

Hon. H. SEDDON: That is so, and the result in another place was a stone-wall of 28 hours, whereby the Labour Party saved the situation as far as they themselves were concerned. Another point regarding the Commission should be brought under the notice of the Government. The members of the Commission have their time occupied in carrying out their routine duties, and they are to be given a job that will take a good deal of their time and will expose them to searching criticism both in and out of Parliament. I should be glad to learn that the Government are prepared to make some recognition of the work of the Commission. Special work in that or any other direction should be specially recognised, and I should be glad to have an indication that the Government will recognise the responsible and onerous duties that the members of the Commission will be undertaking in re-allocating the representation of the people. In conclusion, I wish to urge on the Government once more the desirability of keeping the Commission's report out of the arena of political debate and accepting the findings of the Commission by arranging that they be adopted without debate and without affording an opportunity for the acrimonious discussion that occurred on the previous occasion. Having directed attention to certain disabilities that I contend will exist under the present measure, I support the Bill.

On motion by the Chief Secretary, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 6.14 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 27th November, 1928.

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

ASSENT TO BILLS.

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

- 1, Police Offences (Drugs).
- 2, Jury Act Amendment.

PETITION—TEXAS COMPANY (AUSTRALASIA) LIMITED.

Mr. ROWE (North-East Fremantle) presented a petition from the Texas Company (Australasia), Ltd., praying for the introduction of a Bill to provide powers for the storage and supply of oil, liquid fuel, petroleum, spirits, kero-sene and petroleum products and for other purposes.

Petition received, and the prayer of the petitioners granted.

BILL—TEXAS COMPANY (AUSTRALASIA) LIMITED (PRIVATE.)

Introduced by Mr. Rowe and read a first time.

Referred to Select Committee.

On motion by Mr. Rowe, Bill referred to a select committee consisting of Messrs. Lindsay, Marshall, North, Sleeman and the mover, with power to call for persons and

papers, to sit on days over which the House stands adjourned and to report on the 4th December.

QUESTION—WHEAT EXPORT.

Mr. GRIFFITHS asked the Minister for Agriculture: 1, What was the weekly tonnage of wheat shipped from Fremantle during the 1927-1928 season? 2, What were the maximum tonnage of wheat loaded and the maximum number of ships loaded in one week during that season?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE replied: 1, The information asked for is contained in the appended statement. 2, The largest quantity shipped in any one week was 315,545 bags, shipped into 11 ships during the week 15th December to 21st December, 1927.

FREMANTLE HARBOUR TRUST.

WHEAT SHIPMENTS—SEASON 1927-28.

Week ending—	No. of Bags.	Week ending—	No. of Bags.
1927.		1928.	
Nov. 30 ...	10,756	May 16 ...	165,782
Dec. 7 ...	58,117	" 23 ...	82,568
" 14 ...	122,393	" 30 ...	135,056
" 21 ...	320,702	June 6 ...	176,026
" 28 ...	189,642	" 13 ...	268,351
		" 20 ...	220,439
1928.		" 27 ...	148,033
Jan. 4 ...	292,891	July 4 ...	66,635
" 11 ...	287,706	" 11 ...	117,117
" 18 ...	108,246	" 18 ...	65,358
" 25 ...	195,029	" 25 ...	161,277
Feb. 1 ...	217,127	Aug. 1 ...	208,044
" 8 ...	172,120	" 8 ...	103,814
" 15 ...	130,119	" 15 ...	161,829
" 22 ...	239,180	" 22 ...	133,028
" 29 ...	177,839	" 29 ...	166,248
Mar. 7 ...	134,926	Sept. 6 ...	135,054
" 14 ...	248,551	" 12 ...	34,806
" 21 ...	76,500	" 19 ...	<i>Nil</i>
" 28 ...	127,237	" 26 ...	<i>Nil</i>
April 3 ...	99,261	Oct. 3 ...	<i>Nil</i>
" 11 ...	49,882	" 10 ...	14,011
" 18 ...	111,965	" 17 ...	25,072
" 25 ...	113,640	" 24 ...	49,524
May 2 ...	187,957	" 31 ...	<i>Nil</i>
" 9 ...	196,483	Nov. 7 ...	934

LAND AGENTS' BILL, SELECT COMMITTEE.

Extension of Time.

On motion by Mr. Marshall, the time for bringing up the select committee's report was extended to the 4th December.

LOAN ESTIMATES, 1928-29.

Message from the Governor received and read transmitting the Loan Estimates for the year 1928-29 and recommending appropriation.

In Committee of Supply.

The House resolved into Committee of Supply for the purpose of considering the Loan Estimates; Mr. Lutey in the Chair.

Vote—Departmental, £232,804:

THE PREMIER AND TREASURER

(Hon. P. Collier—Boulder) [4.50]: The amount of loan moneys for which I am applying this year is slightly less than that for last year, but it exceeds last year's actual expenditure by £137,000. Almost the whole of the amount now required is in connection with the further development of the agricultural resources of the State. Extensions of public utilities in the metropolitan area, it is admitted, demand attention, but the expenditure is very small when compared with that for country districts. Loan expenditure, although gradually increasing each year, does not show much variation, either in amount or the direction in which the money is spent.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: By Heavens, it does!

The PREMIER: No, it does not vary much at all.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I will give you the percentages.

The PREMIER: I know it is claimed that the percentage of the expenditure, which shows a direct return of interest, has fallen in recent years. That may be correct, but the expenditure in other directions in assistance to primary production, although not directly returning interest, earns revenue that goes towards the payment of interest. This applies particularly to railways and harbours. Unless those facilities are provided, it is quite useless to encourage settlers to go into the newer districts, or to provide them with funds to assist in the establishment of farms. I remember that some years ago a somewhat similar position existed to that which obtains to-day. Settlement had extended beyond the then existing facilities, and the extension of means of communication became necessary. In consequence, a considerable programme of public works had to be undertaken in order to provide the

necessary transport facilities and other accommodation required because of the settlement that had taken place. It will be remembered that that was the position covering the years from 1911-12 to 1916-17.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: And before that too.

The PREMIER: Yes, I suppose we could go back to 1908 or thereabouts, when settlement first started to extend into the agricultural areas. Of course, that necessitated a considerable programme of railway construction, water supplies and other public works. Owing to the severe set-back agriculture suffered in the bad year of 1914, when the drought occurred, together with the heavy enlistment of our men during the war period, the settlement of our agricultural areas took longer than would otherwise have been the case. Both those factors operated in the direction of delaying the settlement of our agricultural areas. It is well to remember that from centres along the railways that were constructed during those years, 4,100,000 bags of wheat were transported over the railways, a little more than one-third of the total yield last year. Practically all that wheat was railed over lines built in all directions during the years that followed the settlement of the areas I have referred to. Of course, the wheat carried last year was a source of great revenue, but in addition there was revenue from wool, livestock and so on. I think it can be said that the results have fully justified the expenditure that has been incurred in past years.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: By Heavens, yes.

The PREMIER: The expenditure has been more than justified. As a matter of fact, it is our only standby to-day. We are getting results from our production, because of the opening up of our country and the expenditure of loan funds.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Transport is the life of production, and without it there can be no progress.

The PREMIER: Nothing could be done.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: At any rate, we could not make any progress.

The PREMIER: We could not make any headway at all. Transport in these days involves expenditure of very large sums of money. The present extremely heavy demand for land in all our wheat areas fully justifies expenditure on railways, roads, water supplies and similar undertakings for the development of those districts. Unless

used for the purpose of increasing the development of the State, loan expenditure would be hard to justify.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It would be impossible to carry the burden.

The PREMIER: But on the other hand, no sound objection can be taken to loan expenditure that is spent strictly for the purpose I have indicated.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Yes, provided we get value for our money.

The PREMIER: So far as the money is spent for the purpose of development of the State and, as the Leader of the Opposition says, so long as we get value for the money expended, there can be no sound objection raised. During the last few years there has been heavy expenditure on harbours, and before long these should return full interest on the expenditure undertaken. That will apply particularly to Fremantle, and it should apply also to the outer ports, as the volume of produce for export through those ports is increasing year by year. We have to remember that we have a very long coastline, and we must make adequate and full provision for our outer harbours. Those harbours are principally Albany, Bunbury and Geraldton. I do not think any excuse is needed regarding expenditure on those ports in order that they may be fully equipped to handle the ever-increasing volume of trade that comes to them. There is a fairly large expenditure, which does not earn interest or revenue, that has to be incurred in connection with the construction of our roads. Of course, nothing is returned from that work directly. Modern transport has revolutionised methods of road construction. Roads have to be made more strongly and of a more expensive type than was necessary a few years ago. All that expenditure adds considerably to our interest bill and makes no direct return, although the roads are necessary for developmental purposes, just as are our railways. I have stressed these points to show that our expenditure in past years has been, to a great extent, spent on the development of our resources. That point cannot be too strongly emphasised. It has been said that for so small a population our loan expenditure is extremely high, and that our public debt per head of the population is much greater than it should be. Figures have been quoted in support of that contention. But as I have said previously in the House, any such com-

parison with the Eastern States would be entirely misleading. We have always to remember the very large expenditure that comes into Government loan expenditure in this State, which is not the case in the Eastern States.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: And territory has something to do with it.

The PREMIER: That is so. The expenditure, whether from loan or from revenue, per head of the population must be greater in large, sparsely-populated territories than in a closely settled State.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Our loan expenditure has been fully justified.

The PREMIER: Yes, that applies in every direction, with regard both to revenue and loan. We cannot hope to carry on our departments on the same ratio of expenditure as can be done in Victoria. Later on I shall be quoting some figures showing the large amount of loan money required from year to year on undertakings that in the Eastern States are controlled by trusts or boards and independently financed. That is a factor that puts entirely out of court any superficial comparison of our indebtedness per head of population with that in the Eastern States.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: We have got an asset for our expenditure up to date. There is no doubt about that.

The PREMIER: Yes, we have the asset. But the whole of the expenditure on it comes into the State's accounts, whereas in other States it is not all debited to State accounts.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Our great concern is to have an asset for our debts.

The PREMIER: Yes, our indebtedness per head of the population is not an important point so long as we have an interest-earning asset for the debt.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Certainly not.

The PREMIER: For instance, we might have an indebtedness double that of any of the other States, and yet be in a sounder position than that other State.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Yes, our railways show that to be so.

The PREMIER: Turning to the expenditure on our railways, something like £22,000,000, and taking the expenditure on railways in any other State, we see the value of our asset, judged by the annual returns, as compared with the asset in an Eastern State. But a great many people merely

turn up the indebtedness per head of the population, compare it with that of another State, and assume that we are in a dreadful position because ours is so much higher than theirs.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It is merely false reasoning.

The PREMIER: Yes, and it has no bearing whatever on the position. The estimated expenditure for last year was £4,829,109, and the actual expenditure £4,680,260, or a lesser sum, a credit as it were, of £149,149.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I would not call it a credit.

The PREMIER: No, but the fact remains we spent £149,149 less than was estimated. The expenditure under the various heads kept fairly close to the estimate.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: And that was greater than in my last year.

The PREMIER: Yes, somewhat greater. This is how it was spent: under the division of Railways and Tramways, the estimate was exceeded by £66,658, due principally to the heavier expenditure on rails and fastenings and the great progress that was made with the Ejdanding-northwards railway and the Kalkalling-Bullfinch railway, which, of course, had to be met. A large number of improvements to existing railways were carried out by the Railway Department. That is a programme of work the department endeavours to carry out every year, regrading, reballasting of yards, and general improvements, so that heavier loads may be borne and traffic handled more expeditiously. The results for some years past show that expenditure in that direction has been of advantage to the whole system. The rolling stock of the service was increased, and £149,927 was spent in that direction. Fourteen locomotives were completed during the year and issued to traffic. Over 300 wagons and vans were added to the stock. In addition ten cars were built for the Tramways, three sleeping-cars were built for the Midland Railway Company, and 12 petrol tanks were built for the Shell Oil Company.

Mr. Thomson: The Shell Oil Company will pay for those.

The PREMIER: Yes, this is merely an indication of the work done in the railway workshops. The increase in the Trans-Australian railway traffic has made it necessary to improve the accommodation on the service between here and Kalgoorlie. So four

new two-berth coaches have been placed in traffic. That occurred, I think, in September last. Six more are now under construction. By June next there will be 10 new first-class two-berth sleeping coaches, which will be sufficient for the two trams, the full service.

Mr. Thomson: One or two sleeping coaches are badly needed on the Great Southern.

The PREMIER: I dare say they are, and on other lines as well. But it will be agreed that the old service on the Kalgoorlie run had become obsolete as compared with the Trans-Australian trains and those of the Eastern States, and it was only creating a very unfavourable impression in passengers transferred from the one train to the other.

Mr. Stubbs: It was not a good advertisement for us.

The PREMIER: It was not.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I believe the old sleepers of 25 years ago were the best and most comfortable of all.

The PREMIER: They were comfortable enough. The drawback with our sleepers has been that we have had four berths in a compartment.

Mr. Angelo: And six in the second class, which is worse.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Fat people snore so loudly.

The PREMIER: Yes, when you get four or six people sleeping in one compartment it is not very comfortable. I remember that it was I who, as Minister for Railways, inaugurated the second-class sleepers. At that time there were no second class sleepers in Australia. We thought we were making a great step forward, but of course with six berths in a compartment they now seem overcrowded. However, we are making headway with the building of the new coaches. Railway construction during the year was pushed on, and that accounted for £278,942 of the expenditure.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: More than that, I think.

The PREMIER: No. The principal lines were the Denmark-Nornalup, the Ejanding-northwards, the Kalkalling-Bullfinch and Norseman-Salmon Gum lines. Those were carried on during the year, and some of them are still under construction. That Nornalup line will not be finished for some time yet, but the rails in the Bullfinch line were linked

up about three weeks ago and the line should be ready for traffic before long.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The cost of rails and fastenings has been pretty heavy.

The PREMIER: Yes, £161,238 was spent on rails and fastenings, a very considerable item. The expenditure on harbours and rivers amounted to £233,357. The principal items were Fremantle £104,785; Geraldton, £79,495; Bunbury, £10,556, and improvements to harbours and rivers generally £29,754. Improvements to the Fremantle harbour continue to absorb a very large sum of money. I do not know whether any members have visited the Fremantle harbour lately, but if so they will have seen tremendous improvements in the way of increased shed accommodation. Large sheds have been erected and the whole of the work has been enlarged from year to year. And, I am afraid, it will have to go on for many years to come. The expenditure has been pretty substantial. Work has been proceeding at Geraldton also, and it is intended to push on there as rapidly as circumstances will permit.

Mr. Lindsay: You should be glad of the expenditure going on, not afraid.

The PREMIER: I am always concerned as to whether they are not going further than it is necessary to go. Whilst, of course, full and proper facilities should be provided for the handling of our goods at the port, still we need to be careful not to get ahead of the requirements, not to go ahead any more rapidly than is necessary. I do not suggest that is occurring. Because we find in busy times the Fremantle harbour is often crowded, and frequently two or more ships are awaiting berths. Still, it absorbs a considerable amount of money, all the same.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That is so in most of the ports of the world.

The PREMIER: Yes. Generally speaking it should be accounted a good sign to see our ports busy with the shipping of our goods going out; not goods coming in so much, as goods going out to the markets of the world. It should be a good indication of the State's prosperity. I should say the State was never more stagnant than when our harbours are empty. We get an idea of that when shipping troubles come along and our harbours are quiet, for then everything is at a standstill all over the city. There has been spent £549,000 on

water supplies, sewerage and drainage, as compared with the estimate of £604,000.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: And all to good purpose, of course.

The PREMIER: Of that sum the metropolitan area took £321,195, the balance being spent on country water supplies. That is a very substantial portion, more than half. There are, as members know, large country schemes in course of construction, and a number of smaller works and extensions from the goldfields water supply are continually going on. As I say, the expenditure on water supply and sewerage in the metropolitan area was £321,195. The Churchman's Brook dam has been completed, and the Subiaco sewerage scheme almost completed, and house connection work was carried on on a large scale. Other works include the enlargement of water mains to ensure better supply. As the suburbs are growing, so it becomes necessary to put down larger mains in addition to putting down new mains further out in order that the supply should be adequate to the requirements. The largest and most important section of the Estimates is that dealing with the development of agriculture. Last year the expenditure totalled £1,677,126 from the vote and £229,052 from loan suspense. Group settlement and roads and drainage in group areas absorbed over £1,000,000 of this, and other forms of assistance to individuals more than £700,000. The Agricultural Bank experienced a busy year. The advances to ordinary clients amounted to £539,054.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You did not have to find that sum: it was repaid money.

The PREMIER: I had to find £408,471 of it and I shall have to find an equal amount this year. The estimated requirements of the bank last year were £100,000, but owing to various causes, more money was needed and I had to find another £408,471.

Mr. Lindsay: That would mean new capital for the bank.

The PREMIER: Yes. Advances to soldier settlers amounted to £107,225 and to clients of the Industries Assistance Board £713,471. The total under those three headings was £1,359,750. Of course, all of that was not new money.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The Industries Assistance Board money was returned.

The PREMIER: Yes. The exact amount of additional capital provided for the Agri-

cultural Bank was £408,471, as compared with the estimate of £100,000. The bank's operations are expanding so rapidly that a further authorisation of capital will be necessary.

Hon. G. Taylor: Will it be necessary this session?

The PREMIER: I am not sure, but it will be necessary before very long.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It is only a matter of form, anyhow. We vote the money when it is wanted.

The PREMIER: Yes. The expenditure by the Lands Department was mainly in connection with the survey of new subdivisions. A large number of surveyors are engaged in the preliminary classification of land between Southern Cross and Salmon Gums, between the terminus of the Ejdand-ing-northwards line and the Cue railway and also the vacant land north of Mullewa extending past Balla and Dartmoor to the Murchison River. It has been found necessary to increase the accommodation for students at the Agricultural College in order to cope with the applications for enrolment. The estimate of the requirements when the Muresk College was built was very much astray. The number of applicants for admission has far exceeded what was anticipated. In fact, we have been spending money on additions ever since the place was built.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You could not spend it in a better way.

The PREMIER: It is a fact not to be regretted. It is gratifying that the boys are taking to it in such large numbers.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I wonder what else there is for our boys to do.

The PREMIER: There is not much of a future for them in Western Australia otherwise.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: There could not be anything better for them.

The PREMIER: It is a good thing that our boys are going to Muresk College, because they will subsequently spread through the various districts of the State and in themselves will be teachers of the farmers all around them. Consequently the influence of the college will not be confined to those who are fortunate enough to pass through it, but will radiate to all parts of the State. The Forests Department expenditure was £9,972, mostly for pine planting. Some members raised the point during the

discussion on the revenue Estimates as to what had been done in the matter of pine planting. I did not have the figures at the time, but I have them now. It is interesting to know what is being done to provide for our future requirements of softwoods. In 1925, 167,700 young pines were planted on 195 acres; in 1926, 700,000 young pines were planted on 737 acres, and last year 650,000 young pines were planted on 672 acres. The Conservator of Forests assures me that the annual crop being planted will be sufficient to meet the State's requirements of softwoods when the trees mature.

Hon. G. Taylor: It is a continuous crop to be harvested each year?

The PREMIER: Yes. We are planting sufficient year by year to meet the State's requirements when the trees come to maturity.

Mr. Angelo: How long does it take for them to reach maturity?

The PREMIER: I am not sure; I think it is about 30 years.

Hon. G. Taylor: In England it is about 25 years.

The PREMIER: I think it is slightly more here. I do not know whether members have seen some of our principal pine plantations on the catchment of the Mundaring Reservoir. They are well worth a visit. The trees are making phenomenal growth. I have been up there twice in the last year or two. The pines only three or four years old are 8 to 10 feet high. The Conservator told me that he has never known of better growth. The members of the Empire Forestry party who were here a few months ago were amazed at the wonderful growth that has taken place in the catchment area during the last few years.

Mr. Angelo: Members should be given an opportunity to see those things. The gates have always been closed when I have been up there.

The PREMIER: The public are not admitted to the catchment area; a visit can be made only by arrangement.

Mr. Teesdale: A lot of us will not be here to see the trees mature.

The PREMIER: When the session closes or early in the new year I shall be pleased to arrange a visit for members. It will be a most interesting day's outing through the hills and valleys around Mundaring.

Mr. Angelo: That is what I was gently hinting at.

The PREMIER: I rather thought the hon. member had something of the kind in mind. The expenditure on roads and buildings last year was £567,107, or £71,293 less than was expected. The expenditure on roads was £339,000, almost all of which was spent on country roads.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That is a very unfortunate figure.

The PREMIER: Among the more important buildings on which we spent money were the Old Men's Home £12,367; Fremantle hospital £9,809; Point Heathcote Reception Hospital £34,000.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: When will the reception hospital be ready?

The PREMIER: It is just about completed now.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It is badly needed.

