

effected when they have surrendered their holdings.

Mr. DAVY: I understand that as a condition precedent to the application for the renewal of a lease the applicant must pay double the amount of the rental from 1918, plus interest.

Mr. Angelo: With compound interest at 7 per cent., which works out at over 40 per cent. on the amount due.

Mr. DAVY: That seems usurious. When the assessment has been made the lessee will have to pay the amount of rent he would have had to pay if he had accepted the renewal at the right time, and receive back any balance that is left over. The amendment affects the amount of deposit that is necessary to secure a renewal. If the effect of it is not to place the dilatory man in a better position than those who previously accepted the altered conditions I would be in favour of it, but not otherwise.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: It means that the lessee would pay double rent from the 1st January, 1929, and hold his lease until 1948. In that respect the dilatory man, referred to by the member for West Perth, would have a decided advantage over the other. We cannot accept the amendment.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You could accept some easy form of payment.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes. We do not wish to be harsh in the matter. If a lease turns out on assessment to be worth the double rental the extra amount must be paid as from 1918. If it is not worth more than the existing rate the additional money he had paid would be credited to him. We might overcome the difficulty of the inability of the holder to put up the money straight away. At any rate, reappraisement would determine the amount that should have been paid as from 1918. Under the amendment of the member for Murchison, all past liability is wiped out and the man is given a clean sheet to start off on the 1st January, 1929, at double rent. The lease would be subject to reappraisement, and even the double rent might be wiped off. Consideration can be given, however, to the man who is struggling. Probably few lessees would have the cash to put up. Still, they cannot be relieved of their liability. There will have to be some way of charging them until by way of reappraisement it is determined what the rent should be. I do

not wish to place an impossible barrier. Are there any more amendments?

Mr. Marshall: No.

Mr. Angelo: I have a further amendment.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I wish to know what further amendments are to be moved, so that I may go into the whole matter. I adhere solidly to the principle that these applicants are not to be given any advantage over other pastoralists. The matter of finance in connection with applications can be considered. I shall have an amendment drafted to deal with that phase.

Progress reported.

## BILL—WATER BOARDS ACT AMENDMENT.

### *Council's Further Message.*

Message from the Council received and read, notifying that it had agreed to the Assembly's request for a conference, and had appointed Hon. W. J. Mann, Hon. V. Hamersley, and Hon. W. H. Kitson as managers, the President's room as the place, and 7.30 p.m. on the following day as the time.

*House adjourned at 12.15 a.m. (Thursday)*

## Legislative Council.

*Thursday, 13th December, 1928.*

	PAGE
Leave of absence	2442
Bills: Electoral Districts Act Amendment, 3r.	2442
Lake Grace-Karlgarin Railway, 3r.	2442
Appropriation, 2r.	2442
Loan, £4,800,000, 2r.	2442
Dog Act Amendment, Assembly's message	2445
Poor Persons Legal Assistance, Com.	2446
Road Districts Act Amendment (No. 1), 2r.	2446
Education, Conference Managers' report	2448
Water Boards Act, Conference Managers' report	2449
Licensing Act Amendment, Report	2449
Road Districts Act Amendment (No. 1) 2r., Com.	2449
Hospital Fund, 2r.	2451
Water Boards Act Amendment, Assembly's further message	2461
Education, Assembly's further message	2461
Electoral Districts Act Amendment, Assembly's message	2461
Coal Mines Regulation Act Amendment, 2r.	2461
Reserves, 2r., Com. report	2464
Roads Closure (No. 2), Com., etc.	2464

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

**LEAVE OF ABSENCE.**

On motion by Hon. J. J. Holmes, leave of absence for three consecutive sittings granted to Hon. G. W. Miles (North) on the ground of ill health.

**BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.**

## 1, Electoral Districts Act Amendment.

Returned to the Assembly with amendments.

## 2, Lake Grace-Karlgarin Railway.

*Passed.*

**BILL—APPROPRIATION.***Second Reading.*

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY** (Hon. J. M. M. Drew—Central) [4.38] in moving the second reading said: This Bill appropriates the moneys covered by the Revenue Estimates—with the exception of the section "Special Acts"—the Loan Estimates, the Government Property Sales Fund, and the Treasurer's Advance. The Treasurer's Advance is an amount given each year to the Treasurer for the purpose of making payments outside votes on the Estimates, advances to other departments, and to civil servants to cover travelling and similar expenses, and to finance for the time being works where the debit to revenue vote has to be spread over a number of years. Instances of these latter are the relaying of certain sections of the railways with heavier rails, renewals of tram lines, alterations, to Victoria Quay at Fremantle. In the latter case the apportionment between revenue and loan cannot be fixed until the work has been completed. Transactions on Treasurer's Advance are regularly cleared, either by transfer to votes, or by refunds, and nothing in the way of expenditure proper is incurred without subsequent parliamentary approval. Various classes of transactions are set out in the schedules. Schedule "A" covers the total amount dealt with by the Bill. The four Acts referred to are the three Supply Bills passed, and this Bill. Schedules "B," "C," and "D" give details of the provision under Revenue Trust and Loan Funds. Schedule "E" details the purposes for which Treasurer's Advance can be used and how and within what period the transactions are

to be cleared. Schedule "F" lists in detail all the excesses granted under Consolidated Revenue Fund for the year and for which approval is now required. Schedules "G" and "H" do the same in regard to General Loan Fund and Trust Fund. There have been no transactions during the year of an unusual nature, and the details given set out fairly clearly the purpose for which the excesses were required. What I desire is that hon. members seeking information should speak on the second reading of this Bill and ask questions with a view to obtaining that information. I am presenting the Bill at this stage with that object in view. Sometimes questions are asked which go beyond a request for the reasons for an item, and which, while they may have some bearing on the item, could only be replied to, even by the Minister in control of the particular department, after a perusal of the files. So if members will indicate exactly per medium of second reading speeches, the particular phases of the Bill on which they desire enlightenment, I hope to be able to satisfy their wishes when the Bill is in Committee. It should be a very easy matter for members to do so to-morrow, and this would afford me time to make the necessary inquiries. I move:—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

**HON. A. LOVEKIN** (Metropolitan) [4.42]: If I may be pardoned I suggest that in the circumstances we might accelerate the passage of the financial Bills. We cannot forget that at any time we might get news of an event which we would all deplore, and which would necessitate the House adjourning for a little time. In that event it would be necessary that the Government should at least have their financial Bills through. Personally I do not propose to discuss this Bill. I wish merely to try to facilitate its passage for the reason I have hinted at.

On motion by Hon. H. Seddon, debate adjourned.

