

It does not seem to admit of doubt that the general policy of the law is opposed to all restraints upon liberty of individual action which are injurious to the interests of the State or community. It must not be forgotten that the community has a material interest in maintaining the rules of fair dealing between man and man.

Lord Macknaghton summed up the position in these words—

The true view at the present time, I think, is this: The public have an interest in every person's carrying on his trade freely. So has the individual. All interference with individual liberty of action in trading, and all restraints of trade of them selves, if there is nothing more, are contrary to public policy and therefore void. There is the general rule. But there are exceptions. Restraints of trade and interference with individual liberty of action may be justified by the special circumstances of a particular case. It is a sufficient justification if the restriction is reasonable . . . that is in reference to the interests of the parties concerned and reasonable in reference to the interests of the public, so framed and so guarded as to afford adequate protection to the party in whose favour it is imposed, while at the same time it is in no way injurious to the public. That, I think, is the fair result of all the authorities.

These outside municipalities such as Claremont and Cottesloe have the right to come in and say, "the agreement between the Government and the Fremantle Tramway Board may be good as between those parties, but it is infringing upon our rights, and therefore is void as against us." That is why the report of the select committee is perfectly consistent. The agreement is good as between the parties, and is void only as regards outside bodies.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	11
Noes	..	..	..	6
Majority for	..	..	..	5

AYES.

Hon. F. A. Baglin	Hon. A. Lovekin
Hon. H. Boan	Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. J. Duffell	Hon. H. Seddon
Hon. J. Ewing	Hon. F. E. S. Willmott
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. J. J. Holmes
Hon. E. H. Harris	(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. H. P. Colebatch	Hon. E. Rose
Hon. R. J. Lynn	Hon. H. Stewart
Hon. J. M. Macfarlane	
Hon. J. Nicholson	(Teller.)

Question thus passed.

House adjourned at 6.20 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 7th December, 1922.

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

QUESTION—AVONDALE ESTATE.

Hon. P. COLLIER asked the Premier: 1, What was the price paid per acre by the Government for the repurchased Avondale Estate situated at Beverley? 2, How many acres have been sold and what is the selling price per acre?

The PREMIER replied: This question can best be answered by a return, which I hope to lay on the Table at the next sitting.

QUESTION—STORMWATER DRAINS, FREMANTLE.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (for Mr. Gibson) asked the Minister for Works: 1, What is the capital cost of each stormwater drain in the Fremantle municipality? 2, What is the amount of revenue received by the Government by way of stormwater rate for each of the above drains? 3, How long does the Government intend to place that charge on the ratepayers?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: This information should have been asked for in the form of a return. It will take some time to prepare, but will be got ready as quickly as possible.

QUESTION—PUBLIC SERVICE APPEAL BOARD.

Mr. HUGHES asked the Premier: 1, Has he read the report of the Public Service Commissioner in which, discussing the Public Service Appeal Board, he stated inter alia on page 5:—"One of the difficulties to be contended with is the irresponsibility of evidence given by some witnesses called from outside the service. My representative may obtain excellent evidence as to salaries paid outside the service to place before the board, but is met with a refusal to allow information given to him to be used publicly, whereas appellants

brought witnesses who had no hesitation—sometimes with very scanty knowledge of the officer's work—in expressing the opinion that the officer appealing was considerably underpaid; such evidence in some instances being given by men who had business relationships with the department in which the appellant was employed? 2, Will he make inquiries of the Public Service Commissioner for the purpose of ascertaining whether the Commissioner considers that there has been collusion between persons from outside the service giving evidence and those officers of the service on whose behalf such evidence has been given?

The PREMIER replied: 1, Yes. 2, The matter has been referred to the Public Service Commissioner for his attention.

QUESTION—CATTLE IMPORTATIONS.

Mr. J. H. SMITH (without notice) asked the Minister for Agriculture: 1, Is it correct, as I have been informed from different sources, that cattle from the Eastern States has been brought here during the last two months, and are now grazing in the Brunswick district? 2, If this is correct will the Minister explain why the regulation restrictions have been broken? 3, Has any dry stock arrived from the Eastern States at any time within the last two months?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE replied: 1, No stock has been imported from the Eastern States for the last 12 months other than for stud purposes. 2 and 3, Answered by No. 1.

SELECT COMMITTEE—SOLDIER SETTLEMENT.

Extension of time.

On motion by Mr. Wilson the time for bringing up the report was extended until the 20th December.

BILL—ESPERANCE NORTHWARDS RAILWAY EXTENSION.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—HOSPITALS.

In Committee.

Resumed from the previous day; Mr. Angelo in the Chair; the Colonial Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Clause 39—Hospital trust fund:

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move an amendment—

That in line 2 the word "trust" be struck out and "Minister" inserted in lieu.

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

Clause 40—Contributions to trust:

Hon. P. COLLIER: I hope this clause will be struck out.

The Premier: What will be the good of the Bill?

Hon. P. COLLIER: There will still be left the machinery clauses. This clause seeks to impose a tax of 1d. in the £1 upon all incomes, without regard to exemptions except those for pensioners. It is an iniquitous form of taxation. The principle of having taxation for specific purposes is wrong. If it were sound in this case, it would be equally sound to tax for the maintenance of every department of State. It is a departure from the recognised principle of raising revenue.

Point of Order.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I rise to a point of order. Subclause 1 reads—

Every person in receipt of income, salary or wages shall contribute to the fund an amount calculated at such rates not exceeding 1d. for pound as Parliament may from time to time declare and enact in respect of all such income, salary or wages.

The Constitution Act as passed last session provides—

Bills imposing taxation shall deal only with the imposition of taxation, and any provision therein dealing with any other matter shall be of no effect.

The Chairman: Before giving my decision I would like to hear the arguments which the Minister in charge of the Bill has to offer on this point.

The Premier: I understand that the part of this clause to which the member for North-East Fremantle objects, is Subclause 1. But when this Bill passes, it will be necessary to bring down another Bill imposing the tax. The present Bill does not impose a tax. It merely says that the tax shall not exceed 1d. in the pound of income.

Hon. T. Walker: I am sorry I cannot follow the Premier's argument. This Bill makes the imposition of the tax positively imperative. There is no avoidance. No provision is made for any subsequent confirmation or ratification. The subclause says "shall contribute." The tax is imposed here; the assessment from time to time is left to Parliament. The subclause is clearly mandatory, and therefore imposes a tax.

The Premier: But a tax could not be collected under this clause.

Hon. T. Walker: The tax could not be collected without this clause. All that is left subsequently to Parliament is to assess the tax.

The Premier: Parliament may say a farthing in the pound.

Hon. T. Walker: But the burden, whatever it may be, is placed upon the people by this subclause. The Constitution Acts Amendment Act of last session refers to

"Bills imposing taxation." This subclause imposes a tax of some kind. No person in Western Australia can escape it. The thing could not be more emphatic.

The Minister for Mines: On our Bill files we have measures dealing with taxation, containing clauses framed similarly to the clause now under discussion. Clause 2 of the Land and Income Tax Assessment Amendment Bill says—

If the income chargeable of any person, together with income received by him in respect of the dividends of a company, subject to duty under the Dividend Duties Act, 1902, amounts during the year next preceding the year of assessment to such a sum as if it were all income chargeable would be liable to income tax at a rate exceeding 1s. 3d. in the pound.

There the amount is fixed, but the tax is not imposed. A further measure is necessary to impose the tax. The same thing applies here. This is an assessment Bill, and without a second measure the tax could not be collected.

Hon. P. Collier: But the Land and Income Tax Assessment Amendment Bill, seeing that it deals with nothing but taxation, would not be out of order under the point raised by the member for North-East Fremantle.

The Minister for Mines: Last year's measure amending the Constitution provides that a Bill to impose a tax and collect it from the ratepayer shall deal with that subject, and that subject only.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The Act does not say "impose and collect." It says only "impose."

The Minister for Mines: If we did not pass a subsequent Bill to impose land and income tax this year, then, notwithstanding the Land and Income Tax Assessment Amendment Act, we could not collect any revenue. Exactly the same thing applies here. A Bill must be introduced to impose the taxation. The Solicitor-General, in drafting this Bill, was fully aware of the point, as is evident from a minute of his saying that the Bill might be questioned on that point.

Hon. P. Collier: Whilst we have the greatest regard for the opinion of the Solicitor-General, that officer, after all, is not the final authority upon our Constitution. I believe it is on record that at least once in his long official career the Solicitor-General has been mistaken in his interpretation of an Act of Parliament. I have it in mind that at least once his views in that connection were not endorsed by the courts of the land. The Minister for Mines has quoted the Land and Income Tax Assessment Act and contends that because it contains words similar to those in the subclause under discussion, the Bill cannot be out of order. That is entirely false reasoning so far as the point raised is concerned. The member for North-East Fremantle relies on the wording of Subsection 7 of Section 2 of the Constitution Act Amendment Act, 1921, which sets out that Bills imposing taxation shall deal only with the imposition of taxation. The point taken by the Minister regarding the Land and Income Tax

Assessment Act cannot stand because that measure deals only with taxation, whereas the Hospitals Bill deals with other matters as well.

The Minister for Mines: The Act imposes taxation; this does not. Does the Bill impose taxation?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Of course it does.

The Minister for Mines: And the Solicitor-General says it does not.

Hon. P. Collier: 't cannot be questioned that the Bill does not deal with taxation alone.

The Minister for Mines: But it does not impose taxation.

Hon. P. Collier: It does, in that it will be imperative upon the House, should the clause be agreed to, to impose taxation. The clause initiates taxation and the tax will have to be imposed. In those circumstances, I contend that the clause does impose taxation.

The Minister for Mines: If the Bill were passed to-day, no tax could be levied until another Bill had been brought before the Chamber.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: My point has been put clearly by the member for Kanowna and the Leader of the Opposition. The Bill deals with matters in addition to taxation. The clause states that every person in receipt of an income shall contribute to the fund an amount calculated at such a rate not exceeding 1d. per pound as Parliament may from time to time declare and enact.

The Minister for Mines: There you are!

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Under that clause, the Bill does impose taxation.

The Premier: Not at all. You know that very well.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The Land and Income Tax Assessment Act imposes taxation only. The Bill says what tax shall be paid.

The Premier: Yes, when Parliament says so in another Bill.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The Bill is contrary to the Constitution Act Amendment Act and I ask for a ruling.

The Chairman: The hon. member contends that the Bill is not in order, because of Subsection 7 of Section 2 of the Constitution Act Amendment Act passed last year. That subsection reads—

Bills imposing taxation shall deal only with the imposition of taxation, and any provision therein dealing with any other matter shall be of no effect.

In my opinion, no tax can be paid under the Bill any more than a tax could be paid under the Land and Income Tax Assessment Act without another measure being introduced which we know as the Land and Income Tax Act. In the Land and Income Tax Assessment Act, 1907, Section 9 reads almost similarly to the clause under discussion. It is as follows:—

Subject to the provisions of this Act there shall be levied and paid to the Commissioner for the use of His Majesty, at the times and in the manner hereinafter directed, a land tax at such rate as Parlia-

ment shall from time to time declare and enact per pound sterling of the assessed value of all land situate in Western Australia.

The Bill provides in the subclause under discussion as follows:—

Every person in receipt of income, salary, or wages shall contribute to the fund an amount calculated at such rate not exceeding one penny per pound as Parliament may from time to time declare and enact in respect of all such income, salary or wages.

In my opinion, the clause only provides the scale on which the tax is to be levied. It specifies the maximum tax to be levied and, therefore, I rule it is not a Bill imposing taxation but one that provides merely the scale on which taxation shall be levied. A subsequent Bill will have to be introduced to give effect to that provision so that the tax can be collected. In the circumstances, I rule that the Bill is in order.

Dissent from Chairman's ruling.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I move—

That the Chairman's ruling be dissented from.

The grounds on which I move are that the Hospitals Bill imposes a tax contrary to Subsection 7 of Section 2 of the Constitution Act Amendment Act, 1921, as the Hospitals Bill deals with other matters.

[The Deputy Speaker resumed the Chair.]

The Chairman reported the dissent from his ruling.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Clause 40 provides that any person in receipt of income, salary or wages shall contribute to the fund. The Constitution Act as amended last session provides, in Subsection 7 of Section 2, that Bills imposing taxation shall deal only with the imposition of taxation, and that any provisions therein dealing with any other matter shall be of no effect. It has been said that the Hospitals Bill is similar to the Land and Income Tax Assessment Act. But that Act deals exclusively with taxation, and has to be followed by the Land and Income Tax Act providing what the tax shall be. The Hospitals Bill deals with other matters besides taxation.

Hon. T. Walker: Indeed, the other matters are the chief matters.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I maintain, therefore, that the Hospitals Bill is contrary to the Constitution Act Amendment Act of 1921.

The Minister for Mines: The whole point hinges on the question of whether the Hospitals Bill imposes a tax. If, because of the language of Clause 40, it imposes a tax, then the Land and Income Tax Assessment Act also imposes a tax. Nobody knows better than the hon. member that it does nothing of the sort, that it merely provides the machinery for assessing a tax. The Hospitals Bill is only the machinery for imposing a tax. Before that tax can be levied, it will be neces-

sary to bring down another Bill. The hon. member knows that is the position.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I know that this Bill imposes a tax.

The Minister for Mines: Then so also does the Land and Income Tax Assessment Act—which is nonsense, for it has to be done by a separate Act. The Hospitals Bill does not impose a tax, and so it does not come under the Constitution Act.

Hon. T. Walker: The Minister will not deny that the Land and Income Tax Assessment Act is a taxation measure. That being so, it is perfectly right that language of the kind employed in Clause 40 of the Hospitals Bill should appear in that Act, because it is a taxation measure and it deals with nothing but taxation. That is the point. The language employed in Clause 40 would be in order in a taxation measure dealing with nothing but taxation.

Mr. Money: But to come under the Constitution Act, the Bill must impose a tax.

Hon. T. Walker: The Bill lays down the extent of the tax.

The Minister for Mines: But it does not impose taxation.

Hon. T. Walker: The Land and Income Tax Assessment Act deals with nothing but taxation.

Mr. Money: That is not the point. The point is the imposition of a tax.

Hon. T. Walker: The Hospitals Bill imposes a tax, but before the tax materialises we shall require another Bill. Still, the Bill imposes a tax. It is the first stage in the imposition of taxation.

Mr. Latham: Could the tax be collected without another Bill?

Hon. T. Walker: One is the complement of the other. In many instances several steps are necessary, one being only the complement to the other.

Mr. Money: But this is not complete. There is no imposition.

Hon. T. Walker: True, it is not complete, but it is a necessary step.

Mr. Latham: Only the bottom one.

Hon. T. Walker: It is the essential one.

The Colonial Secretary: One step does not take you very far.

Hon. T. Walker: Never mind how far it may take you, it is part and parcel of the thing.

The Colonial Secretary: It is ineffective by itself.

Hon. P. Collier: You could not have got on the second rung of the political ladder had you not been on the first.

Hon. T. Walker: It is here declared that every person in receipt of income, salary or wages shall contribute to the fund. There is the foundation. This binds Parliament to take a further step for the completion of the imposition of taxation.

The Minister for Mines: Under your reading of the Constitution Act, Clause 40 of the Bill is in order, and the rest of the Bill is out of order.

Hon. T. Walker: Clause 40 has no right to be in a Bill dealing with other matters.

The Minister for Mines: You are upside down. You are declaring the one legitimate point in the Bill to be the one wrong point.

Hon. T. Walker: The Constitution Act reads, "Bills imposing taxation shall deal only with the imposition of taxation, and any provision therein dealing with any other matter shall be of no effect."

The Minister for Mines: There you are! On your own showing Clause 40 is the only legitimate clause in the Bill.

Hon. T. Walker: This is the only clause on which the point can be raised. If the Clause be struck out, the rest of the Bill will be in order; but if the clause remains, the rest of the Bill will be of no effect.

The Minister for Mines: Therefore this clause is in order.

Hon. T. Walker: No, this is taking the first step in the imposition of taxation.

Hon. P. Collier: And a mighty big step.

Hon. T. Walker: A Bill containing this clause must deal with matters of taxation. If there be any matter affecting taxation in a Bill, the rest of the Bill not dealing with taxation is null and void.

The Minister for Mines: Then you are raising your point of order on the wrong clause.

Hon. T. Walker: It is the only point at which it can be raised. How could we tell until we came to the clause whether the Bill imposed taxation or not? This clause takes the first step towards taxation. The clause appears in a measure which is not a taxation measure like an Income Tax Bill. An Income Tax Bill is purely a taxation measure, and therefore a clause of this kind would be harmonious in it, but where the rest of the Bill is extraneous to that clause, it nullifies the Bill.

The Minister for Mines: It does not impose a tax.

Hon. T. Walker: It is out of order in the Bill. The latter portion of the clause only renders the first portion more emphatic. It must deal with taxation only. If it deals with more, it is not worth a snap of the fingers.

The Minister for Mines: It says "any Bill to impose a tax."

Hon. T. Walker: And this Bill is a first step in that direction.

The Minister for Mines interjected.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I wish the Minister would shut up.

Hon. T. Walker: A man who puts a razor to another man's throat and draws blood takes the first step towards murder.

The Minister for Mines: He would not have committed murder.

Hon. T. Walker: It is part of the process. This is part of the process of imposing taxation, a link in the chain, one of the essentials to the imposition of taxation.

Mr. Harrison: This is the razor which has not been applied.

Hon. T. Walker: It says "every person shall contribute" up to 1d. in the pound. That is a very strong application. This appears in a Bill which does not deal wholly with taxation, and therefore it is out of order in a Bill which is ulterior to taxation and a portion of which is for other purposes entirely.

Mr. Money: There is a test which might be applied by the member for Kanowna. Let there be an attempt under Clause 40 to collect what he says is a tax, and what would be the answer? The answer would be, "Wait until it is imposed. It is not yet imposed."

Hon. T. Walker: That is not a test.