The PREMIER: Yes. It was expected to be ready a few weeks ago, but there has been a slight delay in completing some of the fittings. It will be opened in a few weeks' time. The cost has been much greater than it was thought would be necessary for a reception home.

Hon. G. Taylor: It is a very elaborate place.

The PREMIER: It is fairly large. I do not know the average number of patients in the mental ward at the Perth Hospital, but it was not large. The Point Heathcote institution will be able to cater for inmates who could not have been kept in the Perth Hospital ward.

Hon. G. Taylor: You will do away with the ward in the Perth Hospital.

The PREMIER: Yes, that is the object of building at Point Heathcote.

Hon. G. Taylor: I wanted to make sure that the ward will be done away with.

The PREMIER: Patients could not be kept very long at the mental ward in the Perth Hospital. Many had to be sent to Claremont, although, if they could have been sent to such a home as that at Point Heathcote, they might have recovered without going to Claremont.

Hon. G. Taylor: No. 12 ward was an observation ward. The patients were not treated at all.

The PREMIER: The expenditure on schools and quarters was £33,759. I find it impossible to provide anything like the amount of money that is demanded for buildings, particularly for the Education Depart-

ment and Public Health Department. The demand is increasing in all directions.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Is it only a demand or are there necessary works?

The PREMIER: No; I am referring to the demand for necessary works. All we can do is to select those that might be considered to be the most urgent; the others have to stand over. The accommodation at our principal schools in Perth and Fremantle is altogether insufficient. The Fremantle Boys' School and the Perth Girls' School are overcrowded.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Thank God for that!

The PREMIER: I am told by the Education Department that they cannot carry on any longer. All kinds of makeshifts are resorted to in order to get through, and I am afraid we cannot much longer postpone the erection of new schools for the senior classes.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The trouble is that the cost of building is four times as much as it was previously.

The PREMIER: That is the trouble. To provide new schools for children runs into scores of thousands of pounds. It is estimated that a new girls' school is required in Perth to accommodate 900 children.

Hon. G. Taylor: That will run into thousands.

The PREMIER: I am afraid to think just what it will run into. There is the difficulty, too, of getting a site. There is not proper supervision at present because the children are scattered about in different buildings; some are in a building in one street and some are in a building in the next street. The numbers are increasing so rapidly that we cannot carry on much longer without increased accommodation. The Minister for Education tells me in all new areas in the country districts he is insisting on nothing less than five acres for school sites and more if it can be obtained.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: In all the country places I think they reserve fair areas. It is in the old places where there is a shortage.

The PREMIER: Yes; mostly in the old places.

Hon. G. Taylor: Just where the population is large.

The PREMIER: Yes, and of course we cannot build. There is a fairly consider-

able area of reserve Crown land going up the hill towards the old cemetery at East Perth. That is the only vacant space of any size in the city that might be considered sufficiently large or suitable for a school.

Hon. G. Taylor: What is the acreage?

The PREMIER: I do not know. It is a big vacant block on the left hand side and it is large enough for school purposes. The trouble is the cost of the building. The same thing relates to Fremantle, where the boys' school is overcrowded.

The Minister for Works: But there they have the land.

The PREMIER: That is very satisfactory. The expenditure may appear large, but I cannot get it down any lower having regard to all the facilities required from one end of the State to the other. During recess the Government contemplate going into the whole question of preparing some scheme for the handing-over of public utilities to the people whom they directly serve.

Hon. G. Taylor: A very wise thing.

The PREMIER: There are the water supply and sewerage of the metropolitan area, tramways, electric light.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: If you hand the tramways back, it will be poetic justice.

The PREMIER: No, no. We will simply transfer their management from Parliament to the people whom they serve.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Those people would have had the tramways for nothing before now if the Government had not bought them.

The PREMIER: I suppose they would have fallen in. Many of those things which are of purely a local character and serve only a section of the community can best be controlled by the people concerned. Then Ministers would have time to devote to matters of State-wide importance, instead of being occupied with more or less minor questions affecting only a section of the people.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I shall have to turn up your speech about the purchase of the tramways.

The PREMIER: I was Minister for Railways then, but it was a Cabinet purchase. Without giving away any secrets, I may say it was a transaction in which I did not take very much part.

Hon. G. Taylor: I think you were like me in that respect.

The PREMIER: However, there it is. The State has to find money for everything, from

one end of the country to the other. On these Loan Estimates the State has to provide a ferry boat, the old "Duchess" being gone. A new ferry boat is on the list for £8,000. I hold that such a thing as a ferry across to South Perth does not concern the Government of the State.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Why did we buy the ferries?

The PREMIER: I do not know, but I am free to confess that they ought not to have been bought.

Hon. G. Taylor: Hand them over to the South Perth Road Board.

The PREMIER: In the Eastern capitals nearly all those concerns are handled by trusts or boards. The Adelaide trams are controlled by a trust. In Melbourne now the whole of the water supply and sewerage is controlled by a board.

Hon. G. Taylor: And the expenditure does not affect the national debt at all.

The PREMIER: No. About 30 millions sterling have been expended by the Melbourne board, and those 20 millions do no figure in the public debt of Victoria at all. When one looks up the Victorian per capita indebtedness it seems low, but no part of those 20 millions, for instance, is in it.

Hon. G. Taylor: But all those things show in our indebtedness.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It does not matter about their showing if the assets are there.

The PREMIER: The harbour works of Melbourne are controlled by a trust, and that trust has separate borrowing powers, so that its expenditure does not come into the Victorian public debt.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The debt remains all the same, and against the same people.

The PREMIER: Of course. It merely appears in different books. However, there are advantages in that respect.

Mr. Griffiths: But the Fremantle Harbour Trust is a profitable concern.

The PREMIER: Yes, but the Government have to find £100,000 for it every year. The Government have to find the money for all those concerns, and inasmuch as there is a limit to the amount of money the Government can borrow and expend in a year, other undertakings, such as the Yarramony railway for instance, have to suffer.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That arrangement as to separate borrowing powers beats

the Financial Agreement too. That has already happened in New South Wales.

The PREMIER: If we created a board now with separate borrowing powers, the board would not receive any sinking fund contributions from the Commonwealth, whereas we would.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: We have to go cap in hand to get permission to borrow. A board would not have to do so.

The PREMIER: I hope the day will not come when the Leader of the Opposition will be able to say, "I told you so." I hope the day will not come when we will have to regret this.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I tell you so now.

The PREMIER: For this year I estimate an expenditure of £4,817,200, and that is made up of new money £4,526,796, and recoup to Loan Suspense Account £290,404. The items which make up the total are set out in the Loan Estimates, and I need not go over them. As usual, development of agriculture absorbs a large portion, £1,753,500. Railways will take £1,034,300; that is the next amount in point of importance, and is £116,000 above last year. There is a never-ceasing demand for money for the Railway Department.

Mr. Teesdale: What about the King's Bay jetty?

The PREMIER: I think that will be in the item "Improvements to harbours and rivers generally." It is not itemised separately.

Mr. Teesdale: I do not see how £45,000 is to be got out of that item.

The PREMIER: I have no doubt the hon. member will consider there is not sufficient in the amount to cover his item and the rest as well, but there is sufficient to make a start.

Mr. Teesdale: The amount seems to have decreased since I last heard of it.

The PREMIER: That work is going to cost a lot of money, I am sorry to say.

Mr. Teesdale: It will do a lot of good.

The PREMIER: The latest estimate I have received is rather staggering in amount.

Hon. G. Taylor: Is it forty odd thousand?

The PREMIER: Double that. Experience shows that work in the North-West is very expensive.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It is pretty expensive everywhere.

The PREMIER: Yes, but doubly so in the North-West.

Mr. Teesdale: If we had accepted the first estimate, there would not be a jetty at Beadon now.

The PREMIER: That is the trouble. One gets led on by an estimate, and once one goes into the work one cannot escape paying up.

Mr. Teesdale: That finishes me.

The PREMIER: The hon. member and the people concerned have been given a definite promise of that work. When I was in the North 18 months ago I had an opportunity of seeing the inconvenience caused there by having to transfer to small lighters and so forth. It is unfortunate that the building of jetties in the North-West is so very expensive. Still, such works cannot be neglected because of that fact.

Mr. Teesdale. Pastoralists cannot ship stock, which is left to die, and the stock route is closed up on account of the drought.

The PREMIER: Almost the whole of the amount provided for railways is for country lines, rolling stock, or improvements such as regrading and ballasting in order to carry greater loads. Practically the whole of the expenditure on harbours is for increased facilities, as also is the amount provided for roads. Then we come to the metropolitan area. As we have undertaken to control public utilities in the form of water supplies, tramways, electricity supply and so on, the responsibility for finding the necessary capital for extensions must be met. There is £390,700 for construction of railways, £125,000 for purchase of rails and fastenings, and £33,500 for surveys, water supplies and so forth. The amount for rolling stock is increased, £200,000 being set aside for that purpose, while further regrading and ballasting are also being carried out. There is an amount of £10,000 for works in hand. There is also £75,000 for electricity supply; that is to complete work in hand. I am told now by the general manager that another unit must be added, and I suppose it will cost another £250,000. There is no cessation so far as electricity supply is concerned. A unit runs into a quarter of a million, and is done over a period of two or three years, and then the Government have to start on another unit because of the growth of business and the consequently increased demand. It is, of course, a sign of the growth of the city: but I am not

too sure that of recent years the city has not been growing rather too much in comparison with the development of the country. If one is to judge by the experience of the past, in the event of bad seasons or falling prices overtaking the country districts all the people who have flocked to the city will find themselves in a bad way.

Mr. Stubbs: Heaven help the Premier then!

The PREMIER: I hope I shall not be Treasurer then. I shall have the most profound sympathy for the man who is.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Those things have been said for a hundred years of every city, but their growth goes on just the same.

The PREMIER: Nevertheless it is a fact. In Australia it is perhaps more apparent than in any other country because of the fact that we have an immense territory, such a huge continent, with more than half the population settled in the capital cities—more than 50 per cent. in Melbourne; more than 50 per cent. in Sydney, which is a city of a million and a quarter inhabitants; and similarly around to our own State, where more than half the population is to be found between Fremantle and Midland Junction, with all the enormous territory at the back awaiting development. Indeed, as regards Victoria and other Australian States as well, there are now considerably fewer people on the land than there were generations ago. In a community like Australia, which must depend for its future prosperity on the development of the country, it is a bad thing to see holdings decreasing and cities increasing.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That is the result of taxation and the tariff.

The PREMIER: The position would not be so bad in old communities, with large manufacturing industries and the possibilities of export to other countries; but I do not see that Australia can ever export manufactures. The most we shall be able to do in that respect is to supply our own requirements.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: No country in the world is wealthy enough to pay the prices we should require.

The PREMIER: It is a very serious matter. I am sure this State, as well as every other Australian State, would be much more prosperous if a fourth of the

people in the metropolitan area were out in the country—

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I hope that does not include the fifty here.

The PREMIER—doing something that would be more beneficial to the State and to themselves. However, people will crowd into the city from the country districts; apparently nothing will stop them, although the life of the country to-day is much better than it was generations ago. With the aid of a motor car one can travel long distances to seek little pleasures and amusements. The telephone and the telegraph also add to the relief of what at one time was monotony and quietness of country life. Everything in the country now should be fairly comfortable except of course in the pioneering stage, and life there is much more wholesome than it is in the city. I will admit though that the country people have not the frots or jazz halls and such-like attractions to attend. Slightly more has been allowed for water supplies than was spent last year, the figures being £558,000 this year compared with £549,460 last year. It is proposed to complete the Subiaco sewerage and extend operations to Nedlands and North Perth. Here again I admit that the sewerage of the city has not for many years gone forward as rapidly as should have been the case, simply because of the difficulty in finding money. If these activities had been controlled by a board, more would have been done.

Mr. Stubbs: It is time septic tanks were done away with.

The PREMIER: But it is all a question of money, and when I read of schemes such as that for the removal of the Perth railway station, the electrification of the railway system, or putting the railway underground, I am amazed. Where do these people who propound the schemes think all the money is to come from? I am afraid it will not be found in my time. It is all very nice to talk about improving our conveniences, but there are works in the country that are more urgently needed, works from which the State will derive some advantage. I am afraid the Perth railway station will have to stay where it is for some time to come. I do not know how that will be regarded in some quarters.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Anyway, you cannot do it if you have not the money. We are doing more than we ought to now.

The PREMIER. Of course we are. Slightly less has been provided for group settlement than was spent last year. This is only to be expected because settlers are becoming established. In addition to the principal vote for group settlement, £150,000 has been made available for roads and drainage in the group areas. As I have already stated, we are finding an additional amount of £400,000 for Agricultural Bank capital, £75,000 for soldier settlement, £60,000 for assistance to settlers, and £100,000 for further supplies of wire netting.

Mr. Teesdale: Settlers all through: all settlers!

The PREMIER: Yes. Up to the present time 4,613 miles of netting has been supplied, and applications are in hand for an additional 884 miles. An amount of £12,000 has been provided for the completion of the contract for the erection of the dormitory at Muresk Agricultural College, £9,300, and the balance will be expended on farm buildings, implements and stock. There has also been £14,000 set apart for the Department of Agriculture, principally to permit of the extension of the equipment at the experimental farms at Salmon Gums, Ghooli and Dampawah. Those experimental farms are serving a very good purpose, but at the same time they are costing some money. The provision for roads, buildings, etc., will be the same as that of last year. There will be £360,900 for road construction along the same lines as last year. The expenditure on roads under the agreement with the Federal Government is now a very large amount and the interest charge is also growing. The expenditure on public buildings is estimated at slightly less than that of last year. A very large amount could be spent on public buildings, were it available. The amount covers the completion of the Point Heathcote mental home, additions to the King Edward Memorial Hospital, schools and quarters, hospitals and police stations. Further capital to the extent of £25,000 is to be provided for the Workers' Homes Board.

Mr. Angelo: I hope that £25,000 will be spent in the country.

The PREMIER: I think it will. Slight additions will be made to the capital of several of the trading concerns, but the amount will be small in each case. A special item appears under the section for

the Metropolitan Market Trust, the amount being £90,000.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: We would not let the municipal council do it.

The PREMIER: The municipal council were ill-advised in the Bill they put up. It would have been better for the council to have controlled the market. I think it will be agreed that the Bill sought to be passed through Parliament was entirely unacceptable to the House and so we have another Government concern, except that it is controlled by a Trust, and the Government do not even appoint the whole of the Trust. Some of the local bodies have a say in that. As hon. members know, the buildings are in course of erection and are well advanced.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I believe a couple of bookmakers have taken offices close to the markets.

The PREMIER: I do not know whether the trust will make provision for them in the building, but we can rest assured they will be close handy. Of course, interest will be paid on the £90,000, but at the same time the Treasurer will have to find it. Those are the principal items of expenditure included in the total. The items are set out in the Estimates. Some hon. members may be disappointed because they are not larger, and others will be disappointed because of the absence of items that they expected to see included.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: King's Bay Jetty near Rochourne.

The PREMIER: That ought not to come under Item 42 of the Estimates; I propose to include it as a special item in the Loan Bill. It is too big an amount to be included under the heading of "improvements and additions to jetties." This usually covers more or less small sums to permit of improvements to jetties along the North-West coast. I hope a start will be made with the work without any undue delay. It may appear that the total amount of these Estimates is large, but the State is in a stage of development requiring the expenditure of money in all directions—roads, railways, water supplies, harbours, Agricultural Bank capital, etc., besides public utilities for the metropolitan area, water and sewerage and all those works demanding the expenditure of large sums of money.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: We are spending too much on the works and not getting value.

The PREMIER: I cannot say as to that. As shewing how the expenditure on roads has increased in late years, I might state that in 1922-23 the sum spent from all sources was £120,000, in 1923-24 it was £192,000, and last year it was £635,000—nearly half a million more than was spent in 1923-24. It will be admitted by those who travel throughout the country districts that a great deal of work has been done on roads throughout the State.

Hon. G. Taylor: And still people are complaining that the roads are bad.

The PREMIER: There is an enormous mileage waiting to be made, and it will take us years to carry out the work. It is not so much the weight of a vehicle that does the damage on the roads; it is the speed at which the heavy vehicles are made to tear along. The State is in that stage when money must be found for the works I have enumerated, and when the items on the Estimates are examined members, I think, will agree that what I am asking for can be justified.

Progress reported.

RESOLUTION—PUBLIC SERVICES, LATE HON. J. E. DODD.

Message received from the Council requesting the Assembly's concurrence in the following resolution—

1. That this House requests the Government to afford Parliament an opportunity to give effect to some form of recognition of the great services rendered to this State by the late Hon. J. E. Dodd. 2. That the foregoing resolution be transmitted to the Legislative Assembly and its concurrence desired therein.

BILL—SUPPLY (No. 3) £1,000,000.

Returned from the Council without amendment.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1928-29.

Report of Committee of Ways and Means adopted.

BILL—WORKERS' HOMES ACT AMENDMENT.

Report of Committee adopted.

BILL—ROAD DISTRICTS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

MR. LATHAM (York) [6.2]: In moving the second reading said: This Bill amends the Road Districts Act, Section 160, dealing with works and undertakings. It is designed to extend the power of road boards to purchase land for recreation grounds. Years ago, when Treasurers had a good deal of money, it was the custom to make grants to local governing bodies for the provision of recreation grounds. Many new districts are springing up in the agricultural areas, and there is no Crown land left in the neighbourhood for this purpose. The road boards are anxious to acquire, from time to time, small pieces of land for the recreation of the ratepayers, but as the law stands they have no power to purchase any. The first clause in the Bill gives road boards power to purchase a small piece of land for recreation purposes. The second clause gives them power to provide homes for their employees. Road boards frequently have to change their officers, and find they are placed at a great disadvantage because there are no homes for them. It is contended by the boards that if they were permitted to build homes and keep them as the property of the board they would frequently be able to appoint officials who would be more efficient than others they have had to appoint. Sometimes they appoint a single man, because there is no living accommodation, whereas a married man might give them better service. In the second clause power is given to these local authorities to purchase homes out of loan funds. The object of giving power to effect these purchases from loan funds is that should the ratepayers have any objection to the scheme, and to the leasing of the homes to the employees, they will have the final say. Both clauses are necessary to enable road boards to carry out their duties. I commend the Bill to the House and hope it will be carried I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. A. McCallum—South Fremantle) [6.5]: I have no objection to the Bill. These clauses were inserted in both of the amending Bills that I brought down, though they failed

to survive the other amendments I suggested. The Bill is necessary, and most of the road boards want it. I support the measure and think that these powers should be given to road boards.

HON. SIR JAMES MITCHELL (Northam) [6.6]: While I think it is a good thing to give road boards the powers sought, some limitation should be placed upon them. It is possible that a board may decide to buy land for recreation purposes, when it already has a racecourse. Some provision should be made whereby they cannot do this without consulting the ratepayers. If the local authorities had to raise money for such purposes, of course the people would be consulted. They could not raise a loan without the authority of the ratepayers. That point ought to be considered. I entirely approve of the boards having power to erect homes for their employees, particularly in the country districts, but I think we should stipulate that a sinking fund should be provided. In the case of a brick building, 1 per cent. would be sufficient, with 2 per cent. for wooden buildings. That point ought to be considered by the member for York and the Minister for Works. Provision should also be made in the Bill that the board should also charge rent to cover the cost of the money, plus sinking fund and something for renovations. With these limitations the clauses of the Bill are necessary. Under the Federal housing scheme, road boards can borrow money just as the Government can from the Federal authorities for the erection of homes.

Mr. Latham: Is that at the cheaper rate of interest?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I think not. They ought to get the money at the lowest possible rate, say the Savings Bank rate, which is $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. I hope the member for York will go into this matter before the Bill reaches the Committee stage. It may be that under the parent Act road boards are compelled to provide sinking funds for loan moneys. I do not know whether that would cover the investment of loan moneys in buildings. Meanwhile I will vote for the second reading of the Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

BILL—EDUCATION.*Council's Message.*

Message received from the Council, notifying it had agreed to the Assembly's amendments Nos. 1 and 2, but had disagreed to amendment No. 3 for the reasons set forth in the schedule.