**BILL—LOAN, £4,800,000.***Second Reading.*

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY** (Hon. J. M. M. Drew—Central) [4.44] in moving the second reading said: The amount asked for is £4,800,000. It is slightly less than that of last year, which was £4,940,000. With one

exception all works covered by the Bill have already been authorised, and have appeared on Loan Estimates. One exception is Item 16 on the first Schedule—"Point Phillip Jetty, King Bay, Roebourne District, £40,000." This is not the whole of the estimated cost of that work. From the engineer's report the cost is expected to be much greater. Provision was made on this year's Estimates under a bulk item for the preliminary work, but as the estimated cost is so great, it was considered that special authorisation on the Loan Bill was justified. The purposes for which money will be raised are detailed on page 3 of the Bill. They are practically the same as in last year's measure. As in the case of the last Estimates, development of agriculture is the largest individual division, and railways come next. Our loan indebtedness is steadily increasing. It is impossible to prevent this with such a tremendous amount of developmental work to be done and the necessity for the Government keeping pace with it. The indebtedness is fully covered by the value of the works carried out to date. The large amount of money to be raised will come under the agreement with the Imperial and Commonwealth Governments. On this the lower rate of interest is payable. This justifies the Government in an endeavour to raise a fairly substantial sum themselves. I cannot say what the amount would be, as it depends on the progress of the work, but I am assured by the Treasury that it will represent a considerable sum. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

**HON. SIR EDWARD WITTENOOM** (North) [4.47]: Before we vote this large sum we should receive some assurance that the railways in particular will be conducted in a safe and proper manner. Recent happenings such as train derailments and accidents indicate that it is almost unsafe to travel by rail in this State. Some explanation should be afforded as to why these things have been happening.

Hon. A. Lovekin: The railways are liable if they kill you.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: That does not matter. These accidents do not encourage people to travel on the railways. We must remember that there is a good deal of motor competition with them, and with the object of restoring confidence to the public some assurance should be given

that our railways will be better conducted in the future.

**HON. E. H. H. HALL** (Central) [4.48]: During the coming year, whoever is appointed Commissioner of Railways should in fairness to the people I represent devote some attention out of these loan moneys to the comfort and convenience of those who travel to and from the Murchison over the Wongan Hills-Mullewa line. The lack of accommodation and the inconvenience suffered by passengers who travel on this line are highly discreditable to the railway system. The trains leave Mullewa on Monday and again on Thursday. They are generally overcrowded and during the summer are in a condition that does not reflect credit on the department. I hope during the year the Commissioner will devote some attention to the travelling public, especially to those who are pioneering the distant portions of the Murchison and who so frequently are obliged to make use of this particular Government line.

**HON. J. CORNELL** (South) [4.50]: I wish to refer particularly to the items in the schedule dealing with water supplies and the Agricultural Bank. The other day the Chief Secretary answered a question of mine with regard to water supplies at Bullfinch, Moorine Rock, Wheatley and Turkey Hill. His reply was:—

The provision on the Loan Estimates covers liabilities for works now in hand, but it is impossible to provide for all new water supply works which are asked for. Within the amount available full consideration will be given to the many requests for new works which are before the department, including those referred to in the question.

I have gone carefully through the Loan Estimates and can find no reference to water supplies in these localities. If any money has been appropriated for the purpose, no work has yet been done. A definite pronouncement in regard to the future is fully warranted. There is a three-year-old scheme relative to these localities. The estimated cost of water supplies there was approximately £80,000. The plans are in the office of the Goldfields Water Supply Department. Each scheme is an independent one. Since they were prepared the settlement in those localities has increased. The district has progressed so much that the settlers are now in a position to carry

sheep, which are a necessity if the land is fallowed as it must be. Experts have recommended the adoption of these schemes. With few exceptions these localities are not suitable to surface catchments and have no holding grounds. I understand that the department, on the draft estimates, asked for the money necessary to put these works in hand. The position is accentuated by the settlement of miners there. From conversations I have had with engineers of the Goldfields Water Supply Department, it seems that part of the Moorine Rock scheme will have to be improvised to synchronise with any proposed scheme for the supply of the miners. People there have been carting water 17 miles for five years. One settler expects this year to garner 5,000 bags of wheat, and he has been carting water. He would grasp the opportunity to-morrow to stock his land if he only had water. The Minister for Agriculture knows that if water facilities were made available there this year the productivity of the district would increase by 50 per cent. I hope some definite statement will be made so that the insecurity of the position will be removed, and that the settlers who possess holding ground and who can put down dams will take the alternative of providing their own water supplies. They have waited for three years for the proposed scheme. The other item I wish to deal with is that of the Agricultural Bank working capital—£750,000. I have no desire to criticise the bank, which is doing splendid work, but wish to make a special plea on behalf of the inspectors. These officers do not receive the remuneration to which they are entitled. They carry greater responsibility than any other bank inspectors in the State. There is no permanency about their positions and no provision for their old age. I am sure the Minister is as appreciative of them as I am. The question is perhaps one for the bank itself. It is time the position of these officers was reviewed and that they received some better remuneration for the services they render, and other conditions of employment that would bring them more into line with the permanent officers of the service. I have no desire to speak disparagingly of the service, but I cannot help thinking that the responsibility that devolves upon the bank inspectors is often greater than that devolving on officers re-

ceiving double the salary. The conditions under which the inspectors work are anything but congenial, particularly in the outlying districts. We have much to be thankful and grateful for in the class of inspectors we have, and the manner in which they are discharging their public duties. I hope the remarks I have made will lead to some amelioration of the position. I notice that a member of another place who has had considerable banking experience has spoken in a similar strain. The position of the Agricultural Bank inspectors, particularly as the eastern wheat belt develops, will be very arduous.

**HON. J. EWING** (South-West) [5.0]: In looking through the items I notice that there is an amount of £75,000 set down for the power station at East Perth. When speaking on the Appropriation Bill the Minister said that if members desired information, he would be glad to supply it when he was replying. It is well known that a certain resolution was passed in this House a few weeks back and was transmitted to another place where it awaits the decision of that House. I am afraid, however, that we shall not get any decision, at any rate not this session. A big question is opened up and that is the policy of the Government with regard to the suggested establishment of a power station at Collie. When speaking to the motion I pointed out that the capitalisation of the East Perth power station was now at least £1,450,000. That has been confirmed by the figures supplied by the electricity commissioner. That being so, I ask the Minister to tell us whether the Government have authorised the expenditure for the sixth unit at East Perth. The cost of that will be approximately £500,000 and if it is installed, the capitalisation of the power station at East Perth will be increased to £2,000,000. I should like very much to know whether the Government have authorised that expenditure. Perhaps the provision of £75,000 is the initial step in that direction. I can see trouble ahead of East Perth, inasmuch as in the not very distant future, people will not be able to get all the current they require. If the Government decide to extend the East Perth power station so as to make it a super-power station, then we should know all about it. To my way of thinking, however, that is not the right policy to adopt. If the demand for electricity in and around

the metropolitan area is so considerable—and an area of only 27 miles from the station is being supplied—a serious position must arise. I ask the Minister to supply us with all the information he can with regard to the sixth unit, the addition of which has been recommended by Mr. Taylor who says he cannot get on without it.