Mr. Money: Subsection 7 of Section 2 of the Act of 1921 states that Bills imposing taxation shall deal only with the imposition of taxation, and any provision therein dealing with any other matter shall be of no effect. The point would arise when a measure imposing taxation was brought down if that measure included anything else. It is as yet too early to raise the point, because this measure does not impose taxation. We must interpret it reasonably. Any tax imposed is collectable. No tax could be collected under Clause 40, because the provision would be incomplete. Parliament would first have to decide to impose the tax, and Parliament has not yet decided it.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The clause definitely states that every person in receipt of income shall contribute to the fund an amount not exceeding 1d.

Mr. Money: Read the balance of the clause which stipulates when Parliament so orders.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I am doubtful as to that. The hon. member would take a case in the court if I refused to pay my tax. He would argue pretty forcibly that the measure laid an obligation on me to contribute to the fund.

Mr. Money: When Parliament imposes it.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That is not a point the hon. member would take in a court. He would argue that the law clearly laid down that every person shall contribute, and, so long as the tax does not exceed 1d. it is collectable. This clause really imposes a tax. Parliament can vary the amount, but that is the only difference.

The Premier: That is the admission we want.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: But the tax is imposed under this Bill.

The Premier: It only declares the form of tax.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: But it says every person shall contribute.

Mr. Money: It not only fixes the amount, but adds "as Parliament may declare and enact."

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The clause is contrary to the Constitution Act Amendment Act because it contains other matter. The hon. member said I was premature in raising the point. This is the first time a Bill of this kind has been introduced since the pass-

ing of the Constitution Act Amendment of 1921. I want to assist the Colonial Secretary in getting the other provisions of the Bill through.

The Colonial Secretary: That is the spirit.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I do not wish to see the Bill declared of no effect after it has left us.

The Premier: If there is no money, there can be no Bill.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Clause 40 imposes a tax and contains other matters contrary to the Constitution Act Amendment Act.

The Deputy Speaker: The member for North-East Fremantle, in the course of his argument, said the Land and Income Tax Assessment Act provided a tax. I am fortified in the decision I am about to give by the fact that when the Federal Income Tax Assessment Bill was before the Senate in 1915, it was dealt with as an ordinary Bill and not as a Bill imposing taxation.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I did not say that.

The Deputy Speaker: I understood the hon. member to say that.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: No, I referred to the question of taxation only.

The Deputy Speaker: A message was returned from the Senate to the House of Representatives requesting concurrence in the amendments made, but not requesting them. The Land and Income Tax Assessment Act does not impose taxation, but provides a scale of taxation which is imposed by the Land Tax and Income Tax Act. In my judgment, therefore, the ruling of the Chairman of Committees must be upheld.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The decision is quite opposed to the reasons.

The Minister for Mines: From our point of view, the reasons are extraneous.

Committee resumed.

Clause 40—Contributions to trust:

Hon. P. COLLIER: When the point of order was raised, I was dealing with the question of imposing a tax under this Bill. This is an antiquated method of raising taxation. This clause appears in the Bill and the Bill has been introduced because the Government find themselves in need of additional revenue. The revenue for the year is not sufficient to enable them to carry on the services of government, and they propose to raise an additional £123,000. The proper and recognised method of raising taxation should have been adopted by the Government when they found themselves in need of more money. They should have brought down a Bill dealing with taxation generally, amending the existing statutes so that the additional amount of revenue required might be obtained. The question of taxation should be confined to taxation Bills and not extended to a measure of this description. For more reasons than one, the Government refrained from adopting that course. In the first place, it would have been well known to the public that the Government were increasing taxation and so, to avoid any hostility which might have been

engendered towards the Government, they decided to adopt this method under the guise of a Hospitals Bill. There is no reference in the Title to taxation and taxation is the sole reason for the Bill. Under the Title of a Hospitals Bill, the Government seek by a subterfuge to raise an additional £123,000 a year by way of taxation. This method is not justifiable. Why do not the Government amend the Land and Income Tax Assessment Bill, and by that means provide for raising additional money?

The Premier: I do not know so much about that. I do not know that we would get it through.

Hon. P. COLLIER: If members are willing to give the Government authority under this Bill to raise £123,000, why would they not give the same authority under another Bill? Yesterday they declared—although it involved a loss, according to the Premier, of £70,000 a year—that no married person in receipt of less than £200 a year should be liable for taxation, and no single person in receipt of less than £100 a year. Are they going to stultify themselves to-day and say that every person in the State, irrespective of income, shall be subject to taxation under this Bill? It would be absurd, illogical and unreasonable to act in that way. Even a washerwoman earning 15s. a week must pay under this Bill.

The Colonial Secretary: She would be exempt.

Hon. P. COLLIER: No. A girl in receipt of 2s. 6d. a week would pay.

Mr. Money: That would be too small an amount from which to make the deduction.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The cash could be collected monthly or quarterly as the case may be. No doubt the ingenuity of some members would be capable of devising means of extracting the tax even from an income of 2s. 6d. a week.

Mr. Mann: We had this in mind yesterday.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Was the hon. member prepared to give something away yesterday, so that he might take it back to-day? This is a miserable, contemptible and paltry subterfuge under the guise of sentiment. It may be good sentiment, but it is not sound economics.

Mr. Teesdale: Is it the principle to which you object? It cannot be a financial loss upon anyone.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I object to both. Although yesterday we declared that a man in receipt of under £200 a year should pay no tax, under this we propose to make him pay 16s. 8d.

Mr. Teesdale: Is that not something everybody would like to do? People do not care to be dependent upon charity.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Ninety-five per cent. of these people would not get any free service. They would still be liable to pay for their treatment in the hospital.

Mr. Mann: If they can afford it.

Hon. P. COLLIER: There is no other form of taxation in this State in which the man in receipt of a small income pays in the

same proportion to the man in receipt of a large income. A man earning £5,000 a year will pay only at the equivalent rate of the man in receipt of 10s. a week.

The Premier: At 10s. he would not pay anything.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes, he will.

Mr. Teesdale: This ought to be cleared up. One member says it will and the other says it will not do so.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The Bill says that people shall pay to the nearest pound. This does not affect the principle.

The Premier: It does.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The small wage earner will actually pay more than the equivalent paid by the rich man.

Capt. Carter: He will get something for that which he pays.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That assumes that every taxpayer will be a charge upon the Government for hospital attention.

Capt. Carter: It is possible to get it, but it is not possible for the man on the higher rate to get it.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The Government hope to extract another £123,000 from the people under the guise of sentiment.

Mr. Latham: It is for a good purpose.

Hon. P. COLLIER: What a ridiculous and nonsensical interjection. Will the hon. member say that the money raised for education, or for maintaining the Claremont Asylum is not used for a good purpose?

Mr. Latham: A man has to pay for services if he can afford them.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Are we raising money and spending it in a way that is not for a good purpose. The purpose for which the money is to be used does not enter into the argument. This is a wretched, miserable, paltry, contemptible form of taxation. The days of special taxation for specific purposes have long gone by. The recognised principle of taxing is to impose taxation by way of land tax, income tax, dividend tax, and so forth, thereby raising sufficient funds for the administration of the country. Did anyone ever hear of such a retrograde step as making every employer in the State a tax gatherer? The taxation under this Bill would require the elaborate machinery of a special department in order to ensure that every person liable to pay the tax paid it, and that every employer did the things imposed on him by the Bill.

The Colonial Secretary: The wages sheets would be open to inspection.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The Minister's interjection shows how costly the administration of the measure would be. How many inspectors of wages sheets would be needed?

The Colonial Secretary: There is only one inspector under the Stamp Act.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That is mere grammatical information, which I am not going to accept. The Minister should make himself reasonably acquainted with the features of his Bill. To say that one inspector would suffice to check the wages sheets of all the

employers in the State from Wyndham to Eucla is positively absurd.

The Colonial Secretary: He could check them from time to time.

Mr. Mann: Every employer puts in a return of his employees to the Taxation Department.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I am not contending that a check is impracticable. What I contend is that the check will prove most costly.

Mr. Mann: But the inspector would not need to travel all over the State.

Mr. Money: It would be the same as with receipt stamps to-day. Receipts are not inspected, but the stamps are used by everybody.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The question of receipt stamps is a different matter altogether. Even if the taxation under this Bill could be collected without any additional cost, the whole principle of it is wrong. The proposed method of taxing is antiquated and ridiculous. Members in touch with the working classes know of thousands of cases of men struggling on less than £4 a week, and finding themselves unable to give their children the food they should have. I know what a struggle thousands of householders in casual employment have in the metropolitan area, men getting three days' work per week. How are such men in a position to pay this tax? Even if the amount is only 16s. 8d. per year, that amount would frequently mean the difference between a child getting a pair of boots or going barefooted for another week. The member for Leederville said some time ago that a person with a higher income would not benefit from the public hospitals. But such a person benefits as well as the humble and poor, because hospitals render a community service.

Capt. Carter: Then everybody gets a quid pro quo. That is your argument.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes, in the same way as in the matter of education. That being so, let taxpayers pay in accordance with the recognised method. The guiding principle is that a man shall not be called upon to pay taxation unless he is in receipt of an income which enables him to pay. The money to be raised under this Bill is money required in a general way by the Government to maintain the services of the State. That being so, the ordinarily accepted methods of raising revenue should be adopted. Let us follow the usual principle of taxation and not adopt a miserable policy of putting a penny stamp on the receipts for wages of 10s. a week, and so on. I hope the clause will be deleted if it should form no part of a Bill of this description. There cannot be any objection to the portions of the Bill dealing with the maintenance and control of hospitals, but the taxation clause should find no place in a Bill described as a Hospitals Bill.

The PREMIER: The Leader of the Opposition would have the Committee believe that he would give the people the control of hospitals and allow them to draw on the Treasury for their requirements.

Hon. P. Collier: The Government would have control, not the people.

The PREMIER: That is not so.

Hon. P. Collier: The Premier does not know the Bill.

The PREMIER: The people will control the hospitals.

Mr. Marshall: Through their local committees?

The PREMIER: Yes. They will continue in control.

Hon. P. Collier: The Bill does not relieve them at all.

The PREMIER: It will mean that the money raised will be spent to a large extent through the local committees. I do not object to paying this taxation. I do not think they wish to escape taxation. They expect to pay. We shall have to look after the ordinary purposes of government, and there are exemptions provided in connection with our taxation proposals.

Hon. P. Collier: This is for the usual purposes of government.

The PREMIER: It is not.

Hon. P. Collier: Yes it is, just as much as education and so forth.

The PREMIER: Not at all. It would be absurd for the Committee to believe that people object to paying something. Under the amendment agreed to by the Committee, in connection with the income tax proposals, it means that the whole burden of taxation will fall upon 18,000 people.

Mr. Marshall: It should fall on a fewer number than that.

The PREMIER: I have no doubt the hon. member thinks so, but when the whole of that burden falls on only 18,000 people we are going too far.

Mr. Hughes: Some of the 18,000 can pass it on.

Mr. Marshall: Some of those who receive an income of thousands are not too badly off.

The PREMIER: To say that 18,000 people are to pay the whole of the income tax imposed in Western Australia is going altogether too far. I believe in exempting people in receipt of under £200.

Hon. P. Collier: But you voted against the proposal last night.

The PREMIER: Yes, because we were relieving people drawing up to £800.

Hon. P. Collier: You were against giving a concession to a man receiving £156.

The PREMIER: I am not opposed to that, but I object to exempting a man getting £800.

Hon. P. Collier: It is Hobson's choice with you. You have been made to accept it.

Mr. Munsie: Of how much will the man getting £750 a year be relieved.

The PREMIER: The tax paid by these people on receiving the high amounts will be reduced to a considerable extent.

Mr. McCallum: Are you prepared to exempt people receiving under £200 from the payment of the hospital tax?

The PREMIER: No, I am not prepared to exempt anyone. I think they should be willing to pay.

Mr. Marshall: You will find that a lot of people are not willing to pay.

Mr. Corboy: Will you be logical and enable the people to get free treatment?

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Hon. members must cease interjecting; they will have an opportunity to speak.

The PREMIER: With the exemption of £40 for each child, if hon. members work out the income tax to be paid by a man receiving £500 a year, presuming he has four children, they will be surprised at the result. The method proposed of collecting money for hospitals is a fair one. It is to be paid weekly by means of stamps, and it will be easy to collect. It is much easier for a man to pay the tax in small weekly instalments than to pay a larger lump sum once a year. Many men contribute nothing towards the hospitals at present, but they will have to contribute when the Bill becomes law. I know a great number of people escape the payment of income tax, but that cannot be helped, because we cannot find them. Under the Bill, all will pay. The Bill was referred to a select committee representative of all parties, and they agreed to a tax of this sort.

Hon. P. Collier: Not as provided in the Bill.

The PREMIER: Yes.

Hon. P. Collier: They did not! Do not misrepresent the position.

The PREMIER: I do not intend to do so. It cannot reasonably be expected that, in addition to the £123,000 we desire to raise under the Bill, the Government can spend another £123,000 from general revenue. Apart from the fact that that amount would not be necessary, the State could not afford to do so. Hospitals are required in different parts of the country, and the people who want hospitals are those who will welcome this Bill in particular. It will be much cheaper for people in the country to pay a small contribution, such as that suggested in the Bill, than to face the expense of bringing a doctor from a distant township, or else conveying the patient to a larger centre. The measure is a fair one, and the people will welcome it. A special service is to be rendered to them, and it is only reasonable that they should be asked to pay. Hon. members do not seem to realise that the whole of the taxation raised is not sufficient to pay for the free services rendered to the people.

Hon. P. Collier: Well, amend your taxation measure.

The PREMIER: We cannot tax the people beyond their ability to pay.

Hon. P. Collier: But that is what you are doing now.

Mr. Marshall: That is the purpose of the Bill.

The PREMIER: Nothing of the sort.

Mr. Marshall: You are adopting a back-door system of getting taxation.

The PREMIER: The hon. member has no right to say that. It is a perfectly fair and open system.

Mr. Marshall: There is no precedent in the Commonwealth for this taxation.

The PREMIER: The Bill is a perfectly plain one. It has been before hon. members for a long time and it can easily be understood. I do not wish to impose taxation on men on the lower rungs of the ladder any more than any other hon. member, but I want to provide services for them and it is necessary to have the tax. The Federal and State income tax is high at present. It is all very well to say that a man in receipt of £3,000 a year is well able to pay the greater part of the income tax, but we must realise that that man is employing others and has to employ his capital in the enterprises necessary to support our industries. We must remember that that man has responsibilities that have to be met.

Hon. P. Collier: The man who is trying to feed his kids has a responsibility, too.

The PREMIER: I quite agree with that.

Hon. P. Collier: Let some hon. members try to rear families on £4 a week.

The PREMIER: I know it is difficult, but I believe that the people who are getting £4 a week will not object to pay this small amount.

Mr. Hughes: How do you know that?

The PREMIER: I know it just as well as the hon. member.

Mr. Hughes: I have not heard one in favour of it.

The PREMIER: In any case, I hope the Committee will agree to the clause.

Mr. CHESON: I oppose the clause. It is proposed to raise £123,000 by way of taxation under the Bill. That will not relieve the people at all. In outback country districts people are paying 6s. a month towards the upkeep of their local hospital, and they have free treatment at the institution. The clause will merely relieve the Government to the extent of £123,000. The Bill provides for a contribution of £15,000 from the Government. It means that the people in the outback districts will have to continue their contribution of 6s. a month to maintain their hospitals. The Royal Commission proposed to relieve those people, but there is no provision here in the Bill. With the carrying of the clause, and the payment of the hospital tax, the people in the outback areas will have to pay for treatment if they go to the hospitals where, till now, they have been entitled to free treatment for the payment of 6s. a month. This Bill is designed to relieve the Government and it will confer no benefit whatever on the people. It will merely inflict a further burden on people who are not in a position to bear it.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I move an amendment—

That after "one," in line 3 of Sub-clause 1, the word "half" be inserted.

If there is to be such an iniquitous, pettifogging tax as this, I propose to make it as light as possible. Even if the amount is thus limited, I shall not support the principle, but shall endeavour to defeat the clause afterwards. The Premier said he believes everyone is willing and anxious to pay. It is absurd to say that men who cannot feed, clothe and house their families as they desire and as they ought to be able to do, should have to pay taxation for any purpose whatever. I only wish that members, who would so light heartedly decree that thousands of householders struggling to live and rear families should pay taxation, could be compelled to live for a month or two in some of the houses, on the diet, and under the conditions common to these people. They would soon change their ideas.

Mr. Marshall: They know nothing of the conditions under which a big section of the community exist.

Mr. Latham: The member for Murchison is the only one who does.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It is easy for those, so circumstanced that they need not stint themselves, to say that someone else shall pay. When the Income Tax Assessment Bill was before us and the clauses affecting the commercial community were under consideration, members showed considerable keenness and alertness.

Mr. Pickering: What about yesterday?

Hon. P. COLLIER: I have seen members armed with typewritten opinions, drafted in the offices of leading King's Counsel in the city, as to the effect of certain amendments when the question involved was the payment of income tax by the squatter, the pastoralist or the big business man. Such members have not hesitated to move amendments to taxation Bills in order to relieve wealthy men from the payment of taxation.

Mr. Durack: Members of Parliament relieve themselves very well.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I did not name the hon. member. Why should he squeal? He is one of the members who come here with typewritten amendments from leading solicitors in order to relieve himself of taxation. That is the reason why some men try to get into Parliament. They wish to lighten the load of taxation on themselves and on the section they represent.