BILL—MUNICIPAL AND ROAD DISTRICTS ELECTORAL.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—LUNACY ACT AMENDMENT.*Second Reading.*

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL WATER SUPPLIES (Hon. J. Cunningham—Kalgoorlie) [6.12] in moving the second reading said: This Bill is for the purpose of remedying defects in the principal Act with regard to the recovery of maintenance fees and medical expenses. The measure will enable a better recovery to be made of amounts due to the Government. In the past considerable revenue has been lost owing to defects in the Act. The Bill also provides for a varying order of the court in regard to payments with the altered circumstances of the debtor, and a variation wherever circumstances permit. There is an obligation on the part of relatives towards mental cases. It was generally understood that the department had the power to recover fees, such as transport fees and the cost of medical certificates, but it has been found, owing to defects of the Act, that it is unable to recover in this way. The Bill also provides for another alteration in respect of the powers now enjoyed by the board of visitors. Under the Act the board have power to instruct the Inspector General of the Insane, but they have never exercised it. The Inspector General is responsible to the Minister, and must accept instructions from that quarter. Realising the awkward predicament the Inspector General may be placed in, the board have never taken advantage of the powers conferred upon them by the Act.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL WATER SUPPLIES: Before tea I was referring to a provision intended to remove an anomaly in the relations between the Inspector General of the Insane and the Board of Visitors. The Bill proposes to withdraw from the board the power to issue instructions to the Inspector General. In this respect the existing Act conflicts with a provision of the Public Service Act which places the Inspector General under the authority of the Minister. The responsibilities and obligations of an officer of the Public Service are clearly set out in that provision of the Public Service Act. For the power to issue instructions to the Inspector General, the Bill proposes to substitute the right to make recommendations to the Minister. The Board of Visitors are in full accord with the proposed change. Up to the present, most cordial relations have existed between the Inspector General and the board. The board realise that it would be rather foolish on their part to issue an instruction to the Inspector General, as they are a body without responsibility and an instruction from them might possibly involve substantial expenditure. The power to authorise expenditure is vested solely in the Minister. I have also referred to a difficulty which has arisen as to the recovery of moneys due to the Government for doctors' certificates, and the transfer of patients to the reception home and the mental hospital. I do not know that I can throw any further light on the Bill at this stage, but in Committee I shall be glad to give full information regarding the various clauses. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Davy debate adjourned.

RESOLUTION—COLLIE POWER SCHEME.

Message received from the Council requesting the Assembly's concurrence in the following resolution:—

That in the opinion of this House the Government should forthwith proceed to establish in the Collie coalfields area a generating plant capable of supplying electrical current for lighting and motive power throughout the whole, or the greater portion, of the State.

BILL—WATER BOARDS ACT AMENDMENT.

Council's Amendments.

Schedule of three amendments made by the Council now considered.

In Committee.

Mr. Lutey in the Chair; the Minister for Agricultural Water Supplies in charge of the Bill.

No. 1—Clause 2. Delete the first three lines, and insert in lieu thereof the following:—"In every case where the Public Works Department has expended or may hereafter expend money in providing a water supply of sufficient capacity to supply the reasonable requirements of the rate-payers within the area to be rated in agricultural areas."

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL WATER SUPPLIES: I move—

That the amendment be not agreed to.

If adopted, the amendment would restrict the activities of the Water Supply Department in providing needed water supplies. It would mean the tightening-up of the department's authority. Who is going to say what are reasonable requirements, or that the proposed supply is of sufficient capacity? When called upon, the department, after investigation, put up an estimate for a work which in their opinion the people concerned are in a position to pay for by way of annual rate. Our agricultural areas are almost entirely dependent upon rainfall.

Question put and passed: the Council's amendment not agreed to.

No. 2—Clause 2. Insert a new proviso to stand as paragraph (i), as follows:—"that where land is included in a rateable area which belongs to an owner who has at his own expense provided a sufficient water supply for his own exclusive use on such land he shall be exempt from rates."

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL WATER SUPPLIES: I move—

That the amendment be not agreed to.

It is a recognised principle, not only in this State but throughout Australia, that the expenditure of public moneys on the provision or improvement of a water supply enhances the value of all properties within the district. A person may claim that he has expended even a considerable sum of money

on a water supply of his own, and yet during the year of meagre rainfall he is just as badly off as other settlers. Even as regards underground water supplies, a dry year often depletes wells. During a good season, or after a winter of heavy rainfall, settlers claim to have adequate water supplies on their own properties; but then a year of light rainfall comes along, and they are short of water. The same remarks apply to earth catchments and excavated tanks. Unless rain comes in the quantity required, the owners of such facilities are as badly off as other people. The amendment, if agreed to, would violate a well-recognised principle. Even in the metropolitan area many people have wells and windmills or rainwater tanks, but they are nevertheless called upon to pay water rates equally with others.

Mr. LATHAM: I had hoped that the Minister would accept the amendment. There is a right to rate a holder past whose property pipes run; but a holder who is ten miles distant from the supply and has provided himself with adequate water cannot reasonably or fairly be rated. There are farmers who possess adequate water supplies, and should not be rated. If at any time such a farmer were found carting water from the standpipe, the rate should immediately be imposed on his property. There is a vast difference between the metropolitan water supply and such small water supplies as the Bill covers. While I am anxious that the Minister shall do all he possibly can to provide water supplies throughout the agricultural areas, I do not want anything unfair to be done. In the circumstances, I think the Minister should agree to the Council's amendments.

Mr. THOMSON: I hope that the Minister will accept the amendment. During the course of his remarks, the Minister said that if the Government accepted the amendment, it would be a departure from a recognised principle. It does not necessarily follow because a departure is made from an established principle, such an act will not be in accordance with justice. If a farmer has already made provision for his own water supply, he should not be taxed, because he will not require to take water from the scheme installed by the Government. The principle that the Minister referred to was accepted when we dealt with the Vermin Act, and therefore the same consideration should

be extended to settlers under the Bill now before us.

Mr. DAVY: As I understand the Minister's proposal, it is to collect water and make it available at one point in any particular area, from which the people can cart it. That water supply will be similar to, but not so convenient as, the supply every farmer endeavours to secure for himself on his own farm. There can be no analogy between a scheme of that description and the house-to-house reticulation in the metropolitan area. The fact that a man has to pay in the city although he may have his own private well and windmill, has nothing to do with the position that will arise under the provisions of the Bill. I do not see how it can be regarded as just to tax people who have already provided themselves, in some instances at great expense, with the very convenience that the Minister proposes to make available to them under the Bill. It simply means that the Minister will ask such a man to pay for the individual who has been less provident. That is carrying brotherly love and communism to extremes far beyond anything dreamt of in connection with the reticulation of water in towns.

Mr. Panton: That is only co-operation.

Mr. DAVY: I believe the Council's amendment is a just and proper one, and I am disappointed that the Minister has not been able to accept it.

Mr. ANGELO: I hope even at this late stage, the Minister will see his way clear to accept the Council's amendment. The Minister suggested that sometimes people may consider they have provided themselves with an adequate water supply, and should that fail they will take advantage of the Government's scheme. If that should happen, the Government could safeguard themselves by providing that should a man who has been exempt from the payment of rates under the Bill, find his own water supply to fail him, he may draw his requirements from the Government supply on payment of the rates for the current year.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL WATER SUPPLIES: The member for York suggested that if a settler had his own water supply and that supply ran out, he should be able to take advantage of the scheme and be rated accordingly. If we were to consider a proposal in the light of who should and who should not be rated, no works of this description would be put in hand at all.

It has to be remembered that in a year when the rainfall is good, the mudholes and tanks are full of water, and farmers who have provided those supplies may consider they have made adequate provisions. On the other hand, what is the position throughout the wheat belt to-day? Farmers who believed they had an adequate water supply have had to pay heavily for water, hence the demand for supplies throughout the country districts. The department cannot wait until one man decides whether he has an adequate water supply, during which period the interests of the rest of the settlers will be hung up. Another important point is that before money is set aside for any such work, it has to be determined whether the revenue to be secured will be sufficient to meet the charges on the capital outlay. That is a matter that cannot be tinkered with, and I advise the Committee to accept the clause as it is in the Bill.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I do not think the Minister's reply will hold good.

Mr. Panton: You do not think it will hold water.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Surely there are a number of farmers in the wheat belt who have an adequate water supply, in which event they should not be called upon to pay the added impost under the Bill.

The Minister for Agricultural Water Supplies: And yet the farmers are asking for improved water supplies.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: If there are any who have an ample water supply of their own, their interests could be protected.

The Minister for Agricultural Water Supplies: Do you know of anyone in that position?

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I cannot say.

The Minister for Agricultural Water Supplies: I do not think you can.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I must accept the Minister's statement that there is no settler in the areas concerned who has a sufficient water supply of his own. If that is so, the Minister would be foolish to accept the Council's amendment. It does not sound to me quite correct, however, for if it were, what have the settlers been doing all along without such a scheme?

The Minister for Agricultural Water Supplies: The Government are paying away large amounts for freight on water.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment not agreed to.

No. 3. Clause 2.—Insert a new proviso to stand as paragraph (vii.), as follows:—“that land shall not be rateable in respect of the cost of works constructed prior to the first day of January, 1925.”

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL WATER SUPPLIES: I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

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

Resolutions reported and the report adopted.

A committee consisting of the Hon. J. C. Willcock, Hon. J. Cunningham and Mr. Lindsay drew up reasons for disagreeing to two of the Council's amendments.

Reasons adopted and a Message accordingly returned to the Council.

BILL—POOR PERSONS LEGAL ASSISTANCE.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR JUSTICE (Hon. J. C. Willcock—Geraldton) [8.3] in moving the second reading said: The Bill follows out a practice which to varying extents is in existence almost all over the world. In many countries there is procedure to enable indigent people to secure assistance of a legal character. I propose later on to refer to one or two countries and detail what has been done in those places. When dealing with the Estimates we know that considerable costs are involved in the administration of justice. Last year under this heading the expenditure was £56,000. So it will be seen that it is necessary to charge some fees in order that the State should not gratuitously render services to those able to pay. Then there is good reason for the charging of fees from the standpoint that to a considerable extent it provides a safeguard against frivolous litigation. If it were to cost people nothing at all to gain access to the courts, we should have all sorts of frivolous litigation which would take up the time of the courts and mean considerable expense to the country. It is necessary that most people seeking the aid of the courts to establish their rights should have legal representation. Very often people can establish their rights only through a court of law, and

those without means should not for that reason be deprived of that opportunity to establish their rights. Similarly, in criminal cases persons may have been convicted, and I suppose have been convicted, because they have not been represented by experienced counsel in the presentation of their cases. Not all the facts of their cases have been placed before the court, and in consequence of this inadequate representation those persons, in some instances, have suffered injustice, and in all instances perhaps have been at a disability because they could not adequately present their cases to the court.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: But they can trust the jury, at any rate.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: But accused persons require legal representation in the placing of the whole of the facts before the jury. Many people who suddenly find themselves in court have no idea of the procedure or what should be done in the way of submitting evidence. Many of them have never before been in court, and on finding themselves in the dock they are so dumbfounded that many points favourable to them are not put forward in a way that will secure justice for them.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: In serious cases you always have found legal representation for the accused.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Yes, on capital charges it has always been the custom to supply legal assistance for the accused if the accused is without means. But in ordinary cases that is not done. As soon as the Government took office we placed £100 on the Estimates for the purpose of providing legal assistance when necessary. However, we have not blazoned anything about it.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: How much did you say; £100 a year?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Yes, we have put £100 a year on the Estimates in order that, if there were one or two cases in which it seemed desirable that legal assistance should be rendered, we would be able to supply it.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: But is not £100 too much?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: No. We spent £100 last year, and nearly the same amount the year before. We could have spent considerably more but for the fact that it was not generally known. Where-

ever it has been proved to the satisfaction of the Minister and the department that in the interests of justice it was advisable to supply legal assistance, we have supplied it.

Mr. Davy: What would it cost to nationalise the profession?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: We are not dealing with that now. I am not at all sure that the legal profession are not in favour of a measure of this kind. They have had discussions on the subject, and they appear to be sympathetic to the idea.

Mr. Davy: They are entirely in favour of the principle, but whether the application of it will be satisfactory remains to be seen.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: The Bill is merely to give effect to the principle. The means whereby that principle can be carried out is entirely in the hands of the House. I am not wedded to the methods outlined in the Bill; in fact, no methods are specifically outlined, although one or two are touched upon. But the principle of the Bill is that the State shall be in a position to grant to people without means legal aid where it is warranted. Of course not every Tom, Dick or Harry charged with an offence will be assisted. If in the opinion of the department there is no real necessity to grant legal aid, it need not be done. In any event the person to be assisted must prove that he is without sufficient means to pay the legal costs. Under this item of £100 on the Estimates good work has been done. But the time has come when something more systematic should be brought into operation, so that everybody in the unfortunate position of requiring legal assistance might know that there is a certain procedure to go through for the obtaining of that assistance. Then if in the opinion of the Minister, or the officers detailed to make inquiry to the circumstances of those people, it is deemed advisable to render legal assistance, that assistance will be granted. Very often people have not the means to engage legal aid for the proper presentation of their cases. Then, because of some little complication arising during the hearing of a case, an applicant before the court might lose the advantage of securing maintenance from people entitled to pay maintenance. The medical profession through their services in hospitals demonstrate that in regard

to health an educated section of the community are prepared to grant their services free in order that suffering humanity might be relieved, at all events to a certain extent. The State, too, through its hospitals has contributed very largely to the same end. We have even gone further, for the Minister for Health has established a dental clinic where free service is given to indigent people whose teeth require attention. Good health perhaps is more important than material wealth. But it does sometimes occur in civic life that a man may possibly lose his liberty because of his own inadequate presentation of his case to the court. Points favourable to himself are not brought forward at the proper time, and so he may lose his liberty for a considerable period. Although health may be almost everything, most people will agree that a man's liberty should be safeguarded in every possible way. At any rate, the lack of a comparatively small amount of money should not deprive a man of an opportunity adequately to present his case so that his liberty may not be endangered. It might be thought that the furnishing of this legal aid will cost a considerable amount. But similar legislation exists in South Australia, where it was introduced in 1925, and in Victoria, where it was introduced last year or the year before. During my visit to the Eastern States 12 months ago I discussed the operation and administration of those Acts, which are similar to this Bill, and I find that only a small staff is required. One man, termed the public solicitor, deals with the whole of the cases, and all the assistance he has is from a typist. So at the outside the whole thing costs less than a thousand pounds. In Victoria a public solicitor was not appointed for some time and arrangements were made in other ways. If this Bill passes I do not think the Government will rush in and appoint a public solicitor in a week or two. We may make some arrangement with the Law Society or the Barristers' Board to undertake cases and give a measure of legal assistance just as the medical profession give medical assistance to poor persons.

Mr. Davy: You will not be slipping backward in helping in this way.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I am pleased to have the assurance of the hon. member. The matter has not been discussed with either of those bodies, but any co-

operation on their part will be heartily welcomed by the Government. The principle has been in existence in this State for a number of years, but the procedure is so hampered by conditions that very little use is made of the rules of the court that enable poor people to gain the advantage of legal aid.

Mr. Davy: It was all right when the rules were originally framed about 150 years ago.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: That is right. A poor person who requires legal aid has to see a solicitor and impress upon him the necessity for taking up the case. The solicitor has then to make application to the judge and the judge has to assign counsel. This means that the solicitor who takes up the case and gets the order made for legal assistance has to do the job. If one man got the reputation for taking up such cases, I am afraid he would have any number of clients. In the circumstances little has been done in that way, although the principle is in existence at present. I have before me a book printed by the League of Nations giving details of what occurs in many countries of the world to provide legal aid for poor persons. I propose to mention one or two representative cases so that the House will realise that we are not seeking to introduce any revolutionary proposal. It is a principle that has been adopted in many parts of the world, although the details differ in various countries. In England poor persons apply for a certificate to a committee consisting of solicitors. Poor Persons Committees have been established in London and in nearly 80 places in the provinces. The book says—

A certificate under this order means a certificate issued by the Law Society or by any provincial law society (after inquiry by a committee appointed by the society and approved by the Lord Chancellor and hereinafter called the committee) signed by two members of the committee present at the inquiry and certifying (1) That the poor person is not worth a sum exceeding £50 (excluding wearing apparel, tools of trade, and the subject matter of such proceedings) or in special circumstances a sum not exceeding £100, and (2) That the usual income from all sources of the poor person does not exceed £2 a week, or in special circumstances a sum not exceeding £4 a week; and (3) In matrimonial causes where the wife is the poor person, in addition to (1) and (2) either: (a) That the poor person and her husband are not worth the amount specified in (1), and that their joint income does not exceed the amount specified in (2);

or (b) that it is reasonable in the circumstances that the poor person should be admitted to take, defend or be a party to the proceedings as a poor person; and if so whether the proceedings are limited to such proceedings as are necessary to enable the applicant to obtain security for her costs or are to extend to any, and what further or other proceedings; and (4) That the poor person has reasonable grounds for taking or defending or being a party to such proceedings.

All those things have to be established before the committee and, when they have been established, a certificate may be granted. In Scotland the procedure is somewhat similar—

If the party's health admit of it, he shall appear personally before the minister and elders at the time and place to be appointed by them to be examined as to the facts required by the said schedule; and the minister and elders shall then certify how far the statement given by the party consists with their own proper knowledge or that of any one of them, or whether its credit rests on the information of others or solely on the statement of the applicant, in which latter case they shall certify whether he be of good character and worthy of credit.

After making inquiries into the applicant's financial circumstances, if they are satisfied, he obtains a certificate and is able to get legal aid. In Roumania persons eligible for legal assistance are those who can produce evidence of poverty in the shape of a certificate emanating in the large towns from the local police authorities and in the departments from the collector of taxes. This certificate indicates the applicant's assets, his occupation, the number of persons in his family and their ages. The director of the legal aid bureau decides whether the person applying for legal aid fulfils the conditions entitling him to such aid. Any party who considers himself aggrieved by the decision of the director of the legal aid bureau may apply to the Dean of the Order of Advocates, whose decision is final. Much the same procedure is followed in other parts of the world. In the Union of South Africa the procedure is as follows:—

In civil cases in the superior courts of the Union, it is not only possible, but a matter of everyday occurrence under rules of court existing in every province for a person to obtain the leave of the court to sue or defend in forma pauperis. Before the leave of the court is thus given, it is necessary for such person to apply to the court stating on affidavit that he is possessed of means not exceeding £10 in some provinces or £25 in other provinces.

The principle is somewhat similar to our practice that in capital cases all legal assist-

ance is granted. Right through this book is information collated by the League of Nations on this question. I shall lay the book on the Table so that members may be able to peruse it and satisfy themselves that the principle of this measure has received world-wide recognition.

Mr. Latham: I do not think there will be much opposition to it.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I do not think there will be.

Hon. G. Taylor: Read the Bill first.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I am merely explaining the principles on which we are acting. I will outline the provisions of the Bill. I am surprised to find from the publication that so much has been done in various countries.

Hon. G. Taylor: We are behind most of them in this particular legislation?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: We are not behind them, but our procedure does not give many people an opportunity to take advantage of the Supreme Court rules.

Mr. Davy: I daresay the English race initiated this legislation 150 years ago.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Probably so. Although different methods are adopted in different States of the Commonwealth, practically the same result is sought and that is in criminal cases to defend persons without sufficient means and in civil cases to conduct proceedings on behalf of destitute persons whether they are suing or being sued. In Great Britain the Law Society undertake this work, certain legal practitioners have their names on the list and they may be called upon to grant legal aid to poor persons. In New South Wales there is a public solicitor who looks into the cases and advises the Minister whether they are worthy of Government assistance. We are not going to allow people promiscuously to obtain assistance. We have to be satisfied that the case is one that might properly be taken up with a view to giving the person assistance. That having been demonstrated and a certificate having been given, the person will be at liberty to proceed with his case.

Mr. Teesdale: Does it apply to divorce cases?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Yes; the Minister applies to divorce cases now.

Mr. Teesdale: Then you will have plenty of work.

Hon. G. Taylor: We shall all have the wind up now.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: If the hon. member reads the Supreme Court rules he will find they contain the procedure whereby a person can take action in forma pauperis. On occasion that procedure has been availed of, but not to any extent.

Mr. Teesdale: There is no stipulation as to income.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Not to income, but to total capital resources.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: We are having a wonderful lot of Bills this session.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: This measure may prove of considerable assistance to certain people.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: To lawyers.