On motion by Hon. V. Hamersley, debate adjourned.

## **BILL—DOG ACT AMENDMENT.**

### *Assembly's Message.*

Message from the Assembly notifying that it had agreed to amendments Nos. 2, 3 and 6 made by the Council, but had disagreed to amendments Nos. 1, 4 and 5 for the reasons set forth, now considered.

### *In Committee.*

Hon. J. Cornell in the Chair: Hon. C. F. Baxter in charge of the Bill.

No. 1. Clause 3.—Insert a new Subclause (2) as follows: “(2) When the dog, the registration of which is applied for, is the property of an aboriginal, registration shall not be refused except with the consent of the nearest protector of aborigines.”

The CHAIRMAN: The reason for disagreeing to this amendment is, “The amendment will seriously interfere with efficient administration.”

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I move—

That the amendment be not insisted on.

As a matter of fact, the amendment does not improve the Bill and as stated by another place it will interfere with the efficient administration of the Bill. If the dog in question belongs to a white person, action is taken right away, but under the amendment, if the dog happens to belong to an aboriginal, the matter has to be referred to a protector of aborigines.

The HONORARY MINISTER: We should insist on this amendment which was inserted by this House chiefly because aborigines use their dogs for the purpose of securing food.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: I thought aborigines were kept by the Aborigines Department.

The HONORARY MINISTER: In many cases they are.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: Then natives do not want dogs.

The HONORARY MINISTER: They do require dogs. If the amendment be not insisted upon aborigines in certain districts will be placed in the position that someone will object to their having a dog license, and if the license be taken away the natives will become a charge on the department. I fail to see how the amendment can interfere with the administration of the Act. There can be no hardship in referring a matter of this kind to the local protector, and if there is justification for refusing a license, the protector will refuse it.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: I am acquainted with every part of the State up to and well beyond Roebourne and I know that there is scarcely an aboriginal that is not employed on some station or other, and that those natives do not require dogs to enable them to hunt for food. In many cases the dogs are a nuisance, and if they kill anything it is generally sheep. Every native can readily find employment on a station and there is no need for them to hunt around for food. What the natives may do in the Kimberley district, where they are in a wild state, I am not in a position to say.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: The amendment does not mean the destruction of aborigines' dogs. It is only when a dog is of a destructive nature that action will be taken. An aboriginal will still be in a position to keep a dog to hunt for food where necessary, but there are not many instances where natives have to do that. In the southern part of the State the native is so well catered for by the department that he prefers to live on the department rather than go to any place where he can get employment. There is no need for natives to have dogs. Still, under the Act a native will have the right to keep a dog, but registration ought to be refused if the dog should prove destructive.

The HONORARY MINISTER: In practically all cases one can say that the dog of the aboriginal is of a destructive nature. I have heard members say that that is so in all cases. I am not as familiar with every part of the State as is Sir Edward Wittenoom, but I do not think he is quite correct when he says that natives are employed on stations throughout the State. Numbers of aborigines are not employed.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Because the department put them into compounds.

The HONORARY MINISTER: There may be room for a difference of opinion on the policy of the department. A dog would be of no use to an aboriginal unless it was of a destructive nature, because it is required to hunt his food. As there is a protector of aborigines in every road district, there will be no hardship in referring the matter to him before action is taken.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment not insisted on.

No. 4. Clause 7.—Insert a new paragraph as follows:—"Limiting the number of dogs that may be kept by any person."

No. 5. Clause 8.—Delete all words after "Act" in line five down to the end of the clause.

On motions by Hon. C. F. Baxter, the foregoing amendments were not insisted on.

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

## **BILL—POOR PERSONS LEGAL ASSISTANCE.**

*In Committee.*

Resumed from the previous day. Hon. J. Cornell in the Chair; the Chief Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Postponed Clause 4.—List of practitioners willing to assist poor persons:

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I was hopeful of being able to bring a suggestion before the Committee. I have discussed the matter with the Crown Law authorities but so far it has been impossible to complete the necessary inquiries. I ask the Minister to grant a little further indulgence.

The Chief Secretary: Till to-morrow?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Yes.

Progress reported.

## **BILL—ROAD DISTRICTS ACT AMENDMENT (No. 1.)**

*Second Reading.*

HON. C. F. BAXTER (East) [5.21] in moving the second reading said: This is a small Bill seeking to amend the Road Districts Act of 1919. In the past it has not been difficult for local governing bodies to

obtain any land they might have needed for park and recreation purposes, but now that country centres are developing and no Crown lands such as were generously granted in the past are available, road boards find themselves unable to provide parks and recreation grounds because they have no power to purchase land. In the matter of parks and recreation grounds the people of the country districts are not so favourably situated as are those of the metropolitan area. In the city generous provision has been made in the shape of public parks and recreation grounds, and other places provided by private enterprise because the population warrants it. In the country centres, however, only the local governing bodies are in a position to provide them, and legislative power is desired to enable them to do so. The second amendment is important because it has a bearing on the sound working of many of our road boards. The object is to give road boards power to build homes for their employees. What is desired is power to build a home for the officer who holds the position of secretary and engineer. Boards have been restricted in their choice of officers because there was no home available in the district for a married man, and it has been necessary to fall back on single men, sometimes with disastrous results. Married men become established in a centre and can be relied upon to give continuity of service, but a single man is inclined to move about more to improve his position, because he has not the ties of a married man to debar him. Road boards should have power to build homes for their employees and then housing accommodation would be available for the secretary or secretary-engineer as the case may be.

Hon. E. H. Harris: A board may have 50 employees.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: That is so. Numbers of boards that desire the amendment have it in mind particularly to provide a house for the secretary-engineer. Other employees are usually residents of the district.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: A board might build cottages for all the workers.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: They generally have their own homes in the district. No board would desire to provide many homes.

Hon. E. H. Harris: The Bill provides for their erecting as many homes as there are employees.

**Hon. C. F. BAXTER:** Some boards have, in addition to a secretary-engineer, an assistant in the office, and may wish to provide a home for him also. Recently the secretary of a road district in my province resigned and disposed of his home, and the road board were put in the position of having no home for the new secretary. The only way in which the difficulty could be overcome was by the secretary and his wife living apart for some time. The board had in view the appointment of a single man in order to overcome the difficulty, but failed to engage a suitable officer. This Bill will provide a way out. Any money expended on such houses will not come out of the local authority's revenue but will be financed by a loan raised for the purpose. Consequently the ratepayers will not be penalised by having their revenue used for building homes when it is needed for other purposes. When a loan is raised to build a home the liability will be adjusted by way of rent or differentiation in the remuneration paid to the officer. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

**HON. SIR WILLIAM LATHLAIN** (Metropolitan-Suburban) [5.28]: While I have no objection to Clause 2 relating to parks and recreation grounds, I have a strong objection to Clause 3 relating to the erection of houses because the power sought is far too wide. Last session a similar proposal was submitted. I am aware that it is essential in many districts for the local authorities to provide a home for the engineer, and I know that many road boards have experienced difficulty on that account, but the power sought under this Bill should be curtailed.