Mr. Latham: That is not fair.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I have seen evidence of it. The people and posterity have been robbed of their rights owing to the amendments made to the Land Act by men who were materially interested. The pastoral areas have been taken away for 30 years by methods which would be a scandal if indulged in in the lowest pot-house. Parliament has been led to accept amendments which meant large sums of money to members of the House, and to the sections they represent outside the House. The keenness with which taxation Bills are followed when they are likely to affect the pockets of the wealthy section of the community is obvious. But

these same members display a lackadaisical indifference when it is a matter of making the wage-earner pay. Another 100,000 wage-earners are to be affected by this taxation, and the attitude of those members is one of indifference. It is time the people knew the motives which actuated some men in their desire to secure seats in the House and the reason why some people are prepared to spend thousands of pounds to win an election. It is because of the power and influence it gives them in legislation of this kind. They are able to pay big fees to King's Counsel to draft amendments for them in order to defeat the objects of measures which would make some of them pay a little more to the taxation of the country. But when it is a matter of taking taxation from unfortunate individuals receiving only £2, £3 or £4 a week, members sit back unconcerned, apparently prepared to support it. In the North-West the rich pastoral areas have been handed over—

Mr. Durack: It is good electioneering stuff.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It is true and the hon. member is one of those who have benefited by such legislation. He is one who has come here armed with amendments prepared by lawyers in the city, and endeavoured to secure the insertion of those amendments because they would benefit his own personal interests. Whether it is good electioneering stuff or not, it is true. If the truth is good electioneering stuff, it will do no harm. I am astonished that Parliament should adopt a schoolboy's method of imposing a tax of this kind. How many of the people who will be called upon to pay it will have occasion to use a hospital? If it is sought to make people pay for services rendered them, at tax for education would be justified. A larger percentage of the people receive the benefits of free education than would ever hope to receive any benefit from a hospital. What percentage of the 140,000 people who will have to pay the tax will receive any benefit? A very small percentage.

Mr. Latham: We sincerely hope they will not need it.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Of course. The hon. member, having had the benefit of 9s. a bushel for wheat from the taxpayers of the country, some of which wheat was sold to the Germans and Japanese for 5s. a bushel, can afford to sit back.

Mr. Latham: I have never sold a bag of it. You mean those I represent and not me personally.

Hon. P. COLLIER: When a man belongs to a section of the community who received such assistance as was demonstrated by the report of the select committee read yesterday, assistance to the extent of six millions of money—

Mr. Latham: And have paid interest on every penny.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Many of them have paid nothing. During recent years they have been able to make money because of the

Government assistance. To-day they are riding in motor cars, and it is easy for the hon. member to sit back and say that the wage-earners shall pay this taxation. The government of this country in recent years has been carried on with practically the sole object of benefiting one section of the community. The functions of Government have been utilised for the benefit of sections only, and of no section to a greater extent than that represented by the hon. member. The hon. member would rope in 100,000 wage-earners and make them pay this taxation. If we want additional revenue, let those in receipt of the incomes pay it. The men who have been getting 9s. a bushel for their wheat could pay.

Mr. Latham: They will pay it under this Bill.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes, and at the same rate as the unfortunate individual who is receiving only £2 or £3 a week.

Mr. Latham: And will get no benefit from it.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Ninety-five per cent. of the wage-earners who pay will receive no benefit, either. What warrant is there for this gratuitous assumption that every wage-earner is going to be a pauper and to receive free service from the hospitals? The hon. member is adopting the attitude of a philanthropist. The farmers are prepared to pay some taxation to assist the wage-earners to get free hospital attention!

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Twenty-thousand wage-earners pay into friendly societies.

Hon. P. COLLIER: A big percentage by paying into lodges, medical funds and benefit societies make provision for days of sickness. On top of that those 20,000 members of friendly societies are to be made to pay this tax. Only a Government that have run the State into bankruptcy and are themselves mentally bankrupt could conceive such a proposal as this. Here is the result of six years of Nationalism.

Mr. Piesse: Who started it?

Hon. P. COLLIER: It was started mainly by the section whom the hon. member interjecting represents. They started it, and accelerated the speed of the drift. Six years ago the Government went into office with a pledge to the country that the drift would be stopped and the finances restored to soundness, and all this without the imposition of any additional taxation. The result is that we have to-day a deficit of, roughly, six millions sterling. For the current financial year we have accumulated in five months a deficit of £635,000.

Mr. Wilson: Who started it?

Hon. P. COLLIER: Certainly the party opposite are never going to stop it. Six years of respectable business government—not Bolshevik, or Beaufort-street, or head-hunting government—have landed us in the present deplorable financial position. There have been increases in taxation and increases in the deficits, and the Government

have now reached a stage where they cannot carry on without taxing the pittance of boys and girls working for wages! Our immigration office should be reinforced by someone from this State who would tell the English people exactly what the position is here. Someone should tell the English people that if they land here and earn even 10s. per week they will be taxed under this measure.

Mr. Pickering: They are taxed through the Customs.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes. When the Premier said that only 18,000 persons in this State paid income tax, he forgot that the people pay practically all taxation through the Customs. I have always endeavoured to put forward the brightest side as regards this State, but if this kind of legislation passes I am going to make it known outside Western Australia that the general conditions of life in this community have fallen to such a level that the Government are forced to tax the pennies of the lowest wage earners in order to maintain the hospitals. Any self-respecting Parliament would be ashamed of such a proposal as this Bill. The smug-faced round-bellied men whom Mr. Hughes described can stand up and boast of this as the richest State, with the greatest potentialities, to be found in the Commonwealth. It may be true that there is prosperity here, because in almost every country of the world we witness side by side extremes of poverty and extremes of wealth—mansions flanked by over-crowded hovels.

Mr. Durack: What is the reason of the over-crowding?

Hon. P. COLLIER: It is caused largely by the fact that some men are privileged to hold two or three million acres of land. If the hon. member interjecting stands for any policy, it is a policy in opposition to making the lands of Western Australia available to the people in small holdings.

Mr. Durack: There is plenty of land available.

Hon. P. COLLIER: A member representing the North-West said here two nights ago that he was greatly disappointed because the pastoralists of the North, holding millions of acres, were unwilling to make even 5 or 10 acres available for cotton growing. That is the policy responsible for over-crowded conditions in this State. If the proposal advocated by that representative of the North-West with regard to cotton growing were adopted, it is possible that thousands now living under conditions of over-crowding—

Mr. Durack: There is plenty of room, millions of acres.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes, plenty of room, but "keep off the grass" so far as the squatters' holdings are concerned.

Mr. Durack: We know it is not being taken up.

The CHAIRMAN: I must ask the member for Kimberley to keep order.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The most infamous Act ever passed through this House is that which enables the hon. member and others to retain possession of their huge holdings for the next 30 years. The people do not know the facts thoroughly. If they did, they might resort to direct action with regard to some members of the Parliament which was responsible for that Act. I know why it is that over 50 per cent. of the people of Victoria are crowded into the cities.

Mr. Piesse: You tried it on at Eucla.

Hon. P. COLLIER: What did I try on at Eucla?

Mr. Piesse: You tried the squatting business there.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The hon. member interjecting is one of those gentlemen—

Mr. Piesse: Stick to yourself.

Mr. McCallum: That is a miserable insinuation.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I will stick to the hon. member. He is one of those double-faced gentlemen—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I cannot allow that. That is a reflection.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I will say the hon. member is one of those gentlemen who say in the corridor, "Yes, I agree with every word you say. No other Government of this State has done so much for the farmers as your Government did." He will say that to you personally, outside, where it can have no effect; but he has never been honest enough or frank enough to say it in the country or in the House. He is one of the first to deny in the House what he says outside to you personally.

Mr. Piesse: Never! I have never denied it.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I never attempted any land monopoly at Eucla, as the hon. member suggested.

Mr. Piesse: I did not say you did; I merely said you went in for a picked spot.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The hon. member did say it.

Mr. McCallum: Of course, he did.

Hon. P. COLLIER: In the future, I shall be glad if the hon. member will refrain from expressing to me outside this Chamber the views which he is not willing to express inside. I do not desire to have his personal assurances of support given outside, and this display of hostility inside. I prefer a man who is frank, not the man who has one face for outside and another face for inside this Chamber.

Mr. Durack interjected.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I do not stand for what the hon. member stands for. I do not advocate employment of black and cheap labour. I am hostile to that kind of policy. That is a kind of nationalism the hon. member stands for, nationalism that will sink this State with black labour and that will bring more wealth to him.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member to refrain from this kind of argument.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I intend to reply to the interjections of the member for Kimberley. If you wish me to keep order, you will have to keep him quiet.

The CHAIRMAN: I ask the member for Kimberley to refrain from making constant and unseemly interjections.

Hon. P. COLLIER: People who stand for the Empire should not prate about bringing in coloured trash to develop our areas. I was saying that we have reached a nice pass in this State, with all its boasted prosperity and wealth, when we have to come down to the question of raising £120,000 by taxing people on the bread line and below it. Girls getting 15s. a week have to pay income tax, and they will also have to pay this tax. Domestic servants who are taxed already will under this proposal also have to pay. And this is after six years of the beneficent rule of nationalism! This, too, from men with business instincts! This is indicative of the deplorable state into which the country has drifted. We have piled up direct taxation to the extent of £600,000 a year; we have piled up a deficit of six millions, and we have a deficit for the five months of the current year amounting to £635,000. Now we are going to launch upon an orgy of borrowing and spending in order to bring us around. It is the action of the prodigal who has disposed of his substance and who makes a desperate plunge with the few pounds remaining, in the hope that something may happen to enable him to recover. We are about to spend in this almost financially derelict country four millions; in other words, we propose to live on that amount of borrowed money. So long as we can find people willing to lend us money, there will be a certain amount of artificial prosperity and it will remain while the expenditure of that money goes on, and while we are pursuing the present policy to help to improve the wretched position of the finances. Give more money to this Government to squander! Even if the Government could defend this tax, I would not be prepared to vote for it, because they have made such wretched use of that which they have already collected. In the past when Labour was in office, whenever a measure of taxation was introduced, the gentleman who is now leader of the Government in another place declared that for his part he would refuse to agree to give any more money to what he called the spendthrift Government to squander. So do I now refuse to give any more money to the present Government, or to subscribe to the raising of funds for a Government that has so deplorably squandered our substance during the past six years. To give them more money would only be to encourage them in their reckless gallop to destruction. The more you give them the more they will squander, and the greater will be the indebtedness of the country. The prosperity of the country has been placed in pawn; we are in pawn

now, to a far greater extent than any State in the Commonwealth. We have a debt per head of the population amounting to £137. This is about 25 per cent. greater than that of any other State in the Commonwealth. We are piling it up for our children and our children's children, who will be weighted with interest charges on borrowed money for generations to come. In addition, we are piling the taxes on them. If the Government cannot carry on with the increased amount of taxation—over £600,000 annually—let them do the decent thing and commit political suicide, and admit that they have failed. Surely they can get another Government from the 33 members on their side of the House who could do better. They certainly cannot do worse even if the names were put in a hat and six Ministers selected in that manner. I am going to use all the forms, and will avail myself of all the privileges of the House to prevent this iniquitous proposition becoming law.

Mr. HUGHES: One would think from the debate that it is necessary for the Government to raise £123,000 to enable them to carry on hospital administration. But a reference to the report of the Royal Commission on hospitals states that from Consolidated Revenue last year, £105,000 was devoted to hospital and medical services. Seeing that we already raised last year £105,000 by ordinary taxation for those services and that it is pointed out that with the 1d. tax £113,000 will be raised, this clause in the Commission's report is interesting. It reads—

The present cost of hospital and medical services is £105,392 per annum, and it is estimated that the proposed tax will produce £113,418. So that on the face of it, the recommendation of the Commission will produce a small amount above actual requirements.

Mr. Mann: You have to add to that, the amount raised by subscriptions and stunts for the children's, Fremantle and other hospitals.

Mr. HUGHES: Does the hon. member think that if the Government raises £123,000 by means of the hospital tax, and withdraws from the hospitals the amount already subscribed from revenue, £105,000, that that will do away with the necessity for cadging and raising money by what he is pleased to call stunts?

Mr. Mann: That is the proposal.

Mr. HUGHES: The hon. member is too shrewd to be deluded into believing that if this is carried there will be no need for the charitable stunts.

Mr. Latham: It cost £180,000 last year to run the hospitals.

Mr. HUGHES: If it did and the Government propose to raise £123,000, and provide no subsidy or revenue, it is quite clear that the balance will have to be raised by charitable stunts referred to by the member for Perth.

The Colonial Secretary: There will be more money available if this is obtained by taxation.

Mr. HUGHES: Where from?

The Colonial Secretary: The Wooroloo Sanatorium is cut out.

Mr. HUGHES: You will not raise £180,000.

The Colonial Secretary: The cost of hospitals, less Wooroloo, last year was £86,000.

Mr. HUGHES: And now you propose to take from the bottom dog £123,000.

Mr. Mann: It is a general tax. Everybody will have to pay it.

Mr. HUGHES: That is the objectionable feature of it. There are to be no exemptions, notwithstanding that the House decided the other night that in respect of income tax there should be an exemption of £200 for married men. The hon. member voted for that, yet to-day he is in favour of imposing a tax on persons earning so little as £50 per annum. Last year we took £105,000 from revenue for the maintenance of our hospitals. If we deduct Wooroloo at a cost of £26,000, we still have £79,000 to be provided through taxation.

Mr. Latham: No. Last year £50,000 came from contributions.

The Colonial Secretary: The cost of Wooroloo was a little under £18,000.

Mr. HUGHES: Let us say that approximately £80,000 was taken from revenue for the maintenance of hospitals. If the Government wish to raise £123,000 in place of that £80,000, why do they not bring down a taxation measure which would give them the additional £43,000? Instead of doing that, they bring down a measure which will take from the taxpayers £123,000. Meanwhile the vote on the Estimates for hospital purposes has been reduced by £33,000. In other words, the real object of the Bill is to enable the Government to reduce their deficit by £33,000. We are told "It is only a penny in the pound"; but a penny in the pound on £200 will produce 16s. 8d. How can a man in receipt of £200 afford to pay 16s. 8d. for a public service? Members are led to believe that a working man in hospital will not be charged fees if he have any difficulty in finding the money. From long experience of Government departments I know that those administering the Act will leave no stone unturned to extract the fees. The Government have told us that a penny in the pound on wages, salaries, and incomes will produce £123,000. Therefore, the amendment will produce over £60,000 which, plus the contribution already subscribed from revenue, will amply meet the requirements of all hospitals.

Mrs. Cowan: No.

Mr. HUGHES: But it will. Although we are to raise an additional £123,000 from those who are unable to bear taxation, we are still to have cagging on behalf of the hospitals.

Mr. Richardson: The difficulty about the amendment is that it sanctions the principle of taxation.

Hon. P. Collier: No, I am going to vote against the whole provision afterwards.

Mr. HUGHES: If the hon. member wishes to make it clear that he is not in favour of taxation, the amendment affords him a safety valve.

Mr. Money: Why talk about taxation? The Bill does not impose it at all.

Hon. P. Collier: Yes, it does. It fixes the maximum. What kind of Bunbury law are you expounding now!

Mr. HUGHES: If the clause does not impose on the working man an obligation to contribute to the fund, what does it do?

Hon. P. Collier: It fixes the maximum.

Mr. HUGHES: If this clause is carried we will not be in a position to bring down an Assessment Bill providing for 1½d. tax. The clause provides that the tax shall be levied and shall not exceed a certain figure.

Mr. Money: We could bring one down for ½d. tax.

Mr. HUGHES: If we put the brake upon the Government and provide for ½d. tax, we cannot have a Bill for a ¾d. tax. It is better to be sure than sorry. If the amendment is carried, members who are opposed to the clause can then vote that out.

Mr. LATHAM: There is some good in the clause because of the benefits that hospitals will derive from it. It is almost impossible to get money from the Government for the maintenance of these institutions. Those immediately under the eye of the Minister will receive the greatest benefit from that source.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Your report does not show that.

Mr. LATHAM: It does. The amount of money subscribed by the people of Meekatharra and Leonora is more in proportion to that subscribed by the people in the city. The whole cost of maintaining the hospitals last year was £180,000. If the fees and donations are deducted the amount is reduced to £130,000. If the tax is imposed we shall not then receive contributions from the public. A man who earns £200 a year will pay only 16s. 6d., whereas the man earning £5,000 a year will pay £20.

Mr. Hughes: Will it not fall much harder upon the £200 a year man than upon the other?

Mr. LATHAM: The richer man does not go near the hospitals.

Mr. Marshall: And perhaps the other does not.

Mr. LATHAM: Hospitals were established to provide for the sick poor.

Mr. Hughes: Why do you not give them the right to those hospitals?

Mr. LATHAM: There are men, who go into hospitals, unable to pay the cost of their maintenance. When they are afterwards confronted with a bill and cannot pay they feel they are made paupers of. If people were entitled to free treatment the privilege might be abused. Local committees will have more sympathy for the sick poor than would some public official. In the course of the evidence taken by the Royal Commission, one witness at Leonora said—

Contributions to the hospital should be compulsory on all labour, the onus being on the employer to collect it. I would not have it based on the rateable property

at all. I would make everybody who is earning money contribute something.

A Jarrahdale witness said—

I think legislation should be introduced to make everyone pay towards the upkeep of hospitals in the State. As regards collection, every employer should deduct the amount from the wages of the employees.

A Collie witness said—

The cost of treating indigent patients should be borne by the people as a whole, and I would not object to taxation for that purpose being imposed on the people as a whole. Such taxation should be on a graduated scale, and those in the best position to pay should pay most.

That is done under this Bill.

Hon. P. Collier: It is not. He was referring to a graduated scale.

Mr. LATHAM: The secretary of the Meekatharra hospital said—

I would like to see a Bill which would reach everyone and so raise revenue in this way. The trouble is that we are taxing the same people the whole time when funds are required for hospital purposes.

A Cue witness said—

The taxation as proposed, is unfair to the ratepayer. I certainly think there is legislation required to put hospitals generally on a better footing than they are at the present time. I favour committee control. I would favour a tax on all wages, same to be earmarked for hospital purposes, and all employers to be responsible for the collection of this tax from their employees.

This evidence is taken from districts where the real trouble of administration exists, and where it has been found difficult to raise money necessary to finance the institutions.

Mr. Marshall: They finance themselves.

Mr. LATHAM: The Royal Commission thought they would relieve the financial troubles of these country hospitals and carry out the wishes of those whose evidence I have just read. The wishes of the people are being carried out in this Bill.