Mr. Davy: It will not assist the lawyers a bit.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Perhaps the member for West Perth will say it will give opportunities to people who have not sufficient means to take a case to court, but the lawyers will not make very much out of it. On the other hand I think the lawyers will give free of charge services that usually have been charged for. In Queensland the same practice is followed except that the provisions are made under the Public Curator's Act, and it is the Public Curator who, if required by the Minister, provides the assistance in civil cases, and there is also a public defender appointed for criminal cases. In South Australia a public solicitor has been appointed. The Bill proposes that following the practice elsewhere a poor person means a person who is not worth £50 excluding wearing apparel, tools of trade, etc., and who has not earned the basic wage under the arbitration court's award during the previous twelve months. There is one difficulty in providing that an applicant must not have £50 or, if he has less, he will be entitled to legal assistance. Many people are improvident. They may have had £300, £400 or £500 during the year and may have made no provision for the future. They may then find themselves with no resources and on getting into trouble might want the State to go to their assistance. There are men who follow nomadic occupations. I am not libelling any section of the community when I say that many shearers earn £300 or £400 in the course of five or six months. After they

have spent four or five months in Perth they may find themselves without a penny, and if they got into trouble, they might think it the duty of the State to provide free legal assistance for them. That is not the class of person we want to assist; we want to assist those people who have not the opportunity, through lack of earning capacity, to approach the court. If a person is being defrauded and he has not the means to enable him to take the case to court, that person should not be denied the chance of obtaining his rights, and in such an instance the community would not want that person to suffer what might be undue hardship. If the case is a good one, no matter against whom the claim might be, a person should be entitled to assistance to conduct his case. Where two or more persons are committed jointly for the same offence—that is on the criminal side—the public solicitor will consider whether the defence can be conducted by the same solicitor, and if not, then a second solicitor must be appointed to defend the second person. On the civil side, the rules of the Supreme Court are extended to apply to persons being dealt with under the Act. The anomaly which has previously existed through the necessity to obtain a legal practitioner's certificate that the case is a fit one, will be removed by the fact that it will be the public solicitor who will officially decide the question. On application being made, the matter will be referred to the public solicitor and according to the requirements of the case, the public solicitor or some other practitioner will be assigned by the Minister. Where costs are recovered by a person whose case has been conducted as a poor person, the costs will be paid to the Crown as a refund of Crown expenditure. If in any civil proceedings taken on behalf of a poor person the poor person recovers an amount exceeding £50, then the costs the Crown has been put to may be recouped from such amount, provided that such costs shall not exceed one-fourth of the amount involved. The Crown will not provide legal assistance for people who desire to take up speculative cases. If the merits of the case are sufficiently good, then only will legal assistance be provided. In drafting the Bill the whole of the laws in England and in the other States on this question have been considered with a view to providing a working scheme that will be up to date. It will be agreed that there is

necessity for the Bill, and if it is not availed of it will show that we are a prosperous community. Unfortunately, however, during the time I have been Minister for Justice I have received many applications for assistance of this nature. In many instances if assistance is not granted to the people who seek it, an injustice to them will result. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Davy, debate adjourned.

BILL—HOSPITAL FUND.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 22nd November.

HON. SIR JAMES MITCHELL (Northam) [8.37]: I marvel that the Minister has the temerity to bring down this Bill. I remember the outcry and the storm of abuse for which a similar Bill was responsible in my time. And that was not a Bill drafted in the way the Bill we are now discussing has been submitted to us.

The Minister for Health: You are quite right.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: This is purely an official Bill, in which the Minister takes not the slightest interest. If he had been interested in it he would not have introduced it. There was a select committee appointed to deal with the previous Hospitals Bill, and they reported favourably. All the same, they were in disgrace for a long time afterwards.

The Minister for Health: They were in that much disgrace that you did not introduce a Bill on the lines recommended by them. They presented a report and you submitted a Bill in opposition to that report.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Nothing of the sort. This is one of the things the Minister objected to when he was sitting on this side of the House. Now he and his colleagues approve of it because he is sitting on the Treasury bench. Really the Government are very difficult to understand.

Mr. Panton: Well, do you agree with the Bill?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: There are some things in the Bill that are new. Since we considered the previous Hospitals

Bill some time ago we have passed a Workers' Compensation Act which alters the situation. I notice that the employer will still have to pay and that the worker will have to pay. The employer will have to pay twice over; he will pay the insurance company and he will pay under the Workers' Compensation Act. The payment will be heavy, too. Another matter is the taxation of Government securities. At the present time those securities are exempt from taxation.

The Minister for Health: We are not taxing securities that are not taxable to-day.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Again, if a man cannot produce proof that he belongs to a union, he will not get hospital assistance. No ticket, no hospital. Recently it was no ticket, no job. Now it is no ticket, no hospital. It is proposed to make the employer the tax gatherer. He is to keep stamps. I suppose if the employer has no stamps, he will have to get some, even though he may have to go 50 miles for them. A man getting £2 a week will have to pay 3d. Then if a boy is put on a farm to learn farming he will still have to pay 1½d. a week, because he gets his board.

The Minister for Health: We don't want too many of them in Western Australia.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: No, the Minister does not want too many people employed. The Bill will give trouble right through, and that seems to be the desire of the Minister. There is no provision to compel an employee to give a receipt for wages. What will the employer do in a case of that sort? The Minister will have to tell us in Committee what he will do. Everybody who gives employment will have to file receipts and the workers will have to carry receipts about with them.

Mr. A. Wansbrough: That will be a terrible burden.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes, and it will be quite unnecessary.

Mr. Marshall: It will be an inconvenience.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Minister proposes to commandeer the assistance of the Commonwealth officials. They are to become collectors under the Bill.

Mr. Marshall: And so will the State officials be collectors.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: We have a perfect right to employ the State officials,

but I don't know that we can employ the Commonwealth officials.

The Minister for Health: Yes; don't pay them now £32,000 a year to collect the taxes?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: They will have to collect the tax for the Minister. I shall be very glad if the Commonwealth Government can be compelled by this measure to do the collecting; I do not think they can. The manager of the Commonwealth Bank would have to see that his officers paid the tax.

The Minister for Health: Why should not he as well as the manager of the Bank of New South Wales?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: What would happen if the Federal Parliament without asking the permission of the State Government passed a law that State officials must do something? I know what the State Government would say. When the Bill imposed a tax of 1d., not 1½d., in the pound was introduced, the State finances were in an entirely different position. We had not then entered into the Financial Agreement which will enable us to shirk our responsibility to pay £400,000 per year to the sinking fund trustees in London. We now have a Federal grant to help us, and generally our financial position ought to be much better than it was when we received a million a year less in gross revenue. If there was need for special taxation for this special purpose then, there should not be any such need now. Moreover, one should always hesitate to impose special taxation for special purposes because one never knows where it will end. The Premier, in introducing the Annual Estimates, said he thought a fixed sum should be set aside for education, which of course means that whatever may be required beyond that sum would have to be found by some means or other, presumably a special tax. I hope special taxation will not be systematically imposed to meet the cost of special services. The fund to be created under the Bill is to be administered by a trust. I object to trusts and boards managing funds of this sort. Someone responsible to Parliament, someone sitting here, should be responsible for the fund. When the entertainments tax was collected as a special fund, it was vested in the Minister. That was perfectly justified, but now we find that the Minister merely transfers the lump sum to the Treasurer. We understood that the proceeds of the tax

were to be retained by the Minister for the doing of special work that could not be done under the vote. But the proceeds are simply paid as a lump sum into the Treasury. They ought to go direct to the Treasury. If funds are to be collected, they certainly should be held by the Treasurer, and certainly should be subject to appropriation by Parliament. The Treasurer would naturally hold funds resulting from this Bill in trust for hospitals, and the House would vote the amount. The Minister should accept the responsibility under the Bill, and proposals for expenditure should come down to the House. In this instance it is wrong to have a trust. We have here 50 members who represent the whole of the State, and who know the requirements of their various districts much better than a board of the most competent officials sitting in Perth could know them. Moreover, we are better able to take into account the interests of the people generally than can any board appointed from anywhere. I hope that before the Bill gets through Committee the Minister will agree to take the responsibility he is paid to take. Recently we have heard a good deal about boards and commissions appointed by the Federal Government, but this State is just as bad. We have boards and commissions sitting on all sorts of subjects. I do not know what tempted the Minister to bring down the Bill at this late hour of the session, and I do not quite know how the Bill was drafted.

The Minister for Health: It was drafted by the Parliamentary Draftsman.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: He simply got from the Minister, or from someone else, the ideas and licked them into shape. He has no responsibility for the imposition of the tax or for the conditions imposed.

The Minister for Health: I am responsible for those things.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I am very sorry to hear that the Minister is responsible for every word in the Bill. If so, he has made a nice mess of the preparation of the measure. He should consider it seriously before it gets into Committee, because we have to see that a Bill which is passed is workable.

The Minister for Health: There will not be even a ripple on the surface when the Bill is in Committee.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Surely the Minister will agree that it is ridiculous to make people pay twice over for the same hospital accommodation. Surely he will agree that it is monstrous. Surely he will agree that the income to be taxed should be not greater than the income which is taxed now.

The Minister for Health: I do not agree with that at all.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The proposal is ridiculous.

The Minister for Health: That is your opinion.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: In introducing the Poor Persons Legal Assistance Bill the Minister for Justice had no idea that only an odd person here and there in the community would want the services of a lawyer. The Minister thought everyone would want the assistance of an advocate. Similarly, in introducing the present Bill the Minister imagines that a great many people will want to go into hospital, and therefore will not only pay under the Bill but will derive advantage from it. But tens of thousands of people never go near a hospital.

The Minister for Health: I hope I shall never require any benefit from the Bill, and so does every sensible man.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: But a man drawing a Ministerial salary is one thing, and a worker on the minimum wage is quite another thing. It is useless to say that it is nothing for a man receiving £200 a year to pay 300 pence to the hospital fund. To many people 25s. annually is a consideration. Under the Bill the man who falls sick does not get medical attention, but merely hospital accommodation. Many sick people prefer to stay in their own homes; if they do, they will get nothing under the Bill. No doubt if a person goes into a private hospital, there is an allowance of 6s. per day; but sick people remaining in their own homes will get nothing under the Bill except the pleasure of paying. I do not know how £217,000 can be raised every year largely from the workers of the State without someone feeling it. It will be felt. It is an enormous sum of money to raise on top of the present taxation. It will mean £217,000 withdrawn from employment, taken from industry, paid into a Government fund and probably not used there. Every time we impose taxation we

destroy a chance of the workers getting work. It is foolish of us to imagine that we can go on indefinitely taking money from the men who are enterprising and energetic and brainy enough to provide employment for the people. Most of the employers here are not rich men; most of them a short time ago were workers. Because of their energy and ability they have been able to make some progress in life. The proposed tax will almost amount to 10s. per head of the population—men, women, and children. It is bound to have some effect on employment. The Bill not only provides hospital accommodation for the people—Heaven knows how they will all be able to get into the hospitals—but also provides that any money over may be used for building, renovation, painting and decorating of hospitals, and I suppose for the supply of furniture and other requirements of hospitals. It is new that all the people should have to pay for those things. Up to now we have said that there shall be certain exemptions. I suppose not more than 10 per cent. of the people pay direct taxation to the State Treasurer. I do not know how many people will pay under the Bill, but everybody earning over £1 per week will have to pay, and so will anyone who gets his board and earns anything whatever. Thus probably everybody at work would have to pay, even the 16-year old youngster.

Mr. Marshall: The newsboy in the street.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes. That is new in taxation. Hitherto we have exempted such people. If there be any money over, it will be used for building and renovating hospitals. I suppose the Minister knows whether the persons I refer to can pay 1½d. in the pound from their wages, and whether it is necessary to make them do so. I understand that under the Revenue Estimates a fixed sum of £90,000 is to be provided annually by the Treasurer. It is hardly likely that with the £40,000 received from the entertainments tax there will be £217,000. If so, that would give us £350,000. Another point forgotten by the Minister is that if he succeeds in getting the Bill passed and if the money is handed over to a trust to be banked with the Treasurer, the Treasurer should pay interest on the balance to the credit of the account from time to time. The Treasury will be saved interest on that money, and therefore the Treasurer should pay interest on the money in the

fund. I hope the Minister has not forgotten that point.

The Minister for Health: No; I discussed that with the Treasurer.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: But not with much success, I am afraid. Hon. members who are interested in the appointment of the trust to control the fund, should see to it that the Bill is amended so that the Premier will have to pay the money into the Savings Bank where it will earn interest.

Mr. Latham: But the Savings Bank could not take such a large amount, and pay interest on it.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: We can amend the Act so as to enable interest to be paid up to any amount that we may state. However, this question of interest on the money paid into the fund can be safely left in the hands of members opposite. If there was no need for additional taxation in years gone by, there does not seem to be any need for it to-day, and I cannot understand why the Minister should introduce such a Bill at the present time. However, the Bill has been introduced, and I cannot understand why it does not contain many of the provisions I have referred to.

MR. MARSHALL (Murehison) [9.1]: I do not intend to cast a silent vote on the measure. I welcome its introduction with mixed feelings. Although I do not agree with the Leader of the Opposition regarding the relationship between the Bill and the measure introduced by his Government, I am surprised at some of the anomalies to be found in the Bill now before us. The Government propose to continue the payment of the present subsidies to hospitals and whatever money is collected under the provisions of the Bill will be in addition to that amount. To that extent the Bill has something to recommend it beyond the legislation that was introduced by the Mitchell Government. However, I cannot agree with the principle upon which the taxation proposal is based. There are two reasons for my attitude. Firstly, I am doubtful about the principle of the introduction of a special tax for a special purpose, and secondly, it passes my comprehension as to how the Government can argue that a person in receipt of a paltry £1 a week should be compelled to contribute 1½d. in the form of taxation, in return for which

that individual may secure free hospital treatment should he require it. It has ever been admitted by even the most conservative Tory Government that he should pay who was in the best position to pay. The attitude of the present Minister is that it is of little concern to him what the position of the taxpayer will be. It may be an urchin who has been shoved out into the world to earn some money to assist in the upkeep of his aged parents, or of his brothers and sisters. Notwithstanding what the position of that urchin may be, he will have to contribute 1½d. out of his paltry 1s. The Minister goes further and says that if a person should receive free board and lodging and receive 15s. a week in addition, that individual will be regarded as earning 35s. a week and will have to pay a tax of 3d. I do not like that idea. Rather do I adhere to the opinion expressed by the Premier, when he was Leader of the Opposition, that the proper method of raising taxation for the maintenance of our hospitals is a super tax on all incomes on a graduated basis. Under that scheme those best able to pay, will be made to pay while those who are not in the position to do so, will be exempt from payment. I cannot for the life of me understand what has inspired the Minister to depart from that basis.

Mr. Latham: Surely Caucus gave him permission to do so!

Mr. MARSHALL: Compared with the conclaves of the executive of the Primary Producers' Association, the deliberations of Caucus are far more liberal!

Mr. Withers: The member for York does not know the meaning of the word.

Mr. MARSHALL: I am not concerned as to whether the Minister has found grounds upon which to change his opinion, for I am opposed to his proposal for the reason that I believe that no one will be in receipt of a wage of £1 a week as his total income, unless it is due to economic pressure. Even an urchin would refuse such a pittance for services rendered unless compelled to accept the payment in order to live. So I say that the principle upon which the taxation is based is altogether wrong and the contention advanced by the Premier, when he was Leader of the Opposition, was more correct. However, I congratulate the Minister upon making an endeavour to do something to maintain our hospitals. Their financial position has

been unsatisfactory and the position to-day is not getting any better. There is little doubt that public pressure has been more or less responsible for the Ministers' activities. It is easy to follow the dictates of a popular outcry. A Minister's activities in such circumstances are the more enjoyable because the lines followed are those that everyone declares to be right. For many years the people have declared that it was right to impose taxation of this description. In his desire to comply with public opinion, the Minister overlooked the fact that the method of taxation he proposes is one that will meet with great opposition from those who best know the position of people least able to bear that added burden.

Mr. Mann: What do you suggest the minimum should be?

Mr. MARSHALL: I will deal with that point in Committee. I go further in my criticism and say that notwithstanding the fact that the Minister has made an endeavour to raise funds under the provisions of the Bill to provide for the maintenance of our hospitals, the methods he proposes to adopt in the distribution of the funds to be raised will be absolutely inequitable. They will not apply fairly and they will not be just. Hospitals in the outer parts of the State will not get an adequate return as the beds available are not always fully occupied. The basis of the distribution of the funds, as well as the means proposed for the collection of the tax, are quite wrong. I have a circular that enables us to get at what was in the Minister's mind, for it emanated from the Minister's office. It was sent out to some of the hospitals.

The Minister for Health: Every hospital in the State received one of those circulars.

Mr. MARSHALL: The circular contains the following:—

Shortly stated, the Bill provides that, with the exception of persons receiving less than £1 per week, every person in the State earning or receiving any form of income whatsoever, shall contribute at the rate of 1½d. in the pound towards a benefit fund, and in return he, together with his wife and family, receives the benefit of free hospital attention when sick.

In the goldfields centres, we do not want anything of the sort, because we already enjoy that privilege. We have provided for ourselves in regard to that particular requirement. Now we are to be asked to subscribe, under statutory authority, to a

fund that in the opinion of the Government will provide for a nationalised scheme. What has been open to the people of the goldfields is open to those residing in any other part of the State. The workers at Meekatharra are paying 1s. 6d. per week to-day to assure for themselves, their wives and families, hospital treatment should it be required. Now we are to be asked to forego a part of that scheme—I do not know how we can do so—and it is argued by the department and by the Minister for Health that a proportion of the 1s. 6d. per week can go to the doctor and the remainder to the hospital. But no one can say what the respective proportions will be! There is nothing in the Bill to guide us. The Meekatharra people will have to pay a tax of 1½d. in the pound per week, and they will not be any better off for the maintenance of the hospital. There is nothing in the Bill to indicate what will be available apart from the subsidy of 6s. per day per bed occupied. I know that the department declares that if the Bill is agreed to the officials will see to it that money is forthcoming from Consolidated Revenue so that we shall not make any loss. By that means, they suggest, the difference between the actual cost of maintenance and the payment of 6s. per day per bed occupied, will be made up. Is that so?

The Minister for Health: That is so.

Mr. MARSHALL: Then why is that not indicated in the Bill?

The Minister for Health: There is no necessity for it.

Mr. MARSHALL: What is the good of the Minister suggesting that what is in his mind will be given effect to? There is nothing before us to guarantee that that will be so. We are asked to vote on the Bill as it is before us, not as the Minister thinks it is. Although I have not been a member of Parliament for many years, I have learnt, during the time I have been a member, that it is well to be dubious regarding what is in a Minister's mind. I have learnt that it is wise to vote upon what we have actually before the Chair, and to disregard what a Minister may say is in his mind. If the Government propose to do anything concrete along the lines indicated by the Minister for Health, they should include provisions to make the position clear in the Bill itself. If that were done we

would know exactly what we were voting for. In another portion of the departmental circular it is stated—

The Bill, therefore, from the point of view of the general public, provides that every person shall become a contributor to the fund and in return shall receive certain benefit when sick. In this respect that Bill simply extends to a national basis, the numerous hospital funds which are at present in existence, and whose operations already affect approximately 30,000 people. These funds have proved very beneficial, and have stabilised the finances of those hospitals in conjunction with which they are worked. It is considered that the extension of the principle on a national footing will have a similar beneficial effect on all other hospitals, as well as extending the Benefit Society principle to the people generally.

I do not disagree with that, but we have already established ourselves on this basis and if we vote for the measure the danger is that we shall be assisting other hospitals to get something that we in our turn will find that through contributing to their hospitals we shall be unable to get for our own. And it is doubtful whether local effort will be abolished, even if the Bill be passed. That is in the circular. A lot of it is mere assumption. But take the rest of it—

Instead of raising debits and collecting accounts from individual patients, the hospitals will receive from the fund payment at the rate of 6s. per day for all patients (excepting maternity, venereal, repatriation, and workers' compensation cases which are at present otherwise provided for).

And so it goes on. Under the Bill, any individual worker who finds himself covered in point of injury by the Workers' Compensation Act, can go into hospital and receive medical treatment free up to £100. But if an individual finds himself so severely injured that the amount under the Workers' Compensation Act does not cover him—I do not know of such a case yet, but we can expect serious accidents to happen—I can see that if I were injured to-morrow so badly as to cost me more than £100 in medical and hospital attention, I would be excluded from the operations of the Bill, and so I would have to pay; although I had been contributing to this fund, or the other fund, or to both, I would be excluded from admission to hospital under the Bill.

The Minister for Health: No.

Mr. MARSHALL: But I say yes. When we get into Committee I will see how the Minister explains it. I say the Bill does

not provide for such a case at all. It specifically exempts anybody in receipt of workers' compensation.

The Minister for Health: You have not read it.

Mr. MARSHALL: I have read it thoroughly. Now we come to the method of collecting the tax. I agree with the Minister that the stamp system is the most simple and most economical and probably the most efficient. But the complex manner adopted by the Minister for doing the job is really wonderful. If the employer chooses to come under the one section, every worker will have to carry with him what is known as a fund card. When pay-day comes around he has to attach a stamp or portion of a stamp thereto and have it cancelled by the employer. On the other hand, the employer must have his wages sheet and must attach to that wages sheet the other half of the stamp and have it cancelled by the employee. If the department had studied it out for twelve months they could not have evolved a more complicated method.

Mr. Teesdale: And look at the strain of licking the stamp, too!

Mr. MARSHALL: There might not be so much in that, for the hon. member probably would be available at any time. The stamp method is a good and simple one, but it is difficult to see why the Minister has gone to all this duplication of signatures and cancellation, and even proposes to divide a stamp into two. It is going to inconvenience every man, for when pay-day comes around it will be the very day on which the fund card has been left at home. So a man will not be able to collect his money until he goes and gets the card and pays his tax.