**Hon. E. H. Gray:** And never mind about the poor old road maker.

**Hon. Sir WILLIAM LATHLAIN:** Many members on this side of the House have as much sympathy for the road maker as has the hon. member. The fact of having such a clause presented to us shows how wise this House was in declining to pass another measure that was before us a few days ago. If we are to have the principle of one property one vote, 25 or 30 employees in a road district would be able to get all they desired through the medium of a measure such as this.

**Hon. C. F. Baxter:** Do country road boards have 25 or 30 employees?

**Hon. Sir WILLIAM LATHLAIN:** We have to remember that there exists in this State a Workers' Homes Board.

**Hon. E. H. Gray:** They are short of funds.

**Hon. Sir WILLIAM LATHLAIN:** That may be so, but I believe the Premier has said he is inclined to find more money for the erection of workers' homes. In addition there is the Commonwealth housing scheme. Now there is a proposed scheme to meet the requirements of road boards, and it seems likely that there will be a number of authorities borrowing for the same purpose. I have no objection to a home being provided for the engineer or secretary, or for other fixed employees; but the scope of the clause is too wide. Some road boards would exercise a wise discretion in the matter, but others would build more homes than were required. I support the second reading, but shall have something further to say on Clause 3 in Committee.

**HON. E. H. H. HALL** (Central) [5.32]: I fail to see how any hon. member could object to Clause 2 of the Bill, which authorises road boards to acquire, establish, maintain and improve parks, gardens, and other places for the purpose of public recreation and enjoyment. It is surprising that this authorisation should still have to be sought. I cannot agree that Clause 3 gives local authorities such wide powers as the previous speaker has suggested. Mr. Baxter has made out an excellent case for the housing of professional men employed by road boards in distant parts of the State. There is undoubtedly a housing difficulty as regards professional men outback. Sir William Lathlain seems to think that road boards want power to build homes for 50 or 60 employees. The hon. member has had the honour of being mayor of Perth, but I do not think he has had the honour of being chairman of a road board. If he has, he would not think it a common thing for road boards to have 50 or 60 employees. Road boards rarely have more than two or three employees. Most of the boards let out their work by contract, and their contractors do excellent work. The Bill represents a real want of the road boards, and its passage will assist them to secure, and to retain when secured, the services of men acting in the dual capacity of secretary and engineer.

**HON. E. H. GRAY** (West) [5.35]: I support the second reading, and hope the Bill will pass without amendment. Every member who has spoken appears to be of the opinion that the power to acquire and maintain parks and gardens is desirable. There seems to be a difference of opinion, however, as to the power to erect houses for employees. I regard that power as highly desirable. Even a scant knowledge of rural conditions tells one that there is a housing shortage. The most progressive road boards carry out their work by day labour. That is a desirable state of things, and it is necessary that the road boards should offer every inducement to their employees to remain with them. This applies not only to engineers and secretaries, but also to all good workmen, whether skilled or unskilled. The endeavour should be to induce them to settle in the country. When farmers pay more attention to providing suitable homes for married men, it will make a big difference in the country districts. Decent homes and decent living conditions there will assist the progress of Western Australia.

**HON. H. J. YELLAND** (East) [5.37]: I support the Bill. It has been said that the Government, when laying out towns, ought to make provision for parks and reserves. In case that idea should be in the mind of any hon. member, I wish to point out that in many country districts towns have sprung into being in places not considered suitable for townsites. For instance, Narembeen was established between two recognised townsites which had been surveyed by the Railway Department. The reason for selecting that site was that its position was convenient to the temporary railway terminus and Narembeen came into being among farms, with the result that there was no provision for reserves, parks or recreation grounds. Road boards operating under such conditions are unable to provide the requirements in the way of parks and so on. That is the main reason for Clause 2. As to Clause 3, while Sir William Lathlain's fears may be reasonable in regard to municipalities, I do not think they can apply to road boards; and the Bill deals only with road boards. At present it is extremely difficult to obtain accommodation for the boards' employees. One point, however, has been overlooked: the

building of these homes will be financed from loan funds.

**Hon. E. H. Harris**: You might tell us something about that. No previous speaker has mentioned it.

**Hon. H. J. YELLAND**: It would be unwise to build the homes out of revenue. Before a loan can be raised for the purpose, the proposal must be submitted to the ratepayers and their sanction obtained. Therefore the fears which have been expressed may be regarded as groundless.

**HON. E. H. HARRIS** (North-East) [5.40]: I have not had time to peruse the Bill carefully, but if I interpret Clause 3 correctly, a road board may erect on any land vested in it, or on any reserve, a row of cottages for its employees. The suggestion here is that this would be done for the engineer, or the secretary, or one or two other employees. But many road boards employ quite a number of men. Can anyone tell me what is the limit, or whether there is a limit, to the power of a road board to borrow money; and whether the ratepayers can demand a referendum before a house, or a terrace of cottages, may be built?

Members: Certainly.

The **PRESIDENT**: A conference between managers of the Legislative Council and managers of the Legislative Assembly is timed to take place at a quarter to six. I shall now leave the Chair. The bells will be rung when hon. members are required to re-assemble.

*Sitting suspended from 5.42 to 9.10 p.m.*

## BILL—EDUCATION.

### *Conference Managers' Report.*

The **CHIEF SECRETARY**: I desire to report that the managers have met and agreed that the Council's amendment should not be adopted, but that Clause 16 should be amended by adding the following new sub-clause—

(4) Any complaint under this section shall be heard and determined by a children's court, and the procedure provided by Section 24 of the Child Welfare Act, 1907-27 shall apply.

### *In Committee.*

**Hon. J. Cornell** in the Chair; the Chief Secretary in charge of the Bill.



The CHAIRMAN: Clause 16 deals with penalties for neglect.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I move an amendment—

That the following new subclause, to stand as Subclause 4, be added:—“Any complaint under this section shall be heard and determined by a children’s court, and the procedure provided by Section 24 of the Child Welfare Act, 1907-27 shall apply.”

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

Clause 17—Employment of children of compulsory age:

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I move an amendment—

That Subclause 4 be struck out.

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

Bill further reported, the report adopted, and a message accordingly transmitted to the Assembly.

### **BILL—WATER BOARDS ACT AMENDMENT.**

#### *Conference Managers’ Report.*

The HONORARY MINISTER: I desire to report that the Conference Managers recommend as follow:—

That the Council’s amendment No. 1 be amended by deleting the words “of insufficient capacity.”