Mr. Hughes: The tax is not in accordance with the desires of the working man.

Mr. Teesdale: And these are all Labour seats.

Mr. LATHAM: Yes. One of the witnesses whose evidence I have read is Mr. J. S. Jackson, president of the Collie Miners' Union. It is to assist men like him that the Royal Commission has reported in this way. I do not mind paying a tax if it is equally distributed. At present some people are giving all the time, and others are giving nothing. If money is collected in a lump sum it may mean a hardship upon some people, but not if it is collected weekly or fortnightly. The Bill will be the means of reducing contributions that are at present made to the hospital sick funds, and will also do away with the pernicious system of street cadging.

Mr. Marshall: But there is a clause providing for that.

Mr. LATHAM: That is not to say it will be done.

Hon. T. Walker: They will still carry on.

Mr. LATHAM: That may be so. There are some people who are collecting maniacs, and they cannot stop it. If they are not collecting money, they are collecting pieces of china, or stamps, or something of the sort. I suggest that the collection of the tax could be made more simple if the wages sheets were taken and employers could send them in with their income tax returns. The department would then see if the necessary amount had been deducted, and the requisite value in stamps placed on the wages sheets.

Mr. Hughes: Who will check the sheets to determine whether they are right?

Mr. LATHAM: They can be checked in the Taxation Department in the ordinary way.

Mr. Hughes: That would mean additional staff.

Mr. LATHAM: I do not think so. In any case, the check would not be difficult.

Mr. Chesson: A lot of men get under £200.

Mr. LATHAM: I do not believe it is possible to have an Act of Parliament that will reach everyone, but we should reach those that we can. References have been made to the I.A.B. farmers. These people have been generous in their contributions, and they have been building up their own hospitals, with a little help from the Government, and they have been maintaining them as well. The Leader of the Opposition should extend the benefits he desires for the small wage earner to these people on the land for I doubt if many of them, after meeting the incidental expenses in connection with their farms, get £52 a year for themselves.

Mr. McCallum: It could be applied to them.

Mr. LATHAM: I doubt it. These men are in a worse position than the poorest paid man in the city.

Opposition Members: Nonsense!

Mr. LATHAM: That is a fact. I defy members of the Opposition to disprove the statement.

Mr. Hughes: Why, there is an average income of £539.

Mr. LATHAM: I am not talking about averages; I am talking about those men who are in the unfortunate position of not being able to meet their liabilities to the Government owing to their holdings comprising a poor class of land. There are 300 of those men who are unable to meet their liabilities to the State.

Mr. Corboy: And you will not support us in exempting them!

Mr. LATHAM: I say that those who can pay should be only too willing to pay their share, so that others may receive the benefit. If I went into a hospital I would have to pay for the services rendered to me, but I would not mind that so long as someone else was getting some benefit. We

should put the hospitals in a better financial position.

Hon. P. Collier: We do not object to that, but we say it should be done by means of a taxation measure.

Mr. LATHAM: The people are contributing to the upkeep of these institutions, and they should not be treated as paupers.

Mr. Corboy: As the educational services are rendered free to the people, so it should be with health.

Mr. LATHAM: Then we should have extra taxation imposed, so that everyone could receive free treatment in the hospitals.

Mr. Corboy: That is what we want.

Mr. LATHAM: But the hon. member does not want it to apply to the 30,000 people who pay income tax. We should not ask the men on the higher salaries to pay everything. The people should get some benefit from the services. We should have this tax so that it will help those who have been struggling along to conduct a hospital, and relieve the position somewhat. We should be fair in the matter.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The member for York does not understand the attitude of the Opposition. We realise that the hospitals need more funds. We object to the system proposed. We agree that more money should be raised, but it should be under a proper system of taxation. He is in error when he suggests that we desire only the 18,000 taxpayers to contribute the money. Very few of those who pay income tax contribute anything. A man, who is well known to all of us, protested to his landlord, in connection with what he regarded as an extortionate increase in his rent. When he asked that man if he did not wish to pay his share of taxation for the protection of his property, the landlord replied that he did not, and that when the Commonwealth taxation was increased, he would put it on to the rent. I will not repeat the language that the gentleman used in reply, beyond saying that he intimated that such scoundrels as that landlord should not be allowed to live in the State. This type of person not only passes on the tax, but puts on a percentage for profit as well. Most people who pay are made the medium for collection. That does not apply to everyone. I would like to see some means devised to prevent people passing on taxation.

The Premier: I would like to know how it can be done.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Some scheme might be devised.

The Premier: You had five years in office and could not find the way.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: We did not want to tax; we exercised economy and care.

The Premier: We pay decent wages.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The member for York said that the money mostly went in the metropolitan area.

The Premier: A large proportion of it does.

The Minister for Agriculture: A number of country people come to Perth for treatment.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The figures furnished by the Commission in their report show that in the Perth and Fremantle districts £33,580 were expended by the Government in 1921-22 as against £51,726 in the districts, which were outside the metropolitan area.

Mr. Latham: Included in that is £10,000 for buildings.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Most of that was expended in the country districts. There are thousands of people who make provision for medical attention for themselves and their families.

Mr. Davies: And they are mostly people on the basic wage.

Hon. P. Collier: It costs them £4 a year for lodge and medical services.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The member for York said that a person would be able to go into a hospital without being made a pauper. That is not so.

Mr. Latham: He would be paying the tax.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Before anyone could get treatment, the same inquiries would be made as are necessary to-day.

Mr. Latham: You would not have it otherwise.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The same charges would be levied. If a person can pay he is made to pay.

Mrs. Cowan: If you can prove it.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Bill makes provision to prosecute.

Mr. Heron: It could not be done in a committee hospital.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: That is so. We are willing to help the Premier to get the necessary money under general taxation.

The Premier: From someone else.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No.

The Premier: Then from whom?

Hon. P. Collier: The people who pay for everything else.

The Premier: From a few.

Hon. P. Collier: No.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Most taxation is passed on. There are 21,000 people in the State who have made provision for medical treatment, and, in addition, many of them contribute to a hospital fund.

Hon. P. Collier: The tramway men in Perth pay £5 a year and they will have to pay under this measure also.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The 18,000 people in receipt of large incomes would not be the only ones who would have to pay without receiving any benefit from the hospital. The chairman of the Cue hospital committee, Mr. Mathers, in the course of evidence said—

I am in favour of our present scheme being continued if it were possible in cases of an epidemic occurring in a district to approach the Government and obtain a special grant to tide over temporary difficulties. It has been the ex-

perience of this hospital to meet with such misfortune and it has been very difficult to obtain any help from the Government.

That hospital might be considerably affected unless the Minister provided for a special medical fund. He could do that for a country hospital, but not for a hospital in the metropolitan area or in any district where there were more than two doctors. The British Medical Association would not permit him to do so.

The Premier: Do you want to throw the hospitals on the people?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It is the duty of the Government to look after the sick.

The Premier: Not the sick who can pay.

Mr. Latham: You are denying the Premier the necessary taxation.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No; I object to the method of imposing the tax. Under this method of collecting taxation, there is a possibility of increasing the cost of hospital upkeep. We were told that there had been no complaint. Did the Colonial Secretary ever receive a request from friendly societies for a special exemption?

The Colonial Secretary: They pointed out that the Bill did not offer them any consideration, but the hospitals do not provide for them.

Mr. Heron: In some cases they do.

The Colonial Secretary: They will receive consideration in such cases.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: There has been objection to the Bill, because these people provide for their own medical attention.

The Colonial Secretary: But they do not provide for hospital attention.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: At least eight of 10 members of friendly societies who go into hospital pay the fees.

The Colonial Secretary: Membership of a friendly society does not include hospital attention.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Clause 36 provides that a hospital board may manage a medical fund to secure for its subscribers medical attendance, hospital treatment or other similar benefits.

The Premier: Whom do you want to pay the tax?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Those who are paying it now should continue to pay it. In any case, it will be passed on.

The Premier: No, it will not.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Let us have the whole of the taxation placed under one system and, if it is necessary to increase the income tax by 1d. or 2d., it can be done under the proper measure.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I draw attention to Appendix H of the report of the Royal Commission. This shows the amount subscribed per annum. In the case of Laverton for instance the rate of subscription per annum is £4 9s. There is nothing in the Bill

to show what is to take the place of that. It would be necessary for people to go on contributing the same amount as they are giving to-day. Members should cease saying that the metropolitan area gets everything.

The Premier: It gets a great deal.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I doubt that. It gets nothing for which it does not pay. For instance, the metropolitan area pays for its tramways, and for its water supply. Everything the people there get they expect to pay for. The report of the Royal Commission shows that for the year 1921-22 the cost to the Government for hospitals in the Perth and Fremantle district was £33,530, whilst for outside districts it was £51,726. It is, therefore, wrong to say that the metropolitan area is getting most of the Government money provided for hospitals.

Mr. (CORBOY: I support the amendment. We have been informed that the Treasurer intends to collect a tax of approximately £123,000. For the purpose of ascertaining the amount that will be obtained from all sources, I have used the figures supplied by the State Commissioner of Taxation in his 14th annual report for 1920-21. In that year the taxable income totalled £12,327,730. The income derived by people who actually received more than the minimum fixed in the Taxation Act, but by reason of the allowances for children and other deductions were not liable to taxation, totalled £3,205,469. All other people earning income in the State would be those who received less than the minima provided at the time under the Income Tax Act. By using this as a basis we find that the £123,000, proposed to be raised under the Bill, will be paid in the following proportions: Those who are at present or have been during the last two years paying income tax will contribute approximately £51,357, or a percentage total of the whole income to be received of 41.5. The report of the Commission states that the amount provided for hospital purposes from the Consolidated Revenue was £105,392. These taxpayers previously provided £105,392, and under the proposal submitted in the Bill will pay £51,357. Those who receive incomes in excess of the minima provided in the Act, but who are not liable to taxation, will contribute £13,356, or a percentage total of the whole income to be received of 10.6. This leaves a balance to be provided by those who are not liable for income tax of £58,287, or 47.9 per cent of the total income to be derived under the Bill. The idea actuating the Ministry in their drafting of Bills is to place as great a burden as possible on those on the lowest rung of the ladder. Of the cost of maintaining hospitals 47.9 per cent. is to be derived from married people who are receiving less than £156 per annum and single persons receiving less than £100. Those who receive an income which is liable to taxation under the old Act will contribute only 41.5 per cent. More than 6 per cent. less of the income will be contributed by those who are receiving taxable incomes than will be contributed by those receiving incomes which

are less than the minima fixed under the old Act.

The PREMIER: No.

Mr. CORBOY: The Premier can work it out himself. On a tax of 1d. in the pound, based on the figures for 1920-21 it is easy to work out what those who pay taxes, and those who receive incomes in excess of the minima provided in the Act who do not pay taxes, will contribute towards the fund. It leaves a balance to be paid by those whose incomes are below £156 and £100 respectively of £58,287, or £7,000 more than will be contributed by those who are liable to taxation. The whole method of raising the money necessary for the maintenance of our hospitals, is wrong. A more equitable method would be to increase the income tax, and earmark the increase for maintenance of hospitals. I desire the deletion of the clause altogether, or, failing that, a reduction of the rate to one-halfpenny in the pound.

The PREMIER: A reduction to one-halfpenny in the pound would make the collection under the Bill altogether too small. This Bill, and the present clause, have been framed on the recommendations of a Royal Commission comprising members of all parties in this Chamber. If we are to raise the money by increasing the income tax, let hon. members tell me how that is to be done, especially in view of the exemptions granted by the Committee last night? Of all people taxed on income in the previous year, only a very few earned above £800—approximately 3,000 persons. Is the increase in income tax to apply to all the people, or only to those few with incomes above £800? We have now a graduated scale of income tax, and the .006d., though it looks innocent, increases very rapidly the amount of tax payable. We must bear in mind that there is not only State income tax, but also Federal income tax. Taking those two income taxes, and adding to them all the other taxes that are levied, one sees that a good deal of the sovereign is taxed away. Then there is local government taxation.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: All those taxes obtain all over the world. Rates here are lower than anywhere else in the world.

The PREMIER: I do not think so. Rates in Perth are fairly high. It must not be forgotten that people with large incomes pay very considerable amounts in rates. I am not so foolish as to contend that people who can pass on taxation do not pass it on. But there are a great many people who cannot pass anything on. I refer to the primary producers, whether miners or agriculturists—

Mr. McCallum: The wage earner cannot pass taxation on.

The PREMIER: If the primary producer is heavily taxed, the cost of living must be high. Every tax put on increases the cost of living. Industry now has to bear heavier charges than ever it bore before.

Mr. McCallum: The wage earner cannot pass any tax on; it is passed on to him.

The PREMIER: But the hon. member knows full well that the cost of living forms

the basis on which wages are fixed by the Arbitration Court.

Mr. McCallum: And that is wrong.

The PREMIER: I know it is wrong, but it must be done.

Mr. McCallum: It ought not to be done.

The PREMIER: It is done under the system. I did not originate that system.

Mr. Marshall: The cost of living at present has very little effect on the president of the Arbitration Court, who gives just what he chooses.

The PREMIER: The cost of living is used as an argument. The Government are exercising all the economy they possibly can. So far as expenditure can be controlled, it is being controlled most carefully. Railway freights have been increased, but wages and coal and other commodities have risen tremendously in price.

Mr. Heron: The Government lost a great deal of revenue by increasing the rates.

The PREMIER: Whatever the increases may be, they are not enough to compensate for the increased cost of running the railways. We cannot have the same rates of freight to-day as obtained under the wages and costs ruling even four years ago. If every possible economy is being exercised, and the Government have to give the free services which this Chamber demands, what is to be done? Education is free from the primary school right through to the University. In a country like this, the cost of education naturally increases. Our educational system is very much better than it was years ago, but it must be paid for. Again, expenditure on charities must increase as time goes on. We have had to increase the grants to foster mothers from 7s. to 9s. per week. That represents a considerable sum. The increase could not be avoided, in view of the cost of living. Then the Medical Department year by year requires additional hospitals, and further subsidies to doctors in country districts. If the mining revival, which I believe will come, does eventuate, there will be still further increases in the cost of administration.

Mr. Marshall: And also increases of revenue.

The PREMIER: Can it be contended that the expenditure under the heads I have mentioned admits of reduction? There is hardly a member of this Chamber but has been to see me during the past three years with a view to increased expenditure under these heads. If it is said that there are too many men in the Public Service, I reply that there must have been far too many some years ago, because there is more work being done now than ever there was before. Then there is the cost of land settlement, agricultural and pastoral development which is proceeding. How is that to be met? So far as the Government are able to practice economy, they are doing it. There was never a tighter hold kept on the purse strings than now. The Treasury controls the expenditure of Government departments to an extent that was never dreamt of before. It had to be so,

because charges had increased so much and the revenue had fallen.

Mr. McCallum: Then the sooner you let go your grip, the better it will be, if we have regard to the results at the end of each month.

The PREMIER: Does the member for South Fremantle recognise that we are debited each month with portion of the interest bill and that we lend an enormous amount of money to the Agricultural Bank, to the Workers' Homes Board, and to local authorities, on which we only collect interest periodically? Does he recognise that with the huge railway expenditure that we have, with three pays amounting to £60,000 in a month, we are bound to be a bit out? If the hon. member would like to look into the situation, I will let him have all the figures.

Mr. McCallum: That is your job.

The PREMIER: It is my job to inform the hon. member.

Mr. McCallum: It is your job to look after the finances.

The PREMIER: And I am looking after them, far too much for the liking of the hon. member when he comes to me for money to stop sand drifts or something else. There was never greater control over the finances than now.

Mr. Marshall: And the deficit never mounted more rapidly.

The PREMIER: That is all the hon. member can say, because he will not understand.

Mr. Marshall: It is impossible to understand the position, with the juggling of figures that goes on.

The PREMIER: Inexperience leads the hon. member to make accusations of that description. There is no juggling with the figures. The civil servants who make up the figures are perfectly respectable and honest men. It is easy for members to say that if we economised, we could save the amount involved in the tax. It cannot be done except by cutting out services that are rendered now. When discussing the Mines Estimates, members were complimentary in their remarks and regarded the expenditure on prospecting, State batteries and so forth as legitimate.

Mr. Marshall: Of course, it is. We do not object to that.

The PREMIER: The hon. member probably knows that we are about £12,000 behind in connection with State batteries for the first five months. The experience of the departmental officers, however, makes them certain that we will recover that position during the next seven months. As a matter of fact, if these services are not rendered the country cannot get out of its difficulties. We cannot engage in big developmental work and expect to get a return straight away. Works of some magnitude are proceeding on the Peel estate, for instance, but the member for South Fremantle knows that it will be a few years before we can get a return. It is not reasonable to say that we should be able to save enough to cover the £123,000 which is

to be raised under the Bill. I am always loath to tax the individual in receipt of a small income, but I feel that in this case it is a special impost for the whole of the people. Industries, such as mining and timber, cannot be carried on without hospital accommodation and thus we all benefit by the establishment of those institutions. I hope the Committee will realise that there is a limit to taxation.

Mr. McCallum: We are trying to get you to realise that.

Mr. Marshall: You are taxing the newsboys in the streets.

The PREMIER: One hears little complaint from the man who is getting £4 or £5 a week.

Mr. McCallum: You do not hear their complaints; we do.

The PREMIER: All taxation is unpopular, but it is not the man who gets £5 a week who makes the most fuss. The tax recommended by the Commission of 1d. in the pound should be adopted.

Mr. Marshall: With a reservation.

The PREMIER: Surely we do not appoint commissions to make inquiries without having regard to their recommendations.

Mr. Johnston: What about Mr. Stead's report on the railways?

Hon. P. Collier: That cost a few thousand pounds, and it has had no influence. There has been wonderful silence about that.

The PREMIER: It has had considerable influence.

Mr. Pickering: But it has had a lot of consideration.

Hon. P. Collier: That silence cannot be maintained much longer.