Hon. G. Taylor: It will be the very day on which he will have the card with him.

Mr. MARSHALL: It will not. Almost every employee knows pay-day when it comes around, but I am dubious as to the number who will remember to have the fund cards with them on that day. The method is very complicated and is not nearly so good as the one provided in the public service. I know that the employer can enter into a bond, but I know also that that is very unsatisfactory. We have had experience of that in relation to picture show taxation, and we know it is not too good an idea, for most of the contracts signed

under this form of legislation are usually pretty one-sided. The better idea for the Minister would be to do it in the ordinary fashion of duty stamps. Under that system, once cancelled it is sufficient; the money must come back to the Treasurer. Why the Minister should have looked for the duplicated method of collecting the tax, I cannot understand. I want the Minister when he is replying to the debate or in Committee to explain exactly what he means by this: "All advances under the Agricultural Bank, the Industries Assistance Board, or the Mining Development Act will be looked upon as wages." If I interpret that correctly, it means that every prospector who secures the ordinary rations of £13 per quarter, running into 25s. per week, in sustenance only; if he collects £13 worth in three months and goes into the bush and discovers nothing, he comes back owing the Minister the £13 in taxation. That is the Bill as I see it. Again, take a prospector who gets a loan under the Mining Development Act. He might not see one penny of the money, but he gets a loan upon which he must pay interest provided he makes good. If he does not make good he cannot refund it. But the money is spent in the work; the inspector of mines will see to that. The borrower never sees the money. If he makes good he must pay interest on it, and if I read the Bill correctly he must pay tax on that amount too. I do not know whether I can support the second reading.

Hon. G. Taylor: He would have a poor chance of paying the tax if he could not repay the principal.

Mr. MARSHALL: But the point is that under the Bill he must do it.

The Minister for Health: Why should he not do it?

Mr. MARSHALL: The man borrows the money. It is a matter of accommodation, and for it he must pay interest.

The Minister for Health: A loan does not apply.

Mr. MARSHALL: It doesn't apply? The prospector applies for six months' rations.

The Minister for Health: If I subsidise a man pound for pound for work done, he is getting half wages and he has to pay.

Mr. MARSHALL: The man who derives any cash consideration out of Government money has just as much right to pay tax on it as has any other individual.

Mr. Davy: But it is only a loan; he has to pay it back.

The Minister for Health: I wish we always got it back.

Mr. Davy: But you have a legal claim.

The Minister for Health: Yes, of course we have. Anyhow, the men themselves are perfectly satisfied.

Mr. MARSHALL: What startles me, notwithstanding the Minister's emphatic opinion regarding the Bill, is the opinion given by the department as to the facts of the measure. It reads as follows:—

Hospital committees will naturally inquire from what source funds will come to meet the difference between the payment of 6s. per patient per day, and the net cost of the hospital. Small country hospitals cost 9s., 10s., and 11s. per patient per day, and while some fees will be received from maternity, workers' compensation and other exempted cases, in respect of the bulk of patients dealt with all the revenue that the Bill definitely provides is 6s. per day, and the question naturally arises, where will the balance come from? The reply is that at the present time the Government provide from Consolidated Revenue approximately £90,000 per annum, and it is the intention that this amount of money shall still be provided from that source.

I understand from the Minister that the introduction of the measure was due to the fact that the whole of their £90,000 was used up in subsidies, which are to continue under this measure. I cannot understand the Minister, nor can I understand the Bill.

Mr. Mann: That is not the Minister's fault.

Mr. MARSHALL: The Minister is responsible for the measure.

Mr. Tee-dale: But he cannot provide you with intelligence.

Mr. MARSHALL: I do not know that the hon. member is an authority on anything relating to intelligence. Here is the next paragraph from the circular—

That money is at present utilised in the payment of subsidies to various hospitals and it will be available; and the present intention of the department is to make up the difference between the net cost per patient per day and the amount received from the fund at the rate of 6s. per day from those other funds which it will have at its disposal.

If that is the Minister's intention, why was it not definitely fixed in the measure so that we could vote for it or against it? The more equitable system of distribution of this fund would have been on the district basis; that is to say, all taxes collected in a given dis-

trict served by a given hospital would go to that hospital.

The Minister for Health: The Bill is much safer for country hospitals.

Mr. MARSHALL: I can say different from that.

The Minister for Health: You do not know.

Mr. MARSHALL: I know that I have been on hospital committees in my electorate and that the drawback was we could not get hold of two-thirds of those using our hospital and make them contribute towards it. Had we been able to do that, we would have had ample money to maintain our hospitals.

The Minister for Health: That is why I want the Bill.

Mr. MARSHALL: The Bill is more particularly a Committee measure, and I think the Minister will be pretty hard-pressed to hold some of the clauses in the Bill, and will be in a difficulty to explain the nature and workings of some of those clauses. I will support the second reading, but I propose to move certain amendments in Committee.

Mr. MANN (Perth) [9.27] I am going to support the Bill.

Mr. Marshall: You will, of course.

Mr. MANN: Because I see the necessity for it.

Mr. Marshall: Yes, for the Perth Hospital and other big hospitals.

Mr. MANN: About a year ago I had the privilege of attending a conference of delegates from various hospitals of the State. The Minister was there. When the secretary of the Health Department outlined this scheme, I think the Minister was not just as enthusiastic about it as he is now.

The Minister for Health: Yes, I was. I was just as enthusiastic, but also I was certain I had no hope of getting it without the publicity first. That was nearly two years ago and I think the public are ready for it now.

Mr. MANN: That is so. The position has been becoming more acute all the time. Every hospital management have found it more difficult to finance their institutions than they formerly did. Every known source has been exploited to get finance, notwithstanding which every institution has been forced to go to the Treasury and ask for further assistance to keep open its doors. From time to time almost every member

of the Chamber has denounced the penny raffles and the shilling raffles in the street and the harassing methods of begging and endeavouring to collect from people in the street sufficient money to maintain the hospitals.

Mr. Marshall: It is not at all certain that the Bill will overcome that difficulty.

Mr. MANN: I hope it will, and I think it is the intention of the Minister that it should do so. I am sure it will to some extent.

Hon. G. Taylor: It will as far as hospitals are concerned, but not other charitable institutions.

Mr. Marshall: The department admit that they do not know whether it will as regards hospitals.

Mr. MANN: The Minister said it was a Bill that should be dealt with more in Committee than on the second reading. I think he indicated that he would be prepared to accept amendments if it could be shown that any hardship or difficulty would arise in the administration of the measure. Naturally there will be some trouble to administer it at the start, but I think any difficulty can be overcome and will be preferable to the difficulties now confronting the management to keep our hospitals open. I should like to indicate a few of the avenues exploited last year by the board of the Children's Hospital in the endeavour to raise funds. The member for Murchison (Mr. Marshall) said the affixing of stamps would cause a great deal of trouble to employees. That will not be half the trouble that has been experienced to raise the necessary money to keep these institutions going. After an employer or employee has affixed the stamp of 1d. or 1½d. once or twice, it will become a matter of course, and the little difficulty will soon disappear.

Mr. Marshall: It is not the little difficulty; it is the unnecessary duplication.

Mr. MANN: I do not know that there will be any duplication; I think it will be an easy way to collect the money. When I first became associated with the Children's Hospital the annual cost of administration was about £12,000. In the space of ten years it has grown to £22,697.

The Minister for Health: The hospital is double the size.

Mr. MANN: That is so. the progress of medical science and treatment entails greater expense. In the last two or

three years X-ray plants have been installed, special massage treatment and special treatment for infantile paralysis have been adopted. All those things have meant extra cost. But the institution would not be worth while and would not be fulfilling its purpose if it did not progress with the times and adopt the latest methods known to medical science for the benefit of its patients. In case it might be thought the cost of running the institution is excessive, I should like to draw a comparison with similar institutions in other capital cities. At the Melbourne Children's Hospital, the cost per patient per day is 8s. 8d.; at the Royal Alexandra Children's Hospital in Sydney it is 10s. 7d.; while at the Children's Hospital in Perth it is 7s. 7d.

The Minister for Health: The Children's Hospital and the Perth Hospital are run more economically than are any other similar institutions in Australia.

Mr. Lindsay: The cost must have been reduced considerably, because in 1925 it was 10s. per day.

The Minister for Health: It has been reduced considerably.

Mr. MANN: I dare say the reduction can be explained. During the past year 674 major surgical operations were performed at the Children's Hospital; 2,016 children were treated as in-patients and 3,252 as out-patients. The cost per out-patient last year was 1s. 10d., while this year it has increased to 2s. 1d. The cost per in-patient per week has decreased from £2 14s. to £2 12s. 10d. For the last couple of years we have been scarcely able to pay our staff, and our accounts have been as much as two and three months in arrears.

Mr. Marshall: We shall pay them for you from this time onwards.

Mr. MANN: The hon. member will do very well if he pays for his own hospital; we shall be quite satisfied if he does that.

Mr. Marshall: We shall fix you up.

Mr. MANN: From my experience as a member of the controlling body, I am convinced that some measure of this kind was absolutely necessary. Whether this Bill was just the best that could be introduced at present, I am not prepared to say. It contains many objectionable features, and I take it the Minister will be prepared to accept some amendments in Committee. It must have been force of circumstances that caused the Minister to adopt this measure.

When a similar Bill was before the House six years ago and the Labour Party were sitting in opposition, the Minister opposed the Bill. However, time has changed his opinion.

The Minister for Health: I opposed only one section of that Bill.

Mr. Davy: He opposed it with even more emphasis than he is supporting this Bill with.

Mr. Angelo: The more to his credit if he has seen the light.

Mr. MANN: Quite so: that is the point I am coming to. The Minister is always emphatic when he is satisfied his viewpoint is right.

Mr. Davy: He is always emphatic.

Mr. MANN: He thought he was right in opposing the Bill brought in by the Mitchell Government, but time has shown him that he was wrong.

The Minister for Health: No.

Mr. MANN: Time has shown that his opposition was wrong. If that Bill had been passed, the Minister would not have suffered the great worry that has been his lot during the last two or three years.

The Minister for Health: It would have been just the same or worse.

Mr. MANN: Anyhow, he would not have had to go to the Treasurer and ask him for thousands of pounds for the various hospitals.

Mr. Kennelly: That Bill would have relieved revenue.

Mr. MANN: So will this Bill.

Mr. Kennelly: This money is going to be used for hospitals and maintenance.

Mr. MANN: The hon. member is not right. Take the amusement tax: we all thought that was to be earmarked and controlled by the Minister, but it went into revenue.

The Minister for Health: It did not.

Mr. MANN: It did, and it relieved the revenue.

The Minister for Health: It did not.

Mr. MANN: The Minister must agree that the thousands of pounds he got from the Treasurer and gave to the institutions was part of the £40,000.

The Minister for Health: Yes.

Mr. MANN: If the Government had not had the £40,000 from the amusement tax, those amounts would have had to come out of revenue.

The Minister for Health: I admit that. I would either have had to go without it or it must have come out of revenue.

Mr. MANN: It relieved revenue and this Bill will relieve revenue, too. I do not mind that, so long as it will give the hospitals sufficient money to enable them to be administered as they should be. I wish to mention some of the avenues that have been exploited by the Children's Hospital in order to raise funds—

Annual subscriptions, £584; donations, £10,354; penny books, £200; collection boxes, £270; cash consultation, £1,213; special appeal, £1,229; entertainments, £16; State schools, £46; wheat appeal, £270; country auxiliary committees, £281; P. A. Connolly, Globe Hotel trust, £200.

If we had more god-sends such as that from Mr. Connolly, I do not think this Bill would be required.

Mr. Teesdale: Hear, hear!

Mr. MANN: I do not know whether it is the duty of a member to throw bouquets at anyone.

Mr. Teesdale: No; enough said!

Mr. MANN: But Mr. Connolly has done his share for the relief of distress and the assistance of charitable institutions in this State.

The Minister for Health: And there are others in this city, too.

Mr. MANN: That is so. Continuing the list—

W.A. Trotting Association (excluding cot endowment of £50), £334; ladies' ball committee (excluding cot endowment of £100), £434; W.A. Turf Club (excluding cot endowment of £50), £300; cot endowments as follows:—Cottesloe, £50; Thomas-street school, £45, etc.

So I could continue the list and show that every effort was made by the committee of management to get money to keep the hospital going. Notwithstanding that, we had to approach the Minister a couple of months ago and say, "We are unable to go any further. The Government must come to our assistance." The Government gave us £1,000 out of the £40,000 received from the amusement tax.

The Minister for Health: Do not say that. You got considerably more.

Mr. MANN: We got the annual subsidy of £7,500.

The Minister for Health: Outside the subsidy, too.

Mr. MANN: I know what the Minister has in mind.

The Minister for Health: You did not get the subsidy of £7,500 at one time.

Mr. MANN: That is so. The Minister has in mind that the Treasurer gave us £7,000 to extend our buildings last year.

The Minister for Health: And you never got that before, either.

Mr. MANN: Anyhow we got it last year, and we spent it in enlarging the buildings, which means greater cost of maintenance in the coming years. In view of the necessity to keep these institutions going, I shall support the second reading, but I hope the Minister will be amenable to reason when amendments are moved in Committee.

The Minister for Health: I am not wedded to the Bill exactly as it is. If you can show justification for amendments, I shall listen to reason.

MR. CHESSON (Cue) [9.43]: I intend to support the Bill in the hope of getting amendments made in Committee. I opposed the Hospitals Bill introduced by the Mitchell Government—

Mr. Mann: We shall forgive you that.

Mr. CHESSON: —on the ground that it was going to relieve revenue and would have meant the cutting down of the hospital subsidy. I realise that this measure will rope in a lot of people who do not contribute anything to hospitals. While a lot of people never pay into the funds of committee-run hospitals in the country, when they become stricken down they are treated in those hospitals and there is little chance of collecting anything from them. This Bill provides that everyone in receipt of £1 a week or over shall contribute.

Mr. Marshall: To any hospital, not necessarily to his own.

Mr. CHESSON: There ought to be some more simple method of collecting the tax. Under the Bill the employer will become a tax-gatherer. I do not see any other way in which the tax could be collected from a large number of men, but there should be some simpler method than the duplication of the stamp by employer and employee.

Mr. Teesdale: The least objectionable of the lot.

Mr. CHESSON: I have no objection to everyone who is in a position to pay contributing his share, but we should make it as easy as possible for the people who are to pay. Employees know the tax will be deducted, but there ought to be a simpler

way of collecting it. Everyone who uses the hospitals should, according to ability, contribute to their upkeep. However, the juvenile on £1 per week is not earning even a bare living. In connection with the prospecting subsidy, £1 or 30s. per week is allowed, according to the district; but that is not the whole of the person's subsistence. He is supposed to provide the balance himself. Under the Mining Development Vote, as pointed out by the member for Murchison (Mr. Marshall), assistance may be given to purchase machinery and wages may not be set off as part payment. If a man in that position receives assistance towards the purchase of machinery, the amount cannot be classed as revenue. It is only a loan and has to be repaid. The man should not bear hospital tax on such receipts. Again, I know of a prospector who was out for 20 years and at last had a fairly rich crushing. He was called upon to pay £3,000 in taxation. That is utterly wrong, as the man had not earned a living wage during the rest of his life as a prospector. Under income tax law a man is allowed to deduct the cost of machinery and development work before being taxed on receipts from mining, but under this Bill he will be called upon to pay taxation on his gross receipts, even though after payment of liabilities he may have no income. It is easy to ascertain what has been the cost to him of carting and crushing; but outside those items his expenditure, on development for instance, cannot be ascertained. In the back country there are committee hospitals, to which everyone is asked to subscribe. There are medical funds and hospital funds to which the contribution at Cue is 1s. 6d. per week. As soon as the Bill becomes law, every person will pay 1½d. in the pound. That, as the Minister has indicated, will have a great effect on subscribers to hospital funds; there may then be only subscribers to medical funds. Everyone paying under the Bill will expect hospital treatment, and in the back country large increases in accommodation and staff will be needed. Committee hospitals now endeavour to get people to accept treatment in their own homes. They realise the high cost of maintenance of patients in hospital. For the back country the proposed allowance of 6s. per day is insufficient. Our matrons and nurses receive much larger salaries than those paid

in the city, and the cost of feeding is much higher.

The Minister for Health: Do you collect 6s. per day for every patient now?

Mr. CHESSON: Taking into account collections from all members, we receive a good deal more. There is no charge to subscribers to the fund. From some people, however, we never get anything. Clause 17 empowers the trust to expend any surplus in any portion of the State, with the consent of the Minister. The committee of the Cue hospital contend that the amount now collected in the district provides amply for all patients and for any necessary additions or repairs to hospital buildings. They are disturbed by the proposal that all the proceeds of the tax shall be paid into the Treasury, which they fear means that the greater proportion of the proceeds will be spent in the metropolitan area while country hospitals will be starved.

Mr. Teesdale: That is all surmise.

Mr. CHESSON: Clause 17 leaves the matter open as regards any surplus. One must be prepared for such things. I support the second reading because the Bill will rope in all sections of the community. Thus it is a step in the right direction. With slight amendments in Committee the entire Bill will receive my support; otherwise I may have to oppose certain clauses.

MR. DAVY (West Perth) [9.54]: I do not feel prepared to oppose the second reading of the Bill. Much has been said with the greatest possible emphasis about relieving revenue and about special taxation. I suppose everybody agrees that theoretically taxation should be simple and comprehensive, with a view to raising revenue out of which all necessary expenditure of the State may be met. I agree, however, that in a matter of this sort the psychology of the ordinary citizen must be considered. Whereas one may get the hospital tax paid with a certain cheerfulness, if the Treasurer brought down a taxation measure increasing the rate of income tax so as to produce the same amount, there would probably be a greater degree of opposition. So he brings down a special measure to raise money for a special purpose, and the Bill will probably become law. At the same time, it does seem that every year we complicate the social life of the people more and more. In these days nearly every citizen requires a private tax-

ation consultant to tell him how to prepare his returns. He has to keep all sorts of books and records, and he really does not know how he is to get through the various taxation burdens imposed upon him. Undoubtedly this measure will render it necessary to put in two different assessments. The Bill suggests that the ordinary income tax assessment will be the basis of assessment for the hospital tax. But there are so many serious and important differences between the income upon which a citizen pays income tax and the income upon which he is to pay hospital tax, that in order to get the thing properly worked out there must be two different assessment forms.

The Minister for Health: The Commissioner of Taxation says no, and I have discussed the whole matter with him fully.

Mr. DAVY: The Commissioner of Taxation is one of those remarkable persons who understand taxation forms. He can pick out a taxation return and read it almost as plainly as if it were this Bill. His opinion on that point, therefore, I do not regard as highly valuable. He is rather inclined to judge other people by himself, and to think that the ordinary citizen can put in a taxation return as simply as kiss your hand. The taxable amount under the Bill does not allow for deductions now existing—deductions in respect of life assurance premiums, repairs to a man's residence, medical expenses, travelling expenses; and a member of Parliament is to be taxable on the whole of his £600. There is to be no allowance for children or dependants. The mining exemption will not apply under the Bill, and contributions to charitable institutions cannot be deducted. I am not strongly criticising the absence of exemptions, but am pointing out that it bears out my contention that a man will have to prepare two taxation returns and have two incomes, one for the purpose of income tax and the other for the purpose of hospital tax. I feel sure that the operation of the measure is going to be much more expensive and much more inconvenient to the public than the Minister anticipates. I have a feeling that we are going to see an amount of human effort and an amount of expenditure not truly proportionate to the results obtainable. I agree that however bad the matter is from one point of view, it is not as bad as the method of raising money for hospitals by bazaars, balls and

street collections. Anything almost is preferable to the terrible existence which hospital committees and boards have led in the past in their endeavours to eke out an existence. I know that the member for Perth (Mr. Mann) and several other gentlemen who give extremely valuable services on the committee of the Children's Hospital are possessed of excellent abilities and great business experience, and I am sure that if any institution is run on the most efficient and economical lines, that particular institution must be, judging by the men who manage it. They frequently tell what awful tasks they are confronted with. I am prepared to accept these obvious disadvantages in the principles of the Bill, in order to relieve that position. There are some matters, the inclusion of which I cannot understand. I wish to criticise some portions of the Bill briefly, and perhaps I will deal with them at greater length when we are considering the clauses in Committee. I understand it is proposed not to make any contributions to hospitals in respect of workers' compensation cases. I maintain that a great deal of injustice has been done to workers owing to the attitude adopted by hospitals in the past, when those in control have refused to take in any workers' compensation cases.

The Minister for Health: Do not blame the hospitals for that! The medical men would not treat the patients if they went to the hospitals.

Mr. DAVY: I will not apportion the blame at all, but I know that the hospitals have refused to take those patients.

The Minister for Health: They had to.

Mr. DAVY: I do not know whether that was so.

The Minister for Health: But it was so.

Mr. DAVY: If the hospitals adopted that attitude, I want to know who was responsible for it.