That the Council’s amendment No. 2 be amended by striking out all words after “land” in the second last line, and adding the words “such fact shall be taken into account when assessing the rate chargeable on such land.”

I move—

That the report be adopted.

Question put and passed and a message accordingly transmitted to the Assembly.

### **BILL—LICENSING ACT AMENDMENT.**

Report of Committee adopted.

### **BILL—ROAD DISTRICTS ACT AMENDMENT (No. 1.)**

#### *Second Reading.*

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

HON. E. H. HARRIS (North-East) [9.25]: When we adjourned I was pointing out that I was not conversant with the Road Districts Act. The hon. member who moved the second reading had been showing what protection it would be to the ratepayers if certain moneys were utilised in the building of the homes as provided by the Bill. During the adjournment I made myself conversant with Part VII. of the Road Districts Act of 1919, wherein the safeguards are provided that the amount of loan is limited, that the loan shall be raised by debentures and the debt shall be liquidated by a sinking fund, and that the resident owners of rateable land in the district may demand a vote if they so desire. Having regard to the fact that the ratepayers are so well protected, I am not going to raise opposition to the Bill, as I had formerly contemplated. When, a session or two ago, we had a certain measure before us some provision was made such as this, but I think it included the building and carrying on of some picture entertainment. In my view that was the reason why that Bill was defeated. However, having regard to the proposed building of homes and the protection afforded, I will not raise any opposition to the Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

#### *In Committee.*

Hon. J. Cornell in the Chair; Hon. C. F. Baxter in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Amendment of Section 160. Parks, gardens, etc. :

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I move an amendment—

That there be added at the end of the clause the following:—“and is further amended by adding to paragraph 20 thereof the following:—‘and build or acquire, establish, maintain, conduct and carry on any hospital within the district.’”

The chairman of the Morawa Road Board has the permission of Mr. Latham, of another place, who was responsible for the introduction of the Bill, to say he has no objection to this amendment being moved in this Chamber. The Morawa Road Board is of recent formation, and of the seven members of the board only one is a towns-

man. A member here said to-day it was quite likely that in some of these new townships the people composing the business section might have a preponderance of seats on the board, and for their own business purposes might be willing to take on something that was not in the interests of the people as a whole. That is not so with this road board, which comprises six farmers and one storekeeper. Centres such as Geraldton have hospitals that are wholly controlled and maintained by the Government. In mining centres there are subscription hospitals, and in the newer agricultural centres that system has also been followed. It is now suggested that we should go one better and permit an officially recognised local governing body to establish and control its own institution and rate the people accordingly. I commend the amendment to members.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I cannot agree with Mr. Hall's views. The amendment is a very dangerous one. Road boards already have enough work on their hands without trying to maintain hospitals. It is also a dangerous thing to leave the finances of such an institution entirely in the hands of the local authority. To do that would mean an increase in the rates and make the position of the ratepayers more difficult.

Hon. Sir WILLIAM LATHLAIN: The action of the Morawa Road Board is to be commended. I would point out, however, that if the Hospital Fund Bill, which has yet to be debated, passes into law, funds may be forthcoming which will render it unnecessary for this road board to concern itself in the matter.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I am astounded at Mr. Baxter's remarks. If the Morawa people are prepared to tax themselves in this way, it is their concern.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: It is not a mandatory provision.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: There is nothing in the amendment to force any local authority into this position. It is unforgivable in Mr. Baxter that he should have refrained from pointing out that before a local authority can raise a loan, the ratepayers have to approve of it. If the Hospital Fund Bill does reach the statute-book, I am sure the Morawa people will receive the consideration to which they are entitled.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Mr. Hall is quite wrong in his assumption. A road board

can spend money without the consent of the ratepayers. The Morawa board has only recently been established and yet it wishes to rush into this expensive proposition.

Hon. G. A. KEMPTON: I support the amendment. I am sure it would be a good thing for the local authorities to have this power. Ratepayers always have the right to object to the expenditure of money if they desire to do so.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I see no danger in the proposal. If the local authorities are prepared to accept the responsibility for the raising of funds and its repayment for hospital purposes, I see no reason why they should not do so. Part VII. of the Road Districts Act contains provisions which adequately cover the financial position.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Section 276 shows that they cannot carry on a hospital. How can a new board erect and maintain one under that section?

The HONORARY MINISTER: The board could, by calculation, arrive at the amount necessary for them to build and maintain a hospital. If the local people are agreeable to the suggestion, we should not interfere with their desires. I support the amendment.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: The Honorary Minister apparently wants to rid the Government of a responsibility. Road boards already have too many functions to carry out and we should not add another to the list, certainly not that of conducting hospitals. The Honorary Minister is not acquainted with the work of local authorities or he would not be so keen to support the amendment.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: The Perth Hospital is not an institution solely for the City of Perth. The Morawa hospital would be purely a local hospital, an institution which, in the army, would be regarded as a clearing station. The goldfields members of this Chamber will appreciate the fact that the settlers of Morawa were drawn largely from the Murchison goldfields, and they are not the benighted individuals that Mr. Baxter would have members believe. The Morawa people know well what they are doing. They were so dissatisfied when they were attached to the Perenjori district that they petitioned for a separate board, notwithstanding that the granting of the petition may have involved them in higher rates. It will ill be-

come the Chamber to turn down the proposition.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: If the amendment is agreed to it will cover all road boards.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: Not necessarily; it is optional.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: The road board in question has not had a great deal of experience. If it had, it would not attempt to undertake the task proposed. If we limit the proposal to the Morawa district I shall support the hon. member, but not otherwise.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I assure the Committee that if the amendment were to bind any other road board I would not favour it, but there is nothing mandatory about it.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	10
Noes	..	..	..	13
				—
Majority against	..	..	..	3

#### AYES.

Hon. J. R. Brown	Hon. E. H. H. Hall
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. G. A. Kempton
Hon. J. T. Franklin	Hon. W. H. Kitson
Hon. G. Fraser	Hon. A. Lovekin
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. C. H. Wittenoom
	(Teller.)

#### NOES.

Hon. J. Ewing	Hon. A. J. H. Saw
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. H. Seddon
Hon. E. H. Harris	Hon. H. A. Stephenson
Hon. Sir W. Lethbaird	Hon. Sir E. Wittenoom
Hon. W. J. Mana	Hon. H. J. Yelland
Hon. J. Nicholson	Hon. C. F. Baxter
Hon. E. Rose	(Teller.)