The PREMIER: Quite a lot has been done in connection with that report, and it has received much consideration. Then there is the Forestry Commission's report. Is that to have no influence?

Mr. Pickering: I hope not, but it is not printed yet.

The PREMIER: It will be, and we shall then see. At any rate, I hope the Committee will reject the amendment.

Mr. McCALLUM: The Premier entirely misunderstands the view point of the Opposition.

Hon. P. Collier: Not accidentally, though.

Mr. McCALLUM: He does not face the position as it is presented by the Opposition.

Hon. P. Collier: He does not wish to understand it.

Mr. McCALLUM: The suggestion that this money could be made up if economies were effected, was not made by any member sitting on this side of the House. All we emphasise is that the money necessary for the upkeep of hospitals shall be raised by way of taxation in the ordinary way. I doubt if in the history of the responsible Government of any country in the world, it was ever suggested before that juveniles should be compelled by Parliament to pay a tax. I do not think any other country has stooped to the level of say-

ing that a boy or a girl who has just left school and is earning 10s. a week shall pay a tax.

Hon. P. Collier: Fancy making a child of 14 years of age pay taxation! What a magnificent conception! What a statesman-like proposal!

Mr. McCALLUM: No other country would stoop to such a level. In that respect we are breaking new ground. The whole of the tax will be paid by the wage-earners, who will have to accept the burden passed on by the merchants and manufacturers.

Mr. Marshall: The stickfast fleas.

Mr. McCALLUM: There is no suggestion of relief for that large section of the community who pay into lodges and friendly societies for medical attention. When they have to pay the hospital tax they will not be able to continue to pay into their lodges, not withstanding which they are not to get free hospital treatment. I have been paying into a lodge since leaving school, and now I will have to pay this tax in addition. The Minister, in reply to a deputation, declared that no relief could be given to those who, because of having to pay the tax will not be able to continue to pay into lodges. Yet these men are just as much primary producers as are the men on the land. They have to pay both income tax and land tax, whereas the man on the land is exempt from one or the other. Admittedly the man on the land does not pay as much in taxation as does the man in the city.

The Colonial Secretary: He does not get the same services.

Mr. McCALLUM: He gets 9s. a bushel for his wheat, which the city man has to pay, and he gets from the Agricultural Bank money with which to build his house and finance his farm, money which the city man frugally deposited in the Savings Bank. It is the wealthy employers who create the necessity for hospitals. Yet every time the workers ask for healthful improvements in factory or mine, the employers strenuously fight them to the last ditch. Having created the need for hospitals, the wealthy employers ought to be called upon to maintain them.

The Colonial Secretary: Who was it said that men with big incomes did not use the hospitals and so ought not to be called upon to maintain them?

Mr. McCALLUM: The Premier, among others.

The Premier: No. What I said was that the enterprise which set up a timber mill or a mine created the need for hospitals.

Mr. McCALLUM: The Premier's chief argument has been that those who use the hospitals ought to pay for them. A man working on a State steamer was knocked down the hold and crippled for life. He demanded compensation, but the case was taken right through to the Full Court before he could succeed. Of course, the action was not fought by the Government, but it was fought by the insurance companies with which the Government deal. Nor is this sort of thing

confined to steamers. The mining companies are the worst of all offenders. Take also the number of accidents that occur in the timber mills. Yet the mill owners, drawing tens of thousands per annum in income, are to pay only the same as the wage-earners. Moreover, subclause 2 allows a deduction of expenses incurred in the production of income. No such deduction can be made by the wage earners. This is a most iniquitous form of taxation. I appeal to the Premier on the score of all those boys and girls who have just left school. In no other country would they be called upon to pay taxation. So long as a boy or a girl gets over 10s. a week, he or she will be taxed. What a nice experience for a boy just leaving school to have the tax gatherer waiting for him every pay day.

Mr. Mann: Does the apprentice pay into his union immediately?

Mr. McCALLUM: He is generally admitted to the union during the last year of his apprenticeship, and pays nothing until he becomes a journeyman.

The Colonial Secretary: The Bill does not mention any age.

Mr. McCALLUM: The Bill mentions the amount. Would the Colonial Secretary expect a man of 21 to be receiving 10s. a week? Is it intended that any little concession or privilege is to be calculated as an addition to wages. Will it be held that domestic servants must add to their wages the value of board and lodging?

The Colonial Secretary: It does not say so.

Mr. McCALLUM: It is not stated in the Income Tax Act, but the Commissioner insists on calculating 25s. as the value of board and lodging. What guarantee can the Minister give us? Although the Arbitration Court lays down an allowance of 18s. for board and lodging, the Taxation Commissioner makes it 25s.

The Premier: No, he does not.

Mr. McCALLUM: He does; it is printed on the form.

The Premier: You mean for waitresses in hotels?

Mr. McCALLUM: For waitresses in hotels, coffee palaces, and restaurants.

The Colonial Secretary: I give you a definite assurance that board and lodging will not be taxed under this Bill.

Mr. McCALLUM: What authority has the Minister to say that? The Taxation Commissioner might say otherwise.

The Colonial Secretary: This is to be collected on wages and salaries at the source.

Mr. McCALLUM: Who is going to collect it? Who will have charge of the stamps?

The Colonial Secretary: An inspector could view the wages sheets.

Mr. McCALLUM: The Minister said the Commissioner would have access to the wages sheets.

The Colonial Secretary: I did not say so, but possibly he would.

Mr. McCALLUM: The Minister's assurance had better be embodied in the Bill. I

disagree with the method of taxation particularly as it affects boys and girls.

The Premier: I wish you had been on the Commission.

Mr. McCALLUM: My signature would never have been attached to the report.

The Colonial Secretary: The Commission were unanimous on this.

Mr. McCALLUM: Perhaps those members would have changed their views if they had heard arguments on the other side. Has it come to this, that the State must dive right through the long list of those in receipt of big incomes to tax the boy or girl earning 10s. 6d. a week?

The Premier: I thought you believed in taxing everyone.

Mr. McCALLUM: I believe in taxing those who can afford to pay. The Premier has expressed the opinion that there should be a bread and butter exemption.

The Premier: I still think so.

Mr. McCALLUM: Then the Premier should stand up to that and not be influenced by the bad company into which he has drifted. The responsibility of financing the State should rest upon those above the bread line.

The Premier: Why did not you help me to put the tax on to wine, beer and spirits?

Mr. McCALLUM: When the Premier occupied a seat on this side of the House he was always giving the Labour Government advice as to how they could raise revenue and balance the ledger. In every speech he offered suggestions for righting the finances. He gave most wonderful assistance.

The Premier: Why did not you support my liquor tax?

Mr. McCALLUM: We have probably been influenced by the atmosphere which pervaded this side of the House when the Premier occupied a seat over here.

The Premier: I wish I could exercise a greater influence over you.

Hon. P. Collier: Enormous volumes of "Hansard" have been built up by his complaints against us.

Mr. McCALLUM: We have told the Premier how he may raise the necessary revenue. Why does not he follow the advice? If people have incomes below the bread line it is a crying shame that they should pay a tax.

Mr. Mann: Don't you think people will be proud to contribute so much to the hospitals??

Mr. McCALLUM: If it was a question of pride over their contributions, the workers of the State would not find the country wide enough in which to expand their chests. The other section of the community has done the charring and not the paying.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: As a result of evidence taken by both sides, the Royal Commission recommended that a hospital charge of a uniform rate of 1d. in the pound, calculated to the nearest penny, be made on all salaries, wages and other incomes. The recommendations of the Commission were embodied in the Bill except as to the number of persons who were to constitute the trust. It has been said that the

funds for hospitals should be obtained from the Consolidated Revenue. This tax will not go into revenue, but will be used entirely for hospital services. The King Edward Maternity Hospital and the Woorloo Sanatorium will be excluded from this.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: What difference does that make?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: There will be more money left for hospital needs. It would be a very good thing if all hospitals could be thoroughly well equipped, but that is not possible at present. To the £123,000, which would be raised by the Bill, there would have to be added £15,000 from Consolidated Revenue, making a total of £138,000. Last year £106,000 was used for hospital services. If we exempt the two institutions I have mentioned, the balance left for hospitals will amount to £86,714, which leaves an advantage of £51,000. It may be said that this Bill will reduce the amount received by way of donations. Even so the hospitals will benefit to the extent of £36,549. Twenty per cent. of the fees charged by the Perth Hospital were collected. The donations to that institution amounted to £943, of which £530 was donated by the W.A.T.C., the Trotting Association, and the commercial travellers. The full amount received from other sources was a little over £400. There will be no need for those paying the tax to go near the Commissioner of Taxation.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: What commission are you going to put on the stamps?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: None, but the matter may have to be considered. The stamps will be printed by the department. There is one inspector administering the Stamp Act. He could also take on this other job, although it may be necessary to appoint an assistant. It is intended, where possible, to retain the present hospital committees, where they are doing good work.

Mr. Lutey: You still want a smoke screen to cover up the tax.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: All those who pay this hospital tax will enjoy the satisfaction of knowing that they will have done something towards improving the condition of the sick poor.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The Colonial Secretary and other members have not been quite candid when stressing the point of the Royal Commission's recommendation. The Minister knows it has been declared most specifically by the chairman and by every other member of the Commission that the intention of that body was that the money raised by this tax should be in supplement of, and not in substitution for, the Government vote. The Government now propose to benefit the general revenue by some £70,000 or £80,000 arising out of this taxation. It is safe to say that had the members of the Commission known of the Government's intention in that respect, no tax would have been recommended by them. The tax represents a turning of the Commission's recommendation to an improper

use. The result of the Hospitals Royal Commission will be a lesson to Opposition members. On more than one occasion the Government have requisitioned the services of members of the House on select committees and Royal Commissions to draft their legislation for them. So far as I am concerned, no member of the Opposition will in future undertake such a responsibility for the Government.

The Premier: The House appointed the select committee.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes, under a specious appeal by the Government, "We have not time to deal with this legislation in the House, so let us refer it to a select committee." Work properly belonging to the Government has latterly been referred to select committees and Royal Commissions to a degree never previously known.

The Premier: I agree with that.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It has been done at the request of the Government in most cases.

The Premier: No.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Let us economise by cutting out some of these peregrinating Royal Commissions. The point raised by the Premier is entirely beside the question. He asked whether we desired that the assistance and services granted to-day by the State should be curtailed.

The Premier: Of course you do not.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Of course we do not. The Premier argued that the fact of no member having asked for any reduction of expenditure in those directions constitutes justification for the imposition of this tax. It does nothing of the sort. If the increased burden upon the State to find funds for these and other purposes justified the Government in seeking additional revenue, the House would be prepared to give it to them. But the point at issue here is the method employed in order to raise revenue. Sentimental appeals have been made, but in regard to taxation it matters not at all to the person paying the tax what is the purpose for which it has been imposed. A tax is a tax, no matter whether the proceeds are to be devoted to the maintenance of a hospital or to be spent in joy-riding. In either case it is equally difficult for a person with a small income to find the money. The Premier says that the agriculturists and other producers are unable to pass on taxation. That is quite true, and it is the very basis of the objection to this tax. The Premier knows that of the 100,000 additional taxpayers who will come within the purview of the Bill—the wage-earners—not a single one can pass on the tax. The Premier said we had only 38,000 taxpayers, and he asked whether we could impose additional taxation on them.

The Premier: A good many were cut out yesterday.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That fact is in itself an unanswerable argument against this clause. Why is the number of taxpayers so small? Because in the judgment of Parliament it is not justifiable to bring in any more. Is it

logical, then, to bring in as taxpayers under the Bill 100,000 persons who so far have been exempt on the ground that they cannot pay taxation? If we are justified in taxing them for hospital purposes, we are equally justified in taxing them for educational purposes and all the other services of Government. In fact, the argument in favour of taxing for education is much stronger than the argument in favour of taxing for hospital purposes, because only a small number of those paying the hospital tax would get any direct benefit, while from the expenditure on education practically everyone benefits. The suggestion that the wealthy people receive no benefit from hospitals will not bear analysis, because it is largely on account of the creation of the salaries of the wealthy people that hospitals have to be maintained to patch up the wrecks of our industrial life. In 1920 there were 21 persons killed in the mines of Western Australia and 538 were injured, while last year 18 men were killed and 344 were injured. In whose interests had those men to suffer?

Mr. McCallum: And that does not refer to the men who suffered from miner's disease.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That shows that the hospitals exist in the interests of the mine owners. While it is urged that the liquor traffic should shoulder the expenditure caused by the trade in connection with our gaols, asylums, and so on, the same argument is not applied to other industries.

Mrs. Cowan: The liquor trade has not been made to pay that burden.

Hon. P. COLLIER: No. So far as the goldfields are concerned, for every person who died or had to enter an institution on account of the liquor traffic, a hundred had to suffer because of their occupation. We are asked to impose this additional burden on the people. This means that the tramway employee who has to pay £4 12s. a year for lodge dues, medical fund, and provision for sickness, and the worker in the outback goldfields districts, such as Leonora, where his dues and so on amount to £6 9s. 4d., will each have to pay an additional 25s. or 30s. a year and are not guaranteed hospital accommodation. The Bill is the worst possible advertisement Western Australia could ever receive. It means that the newsboys who are specially licensed so that they can help maintain their families, will have to sell a few extra copies of the papers in order to pay this tax. What a legislative achievement for Parliament to be proud of. It is the sum total of the legislative genius of the Government! Washerwomen, office cleaners, little boys and girls and casual workers, struggling from day to day, will have to contribute their quota of taxation, in order, we are told, that they may have the satisfaction of saying that they are contributing to the upkeep of our hospitals. The Premier referred to the economies that were being practised and the tight hold the Treasury was maintaining over expenditure. In a few minutes, I could point out where

there has been not economy, but scandalous extravagance.

Mr. Teesdale: We will excuse you.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Was it economy that saddled this unfortunate State with the expenditure of £76,000, on which interest at six per cent. will have to be paid, without the sanction of Parliament, on the railway from Waroona to Lake Clifton? The returns from that railway at the outset represented 18s. 7½d. per day, while the interest bill on the capital expenditure was £9 per day. That is the kind of economy that necessitates legislation of this kind. That line was constructed in defiance of the Commissioner of Railways of the day, in order to satisfy the whim and idiosyncracies of a particular Minister.

The Premier: I had nothing to do with that.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I know that, but the same Ministers who exercise a strong influence in Cabinet to-day and who were capable of making such an atrocious blunder, are capable of doing so again. So long as these conditions obtain, so long will the drift continue. There are other cases of similar "economies."

Mr. Teesdale: Your few minutes have elapsed.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Was it economy as pointed out in the "West Australian," recently to spend thousands of pounds in clearing the route of a proposed railway and then to leave it alone until the cleared stretch had been overgrown again? So long as there is a complacent majority on the Government side of the House, this drift will continue. What has happened to the men who saddled the State with the Lake Clifton line? Were they penalised and turned out of office? On the contrary they continued to enjoy the emoluments of office, as if they had never been guilty of an administrative mistake in their life. We find the salaries of senior officers increased by £100 or £200 a year and two highly paid men doing the work formerly carried out by one officer. So long as the money is voted by Parliament, so long will it be spent in this way. When it comes to finding large sums of money for favoured sections of the community, certainly it shall be done! Tax the street waif earning a miserable living by selling newspapers, or the poor beggar who cannot find food and clothes for his children. Who, before this, ever heard of a flat rate of taxation? And if it be good enough here, why not apply it to income taxation? After its action last night in providing exemption from income taxation, it would be absurd for the House to endorse a tax like this. I regard the halfpenny of the amendment as the lesser of two evils, but the whole principle is wrong, and I will vote against it after the amendment has been disposed of.

Mr. PICKERING: In the criticism of the proposed taxation the two points made are, first that the tax is exceptional in form

and, secondly, that it is unjust in incidence. But we are not singular in considering a tax for a specific purpose. Most of the local authorities levy taxation of that nature. As to whether the proposed tax is unjust in its incidence, the question is debatable. Reference to the first recommendation of the Royal Commission will show that there was unanimity of opinion in respect of the imposition of this tax. After all, the tax is subject to certain exemptions.

Mr. Munsie: Amongst the workers none but pensioners can hope to get exemption.

Mr. PICKERING: The Bill has been ruled to be guiltless of the imposition of taxation, and so it will be necessary to bring down another measure before the tax can be imposed. It may be that the Government will provide certain exemptions in the second Bill.

Hon. P. Collier: Any exemptions must be provided in this Bill, not in the taxing Bill.

Mr. PICKERING: The Premier said he had no desire to tax anybody in receipt of less than £200, and so it is to be assumed that he will introduce exemptions. Provision is made for the deduction of expenses incurred in earning income. Is it not possible to construe a contribution of funds to a hospital as coming under that provision?

Hon. P. Collier: No, certainly not.

Mr. PICKERING: The proposed taxation will constitute a minor burden as compared with the burden of the Customs tariff, against which we hear little or no complaint.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is not in order in discussing the tariff.

Mr. PICKERING: This proposed taxation might well be accepted if some of the desired exemptions were provided. I have followed with interest the debate, and I have read with interest comments in the local newspapers; yet I have failed to observe that outside the House there has been any great outcry against the imposition of the proposed tax. No evidence was given to the Royal Commission against the tax.

Hon. P. Collier: Yes there was.

Mr. Chesson: The hon. member has not read the evidence.

Mr. PICKERING: At all events, there has been but very little outcry against the tax. Amongst members of the Opposition it is popular to condemn all forms of taxation.

Hon. P. Collier: Any form of taxation?

Mr. PICKERING: The hon. member advocates only one form of taxation and that is on those in receipt of more than the living wage. I am prepared to support reasonable taxation.

Hon. P. Collier: What is reasonable taxation?

Mr. PICKERING: The amount stated in the Bill. The tax is for a very laudable purpose.

Mr. Munsie: It will not put the hospitals on a better footing.

Mr. PICKERING: I believe it will. The Premier gave a definite assurance that the additional funds needed would be found.