Hon. G. Taylor: We put too much money into the business under the terms of the Workers' Compensation Act.

Mr. DAVY: The really serious objection was that the hospital authorities, or the doctor accepted the task of judging what was frequently a legal question. That led to the House of Lords being divided against itself. A man goes to the hospital suffering from an injury or from a disease. At any rate, he is sick. The doctor makes inquiries from the man and light-heartedly says, "You

are a worker's compensation case. You cannot come here." And that man is shoved out. He has to go off and finance his own treatment. Of course his doctor treats him because he knows that some great authority at the hospital has declared the man to be a workers' compensation case! The doctor places his trust in that eminent authority at the hospital in expectation of receiving payment in due course.

Hon. G. Taylor: Out of the £100 he can get under the Act!

Mr. DAVY: I know of numerous instances and in each the hospital authority was wrong, and the man concerned was not a workers' compensation case at all.

The Minister for Health: I know that sort of thing has happened.

Mr. DAVY: It has happened frequently. Those workers have a justifiable grievance by reason of their not having received fair treatment.

The Minister for Health: That is so.

Mr. DAVY: The doctor, too, has a grievance because he has not been able to dip into the £100. The most important thing of all, however, is that the unfortunate worker concerned has not had the prompt treatment he should have received, thus leaving the true position to be ascertained later on. I urge the Minister to give consideration to that phase before he insists upon the applicable clause being retained in the Bill. There is another point that I do not understand; I will not quibble at it. The whole scheme of the Bill is to make people who will receive benefit from the fund—that is, the contributors—pay for the treatment they get. At the same time I notice that companies will have to pay the tax that is to be levied. I do not know what part of a company goes to a hospital and receives treatment! Is the secretary to be allowed to track along for treatment, or does this apply to the board of directors?

The Premier: Or to the shareholders who draw no dividends!

Mr. DAVY: It seems to me a quaint provision to include in the Bill. The Minister suggests that people who benefit shall contribute, and he also makes these abstract legal persons contribute as well. It is true that there is a clause in the Bill that says if the company has contributed, then the shareholders will not be required to pay. What about the insurance companies that do not have any shareholders in Wes-

tern Australia? It might be of advantage to make people outside the borders of Western Australia pay for the upkeep of our hospitals if it were possible to secure that payment.

Hon. G. Taylor: It will be a bit of a job.

Mr. DAVY: It does not seem to me to fit in with the scheme of the Bill. It may be good to get in money by various means suggested, but this provision seems to be illogical because it is unnecessary. If we are to make every citizen pay according to his income, it is surely unnecessary.

The Minister for Health: We make life insurance companies pay on the profits derived from their investments.

Mr. DAVY: I did not mention life insurance companies, but referred to general accident insurance companies.

The Minister for Health: They have to pay under the Dividend Duties Act.

Mr. DAVY: Yes.

The Minister for Health: Then is it wrong there, too?

Mr. DAVY: Not at all; that is not the point.

The Premier: The point is that everyone who can get service will pay, but a company cannot get that service.

Mr. DAVY: That is the point. This is not an ordinary taxation measure. It is a Bill to authorise collections in advance for services to be rendered, and we do not propose to render services to companies. I do not propose to fight that phase, although I do not see the necessity for its inclusion in the Bill. There is no reason for the inclusion of an anomalous position under the Bill, if there is absolutely no necessity for it. In Western Australia our taxation law is that a company pays duty and when the shareholder gets his dividend, he does not have to pay tax on it at all. Under the Federal law it is the taxpayer who pays the tax, and the company pays only on profits that should be, but have not been, distributed. If the double tax is paid, there is always a readjustment. If the Government provide for the tax being paid on all incomes earned in Western Australia, I cannot see why any attempt should be made to force companies to pay, because the incomes made by the companies will have to bear taxation in the long run when they pass into the hands of individuals in the shape of dividends.

The Minister for Health: No.

Mr. DAVY: Regarding insurance companies, I know it is proposed they shall pay a tax to be fixed, and I take it another Bill will have to be introduced to fix the amount of the tax at something that shall be not more than 1½d. in the pound.

The Minister for Health: That is so.

Mr. DAVY: With regard to the insurance companies, I notice that the tax is to be paid on every £3 2s. 6d. of the premiums received by those companies. It is quite impossible for anyone not in the know to determine how that amount has been arrived at. On the face of it, it would seem that it must be due to some sort of calculation arrived at by the companies.

The Minister for Health: I could not see how it was arrived at for a long time until I had it explained to me.

Mr. DAVY: I hope the Minister at the proper time will explain the position to the Committee, and tell us how it is that the tax is fixed at what approximates one-third of the gross premiums paid. It must be remembered that the premiums do not represent the profit but merely a portion of the funds from which the ultimate profit is made.

The Premier: There may not be any profit at all.

Mr. DAVY: That is so. One would not say that that possibility is sufficient to condemn the assessment of them on the basis of the premium income so long as it works out, over a period of years, as a fair means of getting at the profits.

The Minister for Health: The underwriters agree that it is a satisfactory method.

Mr. DAVY: I wonder what the source of the Minister's information is when he makes that statement, for I understand it not to be so. I want to find out how this is arrived at, and I ask the Minister to give us the information on that subject when he has it available. Another point: In the Bill the companies are to be taxed on every £3 2s. 6d. of the premiums received by them. Of the premiums received by any insurance company, a very large amount is paid away in re-insurance. That fact seems to have missed the attention of the draftsman of this clause, whereas it is well recognised in the Dividend Duties Act, under which they pay on the gross premiums, excluding amounts paid away for re-insurance.

I think the Minister's attention might be directed to that point also. It might be, of course, that a company that actually gets a particular cover might itself take only a very small portion of the risk and pay away the whole of the rest of it in re-insurance. If the Treasurer were to ask his officer in charge of shall I say, the unauthorised State insurance office, he would find that that gentleman gets re-insurance on big matters when and if he can.

The Premier: Oh yes. We could not afford to take the whole of the risk.

Mr. DAVY: That point seems to have been missed in the Bill. I have no further criticisms of the Bill to make at this juncture. Alternatives to this method of raising money I find myself entirely opposed to. We had a Bill brought down a year or so ago whereby the State was to run something like a "golden casket." On that Bill I found myself one of very few, I regret to say, who sat on this side when we divided. I am glad the establishment of that means of financing our hospitals is not to be the one we are to accept. I am not one who regards gambling from the point of view of individuals as a serious crime. I myself gamble in a small way at times, and I suppose if I had more money I would gamble in a larger way. But that does not seem to be the point. We are all agreed that gambling is not a good thing to indulge in. We all agree, too, that the State should set an example to citizens.

Mr. Mann: Our population is too small successfully to finance our hospitals through sweeps or art unions.

Mr. DAVY: That may be another objection, but not the objection I am putting forward. My attitude is that the State is not to be regarded as entitled to do everything its citizens may do. The State is something higher and bigger, and should be more dignified, more virtuous, more just, in fact should be a pattern for the whole of its citizens. To my mind to have the State actually running a sweep and encouraging its citizens to take tickets in it is a spectacle enough to make the gods weep. I hope we never again will be urged to adopt that expedient to meet the just obligations that are upon us.

The Premier: The spectacle of somebody at a table selling tickets at every street corner is shocking!

Mr. DAVY: And in our State schools our teachers are directed to teach the children that gambling is an evil.

The Premier: It was bad enough when people had to go out of their way to get a sweep ticket, but when now they are on sale at every street corner it is so much worse.

Mr. DAVY: In every tobacconist's shop in the Eastern States the sign, "I communicate with the Black Swan Casket"—that is the kind of thing that some hon. members would be prepared to tolerate.

The Premier: I do not know what our visitors think of all our street sweeps.

Mr. DAVY: I hope that if this measure becomes law, and we have sufficient funds, the Premier will take steps to stop the sweep ticket selling going on in our streets at present. There was one other point I intended to mention, namely the provision—I think I shall find myself in a minority in this—that even if a person goes into a private hospital the same amount is to be provided out of the trust fund under the Bill as if he went into the public hospital. I cannot see the necessity for that.

Mr. Mann: It is very equitable.

Mr. DAVY: Is it equitable? I do not follow that. I can never see that it is equitable to pay a proud father or a proud mother £5 by way of a baby bonus, if he or she is in the fortunate position of having an income of a couple of thousand a year. It seems to me to be nothing short of silly.

Mr. Mann: But that is scarcely analogous to this. You do not contribute towards the £5 baby bonus, but you do contribute to this fund.

Mr. DAVY: As a matter of fact, a person with an income of £2,000 a year contributes vastly more to the £5 baby bonus than would a person with £200 a year, because the thing is based on a sliding scale.

Mr. Chesson: But the £5 is not paid for every baby born.

Mr. DAVY: If permitted I would make a small wager that there never is a baby born in Australia in respect of which the baby bonus is not paid. At all events, if there are exceptions, they must be very few.

Mr. Chesson: What I meant was that there is not a baby born for every bonus paid.

Mr. DAVY: It is very regrettable that we should not find people standing up to their obligations in that direction. Still, the bonus is paid on babies born in the homes of people with very respectable bank balances. I can see no reason why this 6s. per day should be paid in respect of people who can afford to pay their own hospital expenses and who demonstrate their capacity to pay by choosing hospitals where the fees are unquestionably high.

The Minister for Health: They do not demonstrate that by going to such a place.

Mr. DAVY: They surely do. If a man chooses a hospital the fees for which are six guineas or seven guineas per week, he demonstrates his ability to pay for hospital accommodation.

The Minister for Health: He chooses that hospital because he cannot get into the other.

Mr. Mann: You could not get into the Perth Hospital to-day.

Mr. DAVY: No, because I am able to pay to go somewhere else. And if I go off and pay somewhere else, I do not see the necessity for making this contribution. After all, the revenue the Minister will raise from this scheme is not going to be one penny too much. If I am correctly informed, the growth of the work at the Children's Hospital is amazing.

Mr. Panton: And at the Perth Hospital, too.

Mr. DAVY: I do not know much about the Perth Hospital.

Mr. Panton: Both institutions are growing side by side.

Mr. DAVY: I suppose both are growing at the same rate. The Minister is going to need every farthing he gets within a very few years. I suggest that by this seeming display of equity—I do not see the equity myself—and generosity, he is going to find himself, perhaps in too short a time, up against it to provide proper hospital accommodation and medical treatment for the people who must have it and cannot afford to pay it for themselves.

MR. BROWN (Pingelly) [10.21]: Our hospitals have increased at such a rate that something must be done to put them on a sound financial basis. During the last few years the number of hospitals has increased by something like 60 or 70 per cent.,

and the present system of raising funds for their upkeep depends largely on voluntary contributions. There is a big difference in the range of donations made by the Government to various hospitals. One in my district, Kondinin, is receiving about 1s. 11½d. per patient, while another at Brookton is getting a little over 2s. That is not a very heavy burden on the Government. Therefore those hospitals must be largely maintained by voluntary subscriptions contributed by the local people or by the patients themselves. While looking through this Bill, I have been wondering whether the provisions constitute the best method of financing the hospitals. What will be the position of our friendly or benefit societies? Take a benefit society into which a man is paying 1s. per week. I do not belong to such a society, but I understand members pay about 1s. a week. Look at the benefits derived from that contribution! If a member is not able to work, he gets medical attention free and so much per week for a certain period of the year. Under this measure he will get only 6s. per day if he goes into hospital.

Mr. Panton: You do not get all those benefits from a friendly society for 1s. per week.

Mr. BROWN: If a man joins a friendly society when he is young, his contributions are not great.

Mr. Panton: No, about 10½d., but that does not include doctor and medicine. He pays for them quarterly.

Mr. BROWN: I understood those charges were paid by the lodge.

Mr. Panton: Not on your life; I wish they were.

Mr. BROWN: There is no doubt that our hospitals have to depend almost entirely on voluntary contributions. When the Minister introduced his Lotteries Bill to finance hospitals, I opposed it, because I thought it wrong to depend upon the gambling public to maintain hospitals for the benefit of the sick and needy. That Bill was lost. The Minister has now introduced a measure that I think is a most equitable one, but I am afraid it will be a little severe. A tax of 1½d. in the pound will be very hard on the man who is earning only £5 a week. A man receiving £250 a year will have to pay something like £2 12s. 3d., and the only benefit he will get will be 6s. per day while he or any member of his family is in hospital.

Mr. Panton: That is a fair crack.

Mr. Teesdale: In eight days he will have cut it out.

Mr. BROWN: That may be so, but patients are not always a long time in hospital. For a man who is a member of a benefit society, a funeral allowance is provided. There is no funeral allowance under this measure.

The Minister for Health: I should not think so.

Mr. Teesdale: Not for three-halfpence.

Mr. BROWN: A man would be better off by taking out an endowment or accident policy with an insurance company.

The Minister for Health: You try it and see.

Mr. BROWN: I do not know whether the Minister proposes to allow any deductions.

Hon. G. Taylor: None at all.

Mr. Teesdale: Not on the three-halfpence.

Hon. G. Taylor: The Bill speaks for itself.

Mr. BROWN: Take a farmer.

Mr. Teesdale: He wants 5 per cent. off for cash.

Mr. BROWN: A farmer might have a gross income of £2,000 a year.

Hon. G. Taylor: He would be a very poor farmer if he did not have more than that.

Mr. BROWN: Then the hon. member knows very little about farming; otherwise he would not speak in that strain.

Mr. Lindsay: The member for Pingelly was referring to gross income.

Mr. BROWN: Many a farmer with a gross income of £2,000, after allowing deductions, finds he has very little net income.

Mr. Teesdale: Enough to buy a motor car.

The Minister for Health: He would be allowed to deduct the cost of earning his income.

Mr. BROWN: He would not be allowed the deductions permitted under the income tax.

The Minister for Health: Not for his wife or children, but he would be allowed the amount it cost to earn his income.

Hon. G. Taylor: And not for the motor car.

Mr. BROWN: People who become ill often employ a private nurse and are attended by a doctor in their own home.

The Minister for Health: That will happen if this measure is passed.

Mr. BROWN: Such a patient will still have to pay the doctor and the nurse. It is impossible to get a qualified nurse for 6s. per day.

The Minister for Health: Four guineas a week and keep.

Mr. BROWN: Do I understand that if a patient is treated in his own home he will not be entitled to the 6s. per day?

The Minister for Health: Certainly; this is for the maintenance of hospitals.

Mr. BROWN: Thousands of sick people do not enter a hospital. They are treated in their own homes. However, there is to be no exemption for them and they will have to pay the tax. What benefit will they derive from it? I do not think they will derive the slightest benefit. They will have to pay for their doctor, nurse and medicine and on top of that will have to pay the tax.

Hon. G. Taylor: That is right.

Mr. Panton: But consider whom they are helping.

Mr. BROWN: I am not sure that that is altogether fair. Some allowance in that direction should be made. To a certain degree I commend the Minister, feeling that he is actuated by a desire to achieve something of lasting benefit to the hospitals. If one walks down the street, one finds sweeps in progress everywhere. Some are for charitable purposes, and some are not. I do not know why so many sweeps are permitted. It is only of recent years we have found that no sooner is one sweep off than another is on.

Mr. Panton: The reason is public demand.

Mr. BROWN: I do not know what the net gain from the sweeps is, nor what the expenses are. I am told that the expenses are tremendous, and that the returns to charity are not great. Sweeps are now run for many purposes. Can they be run without permission?

Mr. Panton: No.

Mr. BROWN: Who gives permission?

Mr. Panton: The Commissioner of Police.

Hon. G. Taylor: With the approval of the Minister.

Mr. BROWN: To my surprise I find spinning jennies and all sorts of gambling devices permitted at agricultural shows. The police stand by and look on. At a

recent agricultural show I saw gambling devices which I had never seen before.

Mr. Marshall: Did you see crown and anchor?

Mr. BROWN: Yes, and the police made not the slightest effort to stop it.

Mr. Teesdale: They have a shot themselves occasionally.

Mr. BROWN: Are the gambling devices going to be stopped if the Bill is passed?

Mr. Panton: Not on your life!

Mr. BROWN: Apparently we shall still have them with us. There is nothing in our legislation to say that Tattersalls and the Golden Casket must not be patronised.

Mr. Panton: Or the trots.

Mr. BROWN: The gambling spirit is so great, and the money spent on gambling so enormous, that Parliament ought to pass an Act to prohibit gambling if this Bill passes.

Hon. G. Taylor: But this is a Bill relating to hospitals, not to gambling.

Mr. BROWN: Two or three sessions ago the Government introduced a Bill providing for sweeps.

Hon. G. Taylor: That was a bad Bill.

Mr. BROWN: Although I opposed that Bill, I am beginning now to wonder whether it might not just as well have been passed. The present Bill, as the Minister has said, calls for discussion in Committee. I hope some slight amendments will be made to render the measure fair and equitable to all. No honest person will object to paying a hospital tax; but in view of all the other taxes which are imposed, some people, and especially people in the country, will suffer under the Bill. I may mention that the committee of the Kondinin hospital framed a by-law that every single man should pay so much, and every married man a little more, towards the hospital, getting medical attention in case of sickness. There was no compulsion about it, but those who paid for the first year forgot to pay in following years. The matter was merely voluntary.

Mr. Marshall: A by-law is compulsory.

Mr. BROWN: Not a by-law merely framed by a hospital committee. Though considerable amounts of money were collected during the first enthusiastic year, there were deficiencies in the following years. The tax proposed by the Bill will not amount, in the case of the average wage earner, to as much as the single man paid under the Kondinin arrangement; and so there should be no objection. Under that

arrangement a married man paid £4 or £5 a year, or perhaps I should say he promised to pay that amount. Under the Bill, if the income from the farm is very slight, he will not be called upon to pay so much. A farmer after a very bad year may not, after the payment of all his expenses, have an income taxable to the extent of £4 or £5 under the Bill. Many may not contribute anything under the measure. On the other hand, if a farmer has a good season he ought not to object to paying the hospital tax. I support the second reading, and I hope that the clauses will be fully discussed in Committee, and that in respect of any anomalies the Minister will accept amendments.

MR. ROWE (North-East Fremantle) [10.36]: Conditionally upon one or two amendments, I support the Bill. After 17 years on the Fremantle Hospital Board I am able to speak from experience of the difficulties of hospital finance. During that period I made it my business to attend almost every meeting of the board. We frequently had great difficulty in financing. Month after month the accounts were passed to be paid when funds might be available. Quite recently we found ourselves getting deeper and deeper into debt, and thought we must devise some means of clearing ourselves. So we decided to run a stunt. We made up our minds to raise £2,000, an amount which we thought would clear us for the time being. After a considerable amount of worry and anxiety and abuse, we did raise the £2,000, thanks to a band of willing workers, including many ladies. That effort relieved us to some extent, but it is an effort that can be made but rarely. To ask people frequently to contribute towards a stunt for a certain amount of money is asking too much. I myself have often taken my stand in the main street with a box in my hand to collect for the Fremantle hospital, and when I have stopped one person and asked for a donation three or four others have taken the opportunity of slipping by before I could appeal to them. In view of these experiences I welcome a measure from which hospitals will benefit. In passing I may mention that two or three years ago it was suggested to the Fremantle Hospital Board that they should endeavour to raise funds from the Fremantle workers by asking them to contribute one penny in the pound out of their earnings weekly. The

idea was taken up willingly by the workers, who agreed to contribute as suggested. As one organisation receives close on £7,000 every week in wages, we thought a big addition to our funds would accrue. Everything was progressing favourably when a deputation from the association of doctors asked for an interview with the board. The interview was granted and the doctors pointed out what they considered the unfairness of our proposal that a person contributing towards the Fremantle hospital should be entitled to medical treatment, and to a clean receipt when he left. The doctors said, "That is going to ruin us. If a man with his family can be treated in the Fremantle hospital in return for contributing one penny in the pound per week, nobody is going to join a friendly society, and nobody will go to see a private doctor. Consequently our profession will be absolutely ruined." At that time the Bill was being discussed in Parliament, and the board decided to postpone further consideration of the proposal until Parliament had decided the fate of the Bill. The Bill was thrown out, and our proposition died a natural death.

Hon. G. Taylor: And the doctors kept on smiling!

Mr. ROWE: And we have kept on begging ever since. Apparently we shall have to continue begging until some better method is introduced. I can see some hope for the hospitals in the future. I visit a good many of them, and in conversation with various secretaries and chairmen of hospital boards I have ascertained that they are confronted with the same problem. They are hard up against the financial position, and they will continue to be. I welcome the introduction of the Bill because it is long overdue. Conditionally upon one or two amendments being agreed to, I shall support the measure.

