the work with a view to making further inquiry as to whether the advice of so many professional officers is correct?

The Minister for Works: On a point of order, is the hon. member in order in referring to a motion which is still on the Notice Paper, and on which he spoke recently?

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is not discussing that railway; he is just making some remarks leading up to this debate. I have already directed his attention to the fact that the railway referred to is still under consideration.

The Minister for Works: Shall I be in order when my turn comes in saying something in reply to the outrageous statements which the hon. member has already made?

Mr. SPEAKER: I shall be able to tell the hon. member when the time comes.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I want to know from the Minister, when he replies, whether, if the House gives authority to build this seven miles of railway, the Government intend to build it on the surveyed and authorised route, or whether they intend to act as they have done in connection with the Narrogin-Dwarda line. Is it intended to spend £3,000 on the survey and clearing and then to hold up this work on the plea that an investigation is required as to whether the authorised route should be