#### PAIR.

AYE.	No.
Hon. C. B. Williams	Hon. J. J. Holmes

Amendment thus negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 3, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

### BILL—HOSPITAL FUND.

#### Second Reading.

THE HONORARY MINISTER (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [9.57] in moving the second reading said: Hospital finance has been a burning question for some considerable time, and this Bill is submitted with the

object of placing hospital finance in this State on a sound footing, and to obviate as far as possible the necessity for the periodical special appeals to which we have been subject for years. It has proved a difficult problem and notwithstanding many attempts which have been made to deal with the subject, nothing in the way of a definite solution has been arrived at. As the State develops, the problem becomes more acute, and the rapid extension which is necessarily taking place in all parts of the State so far as hospital services are concerned demands something of a concrete character should be done without delay. To show the increase in hospital service I submit the following facts:—

#### Average beds occupied—

	1921	1924	1927
Departmental hospitals	230	270	346
Public hospitals	427	520	590
Committee hospitals	57	81	139
Totals	714	877	1,075

There is an approximate increase of 50 per cent. from 1921 to 1927. In 1921 there were 54 hospitals in the various categories; in 1927 there were 82.

Sir Edward Wittenoom: What is the cause of so much sickness in a country like this?

Hon. J. R. Brown: Motor cars.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Those figures show conclusively—particularly when we take into consideration our population and the difficulties under which we are labouring—that it is time some concrete scheme was adopted to deal satisfactorily with hospitals. Let me explain the different kinds of hospitals. The departmental hospital is a hospital managed entirely by the department to which all cases are admitted. Of departmental hospitals there are 30. Public hospitals include the Perth, Fremantle, and the Children's Hospitals, established for the benefit of poor people only. Committee hospitals are the same as departmental hospitals, except that they are managed by local committees. They number 49. Two Bills have been introduced previously—the first on the lines of New Zealand legislation which provided that the net cost of hospitals should be divided between the central Government and the local government authorities. That Bill was withdrawn owing to considerable opposition in another place. The second Bill provided for a special

tax on all income and was rejected by this House. As the hospital authorities have found it almost impossible to maintain their services and pay their way, various schemes have from time to time been suggested, and eventually one scheme was put forward, having for its main object the creation of a national benefit fund, to which all persons in the community would contribute, and from which fund hospitals would receive some regular payment towards the cost of maintenance. This scheme was submitted to various bodies and organisations interested in hospital problems, and the Government then appointed a committee consisting of the Acting Under Treasurer, the Secretary of the Medical Department, and the Acting Government Actuary, to examine it and other schemes that had been put forward. The scheme for the national benefit fund, as embodied in this Bill, represents the original scheme referred to with various suggestions and amendments recommended by the committee, together with one or two amendments adopted by the Government. On the Goldfields most of the hospitals have been successfully financed by means of funds of a similar nature to that now proposed. As a matter of fact on most mining fields it has been the custom by agreement between the miners and mine-owners that one condition of employment should be that all workers should belong to the medical and hospital fund. Those funds have been a very important factor in maintaining the hospitals in a financial condition. Each individual contributed a small amount per week—from 6d. to 9d.—and that, with the help of a small Government subsidy, enabled the hospitals to be carried on with little financial worry. In the timber areas also small hospitals have been carried on in a most satisfactory manner by means of medical and hospital funds. At present approximately 30,000 people—contributors and dependants—are entitled to hospital treatment as a result of those funds. The cost of collection is very small as contributions are usually deducted from wages, but would be particularly costly if collection had to be made from the individual in the ordinary way. I think most workers would be pleased to contribute from 6d. to 9d. weekly if they could ensure hospital treatment for themselves and their dependants without any additional cost. If a vol-

untary system were established difficulties would undoubtedly soon arise. The cost of collection would be a particular difficulty, while another would be that men with the greatest liability for hospital services would invariably join, while the men with less liability would not join, and as a consequence more than the average liability would be thrown upon the scheme. It is therefore considered that all persons receiving any income should be required to become contributors and that all contributors should automatically be entitled to receive hospital benefits. It is a scheme that is equitable in its incidence and one that I imagine we can all support whether we are likely to require hospital treatment or not. For many years I have argued that there is a community responsibility. When a section of the community, through various circumstances, are not in a position to secure the best of attention in times of sickness and distress, there is a responsibility on the community to see that their reasonable requirements are supplied. The scheme embodied in this Bill will achieve that end. I am not claiming that the scheme is incapable of improvement, but I suggest it is the first concrete effort towards a solution of the difficulty.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: It is very similar to Sir James Mitchell's scheme.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Yes, but there are differences. Except the members' funds referred to, hospital patients are expected to pay fees. The various hospitals charge from 7s. 6d. to 9s. per day for all persons treated, and patients or their relatives are expected to pay what they reasonably can to meet those debits. When a person of limited means finds it necessary to enter hospital for treatment, it is usually the time when he is least able to bear the additional expense. While the individual may be only too pleased to acknowledge his responsibility and liability for the payment of the fees, a great hardship is created in many cases, a hardship that is shouldered willingly by some people, though some cannot possibly bear it without going short in other ways. The wages of the individual have ceased, and as a rule there are other expenses outside the hospital fees that must be met, with the result that it is often absolutely impossible for him to pay his indebtedness, no matter how keen he may be to do so. The root principle of the Bill is that

every person in the community earning income of any description shall become a contributor to the national hospital benefit fund, and that every contributor together with his dependants shall be entitled to receive hospital treatment. There are exceptions where a variation from that ruling principle may be necessary. It is necessary that exception should be made of old age and invalid pensioners. The full pension payment now is £1 per week, and the Bill provides that any person receiving any other form of income aggregating less than £1 per week shall be exempt from contribution. Many people do not care to patronise the public or departmental hospitals, but prefer private hospitals. A provision is made to meet them. When the details of the Bill are thoroughly understood, I think they will be acknowledged to be quite equitable. The rate of contribution intended to be fixed is  $1\frac{1}{2}$ d. in the pound on all income, and it is anticipated that this will produce a gross amount of £217,000. Only a very small amount will be absorbed in the cost of administration because existing agencies will be utilised almost exclusively to collect the money and very little new expenditure will be involved. From the amount of £217,000 must be deducted £29,000 which it is estimated will be absorbed in paying the stated rate of 6s. per day for cases treated in private hospitals, leaving a net amount available for public hospitals of £188,000. Under the Bill the hospitals will receive payment at the rate of 6s. per day for all cases treated, but there are exceptions such as repatriation and maternity cases that are otherwise provided for. It is estimated that the hospitals will receive £130,000 per annum, leaving an estimated balance of £58,000 to meet further hospital expenditure and hospital needs in general.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Does that £217,000 include the stamp contributions each week as well as the income tax?