MR. LINDSAY (Toodyay) [10.42]: I read the speech delivered by the Minister and it struck me that he stopped short of an explanation of the Bill. According to the Minister, the object of the measure is to raise funds to pay 6s. per day per bed occupied at the various hospitals, be they private, public, or Government assisted institutions. The Minister informed members that the money at present provided from Consolidated Revenue for the assistance of hospitals will continue to be paid. According to the Bill, if there is any surplus in the fund after the payment of 6s. per day

per bed occupied is made, the balance shall be used for subsidising hospitals and for constructing or altering hospital buildings. I also understand that patients at the Government hospitals will receive free attention. Unless there is some method provided for increasing the receipts beyond the 6s. per day, the position of the country hospitals will be worse than it is to-day. It is a fact that country hospitals are able to collect the greater part of what it costs to treat and maintain a patient. That has applied particularly since the Workers' Compensation Act was passed.

The Minister for Health: There is no single hospital in the State that collects as much as 6s. per bed per day.

Mr. LINDSAY: That may be so, for I know in regard to my own hospital that we have to resort to certain collections from time to time, but the fact remains that we manage to pay our way without approaching the public too frequently for additional assistance. Under the provisions of the Bill we shall not be allowed to do that in future. From that point of view, it is interesting to note the information supplied by the Public Health Department in the annual report that has been made available to us this session. If we analyse the statement of revenue and expenditure of public assisted hospitals, we can gain some idea as to what it costs per patient in the various hospitals. It leads us to ask how the Government propose to make up the deficiency represented in the cost per patient and the amount of 6s. that will be received per bed per day. The member for Murchison dealt with the Meekatharra hospital and gave us particulars regarding what it costs to deal with patients there. The details included in the last annual report of the Health Department deal with the year ended the 31st December, 1925. They show that the cost per patient per day at the Meekatharra hospital was £1 11s. 11¼d. One would imagine, listening to the member for Murchison, that the Meekatharra hospital has been able to pay its way without a penny from the Government by way of subsidy!

Mr. Teesdale: At a cost per patient per day of £1 11s. 11¼d., surely they must get champagne!

Mr. LINDSAY: It should be remembered that the Meekatharra hospital is a small one and the average number of beds occupied for 1925 was 2.8. It is necessary

to keep a larger staff, one that would be adequate to deal with 10 or 12 patients, and this means that the cost per patient must be heavier in the small institutions.

Mr. Teesdale: That explains it.

Mr. LINDSAY: The rate of subsidy per patient per day received by the Meekatharra hospital amounted to 5s. 10d. I have indicated on previous occasions that there is a marked difference between the rates of subsidies paid to hospitals in districts that are comparable. I have already mentioned the position regarding the Meekatharra hospital. I want to know, if it costs £1 11s. 11¼d. per patient per day, what will be the position if the Government are to pay 6s. per patient per day?

Mr. Marshall: They can take over the hospital.

Mr. Brown: And make it a Government hospital.

The Minister for Health: The Bill will have the opposite effect, and already we have been approached by two bodies saying that if the Bill is agreed to, they will be prepared to take over the Government hospitals at their centres.

Mr. Marshall: That does not apply to country hospitals.

The Minister for Health: Yes; the two bodies I refer to were concerned with country hospitals.

Mr. LINDSAY: The average cost per patient per day at the Perth Hospital amounts to 9s. 7d. If the Government pay 6s. per day per bed occupied, there will be a deficiency of 3s. 7d. per day. How will that be made up? The Government have indicated that they intend to continue making payments available out of Consolidated Revenue.

Hon. G. Taylor: That represents an amount of £99,000.

Mr. LINDSAY: Yes, I have the figures before me. It strikes me that that amount will not be nearly enough to make up the deficiency throughout the various hospitals. Take the Beverley hospital. The rate of subsidy per patient per day is 1s. 4¼d. whereas at Goomalling the rate of subsidy is 10d. The cost per patient per day at the Beverley hospital is 10s. 11¼d. How will the deficiency be made up? That is the only point I want to deal with in connection with the Bill. The departmental report gives a lot of information about the various hospitals, and indicates how the revenue is collected, and so forth. The particulars show

there was very little charged against the patients at the Meekatharra hospital compared with what obtained in connection with the Beverley hospital. The latter received much less by way of subsidy, but received £1,214 on account of patients' fees, and received a special grant of £448 from the Government. On the other hand, the Meekatharra hospital received a total of £1,821 but of that amount patients' fees represented only £255. There is another very important point that affects progressive agricultural districts where the population is always increasing. I refer to the necessity for raising funds for the extension of hospitals. Nothing of that sort will be permitted in the future. The Bill means that we shall not be able to use the ordinary means for raising funds to meet the cost of hospital extensions.

The Minister for Health: Certainly not.

Mr. LINDSAY: The member for Fremantle (Mr. Rowe) has talked about raising £2,000 at Fremantle. That seemed to be a large sum of money to him but in the small township where I live, we have been able to raise £2,000 to build a hospital during the course of the last three years, apart from the fact that they had to raise the money to pay off the deficiency.

Hon. G. Taylor: There are a lot of wealthy farmers there.

Mr. LINDSAY: If my friend will pick up the income taxation returns he will see that very few of the farmers of the State pay income tax at all, and those who do, pay on very small incomes.

Hon. G. Taylor: That is because they will not pay if they can get out of it.

Mr. LINDSAY: If there is one man who cannot get out of paying taxation it is the farmer; because every bag of his wheat can be traced by the department. I should like the Minister to clear up the points I have mentioned. I must admit that the doctor in Wyalkatchem told me he was quite satisfied with the Bill. But that is from a doctor's point of view.

The Minister for Health: I only wish we had a doctor like him in every country town.

Mr. LINDSAY: Yes, he is a very fine man. One serious point is that in the future we shall have to find greatly increased hospital accommodation. In a growing country district the trouble is that when you build a hospital you have to duplicate it two years later, and repeat the process again in another two years. It means a great strain on the people. But under the Bill the hospital at

the end of the first two years will have to be made four times the size instead of twice the size. At present a number of people refuse to go to hospital when ill, preferring to lie up in their own homes: but when it comes to free hospital accommodation, those people, instead of lying up in their own homes, will exercise their right to go to the hospital. So in future we shall require greatly increased hospital accommodation. That will be one of the effects of the Bill. I hope the Minister has thought of that problem, because it is one of the most serious that will be set up by the Bill. I will support the second reading.

MR. DONEY (Williams-Narrogin) [10.52]: It will be appropriate if I restrict myself to the farmers' point of view, since none of the speakers have troubled about that aspect. I agree that this is a fair Bill so far as the Minister's intentions go, and apparently it is likely to prove a popular Bill, particularly in and around Perth. Personally I regard it as an honest attempt to overcome a serious difficulty. But I am afraid that attempt fails in its purpose, for its incidence on the agricultural industry is altogether too harsh. In an agricultural State like this it would be quite fair to submit all such legislation to this test: Does it tend to lessen the cost of production? Obviously the Bill does not. I suppose that in a sense it could not be expected to do so. But this at least will be agreed: There are in this State only two industries of any consequence that exist and show a profit without Government assistance. I refer to the industries of wheat and wool.

Mr. Pantou: Well, what do you know about that?

Mr. DONEY: I am stating my opinion, and if I had time I could bear it out. In any case one can justly pay debts only from profits: so wheat and wool plainly bear the full cost of the State's debts and the State's taxes. As I see it, the first duty of the Government is to safeguard and foster their sources of revenue, namely the primary industries. And since taxation can come from no other source, it has to come from agriculture, which for years past has had to carry all the taxation that could be imposed upon it. The Bill does not encourage agriculture at all. Every member knows that this proposed tax will be passed on by the wage earner and the merchant to the farmer who, of course, will pay the lot. So it will

be added to the cost of production and the profits from wheat and wool will correspondingly diminish. I see some reference here to the Industries Assistance Board. I notice that the Government advances to Industries Assistance Board clients will result in those people suffering a special taxation. I cannot for the life of me see why that should be. After all, it is only a general purpose loan, one that has to be repaid. It frequently happens that the farmer retains a certain portion of that loan in order to recoup himself for work that he himself has done.

The Minister for Health: Is not that wages to him?

Mr. DONEY: If that is wages to him, how would you regard the case of a city property owner who borrows money on city property and who himself puts in a week or a month of his own time on his own property? Is he taxable on the amount of wages he may be said to have earned?

The Minister for Health: No.

Mr. DONEY: Then why should the other man be taxable?

The Minister for Health: The other man is not, either.

Mr. DONEY: The city man is not to be taxed, but the farmer is to be taxed.

The Minister for Health: The two will be treated exactly alike.

Mr. DONEY: Then I must be drawing wrong deductions. In that case I can see a definite injury to the Industries Assistance Board client.

The Minister for Health: What about the Industries Assistance Board client getting 9s. a day? Is he not entitled to pay tax on that?

Mr. DONEY: Such portion of that as he may pay out in wages he is entitled to pay tax on.

The Minister for Health: He gets it for himself; he does not pay wages.

Mr. DONEY: Then it is not wages at all. He is not a wages man for a moment. There is one other direction in which the incidence of the proposed taxation bears unfairly, and that is in respect of country hospitals. I have been given to understand they practically pay a double tax. They are required to find 50 per cent. of the money for a new hospital. At the same time, as opposed to that fact, I am told that when a hospital is erected in Perth the municipal authorities

are not required to find anything. Can it be said that that is fair?

Mr. Panton: But 25 per cent. of the patients in the Perth Hospital are from the country.

Mr. DONEY: I do not know that.

Mr. Panton: I am telling you.

The Minister for Health: And 37 per cent. of those in the Children's Hospital.

Mr. DONEY: People in the country suffer for their solitude, and the more expensive the journey to the hospital, the less likely is that journey to be undertaken. I consider that agriculture just now is passing through one of the most stressful periods in the history of the State. There is no doubt of that, and instead of showing a little generosity here and there we have the Minister adding, perhaps quite unintentionally, to the troubles of the agriculturist. It is not as if the Minister proposed to tax profit only. In the case of the I.A.B. client I mentioned he will be taxing the outlay on developmental work, reproductive work, which is quite contrary to the avowed intention of the Bill, if my reading of it is correct. The Minister rather should be coaxing agriculture to grow up a little before he starts taxing it. Instead of that he proposes to tax it while it is small, and thereby restrict its growth. I am not concerned about the good man on the good farm or the rich man on the rich bit of soil; I am concerned about the poor man on the ordinary farm and the ordinary man on the poor farm. We should legislate in the interests of those men. They stand on the brink of uncertainty. I do not mind to what extent the Minister taxes excessive profits or the unearned increment. He may put a tax on luxuries or penalise the people who evade their just responsibilities, but why, when taxation is discussed, should he always harass the farmer?

Mr. Teesdale: You have a few quid on to-day's Loan Estimates, anyhow.

Mr. DONEY: I am glad there will be an opportunity, or so I have gathered from the debate, to have certain of these inconsistencies put right in Committee.

Mr. Teesdale: You are pretty optimistic.

MR. GRIFFITHS (Avon) [11.2]: I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

The Minister for Health: No.

Hon. G. Taylor: Why not? It is after 11 o'clock.

The Minister for Health: I do not care; I will not agree to an adjournment.

Motion put and negatived.

MR. LATHAM (York) [11.3]: If the Minister proposes to go on, we shall have to do so. This is purely a taxing measure. It is proposed to raise additional revenue to the extent of £217,000 and we must not lose sight of that fact. I sympathise with the Minister in the great difficulty experienced in financing the hospitals of this State, but whether this is the best scheme to raise money for them is a question that this House must decide. I consider that the Leader of the Country Party the other night put up a very good scheme for financing hospitals.

Mr. Mann: He did not know what he was talking about.

Mr. Marshall: There we have the two of you now.

Mr. LATHAM: The Leader of the Country Party quoted figures—

Mr. Griffiths: That were irrefutable.

Mr. LATHAM: —figures audited by the Government Auditor of Queensland, and I take it that no member will dispute them.

Mr. Mann: Queensland has a population of a million people to exploit and we have fewer than half a million.

Mr. LATHAM: I am not specially advocating that we should establish lotteries to raise revenue, but we have lotteries already in the most pernicious form possible. I do not think any State in Australia could provide a parallel for them. It is not a question of population; it is a question of the amount of money that goes out of this State annually for investment in lotteries and the amount of money that would come from other States for investment here if we were running lotteries. The hon. member made out a very good case why this House should clean up the pernicious system that is so prevalent to-day. I was hopeful when the Minister introduced his legislation some time ago that it would lead to a better system than we have to-day.

The Minister for Health: So it would.

Mr. Mann: Another State trading concern in the shape of a lottery.

[The Deputy Speaker took the Chair.]

Mr. LATHAM: Even if it were a State lottery, it would be far and away better under some control than the present system which is under no control. I say definitely that from 30 to 40 per cent. of the money raised is used in the promotion of the schemes. That is a scandalous state of affairs.

Mr. Mann: More than that, too.

Mr. LATHAM: In some instances, more than that. Therefore, I should have thought the hon. member would agree to clean up such lotteries.

Mr. Mann: This Bill will do that.

Mr. LATHAM: This Bill will not do that.

Hon. G. Taylor: Of course this Bill will not clean them up.

Mr. LATHAM: If the Minister dropped this Bill and re-introduced the other measure, I believe we could get it through another place. It would be a matter of educating the public to think as the reasonable-minded members of this House think.

Mr. A. Wansbrough: We failed once.

Mr. LATHAM: Yes, but we might be successful on the next occasion. It has to be remembered that we are going to impose a fair amount of hardship under this measure. Some people will be taxed to an extent they can hardly bear. When a man has eight or nine children to provide for and is to receive no exemption in respect of them, his difficulties will be considerably greater.

Hon. G. Taylor: There are not too many with eight or nine children.

The Minister for Health: He will not have so many difficulties as at present when, after going into hospital, he gets his bill.

Mr. LATHAM: No one knows better than does the Minister that those people do not pay and are not expected to pay.

The Minister for Health: A lot of them do pay.

Mr. LATHAM: Some do and a lot do not. I sympathise with the Minister in his attempt to put hospital finance on a better footing.

Mr. Mann: A Government employee has to pay for hospital accommodation. It is possible to follow him up.

Mr. LATHAM: One thing I am pleased about is that the Bill will impose a tax on those who hitherto have used the hospitals and contributed nothing towards their upkeep. I am speaking of nomadic workers

I am not so sure that I do not commend the proposed system for collecting the tax. I believe it is going to be a very cheap system. By this measure we shall institute the system of taxing income at the source. If it is possible for us to do it we shall get at many of those people who to-day evade taxation. I refer particularly to the men who earn fairly large wages and salaries and who, as taxpayers, are evading their liabilities.

Hon. G. Taylor: It is costing £30,000 a year to collect taxation now with £56,000 of assessments, and it will mean £156,000 with this tax.

Mr. LATHAM: It will cost less to collect the additional money.

Hon. G. Taylor: It will cost more.

The Minister for Health: It will not cost anything like as much.

Mr. LATHAM: No, and for that reason I commend the Minister. He has shown how it is possible to collect this tax at the source of income.

Hon. G. Taylor: There will be two assessments to send out instead of one.

Mr. LATHAM: If we tax at the source, we shall be able to collect from many people who have been liable to taxation and have evaded it. I cannot understand why the Minister has included companies. What are companies? They are bodies of people banded together to invest their money for the purpose of making a profit. I cannot understand the Minister's intention to tax them twice. He will tax them on the profits they make and therefore why should he wish to tax them on the dividends as well? If he decided to exclude the tax on the dividends, it would probably be fair.

The Minister for Health: How would you get at a pastoralist who forms himself, his wife and children into a company? You could not collect 1s. from him even if his income were £20,000 a year.

Mr. LATHAM: I was under the impression that all shareholders had to furnish returns. If they do not do so, it is news to me. As they furnish returns they are liable to be taxed on the amount of profit they receive from companies. Another point in the Bill is that it will force people who now remain in their own homes when sick, to use hospitals. I am going to be entitled to 6s. per day for every day a doctor says I am ill. I shall not get that 6s. if I remain in my own house, but I will get

it if I enter the Perth Hospital, which will be wide open for me.

The Minister for Health: Not at all.

Mr. LATHAM: It will be so according to what the Minister has stated. Or else I may go into a private hospital and receive a subsidy of 6s. per day.

The Minister for Health: And you will pay the other 8s. per day.

Mr. LATHAM: No. I have only to pay for medical attendance. At Fremantle the Minister stated that he considered rich people were entitled to hospital accommodation in the same way as poor people, if they subscribed under the Bill. What is to prevent me from going into the Perth Hospital? The law does not say I cannot enter that hospital.

Hon. G. Taylor: Yes, it does. I ought to know, because I was on the board for 16 or 17 years and was chairman for 10 years.

Mr. LATHAM: But the law has been altered since.

Hon. G. Taylor: No.

Mr. LATHAM: The law passed two years ago altered the aspect of hospitals altogether.

Hon. G. Taylor: No. The Perth Hospital operates under a measure passed about 30 years ago. You should read the Bill.

Mr. LATHAM: I have a right of admission to the Perth Hospital provided I pay the difference between 6s. and whatever is the charge for a private ward.

The Minister for Health: There is no private ward in the Perth Hospital. There is a private ward in the Kalgoorlie hospital.

Mr. LATHAM: There are many public hospitals where I can get attention.

Hon. G. Taylor: But you cannot get it in the Perth Hospital.

Mr. LATHAM: Before long the present system at the Perth Hospital will have broken down.

The Minister for Health: No.

Mr. LATHAM: Then the money being obtained under the cancer appeal is being obtained under false pretences. Like many other subscribers to that appeal, I have been led to believe that by contributing to the fund I become entitled to treatment by the special system, just like anyone else.

The Minister for Health: Your view is perfectly correct, as regards cancer.

Hon. G. Taylor: But that is all.

Mr. LATHAM: Then in a little while we shall see the whole system broken down.

As soon as Parliament says that hospital accommodation is to be provided under this Bill, a tremendous amount of money will have to be spent in providing additional hospital accommodation. Shall we derive additional benefit by altering the system? I have my doubts on the point. Another serious aspect is the question of the honorary staff. I heard the Minister for Justice say to-night that he wanted to inculcate upon the legal profession the same splendid public spirit as operates in the medical profession. Anything we can do to keep that spirit alive ought to be done. It is one of the things that build up our nation and make it stand higher than others. I refer to the fact that the best medical advice is available to the poorest in our midst.

Mr. Teesdale: That is the way doctors make their reputations.

Mr. LATHAM: I am not too sure of that. In any case, I can make the same assertion on other grounds than that of honorary work in hospitals. There are medical men in this State who have built up great reputations without service in public hospitals. They are men who do not wish to add to the prestige of their profession at all by rendering honorary services at the Perth Hospital. Let us not disturb that splendid position. I sincerely hope it will continue, though I fear it may not. The previous Bill intended that a medical man should be permitted to follow a patient into the hospital. I do not know how that would operate in a large hospital like the Perth institution, though in my opinion it would operate very well in smaller hospitals. I am sure that in the York hospital a doctor cannot charge any patient a penny.

The Minister for Health: I am positive he does charge.

Hon. G. Taylor: The member for York has a lot to learn about hospitals.

Mr. LATHAM: I know a man affected with heart disease who was admitted to the York hospital as an urgent case, and who can well afford to pay. He said that the one thing he could not understand was why he had not to pay the doctor.

The Minister for Health: Medical fees have to be paid by patients in hospitals.

Mr. LATHAM: The doctor I refer to does not live on his hospital practice; he lives on his outside practice. I would like the Minister to inquire into the case and

to let the doctor know that he can charge. I know that the doctor in question does not charge fees to patients who enter the Government hospital. Another thing which has struck me forcibly is the demand made upon our hospitals by motor accidents. That aspect was brought home to me not only in Australia, but also in Britain and America. It would be well if the Government took steps to ensure that such cases, admitted as urgent cases, pay for hospital maintenance and doctors' fees. If the money is not obtainable by any other means, the people in question should be compelled to insure against accident. I think last week nine cases of motor accidents were admitted to our hospitals.

Mr. Mann: Did not those patients have to pay?

Mr. LATHAM: They have not to pay doctors' fees when they enter the Perth or the Fremantle Hospital. We should compel these people to protect themselves, and the expense involved as a result of accidents of this description should not be a burden upon the general public.

The Minister for Health: Many of the people who have been concerned in motor accidents have done that.

Mr. LATHAM: At any rate, they should all be compelled to take that action.

Mr. Teesdale: Does not the 8s. per day go towards paying the doctor?

The Minister for Health: Yes, part of it.

Mr. LATHAM: That 8s. has to pay for food, drugs, accommodation and doctor.

The Minister for Health: Not the patient's own doctor. The patient does not pay for the doctors who attend him at the hospital. There are 10 resident house doctors, who are juniors, under a senior.

Mr. LATHAM: And those doctors are paid.

The Minister for Health: They are paid a nominal salary ranging from £75 to £150.

Mr. LATHAM: Of course, they are there to gain knowledge.

The Minister for Health: And it is a good thing that they can get that experience there.