Hon. P. Collier: You were not too ready to accept his assurances on the Closer Settlement Bill.

Mr. PICKERING: Perhaps so. We should be in a position to pay the nurses a higher rate.

Hon. P. Collier: And take a penny from the children.

Mr. PICKERING: I regret that the Bill will still permit soliciting for funds for hospitals. If the Government obtain the money they anticipate, they should supply sufficient from Consolidated Revenue to make street collections unnecessary. Provided the hospitals are put on a sound footing, no one will object to the proposed tax. One would imagine that the amount of the tax was stupendous.

Mr. Munsie: It will relieve the Government to the extent of £100,000.

Hon. P. Collier: Could you live on £4 a week and rear a family?

Mr. PICKERING: I do not think so—

Hon. P. Collier: Then why ask another man to do so?

Mr. PICKERING: Not with the demands made on a member of Parliament.

Hon. P. Collier: But without those demands?

Mr. PICKERING: As a farmer, I think I could.

Mr. McCallum: Only because you could grow most of your requirements, but if you had to buy them all, you could not.

Mr. PICKERING: I have not tried to live on £4 a week.

Mr. Corboy: Then why assume that a man on £4 a week can pay the tax?

Mr. PICKERING: Ten or 20 years ago one did not get all the things one needs today.

Hon. P. Collier: You have fallen on more prosperous days.

Mr. PICKERING: The Commission did their work well. They were representative of both sides of the House and the Government, in adopting their recommendations, are carrying out the desires of every section represented in the House.

Hon. P. Collier: Will you accept the recommendations of the select committee on the I.A.B.?

Mr. PICKERING: If the recommendations of the I.A.B. are unanimous—

Mr. Corboy: You do not claim that the recommendations of the Hospitals Commission are unanimous?

Mr. PICKERING: There is nothing to indicate the contrary.

Mr. Munsie: Have the Government complied with the request to make up the balance required out of Consolidated Revenue?

Hon. P. Collier: Only to the extent of £15,000.

Mr. PICKERING: The only people who will derive benefit from the hospitals will be the indigent.

Mr. McCallum: The employer, the big man, will get most benefit.

Mr. PICKERING: Hospitals are established for the sick and indigent.

Hon. P. Collier: If the Government did not provide hospitals, the onus would be on the employers and the industry to provide them, and the employers get the advantage that way.

Mr. PICKERING: The bulk of the people will not regret having been afforded an opportunity to contribute to the hospitals. These institutions are in dire straits. The Kellerrin hospital is the only one I have heard mentioned as being affluent.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That is a new hospital.

Mr. PICKERING: All the others are in urgent need of funds. They require linen; they are mortgaged up to the eyes for stores, and some are unable to pay for telephones. When means are devised to relieve hospitals of the great anxiety arising from insufficient funds, surely they are deserving of support. It is only fair that every one should contribute within his means towards building up our hospital system on sound lines.

Hon. T. WALKER: If the public have not raised any great objection to the Bill, the reason is that they do not know what is being done. There is more opposition to this measure than has reached the ears of members of Parliament. This is a species of irresponsible imposition of taxation. My chief objection is that it is legislation by a board or select committee. It is not the legislation of responsible Ministers of the Crown.

The CHAIRMAN: There is too much conversation in the Chamber and it is not fair to the hon. member who is speaking.

Hon. T. WALKER: Ministers have not accepted the responsibility of their own work. They have delegated to the committee the work of legislation. The functions of a select committee should be informative only; they should not go to the extent of drafting a Bill. I have repeatedly directed attention to the danger of taking from Ministers their responsibilities—

Hon. P. Collier: Of Ministers shirking their responsibilities.

Hon. T. WALKER: Of Ministers getting rid of the clear duty of constructing legislation, and submitting it to Parliament in the spirit that they stand or fall by it. There is an absence of that spirit nowadays. Ministers say, "It is not our Bill; it is the select committee's Bill." We cannot sheet home any wrong to Ministers. Mr. William Watson, a member of the Fremantle Hospital Board, gave the following evidence before the Commission:—

I can see no fairer way of raising money than by means of a graduated super tax on income. Surely it is not intended to take from a man who is earning less than £3 a week even a small amount for hospital maintenance. The graduated super tax would be a simple method, and the amount would increase as the income be-

came larger. The cost of the upkeep of our hospitals should be borne for the most part by the wealthy and not by the poor.

[Mr. Stubbs took the Chair.]

Mr. Mann: The Commission were evidently guided by the weight of evidence.

Hon. T. WALKER: Not by the weight of common sense. There has been a delegation of Ministerial responsibility to this Commission. A new principle has been introduced, and a new departure made from the general methods of taxation. This is a method which England has avoided for centuries. Members of the Commission were inexperienced in the principles of taxation, and complacently the new and inexperienced Minister has followed their example. The Leader of the Opposition has so powerfully and unanswerably dealt with the incidence of taxation that I scruple to follow the same track lest I weaken the strength of his logic. We have lost all sense of consistency if, after saying last night it was wrong to impose a legitimate and tested form of taxation upon the poor, we now come down to the lower depths of poverty, and insist upon imposing a tax. The argument of that beautiful example of innocent Toryism that represents Russelton, is that those who use the hospitals should pay for them, but it is the indigent who use them and it is the indigent who, according to the hon. member, should pay. How broad, magnanimous, and noble is that argument! What is the nobility of mankind but to better the conditions of the poor, and what is the purpose of a civilised Government but to protect them? To the Government taxgatherers is it now intended to add countless others in the form of employers? The Government have not the courage to maintain their hospitals by legitimate taxation, but propose to do it by a side wind. I wish to express my anxiety to uphold the traditions of our legislature, to preserve it from boyish methods of legislation, to see it maintain the dignity of those who look upon the poor and unfortunate in our midst as the care and the charge of the rich and fortunate. If wealth cannot take pity upon the poor when they are sick, upon the maimed and the wretched, civilisation is a fraud, a sham and a hypocrisy. I trust that the principle affirmed last night will not be departed from to-night, and that this tax, proposed by an irresponsible body and accepted by a young, untrained, untried Minister, will be rejected.

Progress reported.

ASSENT TO BILLS.

Message from the Governor received and read notifying assent to the following Bills:—

- 1, Administration Act Amendment.
- 2, Married Women's Protection.
- 3, Public Education Acts Amendment.

BILL—LAND ACT AMENDMENT.

Returned from the Council without amendment.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1922-23.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from the 5th December; Mr. Angelo in the Chair.

Department of the Minister for Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage (Hon. W. J. George, Minister).

Vote—Goldfields Water Supply Undertaking, £132,499:

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. J. George—Murray-Wellington) [10.25]: In view of the number of years during which the Goldfields Water Scheme has been in operation, it is hardly necessary for me to say much to members on the subject. I have much pleasure in stating that there is an increasing demand from the farming areas for supplies of water from the scheme. This pleasure of mine will be readily understood by hon. members when I inform them that unfortunately owing to the present condition of the mining industry on the Golden Mile there is not so much demand for water on the Eastern Goldfields as there was some years ago. Hon. members will be aware that the scheme was initiated with the idea of supplying about five million gallons per day to Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie. That ideal, to which the engineers were working, has not been reached; but the scheme is now delivering as much water as the pipes can carry. Between the reservoir and the No. 1 pumping station, on to No. 4 station, we are pumping something over five million gallons per day; but of that five million gallons the great bulk is absorbed by the farming areas which tap the main on its way to Kalgoorlie. The goldfields are now taking about two million gallons daily. There has been a natural anxiety as to the stability of the pipes. At the start the life of the pipes was laid down as being about 25 years, and, with good luck, rather more. During the years which have passed, there have been various occasions on which the engineers have had to carry much anxiety, by reason of the action of electrolysis on the pipes. However, the skill of the engineers in charge of the work—I may refer particularly to Mr. O'Brien—enabled them to devise means by which the life of the pipes has been considerably prolonged. Although there is, and must be, a certain degree of nervousness about the matter, still I am assured we need not fear but that the scheme will be able to carry out the objects for which it was constructed. A question which has been, and is still being, carefully gone into, with a view to reducing the cost of pumping, is the idea of replacing at the No. 1 and No. 2 stations the steam-propelled pumps with pumps to be driven by electricity. At the moment I cannot say whether the substitution would prove fully economical. How-

ever, we are very desirous of installing electric power, not only because we are anxious to produce, if possible, a further economy in the working, but also in order that we may assist the big electricity scheme operating at East Perth by enabling it to have a bigger call than at present on its production. If we find that it is possible to see even our own back again, or possibly a little less than our own, by pumping with electric power instead of steam power, I personally should feel inclined to instal electricity. So far as my nature will allow me, I like to look at these things with a broader view than the particular enterprise upon which I am engaged. I regard the goldfields water scheme as a member of a big family, of which the electricity scheme at East Perth is also a member. I bear in mind that if the scheme can take a large quantity of electric current from East Perth, the increased output there would result in that undertaking being able to supply the people generally with electric current at a rate considerably lower than that now being charged. If investigation should prove that even some slight loss in this connection to the goldfields water scheme would be counterbalanced by increased efficiency and lower working costs of the electricity scheme, I should regard it my duty as a Minister to take up a corresponding attitude.

Mr. MacCallum Smith. Are the agricultural areas not interested in connection with the Goldfields Water Supply Scheme?

Mr. McCallum. It does not look like it, seeing that there are practically no Country Party members present.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They should be interested.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Country Party seats being practically empty, may be due to the fact that the members of that party have been listening for seven or eight hours to arguments on another matter. I wish hon. members would remember these points regarding the electricity scheme. If it should be desirable to effect these alterations, they will be carried out. We have heard complaints this session regarding the Government being so hard up. A number of members have advised the Government as to the necessity for economy being practised, especially in view of the deficit. It is one thing for hon. members to talk about economy in this Chamber, but they are probably aware that if there is one thing that I have more to do with than another it is the water supply for the agricultural areas and the goldfields. Members frequently ask for concessions in the interests of their constituents. During the last week or two, I have received a number of applications backed up by members of Parliament, whose sincerity and earnestness no one can doubt. These applications were for concessions in connection with water supplied to various parts. The arguments advanced are quite all right in themselves, but if members will look at the balance sheets they will see that the scheme is not a paying concern. In those

circumstances, it should be remembered that every bit of revenue which is lost through the granting of these concessions must add to the deficit. I trust members will not lose sight of that fact in the future.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You learnt that when you were on the Opposition side of the House.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have learnt many things both on the Opposition side and on the Government side of the House. There are one or two features of the utilities served by the Goldfields Water Supply Department in the agricultural area, to which I will refer. It has been recognised by various Governments from the very inception, that it would be ridiculous to suppose that the early settlers could supply themselves with water straight away. In many instances, therefore, dams and wells were put down in advance of settlement. In other instances, this work was done at the same time as the settlement took place, while in other cases it was done after settlement. There are about 2,000 dams and wells which have been provided at a cost, running into about half a million pounds.

Mr. Munsie: During what period?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: During the last 20 years or so. These dams were put down when the districts were really in the pioneering stages, so as to enable not only the settlers, but those who were droving and carting to stations, to procure water supplies. These dams and wells were maintained at the expense of the general revenue. Some years ago the Government of the day decided—I think rightly so, too—that they could not be expected fairly to continue the expenditure involved in the maintenance of the dams. It was held that those who received benefits from the wells and dams could be expected reasonably to effect the necessary repairs. It was not an unreasonable attitude to adopt that, should the dams become silted up, the settlers in the districts should give a day per season to remove the silt and clean out the drains so that when the rains came, the water could have free access to the dams, and so collect all the water possible. The Government were unable to find the money for maintenance purposes and, consequently, the dams and wells were handed over to the road boards in the various districts. I wish it were possible for me to say that the department is satisfied with the attention that has been given to the dams. At the present time, I receive letters almost daily from various districts pointing out that there is a stringency regarding water supply and that the people will be in trouble because of the condition of the dams and wells. As Minister of the day, and voicing the views not only of the present Government, but of others with which I have been connected, I feel that this point should be stressed to members of the agricultural districts, so that they can mention it to the road boards and their constituents.

Mr. Heron: The agricultural members are not here to listen to you.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There must come a time when the special expenditure undertaken by the Government must be transferred to the care of the local authorities. It is not too much to say that that burden should be accepted in the districts concerned. Some of those authorities have been accustomed to look to the Government for everything that should be done and now, in a time of financial stress, they do not understand that "God helps those who help themselves."

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That only means putting the tax on to another party.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Hardly as much as that. It means that these districts should certainly look after their own concerns as much as possible. There has been trouble from time to time regarding centralisation. This is one direction in which I think decentralisation can be carried out, supported by common sense.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Decentralisation is wanted only outside the metropolitan area.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We have other water schemes at Meekatharra, Cue, Day Dawn, and other places. The report of the Public Works Department shows that the financial condition of these schemes is not good. It is, of course, the result of the migration of population owing to the decline of the fields. This aspect has had considerable thought from the departmental officers and will have to be considered by the Government. The Narrogin water scheme was opened a week or so ago, and I believe it may be looked upon as a successful effort on the part of those responsible.

Mr. Pickering: What did it cost?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: About £39,000 odd. The Railway Department contributed towards the cost, and will draw its water from the scheme. The Wiecherina scheme at Geraldton is progressing very well, and it is hoped that early in the new year it will be possible to give Geraldton the new supply, which will be ample and of good quality.

The CHAIRMAN: Is not the Minister getting away from the division? We are on Goldfields Water Supply.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: But this comes under the same department.

The CHAIRMAN: If the Committee has no objection, the Minister may proceed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: A question agitating Kalgoorlie members is whether, since the sinking fund payments have been set aside for the time being, a reduction in the price of water will not be possible. That question is being carefully considered, but the inquiries are not yet complete.

Mr. Corboy: How about allowing water for the money paid in meter rents?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I will deal with that presently. The cost of pumping water up to Kalgoorlie is in excess of what is received.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Is that allowing for what the agricultural areas ought to pay?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes. We give the scheme full credit for that. I have had prepared a diagram showing the cost of water at every station. Goldfields members are keen upon the provision of cheap water for low grade mines. It is contended that if cheap water could be supplied to those mines, although it would mean a loss to the department, yet the benefits resulting to the State would more than offset that loss. I have put that contention before my officers, and I can assure hon. members that as soon as we get into recess the matter will be finalised and a recommendation made to Cabinet.

Mr. MUNSIE (Hannans) [10.45]: I should have been better pleased if the Minister had told us approximately what the goldfields scheme is losing. From the figures supplied here, I take it that if expectations are realised, a profit will be shown this year. I do not know whether the Minister is including the £179,000 for interest and sinking fund, as in previous years. I have been turning up "Hansard" with a view to learning from the report of the Treasurer's Budget speech what he was going to save this year in sinking fund payments.

Hon. P. Collier: He said £98,000.

Mr. MUNSIE: Yet we find in this footnote that the same amount is provided as was set down last year. By wiping that out, and taking the actual expenditure and the estimated income, we get a profit of £52,000. That being so, the Minister ought to endeavour to reduce the cost of water to low grade mines. Only to-day I received from Kalgoorlie a letter asking me to make suggestions as to how the mining industry could get some relief. God only knows, it wants relief. There is no other industry in the State which, during the last six or seven years, has been hit as hard as has the mining industry. It is up to the Government to do something to assist that industry and, since they have been relieved of the payment of sinking fund, the provision of cheap water appears to be a practicable form of assistance. I was disappointed with the attitude of the Minister in respect of outlying centres. A little over two years ago the Government decided to pull up the water main from Boorara to Bulong, evidently with the intention of transferring the pipes to some other locality.

The Minister for Works: To Meekatharra.

Mr. MUNSIE: I am speaking of the pipe line from Boorara to Bulong, and not that from Lakeside to Boorara. People in the Bulong district running stock have to rely on one dam, and if that happened to go dry, their holdings would be useless. It was suggested that it would be uneconomical to pull the pipes up. I do not know what it cost to pull them up, but after they were taken out of the ground, they were carted to Kalgoorlie where they are still stacked. It was not worth going to the expense of pulling them out of the ground as they are unfit for further use. Had they been left in the ground, they would have continued to serve a useful pur-

rose. There was no great pressure on them, because the water gravitated right to Bulong. The Government have now decided to pull up the pipes to the Boorara pumping station. A reasonably fair find has been made in the Boorara district quite recently. About 12 men are working these and the water was being used also by two pastoralists.

The Minister for Works: From that main?

Mr. MUNSIE: Yes; they brought their cattle in for water.

The Minister for Works: They might have done that. I was up there and was assured there were no residents within miles.

Mr. MUNSIE: The Minister could not have gone far.

The Minister for Works: I went to the pumping station.

Mr. MUNSIE: There has been no one in that locality, apart from the pumping station man, for 12 or 13 years. Had the Minister gone $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles south-east to Waterfall, he would have found residents who relied on getting their water from the scheme. The Minister, in reply to a question, said it was intended to utilise the pipes at Meekatharra. I do not know whether he has had these pipes examined, but I am afraid that if he pulls them up, he will find them in no better condition than the other lot. They will not be fit to send to Meekatharra.

Mr. Harrison: Did the department use any of the pipes which were lifted?

Mr. MUNSIE: Not one length of them; they were not fit to use. In many places the thumb could be pressed through them.

The Minister for Works: Were they 3in. galvanised iron pipes?

Mr. MUNSIE: They were 3in. pipes; I do not know whether they were galvanised.

The Minister for Works: It saved an expenditure of £800 by sending some of the pipes from there to the sawmills.

Mr. MUNSIE: I made inquiries three weeks ago and was informed that all the pipes pulled up, barring those which were in too bad a state to be lifted on to the lorry, were stacked at Kalgoorlie.

The Minister for Works: I shall inquire into that.

Mr. MUNSIE: I hope the Minister will reconsider this matter and leave the pipes in the Boorara line. They are costing nothing for maintenance, and a considerable expenditure will be involved if it is decided to pull them up. When they are pulled up, they will probably be useless.

The Minister for Works: We do not want to do that.