The HONORARY MINISTER: Yes; it represents the whole of the contributions based on the rate of  $1\frac{1}{2}$ d. in the pound. Through the creation of this fund the hospitals will lose the amount they at present collect by way of fees from patients, approximating £70,000 per annum. They will probably not receive quite so much in the way of donations, subscriptions and proceeds from special efforts as they have done in the past, amounting approximately to

£30,000 a year. By the institution of this benefit fund and the setting-up of the standard payment of 6s. per day the hospitals will receive approximately £130,000 in the aggregate in lieu of £100,000 which they previously received from patients' fees, special efforts and so forth, thus showing an improvement so far as hospitals are concerned of approximately £30,000. In regard to the income from subscriptions, donations and special efforts totalling about £30,000, a detailed statement showing the various contributions is not available, but I think it would be safe to say that the subscriptions in cash by way of straight-out donations do not amount to more than about £5,000. The rest of the money making up the £30,000 is derived from concerts, balls, sweeps and the various efforts that we know have taken place from time to time both in the metropolitan area and elsewhere. So far as those special efforts are concerned, in many cases the expense of raising the money is particularly heavy. To my way of thinking in some cases it is far too heavy.

Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. J. Nicholson: What would be the cost of collecting this fund?

The HONORARY MINISTER: I will give that information before I finish. From personal experience, having been associated with various successful public appeals which have been run on a comparatively low scale of cost, I can say that there are some appeals where the expenses of collection have been out of all proportion to the sum finally handed over to the hospital or charity or other object of the appeal. I have quite a mass of material here which I do not wish to go through in its entirety, as it is information which can very well be given to hon. members in Committee; but it might be as well to give a summary of hospital finance for the year 1927. It will have been noted from my foregoing remarks that on the face of it hospitals with the advent of this scheme are expected to be better off to the extent of £88,000 made up as follows: Payment at the rate of 6s. per day from the fund, £188,000; less patients' fees of £70,000 and less special efforts representing £30,000, leaving a net gain of £88,000. Let us compare that with the statement of hospital finance for the year 1927. The receipts were as follows: patients' fees, £81,148, including fees for maternity and workers'

compensation cases, which amounted to approximately £11,000. Then there were subscriptions, donations and special efforts totalling £29,021. The proceeds from the entertainments tax were £32,000. The payments from Consolidated Revenue for departmental hospitals and subsidised public and committee hospitals totalled £126,832. Deducting from that revenues amounting to £37,255 leaves a balance of £89,577. The approximate amount of subscriptions to the medical funds which I mentioned earlier represented £8,000, and there was a miscellaneous revenue of £14,355, giving a grand total of £254,101. The expenditure was as follows: Perth Hospital £74,927, Fremantle Hospital £17,462, Children's Hospital £21,914, 40 committee hospitals £50,938, 29 departmental hospitals £66,047, and Wooroloo Sanatorium £25,990: or a total of £257,278. The expenditure exceeded the receipts by approximately £3,177. Under the proposed scheme the hospitals would be better off to the extent of £88,000, as I have just mentioned; but against that £88,000 must be set the cost of administration. It is estimated that this should not be more than £5,000. And after the scheme has got into working order, the cost should be even less. At the present time there is in connection with our hospital administration a staff of an inspector and four clerks, and there are also several collectors who receive 15 per cent. commission, and another collector whose time is occupied in the collection of fees and so on. That staff will be available for the purposes of the new scheme. Against the cost of administration of the proposed scheme must be put the present cost, estimated at not less than £3,000. I suppose it is only natural to expect that with a national hospital benefit fund of this kind operating, there will be a greater tendency for sick people to utilise the hospitals. It is only natural, with sick people belonging to a fund of this kind and paying for certain benefits when sick, to utilise those benefits whenever necessary. So there will probably be a greater tendency to send sick people to the hospital and less tendency for them to remain at home.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: And a greater disinclination to leave the hospital too.

The HONORARY MINISTER: In some cases that may be so; but I say—I do not know whether Dr. Saw will agree with me—that such a tendency may be all to the good.

Undoubtedly in the majority of cases sickness can be better nursed in a hospital than would be possible in the homes of many patients. To that extent I think the community would benefit. But let us examine the position a little further in view of Dr. Saw's suggestion. At first sight it may appear that a considerable increase must be made to meet that situation, but when one examines existing benefit funds it is found that where one might expect this tendency to be already apparent, it has relatively very little influence on the rate of admission to the hospitals concerned. It is to be borne in mind, too, that a considerable proportion of hospital beds are occupied by long-standing and chronic cases, and by cases of serious illness which in any event would be in hospital. So that probably an allowance of 10 per cent. to meet the tendency just mentioned would be quite sufficient. Although the proceeds of the entertainments tax have materially eased the hospital position during the last three months, the funds derived from that tax have been by no means sufficient to meet all demands on them.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: Are not you assuming that there will be a great deal of ill-health?

The HONORARY MINISTER: We are only assuming on what experience has shown to be necessary.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: We had better get out of this place if it is so unhealthy.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I do not know that our present hospital figures suggest that Western Australia is not a healthy place, but experience goes to show that there is a necessity for us to provide not only what we have already provided but even greater facilities in certain cases. Experience also shows that there is necessity for a better system of financing our hospitals. I think the scheme embodied in the Bill meets the situation. Experience may show, of course, that the scheme is not quite so successful as we think for the time being that it will be. On the other hand, it may be even more successful. There is the possibility, of course, that we may have to consider some alteration of the scheme at a future date; but one thing is certain, that if we are to maintain our hospitals at the standard which has been reached by them, and if we are going to extend our various services to the country districts with the advance of settlement, and if we are going to treat the people

of Western Australia in the same manner as other Australian States treat their communities, we shall either have to accept some alternative—and up to date no alternative which will meet the situation to the same extent has been suggested—or else accept the proposal of the Bill. With regard to the entertainments tax which I have just mentioned, although that has meant a revenue of between £30,000 and £32,000 annually since the Commonwealth vacated the field of taxation in respect of tickets under 2s. 6d., even that added amount has not sufficed to cope with the cost of the increased services which have been and are being rendered.

Hon. H. J. Yelland: Will that tax still remain?

The HONORARY MINISTER: I believe it will.

Hon. E. H. Harris: And you are going to double-bank the man on the bottom rung of the ladder.