Mr. LATHAM: I am not complaining about that, but I am afraid that we shall force people into hospitals unnecessarily. I want to see the position safeguarded with reference to our indigent people. Then there is the difference between what it costs to maintain a patient at a hospital, and

the payment of 6s. per day. We are told that the difference will be made up to the hospitals by the Government, but we do not know for how long that will last. We can only make a guess at it.

Mr. Marshall: It will not be too long under the Bill.

Mr. LATHAM: I suggest that what happened before will happen again. The Treasurer will be confronted with a shortage of funds and he will say, "These people had £40,000 too much last year; they can cut that out now." It must not be forgotten that the Bill is a taxing measure, which will bring to the Treasury £217,000.

The Minister for Health: That is the estimate.

Mr. LATHAM: Even with that money made available, I am afraid we shall not be relieved of the vicious system of street cadging.

Mr. Marshall: Even that is not guaranteed under the provisions of the Bill.

Mr. LATHAM: More than that, it is proposed to appoint canvassers under the Bill. I suggest to the Minister that there are certain other institutions that are supplementary to hospitals, and he could use any surplus money at his disposal in assisting those organisations. I would instance the York Hostel. The women of the district provided funds for the hostel to which mothers could go prior to proceeding to a maternity home. They are allowed to bring two or three of their younger children with them. As a result of the provision of the hostel, mothers are enabled to spend a week or two at the institution before returning to their homes after their confinements. I commend that hostel to the kindly consideration of the Minister. If necessary, I will move an amendment to give the Minister power to devote some of the funds to such institutions. I understand that the members of the trust will not be appointed from outside the department, and that probably the Minister will be the chairman of the trust.

The Minister for Health: No.

Mr. LATHAM: I am sorry to hear that.

The Minister for Health: I will have Ministerial control of the trust, and in the circumstances I could not be a member of the trust as well.

Mr. LATHAM: For my part I would be willing to discard the trust altogether and hand over the money to the department.

The Minister for Health: I cannot make the department a corporate body, or else I would have adopted that course.

Mr. LATHAM: The Minister was rather vague in his references to the personnel of the trust, but I gathered that in all probability the members of the trust will be public servants.

The Minister for Health: That is so.

Mr. LATHAM: I want to see that the people in the country districts are assisted, and am more concerned about them than the people in the city. Here they have their clinics, maternity homes, and other conveniences close at hand. In the country districts prospective mothers often have to travel 60 or 80 miles to receive proper attention. I appeal to the Minister to extend to the people in the country districts something of the human kindness and sympathy that is so apparent in his dealings with institutions in the metropolitan area. I am sure that the Minister endorses what I am able to say regarding the work carried out at the York Hostel. He appreciates the work that is done there, because he made available a building rent free to the womenfolk. I would like to see him render some additional assistance in the interests of indigent people. There is nothing to prevent people going there whether they can pay for their keep or not, but I think the Minister should be in a position to help those in charge of the hostel by making a small grant that would assist them financially in respect of those who cannot contribute anything towards their maintenance while at the hostel. I support the second reading of the Bill, but I would again remind hon. members that it is a taxation measure.

MR. GRIFFITHS (Avon) [11.28]: I shall not detain the House beyond a few minutes, because all the points of interest have been dealt with fully by other hon. members. I wish to refer to what I believe is an earnest and genuine attempt on the part of the Minister to grapple with the very difficult task of financing our hospitals. Legislation has been introduced on previous occasions, but it enabled certain sections of the community to escape their obligations. In the Bill now before us the Minister has included what he describes as a drag-net clause that will prevent people avoiding their responsibilities. The member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. Doney) spoke of the position of Industries Assist-

ance Board clients, and advances made to them. Those advances do not represent actual wages.

Mr. Latham: Of course, the Bill specifies wages.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: If that is specified, then it is all right. I had in mind the position of prospectors who receive advances. Part of that money may be in the nature of wages, but the whole of it is used for the work of looking for gold. Then there are the anomalies likely to occur between the different hospitals, regarding the present Government subsidy and the 6s. per day. Already that has been gone into exhaustively by the member for Toodyay. It is a matter the Minister could well bear in mind. The amount to be raised under the Bill is estimated at £217,000, whereas under the Golden Casket operations last year £290,000 was raised, a good deal of it being furnished from this State. It seems like going over the ground again, but one thing I should like to emphasise, following on previous speakers, is the wholesale selling of sweep tickets in Perth. After the debate the other night, even at that late hour, outside picture shows and in certain alleyways men were to be found selling sweep tickets. If those sweeps were being conducted for charity, or some other good object, or were being run at a reasonable cost, as in the case of the Golden Casket sweep, one might not object so much; but having regard to the high cost of running those sweeps—in one instance 43 per cent.—it is time Parliament took a hand and regulated these things if, indeed, it was not to cut them out altogether. It is an extraordinary position we are in to-day. We are sending to Tasmania and to Queensland and other places all the spare money available in order to keep other hospitals going; yet we say we will not do anything of that sort ourselves. I think the idea of having a sweep such as the Golden Casket has not so very much against it as some devout people would have us believe. We are allowing this sort of thing to go on for the benefit of hospitals in other States, but will not allow it to be carried on here in the interests of our own hospitals. The incidence of the proposed tax is going to be pretty severe. Each member of this Chamber will have to pay £3 15s., although many of us will never use the hospitals. Out in the country many

people will be hit up quite heavily. This party stands for no increase of taxation until economical administration has been brought about. It appears we have not too much say in the matter just now, the numbers being against us. I will support the second reading, but I hope some amendments will be made in Committee.

THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH (Hon. S. W. Munsie—Hannans—in reply) [11.35]: I think I will adopt the unusual course of going backwards in replying to members, starting with those who spoke latest. I do not intend to reply to all the points raised, because many of them can be dealt with to greater advantage in Committee. There has been considerable discussion, particularly by the member for York, regarding the honorary staff at the Perth Hospital. Interjections were made to the effect that the honorary staff at that institution got a wonderful experience and built up a reputation for themselves. I admit that every physician or surgeon who attends in an honorary capacity at the Perth Hospital does get a wide experience which, manifestly, is to his advantage. But I also wish to say that no man is elected to that honorary staff unless he has a reputation before ever he is elected. So those practitioners have not built up their reputations by being elected to the honorary staff. For every vacant position, either for a physician or a surgeon, that occurs, there are at least half-a-dozen applicants. The member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. Doney) said the incidence of the proposed tax would bear harshly on agriculturists, that all others would pass it on and that the farmer would have to pay the lot. When in the Committee stage we reach the taxation proposal, I hope the hon. member will give me some information as to how the wages men can pass on the tax. The member for Toodyay (Mr. Lindsay) particularly wanted to know where the money in excess of the 6s. per day was to come from to assist the country hospitals. I might mention that every hospital other than a private hospital in the State to-day is getting a subsidy from the Government: there is not one of them that is not getting it. Take one instance—not what the hospital actually gets and collects, but what it actually costs to run. I refer to the Perth Hospital. For 1927 that hospital had £77,000 odd. Knocking off the

collections made in the street by various kinds of effort, which amounted to £6,600, and £14,000 odd that they collected in fees from patients—taking out both those amounts and putting the Perth Hospital with its present subsidy under the scheme, that institution would have ended up with a surplus of £20,233. Does the hon. member think I am going to allow the Perth Hospital £20,233 extra? Of course not. Suppose we allow that hospital an excess of £5,000 to come and go upon, there will be from the savings in respect of the Perth Hospital alone nearly sufficient to pay all the difference up to the actual cost of every other hospital in the State. All subsidies will have to be recast if the Bill goes through.

Mr. Lindsay: That will be all right.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Do you think we should pay 6s. per head per day to the Perth Hospital and then pay a £40,000 subsidy as well? The average collection now is less than 3s. per head per day. Members will keep saying that 6s. per head per day is not enough. I made inquiries to-day, and from our records of even the committee-run hospitals it is seen that there is not a hospital in the State collecting 6s. per day from patients' fees. Not one of them collect 6s. per day per bed occupied. If they get 6s. per day per bed occupied, they will certainly be better off than they are to-day.

Mr. Latham: But you shut the door against the voluntary giver.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I do not. All said and done Western Australia is a very young country; there are not many rich people in the State yet, but I am hopeful that those who are imbued with feelings of sympathy for their fellow men will still provide some endowment for hospitals. They always have done it and, in my opinion, they always will do it. The mere fact of their having to pay 1½d. in the pound will not discourage people who are imbued with that spirit. The member for West Perth (Mr. Davy) raised two or three points. He said he did not altogether agree with special taxation for special purposes, but there he stopped. Every member who has spoken against the Bill or who has spoken doubtfully about the Bill has said the same thing. All have emphasised that this is a special tax, but not one of them has mentioned that it carries a special benefit as well. I will

admit it is a special tax, but I want the people to understand that for Government and committee hospitals alone, on the basis the 1927 figures, it will be a special benefit to the extent of £132,000 a year. It is all very well to stress the taxation aspect of it, but why omit the beneficial aspect? I wish to stress the humane point of view. Members have urged that a man with a family will be unable to pay. Scores of men who enter the Perth Hospital and other institutions receive their bills when they leave and they do pay.

Mr. Panton: Hear, hear!

Mr. Latham: There is a large sum of money owing to the Perth Hospital.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: There is little owing now because each year the board write off £20,000. The charge at the Perth Hospital is 8s. per day and the amount collected is 3s.

Mr. Teesdale: Is it correct that the board write off £20,000 a year?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Yes.

Mr. Panton: That is so. They are writing off nearly £5,000 per quarter.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I know many men with families, who have been in the Perth and other Government and committee hospitals, and who are paying. On the other hand, the Bill should commend itself on humane grounds because a tax of 1½d. in the pound will relieve the unfortunate people who are not in a position to pay. Even from that aspect alone the Bill is worth while. One member pointed out that there would be no allowance for children or other exemptions provided for under the Income Tax Act. I admit that is so. With two exceptions, the deductions have been deleted. We are providing a benefit for the man with children, and if his children fall sick he will be entitled to get them treated in the hospital without fee. Consequently, why should he want exemption? It is only fair that a man should pay on his actual income because he is getting the benefit not only for himself but for his wife and children. Therefore it is quite legitimate that this measure should differ from the income tax in the matter of deductions. One member raised the point that this Bill would involve two income tax papers.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Two assessments.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I cannot see that it will. I have discussed the

matter with the Crown Solicitor and the Commissioner of Taxation. When the final draft of this Bill went to the printer the Commissioner of Taxation was away, but before I got it back I had an opportunity to discuss the matter with him. Unfortunately it was too late to make any alterations. He pointed out three things that should be altered. The word "July" should be struck out and "August" inserted to bring it into line with ordinary taxation. Another necessary amendment is to insert in Clause 10 (2) the words "after assessment," and a further amendment must be inserted to exempt shipping companies. I shall explain in Committee why shipping companies must be exempted. It may seem strange, but we cannot tax shipping companies under particular Acts of the State. Any man employed on a ship falling sick, if taken to a hospital at any port on the Australian coast, must have his expenses paid by the shipping company, and the companies have paid. I do not know of an instance of the kind in which the company have not paid. The member for Perth (Mr. Mann) after expressing pleasure at the introduction of the Bill and promising to support it, said he was pleased that at last I had seen the light, and that though I had opposed the Bill of the Mitchell Government in 1922, I had now seen the error of my ways.

Mr. Latham: You are all the better for that.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: The same argument was used by the Leader of the Opposition, the Leader of the Country Party and the member for Swan, so one reply will cover the lot. We have been told that this Bill is almost identical with the measure of 1922.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: No, it is much worse.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: We have been told that the principle is the same. The Leader of the Country Party and the member for Swan quoted figures to prove to their own satisfaction that the statement was correct. I repeat what I said in moving the second reading, that this measure, if passed, will not relieve Consolidated Revenue. The member for Swan said this Bill, if passed, would protect Consolidated Revenue and I immediately admitted that it would, but it will not relieve the Treasurer from paying the amount he has to find at present. That is the difference.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: There is no virtue in that.

The MINISTER OF HEALTH: As to the virtue point of view, I take it that the present Leader of the Opposition supported the Bill in 1922 that would have deprived hospitals of 50 per cent. of the amount being paid from Consolidated Revenue. Statements were read from "Hansard" of 1922, and the Leader of the Opposition said he was astounded at the temerity of the Minister in introducing the Bill, or he marvelled at the temerity of the Minister owing to his opposition to the previous measure. If he looks up "Hansard" he will find that I opposed the Bill on only one principle, the principle that the Bill relieved the Government to the extent of £100,000 a year. They proposed to tax the people an extra penny in the pound on all incomes, and anticipated raising by that means £130,000, of which they proposed to take into Consolidated Revenue £100,000. So they intended to tax the people to the extent of £100,000 while the hospitals were to get only £30,000. This Bill will stabilise hospital finance in respect of £90,000 annually to be received from the Treasurer.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: But what about the £40,000 from the entertainments tax?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: That must all go in, so as to enable the hospitals to be run. It will stop as it is, and will be spent on the hospitals. The Treasurer will not be able to touch one penny of it.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: But the Treasurer takes it.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: No. The Commissioner of Taxation pays it into the Treasury; and the same official will pay into the Treasury all moneys he collects under this measure, if it becomes law. There has been much reading-out of what was said on the previous Bill. I have stressed the fact that this Bill is a benefit Bill as well as a taxation Bill, whereas no benefit attached to the previous measure except in so far as it proposed to give the hospitals £30,000 yearly. In introducing the previous measure, the then Colonial Secretary, Mr. Sampson, after I had interjected a reference to the fact that the timber workers were already paying directly towards the upkeep of hospitals, spoke as follows:—

So are lodge members. This Bill will not affect the position so far as they are concerned.

Undoubtedly the timber workers were contributing, and so were the miners. That is the case now.

Mr. Sampson: They were receiving consideration under the Bill.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Nothing of the kind. The present Bill merely extends to all the people of Western Australia a principle already operating as regards 30,000 of them.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The Government support the Kalgoorlie Hospital almost entirely. I saw the figures the other day.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: The Government pay less towards the upkeep of the Kalgoorlie Hospital—with nearly twice as many beds—than they pay towards the upkeep of the Northam Hospital, in the electorate of the Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: No.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: The Government pay more per year towards the upkeep of the hospital in Northam than they pay towards the upkeep of the hospital in Kalgoorlie. As the Colonial Secretary of 1922 said of his Bill, I say of this Bill that it will not affect the position so far as lodge members are concerned.

Mr. Sampson: The Bill would affect the position in regard to the amount they had to pay.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: The Colonial Secretary continued—

The measure, if passed, will not give to anyone the right to free hospital attendance. That right is restricted to those who, in addition to being sick in health, are sick in pocket. No other section of the community has any right under our public hospital system, to secure free treatment.

That is one statement.

Mr. Sampson: Do you believe in that?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: The statement is not bad. I quoted it merely to show that the hon. member had in mind that his Bill was not a benefit measure in any shape or form. As to the revenue aspect, he keeps on telling me that my Bill is exactly the same as his. In introducing his measure he further said—

The hospitals and institutions under the Medical Department at present cost the State £180,000 yearly. To this amount the Consolidated Revenue last year contributed £105,000. The passage of the measure will, it is hoped, relieve the Consolidated Revenue to the extent of at least £100,000. When hon. members contemplate the good work that will be possible under those conditions, the Bill

must commend itself to them. I acknowledge, of course, that under the proposed system voluntary contributions may decrease to some extent. Nevertheless, the Consolidated Revenue will be relieved by at least £100,000 annually.

I am now, six years later, introducing a Bill under which the amount contributed to hospitals, instead of being £105,000 all told, will be £180,000, less deductions on account of collections from Government hospitals going into Consolidated Revenue, making the amount £90,000. We are spending at least one-third more on Government and public hospitals than was being spent when the hon. member was Colonial Secretary.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You said £90,000 as against £105,000.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: No. I said the previous Government spent £105,000 as against our £180,000. In that amount no allowance was made for collections.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You squander money on everything you touch.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: The Leader of the Opposition is such an economical man! Everything in the garden was lovely when he was there! Although he was managing so economically, he wanted to collect another £130,000 from the people, benefiting his revenue by £100,000 and letting the hospitals have £30,000. I am giving £180,000 to the hospitals alone.

Hon. James Mitchell: Do not say, "I am giving."

Mr. Sampson: This year's Estimates do not provide £180,000, or anything like it.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: They provide £180,000.

Mr. Sampson: For the hospitals?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Yes; for the Medical Department.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: There is £40,000 to come off that.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: For "Medical" last year's estimate was 167,966 and the expenditure £166,964; this year's estimate is £171,858, an increase of nearly £5,000.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: But less £40,000 from the entertainments tax.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: No; the entertainments tax is in addition. That has been the case every year. I want to show from their own Estimates what members opposite did. When the hon. member introduced the Bill on behalf

of his Government, the Estimates had not been dealt with. He anticipated the Estimates going through, but notwithstanding that fact, the Bill, had it become law, would have taken effect as from the 1st January following. The Estimates of the Medical Department for 1921-22 show that the Vote was £149,092, whilst the expenditure totalled £150,083. The estimate for 1922-23 was £98,298, or a reduction of £51,785. A footnote attached to the Estimates contains the explanation that the deficiency was to be recouped from the hospital tax. Despite that, the hon. member persists in arguing that the Bill he introduced was on all fours with the one I have placed before members this session.

Mr. Lindsay: You are merely stonewalling your own Bill!

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I did not want the hon. member's remarks to pass without taking advantage of this opportunity to explain the position. There has been a lot of reading from the pages of "Hansard," and it is just as well for me to do a little reading from "Hansard" myself.

Mr. Sampson: I did not read from "Hansard" but from the Estimates.

Mr. Teesdale: At any rate, we will now have a little bit about the Bill, if you please!

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: If the hon. member does not like listening to the facts, he can go outside.

Mr. Sampson: If you will look on page 89 of the Estimates for this year, you will find that the amount provided is £152,401.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: The amount of the Estimates is £171,758! Members who quoted from "Hansard" dealt with the speech made by the Premier when he was Leader of the Opposition. When they were dealing with his speech, the Premier interjected, "Yes, that was one of the best speeches I have yet made in the House." For my part, I could just as conscientiously get up on the Opposition side of the House and make the same speech as the then Leader of the Opposition did, and I could still introduce the Bill I have placed before the House; and I would be absolutely consistent in my attitude. Some people have declared that it is all right to introduce legislation that provides for taxation to help finance our hospitals, but that the Bill will relieve Consolidated Revenue.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I suppose you remember the criticism of the sandalwood business!

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: When I first moved the second reading of the Bill, I intimated that I was very pleased that the Mitchell Government's Bill had not been passed. I am candid when I say that if that Bill had been passed, I would not have had the opportunity to place the present Bill before the House and thus in time be able to secure £217,000, all of which will be spent in the interests of our hospitals as against £30,000 that the hospitals would have secured from the Mitchell Government's Bill.

Mr. Sampson: In view of the Federal advances and so on, the position has entirely altered.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The Minister must remember that he got £50,000 from the sandalwood business, and he had a lot to say about it when the regulations were being discussed.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I have to thank hon. members for their kindly criticism of the Bill, and I wish to intimate that I am not wedded to the Bill word for word as it stands to-day.

Mr. Teesdale: You have forgotten the contribution by the member for Murchison!

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: That hon. member dealt with—

Mr. Teesdale: It does not matter what he dealt with; his contribution was not of much value anyhow.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: The member for Murchison was afraid that his hospital at Meekatharra would suffer because of the operations of the Bill. I have not gone into the position of the Meekatharra hospital separately, but I take it the position of that institution will be the same as that of other committee or locally-run hospitals. The committee-run hospitals will show a gain of over £13,000 a year, while the Government hospitals, of which there are 30 scattered throughout the State, will be £3,000 better off. Do hon. members think we will pay the same subsidies to hospitals that show a gain of £20,000 as against the Fremantle Hospital that will be £35 worse off, if we take all collections into consideration. The Children's Hospital will be £3,000 better off. However, I thank hon. members for the consideration they

have shown in dealing with the Bill, and I hope the measure will be passed without much interference with the methods proposed for raising the money. Without the benefit of the funds that will be available, I do not want the Bill.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: But the people who provide the money will make those benefits available.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: The hon. member talks a lot just now, but he had not the courage to take the necessary action to provide the people with the benefits that are outlined in the Bill. I have had the courage to do it, and I am doing it. I know that the people who pay are those that will provide the benefits, but without someone having had sufficient courage to introduce the Bill, nothing could be done to make those benefits available. The hon. member has been interjecting from time to time, but he had not the courage to tackle the subject as it should have been dealt with. He talks as though he is the only man who knows anything. He speaks about the farmers as though he is the only man who has their interests at heart.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: And you tax them, and everyone else.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

House adjourned at 12.8 a.m. (Wednesday).