Mr. MUNSIE: I wish to warn the Minister that that is what will happen. In the interests of the district the pipes should be allowed to remain in the ground. It is quite right to take pipes from a district where they are not required and use them for a new and promising centre, but it is a waste of money to pull up worn-out pipes, which might still be of service in the old district.

The Minister for Works: I agree with you.

Mr. MUNSIE: There is still a possibility of Waterfall producing a good deal of gold. The district has not been abandoned by any means. It is up to the Minister to give a cheaper water supply to some of the low grade mines in Kalgoorlie and along the pipe track. Ever since I have been in Parliament, I have advocated cheaper water for such mines. In some instances a reduction has been secured, but while the Government had to pay interest and sinking fund on the scheme loan, it was not a fair proposition to ask that water be supplied at less than cost price and the general taxpayer should make up the deficiency. Now that the scheme is free from the burden of interest and sinking fund, the Government should supply water at a cheaper rate. I realise some of the difficulties. There may be a well established mine working on fairly low grade ore and making a success of it. If the Minister gives cheaper water to some undeveloped low grade show, he will be requested by the larger and more successful show to be given water at the same rate.

The Minister for Works: That is so.

Mr. MUNSIE: That difficulty, however, is not insurmountable. I do not know of one company on the Golden Mile that is squealing about the charge for water supplied for general use. For the pumping of tailings, the Government supply water to some of the big mines at less than it costs to deliver it to Kalgoorlie.

Mr. Corboy: They are selling it cheaper at Kalgoorlie than at Southern Cross.

Mr. MUNSIE: I refer particularly to the Great Boulder, the Ivanhoe, and the Horse-shoe.

Mr. Corboy: And the South Kalgurli.

Mr. MUNSIE: These mines have had cheap water for some years. I believe the concession is at the rate of 1s. 6d. per thousand. The Government will not permit the companies to use salt water. If a mine has sufficient salt water to enable it to run a ten-head battery, it cannot use it without losing the concession for fresh water. Salt water, of course, cannot be used for boiler purposes. Directly the mine attempts to use its own salt water, the Government put up the rates for fresh water about 300 per cent. For the last two or three years the Minister has complained that if he gave any concession in the price he could not supply the extra water on account of the pipe line difficulties. Only two million gallons a day are being supplied to Kalgoorlie. The rest of the water is absorbed along the route. If there was a demand for five million gallons per day the Minister could not supply it with the present pipe line. He dare not put the necessary pressure on the whole line. If he cannot supply any extra demand, the companies should be able to make up the amount required by using their own salt water without being penalised.

Mr. Harrison: That was not the policy of the present Government alone.

Mr. MUNSIE: It has been the policy of the Water Supply Department for many years. The desire is to make the Goldfields Water Scheme a paying proposition. The department has held that if a concession was given in one direction it would have to be given in another. That is a dog-in-the-manger policy. The pipes are less efficient than they were, and the longer they remain in the ground the less efficient will they become. It is necessary to ease the burden of water costs upon the companies. There are not many mines in Kalgoorlie and Boulder district which have water of their own, and I cannot see why the Government should object to their using salt water in conjunction with fresh.

Mr. Harrison: That policy has fallen heavily upon Westonia.

Mr. MUNSIE: Some of the mines have to waste their water because of the position I have outlined. The Government have been repaid for fully 90 per cent. of the meters they supplied on the goldfields, and have had ten times their value back.

The Minister for Works: You are mistaken.

Mr. MUNSIE: The Government have charged 10s. 6d. per annum per meter, and 75 per cent. of the meters on the fields have been in existence for 15 years.

The Minister for Works: It costs something to repair them.

Mr. Corboy: They have been in the ground for 15 years without being touched.

Mr. MUNSIE: They have returned roughly about £8 each, which is surely in excess of their original cost. During the last two or three years the Government have permitted the householder to cut out his meter rent by paying an exorbitant price for excess water. Even in that respect the Government are not giving the people a fair deal. If the Minister will go into the matter, I am sure he will devise some means of affording relief to the goldfields people.

Mr. LUTEY (Brown Hill-Ivanhoe) [11.8]: Have Ministers come to any decision as to supply of water to the goldfields? What has been the result of their negotiations with the mining industry? The industry deserves all the assistance the Government can give it. There are pensioners and men under the Mine Workers' Relief Fund who are having a hard struggle to make ends meet. They are not in a position to pay the water meter rents. The quantity of water they use is small, and therefore they get no benefit from the concession. Some consideration should be given to these people by the Minister.

Mr. CORBOY (Yilgarn) [11.10]: I desire to back up the remarks of the member for Hannans, and to appeal to the Minister to go personally into the matter and see in what way he can help. In regard to assistance to low grade shows I think we can depend upon the co-operation of the Minister for Mines. Some months ago I had

occasion to place a case before him, and although the application was turned down by the Minister for Water Supply, I still hope that the announcement to be made by that Minister in the new year will be one with which we can all be satisfied. Regarding meter rents, I have at various times collected a little information. I have found that in a number of cases the meters have been in the ground for 15 or 16 years, functioning without repair or removal. The meter rent has paid the cost of the meters more than once. Some relief should be given to goldfields residents in that respect. In the metropolitan area there was originally a charge for meter rents, but that charge was done away with some years ago, the department recognising that the meters form portion of the departmental plant.

The Minister for Works: It was a mistake that the meter rents were done away with.

Mr. CORBOY: Some people contend that the Minister has got the money back by imposing charges for water in other ways. However, I would not be so unkind as to make such a suggestion. In view of the high price of water on the goldfields, and in view of the fact that the meters have been more than paid for by the meter rents, I think the charge should not be allowed to remain. At Southern Cross the charge for water is higher than at Kalgoorlie. Of course I recognise that Southern Cross uses a great deal less water than Kalgoorlie uses, and therefore it is made difficult for Southern Cross to obtain equal consideration.

Mr. HICKMOTT (Pingelly) [11.14]: The question of water for the agricultural areas is one of the most serious problems facing the Government. There has been talk of supplying those areas with water from Mundaring Weir. I was surprised to hear the Minister say that about half a million had been spent on water conservation in the agricultural areas. My observation tells me that the matter has only been tinkered with. In all the Eastern States the Governments have laid down water supplies in the agricultural districts at a cost that in many cases is merely trifling as compared with the cost here. In what are called the dry areas of Victoria there is a splendid supply of water from the River Murray, and the water rate is about £7 per annum for 640 acres. I admit that there is a special difficulty here, because frequently the ground is not good for holding. In other cases, I am told, the water gets brackish if the dam is sunk to any considerable depth. Some of our dams, sunk to a specification furnished by the Water Supply Department, will not hold water for more than six weeks. As soon as dry weather sets in, the water evaporates. As regards wells, let hon. members imagine a man carting water from a well 100 feet deep and supplied only with a windlass. That is the equipment of many wells in the agricultural areas. Many of the wells are 70, 80, 90 and even 100 feet deep, and the settler has to pull the water

up with the windlass and fill his tanks. By the time he gets home he almost requires to go back again to the well. In many seasons when there is sufficient rain to make the grass and crops grow, there is not sufficient to allow of water being conserved. Dams in the agricultural areas must be of sufficient capacity to carry the settlers over two years. Without such dams a permanent water supply is out of the question. The Government should come to the assistance of the farmers in that respect. Some little time ago the Minister said that to supply water from the scheme would cost £50 for 1,000 acres.

The Minister for Works: In some places, yes, and even as much as £60.

Mr. HICKMOTT: From my knowledge of farming I say that no man can pay such a rate.

The Minister for Works: The farmers say they can.

Mr. HICKMOTT: They may say that, but it will be found that they cannot keep up their payments.

The Minister for Works: That is my opinion too.

Mr. HICKMOTT: There are other methods of supplying them with water, and those methods must be adopted in order to obtain a permanent supply. The problem is one which, though difficult, will have to be faced if we are going to keep our settlers on the land and get them to produce as the Government desire. Of course that is not only the wish of the Government, but also the wish of the people concerned. They desire to produce more and more, and the larger their production the better it will be for the State. When I first went into the dry areas many farmers carted water over distances of 15 to 20 miles. In summer that work occupied them practically the whole of their time. Reverting to the rate quoted for scheme water, I say it is impossible for any farmer to pay £50 or £60 per thousand acres.

The Minister for Works: Your deputy leader assured me that the farmers could pay that.

Mr. HICKMOTT: I would not like to undertake such a responsibility, even though it is absolutely necessary to have water. In the old St. Arnaud shire of Victoria, a very large shire covering hundreds of square miles, before cheap water was obtained from the Murray River it was the practice to sink dams of 6,000 or 7,000 cubic yards in places where there was good catchment, and thus the farmers were, generally speaking, within three to five miles of water. Those dams were one of the best investments of the kind ever made by any public body.

The Minister for Works: Were the dams lined?

Mr. HICKMOTT: No. They could sink dams there very much cheaper than has been possible here. I know of one 10,000-yard dam, 20 feet deep, which was put down for less than 1s. per yard. That dam

was filled by the water scheme, and not directly by rain. I believe the excavation of tanks here costs from 2s. to 2s. 6d., or perhaps more, per yard, and that is a very expensive item. Many 2,000-yard dams have been constructed in Victoria for 6d. or 8d. a yard. The dams have to be deep because if they are shallow the evaporation is an important item. In some cases, the use of tittres, which do not affect the water, has been resorted to successfully as a covering to prevent evaporation. The Water Supply Department and the agriculturists should give consideration to this matter with a view to arriving at some scheme which will provide the people with a permanent water supply. The system in use in the mallee country of Victoria would hardly be applicable here because the country is more undulating in this State. In Victoria the water is taken for miles in open channels by gravitation and the department will fill any sized dam that is required. They specify that the settler must have a 2,000-yard dam for every 640 acres, but if the farmer puts down a 10,000-yard dam, the department will fill it with water without extra charges being levied. It would not be possible to supply water as easily in this State as we have not the flat country that exists in Victoria. In many places, however, we have rock catchment areas which lend themselves to the construction of tanks and dams from which good permanent supplies of water could be drawn. That cannot be done in all cases, but I urge the Government to put forward every endeavour to solve the problem of giving the people a permanent water supply. The Minister referred to the fact that a number of dams and wells constructed by the Government had been neglected by the people. The people should be compelled to keep those conveniences in order once they are constructed by the Government. In one case a windmill was sent to a district and I do not think it was ever put to use at all. It was erected in a slipshod manner and was blown to pieces. In most instances, the people have to draw up the water from wells by windlasses which is an antiquated method. I trust the Government will look into these matters with a view to furnishing adequate water supplies.

Hon. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [11.25]: I am disappointed that the Minister has not made a definite statement this evening regarding a reduction in the price of water on the goldfields. If these Estimates are passed and the Government are allowed to go into recess, nothing whatever will be done until Parliament meets again.

The Minister for Works: I can assure you something will be done.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I have no doubt the Minister will make investigations and cause inquiries to be set on foot so that he can get reports, and so on, but no substantial reduction will be granted in the price of water. The Government have been aware of the improved position for six months. They have known of it ever since the Premier returned

in May or June. They were aware of the fact that they were relieved from the necessity of paying interest and sinking fund for the future and that that represented something like £100,000. I do not know how much more it will be. Surely something can be done by the Government on behalf of the consumers on the goldfields. One of the first things the present Government did on taking office was to reduce the price of water, drawn from the scheme, in the agricultural areas, although I am pretty safe in saying that at that particular time the department were showing a loss on their operations in the agricultural areas. Notwithstanding that fact, the reduction was made for the benefit of the agriculturists.

Mr. Harrison: No loss was made.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes, there was a loss.

The Minister for Works: We reduced the charges in some areas from 6s. to 2s., because the adjacent districts were getting it at 2s.

Hon. P. COLLIER: But the fact remains that when the reduction was made in the agricultural areas there was a loss.

The Minister for Works: I cannot say exactly, as I have not the figures with me.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I know that that is so. The Minister said he would not make the concession here and then went out and did it as soon as Parliament closed up.

The Minister for Works: I did?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Yes, you did.

Mr. Harrison: And it was a very wise action to take. It was a master stroke of business.

Hon. P. COLLIER: If the Government can make a concession of that kind, it is regarded in the agricultural districts as a master stroke of business.

Mr. Harrison: They made a profit by it.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: There is no profit being made now.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Will the member for Avon (Mr. Harrison), or the Minister, say what the position is now?

Mr. Harrison: Look at the footnote attached to the Estimates. It refers to the revenue expected from the scheme.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That is due to the fact that the Government have been relieved from the payment of interest and sinking fund this year.

Mr. Munsie: In any case the footnote has no right to be there, according to what the Premier said.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The fact is that the Government made this concession in the agricultural areas but they have not taken any steps in the same direction in connection with the goldfields areas. It is not unreasonable to ask that the Minister should give us some definite statement before the Estimates are passed. There has been ample time to go into the matter and come to a decision. Surely when the Government are relieved of the responsibility of finding £100,000 or more, a proportion of that amount could be given by way of relief to the consumers on the goldfields. We can never forget what the industry has done for the State. Now that

mining can scarcely be carried on at a profit, the Government, relieved of the sinking fund payments, ought to be able to make some substantial concession to the industry. The charge for rent of water meters ought to be abolished within the next 24 hours. At one time rent was charged on the ground that the scheme was a losing proposition.

The Minister for Works: The meters cost in repairs quite as much as is paid for them in rent.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Meters in the metropolitan area cost the same for repairs, yet no rental charge is made. Once the defence was that metropolitan consumers paid in rates sufficient to cover the cost of the service rendered including the cost of meter repairs—a perfectly sound argument. But we have now reached a similar stage on the goldfields. Here we have a department showing a profit of £52,000 for this year. There can be no longer the slightest justification for charging meter rent. I hope the Minister will remove that impost at once. But that slight concession will not be regarded as sufficient relief to the mining industry. With the department showing a profit of £52,000, which is most unusual—

Mr. Teesdale: Highly irregular!

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes, it is. We are not claiming the whole of that; we will be satisfied with a fair percentage of it. I am disappointed that the Minister should not be able to give us something definite about this. The question has been raised for months past, and requests have been made to the Minister to go into the matter and see what could be done. Something in the way of finality ought to have been reached ere this, yet the Minister has nothing to say about a reduction in the charges made for water. I want from the Minister an assurance that substantial relief will be afforded. At least half the £52,000 ought to go to the consumers. That would be only 25 per cent. of the total payments of interest and sinking fund of which the Government have been relieved, for the Premier said it represented approximately £100,000.

Mr. HARRISON (Avon) [11.37]: A little while ago at Bruce Rock a deputation waited on the Premier in respect of water supply. Water for agriculture is of the utmost importance. We need assistance to conserve the water supply. We have no rivers, no reservoirs of any moment; we have only the rainfall, and that requires to be conserved. From that portion of my electorate around Weston, east of the rabbit-proof fence, have come requests for an extension of the water supply. Also on the north side of the railway, some distance out from Merredin, the people want further assistance in that respect. I thought the Minister would have heard something from the Premier regarding these deputations and would have made a statement to the Committee.

The Minister for Works: What chance has a Minister to attend his office when we are sitting here day and night?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I suggest that progress be reported now.

Mr. HARRISON: Where rock out-crops occur on the rises and the catchment is sufficient, investigation would be warranted to ascertain the capital expenditure necessary to reticulate an area of the surrounding district from such a reservoir. The outlay on work such as this would probably be recouped in a very short space of time. We require capital outlay for water supplies. There are areas in which people are unable to carry stock on account of the lack of water supplies, and the fact of their being dependent solely on wheat is not good from the point of view of the State. The departmental officials should be instructed to investigate the capital cost of such works, and ascertain whether the enterprise would warrant the outlay. This matter has been brought under my notice by one of the officers connected with the Agricultural Bank and the Industries Assistance Board. A gentleman in the Toodyay electorate saw me on two occasions and I spoke to the Premier about it. This matter should be followed up. I am with the goldfield members in their desire to secure water at a cheaper rate for the treating of sands and slimes. I was surprised at the Leader of the Opposition speaking as he did regarding a reduction of the rate, because it would be the means of bringing further revenue to the department and to utilities such as the railways consequent on the increased number of stock which could be carried.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The more the railways carry, the more they lose, according to your statement.

Mr. HARRISON: I said nothing of the kind. If in the occupied areas water supplies could be provided, it would be wise to find the money for them. Some of the mines were getting water for 1s. 6d. a thousand gallons years before we in the agricultural areas received any reduction. I am convinced that the heavier the consumption of water consequent on supplying it at a reduced rate, the heavier will be the returns of revenue accruing from increased production. If the benefit is not reaped by the Water Supply Department it will certainly be reaped by other utilities.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [11.44]: I have been trying to look up the figures in the reports and have been unable to find any expenditure for the agricultural areas, with the exception of the capital cost. There are no figures showing the quantity of water supplied.

The Minister for Works: You mean from the Goldfields water scheme?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Yes.

The Minister for Works: You would not find those figures.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Avon district is supplied from the water scheme, but the quantities of water supplied are not shown. The revenue last year was £13,443 and the cost of putting the water pipes in was £128,-

335. Seven per cent. on that sum represents £8,982, and after paying interest there would not be much left to meet the cost of pumping, the cost of the main and the head works. The accounts should show how these supplies pay. It is generally believed that the goldfields are getting all the benefit from the water scheme. For years we have heard it said, "Look what we are paying on the Goldfields water scheme. We are paying about £80,000 a year to supply water to the goldfields." As a matter of fact that water is distributed through agricultural towns and districts right along the railway line, and much of the loss is due to the supplies between Mundaring and the goldfields and not to the goldfields at all. It is only right that a statement should be presented to Parliament in the form it used to take. In the first year the Minister for Works was here, we could consult the figures and decide whether it was a fair proposition. I got into hot water for supporting the Minister. I was accused of being antagonistic to the agricultural areas, because I expressed the belief that the Minister was justified in making charges approximate the cost of the service. There was no allowance for head works or pumping. All that was charged was interest, sinking fund and a little for the water distributed. Then as soon as Parliament closed down the Minister reduced the rate and, for the amount previously paid, supplied double the quantity of water. These Estimates should have shown the exact position in the agricultural districts. Last session I asked for a return, and though it was not compiled to the date of presentation, it contained sufficient information to show we were losing £8,000 or £9,000 a year. It would be well for members to realise that there are other places besides the metropolitan area which are a drag on the revenue of this State. Some members in the present Parliament—I have not known of it in any other Parliament—seem to think that every penny of the deficit represents expenditure in the metropolitan area, and that none of the money has been spent in the country. The last return I saw showed a loss of about £9,000 a year. At the cheap rate of supply from the goldfields main, the engineer said the price charged would not pay for delivery at the point of distribution. I hope the Minister will give us the figures. The great demand that is made upon him by some sections of the community is such that he may want some assistance from us.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. J. George—Murray-Wellington—in reply) [11.52]: Goldfields members have made a legitimate inquiry as to whether or not the transactions concerning the sinking fund made by the Premier in London will or will not bring about a reduction in the price of water on the goldfields. I should be sorry if I thought they had the idea that the Government were trying to lay aside this question. The Minister for Mines and I have not had an opportunity to go into it. While Par-

liament is sitting Ministers have every nerve strained to carry on current matters.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I have no sympathy with the Premier because he keeps us here.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: When we get into recess the matter will have my serious attention and that of the Minister for Mines. When we have investigated it we shall have to see what view the Treasurer takes of it. The report of the Public Works Department shows a deficit for last year to the 30th June of £116,000, which included £97,000 for sinking fund. These figures must cause the Minister in charge to be careful. It is anticipated that the revenue this year will be £185,000 and the cost of operations £132,000. From these figures the Leader of the Opposition infers that the apparent profit should be utilised to assist mine owners to find a more profitable outturn from their mines. This point will be gone into. The member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe referred to the pipes of the Golden Ridge water scheme. If the pipes are not being used and their quality is good enough to warrant us in moving them, they will certainly be made use of instead of a demand being made upon the Treasury for cash to buy other pipes. I am not aware that the pipes taken from Bulong are in the condition stated. With regard to the pipe line to Golden Ridge, I went over the ground with Mr. O'Brien, and with Mr. McQueen, the engineer at Kalgoorlie. I was assured they had made tests and that the pipes were fit to be transferred to Meekatharra. The reason why they were not transferred there, where they are needed, is that funds were not available for the carrying out of the work. If there is gold in the district and a reasonable hope of development occurring there, well and good. We would not be justified in moving the pipes unless and until we are satisfied that the reported gold finds are of no value. I am not anxious to pull up pipes merely for the sake of doing so, nor am I anxious to make a call upon the Treasurer if other means can be found for utilising material that exists in different parts of the State. I will make inquiries into this matter.

Mr. Munsie: What is the size of the pipes between Lakeside and Boorara?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I believe they are 3in. pipes. I have noted what has been said about cheaper water, and inquiries will be made into the question. If the demand for water from the Mundaring weir en route to Kalgoorlie is such as to allow a certain quantity only to be delivered at Kalgoorlie, and the demand at Kalgoorlie is greater than the supply, it is reasonable that the question of allowing a proportion of salt water to be used should be considered. If we cannot deliver the goods, we cannot stifle an industry by a dog-in-the-manger policy. The Government would not be likely to adopt such a policy. Meter rents have been referred to. From my experience of the metropolitan area water supply during the last two or

three years, it seems to me just that a charge should be made for meters.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You do not pay for a grocer's scales when he weights out 1 lb. of sugar.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No. The cost of repairing and replacing meters is a very heavy charge upon the department in the metropolitan area and in Kalgoorlie.

Mr. Munsie: They often get corroded here.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have discussed with the engineer in charge whether it would not be better to take away all meters in certain parts rather than incur the expense necessary upon repairs. We have a staff of 10 or 12 at Lottus-street, who devote most of their time to looking after the 20,000 meters in the metropolitan area. The time is fast coming when the question of the price of water in the metropolitan area will have to be considered by Parliament, with a view to making ends meet. A goldfields member pleaded the case of men out of work, or only partially employed. The hon. member urged that in such cases payment of meter rents should not be insisted upon. If there are any genuine cases of the kind, in connection with either meter rents or water rates, there is no desire in the department to behave harshly. The State has a right to be paid for services rendered, but the State cannot be a hard and fast machine, without consideration for people who have been overtaken by misfortune. If such cases are brought before the Minister for Water Supply, he will attend to them. The member for Pingelly gave us a most interesting address on water supply in Victoria. I only wish we had here the favourable conditions obtaining there. But we have not. We cannot sink dams so cheaply here as they can in Victoria, or as they could a few years ago. When I stated that nearly half a million pounds had been spent upon the sinking of wells and dams in the agricultural areas, I was well within the mark. The department have had quite a number of requests for dams, either directly, or through the Premier or visiting Ministers. It has been quite impossible to accede to those requests. A 3,000-yard dam put down by the engineers would cost £2,000 or more, and that fact makes the matter a serious one for the Treasurer. To put a hole into the ground is one thing, but in many cases lining and fencing would be required, and these things involve much more expense. The member for Pingelly remarked that farmers had been quoted £50 or £60 per thousand acres for water from the goldfields scheme. I interjected that the farmers had expressed their willingness and ability to pay that amount, and that the Deputy Leader of the Country Party—whose electorate includes Totadgin—had assured me—I presume he has assured the Premier also—that the farmers can pay that charge and will pay it. I feel, like the member for Pingelly, that when once the Government put the water into those districts at a cost of £100,000 or £120,000, they might receive payment of the rates so long as things

went all right, but that if a lean period came to the farmers the Government might have to whistle for their money. However, the request will be fully considered. Undoubtedly the water question must be faced by the Government with a determination to beat it: otherwise the farmer cannot and will not stay. That is a consideration which must weigh with those who take the responsibility of what shall be done. I am glad the member for Pingelly agreed with the Government that where dams and wells are put down, those who benefit by them should care for the maintenance. That is the only fair and honest way of dealing with the matter. The Leader of the Opposition expressed himself as incredulous regarding any substantial reduction being made in the price of water once these Estimates are passed. While I cannot give the hon. gentleman any assurance in the matter, I repeat that the Minister for Mines and the Minister for Water Supply will go seriously into the whole question so soon as they have a chance, in recess, of tackling their work. The Leader of the Opposition suggested that the £52,000 shown as prospective profit of the department should be shared by the consumers. I have taken a note of the suggestion, and in the representations which I shall shortly be making for the Treasurer's consideration that point will not be overlooked. The Westonia water supply I will have inquired into, and will advise the hon. member concerned as promptly as possible. I think there is something in his idea that, provided the money can be found, we should utilise such rocky catchments as exist to conserve water. I will see that that matter receives consideration. The member for North-East Fremantle referred to an omission in the financial statement of the department.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It was the same last year.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: I assure the hon. member that that has not been done with any idea of misleading the Committee. The revenue accounts of each department will be found on pages 6 and 7 of the Estimates.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The revenue is there, but the expenditure is not.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: That point also I note. If the hon. member will move for a return, I will have the information got out and placed at his service. Any further information the Committee may desire I shall be glad to furnish.

Hon. P. Collier: The information as to revenue is of very little value without the corresponding information as to expenditure.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Government Refrigerating Works, £5,604—agreed to.

Vote—Kalgoorlie Abattoirs, £3,619:

Mr. LUTEY: The revenue from the Kalgoorlie abattoirs in 1921-22 was £4,633, and the expenditure £3,157, leaving a profit of £1,476. Notwithstanding that profit, it is proposed to increase the charge for bullocks

by 6d. and the charge for sheep by 1d. per head. At Midland Junction the charges are 3s. 6d. and 6d. per head, respectively, these charges including fees for water, etc., At Kalgoorlie the present charges levied are 4s. 6d. per head for bullocks and 1s. 1d. for sheep. In addition there has to be paid 1d. per day water fees for cattle and ½d. per day for sheep. On top of that, although there is already paid so much more than is charged at the Midland Junction abattoirs, it is proposed to levy an extra fee of 6d. per head for bullocks and 1d. per head for sheep. This is most unjust. I do not see why the goldfields people should be taxed so much more heavily than those using the Midland Junction works. I hope the Minister will look into the question and see if he cannot make a reduction, rather than an increase in the charges, seeing that a profit has been derived from the Kalgoorlie abattoirs. There are one or two other matters which should be remedied. For instance, the pens for sheep are not covered. Hon. members can understand what it means to pen up sheep in hot weather, without any cover. On days when the temperature is 110 degrees in the shade, the water that the sheep have to drink becomes quite hot. It is cruelty to animals to permit this to continue. Only half of the bullock pens are covered, and in the drying yards the skins and hides have to lie exposed to the rain in winter and the hot sun in summer. This must mean a loss of hundreds of pounds to the goldfields people. These matters should be remedied as soon as possible. The value of the skins and hides deteriorates considerably both in summer and winter owing to the condition of the yards. There is another matter affecting the abattoirs which could easily be rectified. There is hot and cold water available, but there is no room where the men can change. They have to sit around in various places to eat their crib and when they want to change after work, some do so in the sheep pens, while others have to go to other parts of the abattoirs. A small expenditure only would be required to remedy this position. I brought up this matter before and I understood that the Minister was favourable to making the necessary improvements so as to provide the men with a room in which to change. I trust these matters will receive consideration.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The financial position regarding the Kalgoorlie abattoirs at the moment is not such as the member for Brownhill-Ivanhoe suggested. Naturally having regard to the financial position, the consumers always have to pay and we have had to increase the charges to make ends meet, if possible. Immediately I found it was necessary to increase the charges, I wrote to the members for the districts affected, namely, Kalgoorlie and Boulder.

Mr. Munsie: The abattoirs happened to be in my electorate. You did not notify me.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The comparison between the Midland Junction

tion and Kalgoorlie abattoirs is hardly a fair one, because we put through at Midland Junction as much stock in one day as is put through at Kalgoorlie in a week. If more stock were put through on the fields, we would be able to reduce the prices. At Kalgoorlie in 1914 the kill totalled 70,741, whereas last year it totalled 56,274. However, I will look into these matters, including the question of the accommodation for the men.

Mr. MUNSIE: I am pleased that the member for Brownhill-Ivanhoe raised the question of the increased prices levied upon the goldfields people. How can any private member understand anything about the finances when the Estimates are prepared in their present form? I do not doubt the Minister's word but the Estimates are issued practically as a balance sheet. If the figures disclosed do not show the actual position at Kalgoorlie abattoirs, how can we be expected to understand what it really is?

The Minister for Agriculture: I spoke of the position as it is at the present moment. The Estimates disclose the position at the end of the financial year.

Mr. MUNSIE: The Estimates show that you received £4,633 in revenue.

The Premier: Interest had to go on to that.

Mr. MUNSIE: Why is not the interest included in the items?

The Premier: It never is included in the Estimates.

Mr. MUNSIE: Taking the figures as they appear in the Estimates, they show that there was an actual profit of £1,476. If the revenue gave that increase over the actual expenditure, it is not right to put up the charges at the abattoirs. The Kalgoorlie people have been willing payers all through, and the mistake we have made is that we have not carried our protests further. Why does the Minister want to increase the cost this year?

The Minister for Agriculture: I told you they were showing a loss.

Mr. MUNSIE: Then why is it not shown here? What is the use of Estimates such as these?

Hon. P. COLLIER: When the Minister says they show a loss I take it he means including interest. What the capital expenditure has been we do not know. I should like to know whether, when any works in other parts of the State begin to show a loss, the charges are increased in order to cover it.

The Premier: Of course they are.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I do not think so. In agricultural areas losses are made in many Government undertakings notwithstanding which the charges are not increased.

The Premier: So, too, on the goldfields, in works such as water supplies.

Hon. P. COLLIER: But water supplies outside the scheme are free. In agricultural areas, on water supplies apart from the scheme, there has been much greater capital expenditure than on similar supplies on the goldfields. Yet immediately

there is a loss on the goldfields, up go the charges. Scarcely ever are charges in the agricultural areas increased. Indeed they are decreased, even in respect of concerns showing a loss, as in the instance of the scheme water.

Mr. Harrison: We pay 2s. 6d. per thousand gallons for water.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I do not know how long metropolitan members will continue to submit to nearly the whole of the expenditure of the State going to one part of the State where great losses are incurred, while people in the metropolitan area are called upon to pay every time. The very tram fares are increased in order to cover losses in the agricultural areas.

Mr. Harrison: The railway fares also have been increased.

Hon. P. COLLIER: But the tramway service shows a profit, without any increased charges. It is time the people in the agricultural areas had their charges increased, if charges are to be increased in respect of other sections of the community. Immediately there is a proposal to spend money on the provision of necessary facilities in the metropolitan area, members on the cross benches explode and threaten the very existence of the Government. There must be no expenditure in the city. All the money is wanted for the agricultural areas, and if the Government dare to spend any more money on tramway extensions, out they go. That is the threat held over the Premier.

The Premier: Oh no.

Hon. P. COLLIER: If I represented a city electorate I would not so tamely sit down and be content with the wretched water service, and have increased tram fares heaped on me and my constituents. I never knew so silent a gang of members as those representing metropolitan electorates.

Mr. Piesse: That is a gag.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It is not a gag. It is a fact. Is it not a fact that the profit made on the tramways is paid into revenue?

Mr. Piesse: Is it not a fact that Goomalling pays 8s. per thousand gallons for its water?

Hon. P. COLLIER: I do not know.

Mr. Munsie: No consumer on the fields gets a gallon at less than 6s. 6d. per thousand gallons.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Is it logical that because Goomalling pays 8s. per thousand gallons therefore everything I am saying is merely a gag? The hon. member declared my remark to be a gag, and in proof of that he says Goomalling pays 8s. per thousand gallons for water.

The CHAIRMAN: I think we are wandering from the division.

Hon. P. COLLIER: We are dealing with increased charges on the goldfields.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: At Goomalling they do not use much water at 8s. per thousand, for they paid only £640 last year.

Hon. P. COLLIER: If metropolitan members had any regard for the interests of

their constituents they would not tamely sit down and submit to this sort of thing.

The Premier: The abattoirs ought to pay.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes, so long as equal treatment is meted out everywhere. If concerns in other parts of the State had to pay higher charges, I should not complain of the abattoirs being made to pay. I object to a goldfields concern being singled out as one which must be made to pay when many other services rendered by the Government are not required to pay.

The Premier: Yes, they are.

Hon. P. COLLIER: They are not; I could name no end of them.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I suggest that the Government get £30,000 from the Gascoyne Vermin Board.

The CHAIRMAN: There is no mention of the Gascoyne Vermin Board in these Estimates.

Hon. P. COLLIER: You, Mr. Chairman, know the position in the Gascoyne district where the people repudiated their contract and refused to pay. Are they paying anything now? I suppose the amount is carried over as a liability.

The CHAIRMAN: The district of Gascoyne is not under discussion at present.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I admit it is a big step from the Kalgoorlie abattoirs to Gascoyne. I do not blame the Government for making charges to cover the cost of services rendered, but this principle should be applied all round. Talk about spoils to the victors!

The Minister for Agriculture: The killing is decreasing and I do not think the butchers have put up their prices.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Of course none of these people put up their charges.

The Minister for Agriculture: It will not result in any alteration in the price of meat at Kalgoorlie.

Hon. P. COLLIER: If the extra charges levied work out at a farthing, the difference is overcome by adding $\frac{1}{2}$ d. to the retail price.

The Minister for Agriculture: If we charge an extra 1s. per bullock, it would be infinitesimal in the retail price.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I remember a wages board decision in Victoria which gave milk carters an increase in wages. The increase involved one dairyman in an extra outlay of £3 per week, but he increased the price of milk to bring in £30 a week, so that as a result of that decision he gained £27 a week.

Mr. Pickering: He showed business acumen.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That is the principle usually adopted. While the Labour Government were in office railway rates were increased slightly, and the business people of Kalgoorlie and Boulder immediately increased the price of their commodities. The price of sugar was increased by 1d. per lb., and the people were told it was due to the increased railway rate. Yet the increase in the railway rate per lb. of sugar was an almost infinitesimal fraction of a penny. I

do not know whether the butchers will make this an excuse for increasing the price of meat, but I hope the charges on the fields will not be increased more than is necessary.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Metropolitan Area Abattoirs and Sale Yards, £15,590:

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Is there any intention of closing down the Government abattoirs at Fremantle?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: None whatever. We have leased the Union and Anchorage abattoirs, and we cannot see that there will be any necessity to close them down until we review the whole abattoirs policy.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The butchers of Fremantle think they will have to go to the freezing works.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: If the freezing works are good enough to slaughter stock for export, I see no reason why these works, when completed, should not be proclaimed as abattoirs. When the Abattoirs Act came into force in 1909, every slaughter yard in the metropolitan area was automatically closed. Since that time any one who has built works has known he took the risk of their not being proclaimed as Government abattoirs. If it should happen that the new works are proclaimed as abattoirs for local killing, I think we shall have to bring our own abattoirs at Midland Junction on to more modern lines, and provide them with better equipment. We shall have to continue the present abattoir system for some time.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Immediately the Government close their old abattoirs there will be nothing left for the butchers of the Fremantle district but a private monopoly. They object to that. They prefer to carry on the present system, and to do their own killing, rather than be compelled to come under the control of a company. Why should the Government drive these people into the hands of a private company?

The Minister for Agriculture: We are not driving them.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It is rumoured that this is their intention.

The Minister for Agriculture: There is no foundation for it.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The quantity of beef that is available will be insufficient for export.

The Minister for Agriculture: They must be proclaimed abattoirs.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: They are proclaimed. I do not say that the works are not suitable as abattoirs, but I want to prevent the Government from closing them down and driving the butchers into the hands of a monopoly.

The Minister for Agriculture: I will give you my word on that score.

Vote put and passed.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 12.45 a.m. (Friday.)