The HONORARY MINISTER: No. There is still a great deal to be done to improve our hospital services by providing well-equipped, well-furnished, and adequately staffed institutions. Many members of this Chamber know of country hospitals that require rebuilding or reconditioning, both as regards structure and equipment. Much work has been done in that direction during the last few years. Notwithstanding that, we have not done enough; there is urgent necessity for additional activities in that regard. That has not been possible with the money available, and I believe that the scheme outlined in the Bill will serve to provide the necessary funds. I will point out the position at the Kalgoorlie Hospital as an example of what obtains at other institutions as well. Much has been done to improve the position of that hospital during the last 12 months, following upon the arrangement made by which medical practitioners follow their patients into the hospital. There are about 120 beds in the hospital, but there are only eight of them that are of modern design. All the other beds are old and the wire mattresses are defective. I am informed that the beds for the staff are in a worse condition still. That deals with one item alone! There are numerous other items that could be referred to in order to indicate how short our hospitals are of essential equipment. Dealing with the estimated revenue to be derived from the scheme, it has been necessary to calculate the total incomes of all persons in

Western Australia. No exact figures are available and consequently the scheme is based on figures that are purely estimates. They have been examined carefully by the departmental committee, and it is considered that practical experience will probably reveal that the estimates are not far from the mark. At the same time, it is wise to err on the safe side so that we will take the estimated revenue to be derived for hospital purposes at something upwards of £75,000. It has to be remembered that the collections may fall short of that figure. In any event, the huge area covered by the State means that it will be some time before the scheme can operate satisfactorily throughout Western Australia. While the machinery of the Bill may be prepared in a few minutes, it will take some time for the whole population to become used to the new order of things, and to gain an appreciation of the necessity for regular contributions. It may be necessary for the enforcement provisions of the Act to be put into operation in some instances. Another thing we will have to bear in mind is that a certain proportion of the income to be derived under the scheme will be available only when the income tax payments are made. As those payments become available several months after the close of the year, it may be some time before a considerable proportion of the estimated revenue is collected. As to the administration of the scheme, I would draw the attention of hon. members to Clause 3, which sets out that it shall be administered by the Medical Department. It will be agreed that the officials of that department have had a great deal of experience in connection with hospital work. In view of past experience, it can safely be left to those officials to see that the scheme is administered in a reasonable manner. I have already pointed out that, so far as is possible, existing machinery will be availed of for the collection of contributions under the scheme. That applies to wages and salaries. In the majority of instances collections already paid into existing hospital and benefit funds are made by arrangement with the employers who provide deduction columns in their wage sheets. It is intended that the system of weekly deductions from wages shall be applied generally, although it may be necessary for exceptions to be made. Hospital stamps of various denominations will be available, and these will be

used when the receipts are given for wages. Alternatively, the employers will be able to make use of their deduction columns on the wages sheets. This will naturally involve a certain amount of work in the offices of various employers, but when the system is properly in operation, I believe it will work smoothly and economically. I understand that the experience in some districts, where hospital funds have been in existence for some years, is that the extra time involved in arriving at the amount the firm has to contribute either on its own or on behalf of its employees, is infinitesimal. As for incomes other than wages and salaries, the contribution at the standard rate of  $1\frac{1}{2}$ d. in the £ will be collected by the Commissioner of Taxation from all persons who render income tax returns. In due course the money so collected will be remitted to the fund at the Treasury.

Hon. A. Lovekin: What charge will the Commissioner make for dealing with those collections?

The HONORARY MINISTER: I do not know that the cost will be very high. All the income tax returns will have to be re-examined by the taxation officials, but that should not be a great task and I believe the expense involved in that method of collection will be relatively small.

Hon. A. Lovekin: I do not think the Commissioner of Taxation will agree with that statement.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I have an idea that the Commissioner of Taxation has already been consulted in the matter, and I do not know that there are very great difficulties in the way. Should difficulties be encountered, we will have to get over them, if we agree to the principle of the Bill. I have no doubt when the Bill is put into operation at the outset, we shall find anomalies and some difficulties that will have to be overcome. However, if we agree to the principle embodied in the Bill, we should be prepared to give it a fair trial. Under the administration of the officers of the Medical Department, I think it will be found before long that the scheme will work most efficiently. Special provision has been made in connection with the payment of contributions by the large number of persons receiving small incomes other than salaries and wages. These persons would include small shop-keepers, small contractors, and those carrying on small businesses on their own account. In

respect of this type of contributor, which will be scattered all over Western Australia, it is not proposed to expect him to make an elaborate return. The machinery proposed for collecting contributions from him is that he shall go to the nearest Receiver of Public Money or Savings Bank Agency, sign a declaration, and pay his contribution. This small piece of machinery should prove to be sufficient and economical in operation, as well as providing an easy facility for payment by the contributor.

Hon. H. J. Yelland: Will the man who makes the declaration require to stamp it under the provisions of the Stamp Act?

The HONORARY MINISTER: I cannot say. Of course there will be certain types of cases that will be exempt from the operations of the scheme, and I will mention a few of them. There are certain types of cases dealt with in hospitals which are already provided for financially. Regarding maternity cases, the maternity bonus paid by the Federal Government is available, and at the King Edward Memorial Hospital, for instance, patients are dealt with for a fee of £4 4s., so that the bonus is more than sufficient to meet the whole of the hospital costs in connection with normal cases. For this reason maternity cases have been excluded from the operations of this scheme. With respect to venereal disease cases, special provision is made under the Health Act. Every public hospital must, if a patient demands it, provide him with free hospital care. The hospital is paid at a certain rate by the Public Health Department and the Federal Health Department recoups the State half the cost involved. Repatriation cases are the responsibility of the Repatriation Department of the Commonwealth, and there is no reason why they should not also be exempted from the provisions of this scheme. Hospitals would be paid in respect of any such cases by the Repatriation Department. As to workers' compensation cases, what normally is ample provision for medical and hospital care is contained in the Workers' Compensation Act, and it is not proposed to disturb that arrangement. There are, of course, cases where the provision of £100 for medical and surgical care and for hospital attention will prove to be inadequate, and accordingly the Bill has been framed so that should a workers' compensation case exhaust the financial provision for hospital care



under the Workers' Compensation Act, the patient will come automatically under the terms of the national hospital benefit scheme.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Will he not have to pay twice for that?

The HONORARY MINISTER: I do not think so, but even so, it will not be a great hardship.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Such a man will have to pay his contribution towards his insurance and then pay his hospital tax as well.

The HONORARY MINISTER: We all have to pay for our insurance, and I do not think the extra payment will be severe. From the figures already quoted it may be suggested that the rate of contribution of  $1\frac{1}{2}$ d. in the £., seeing that it is estimated to benefit hospitals to the extent of £65,000 to £70,000 per annum, is unnecessarily high. However, it should be borne in mind that the figures on which this estimated revenue is calculated are but estimates, and in practice it is possible that the estimated revenue may not be received. Only experience can prove the correctness of the estimates. Again, most of that portion of the estimated revenue derived from income other than salaries and wages will not be received until 18 to 24 months after the similar revenue in respect of salaries and wages. On such other income contributors are not assessed until after the close of each financial year, and then in most cases will not pay until many months after their returns have been furnished. It may be suggested that hospital authorities and the department will be inclined to become lavish in their expenditure if they have more money than is necessary. In reply to this, it may be stated that the hospital administration in this State has undoubtedly, speaking generally, been characterised by economical expenditure. Comparisons with the expenditure of similar-sized hospitals in the Eastern States, New Zealand and America, will show that the costs here are considerably lower. A comparison of revenue figures will also clearly demonstrate that the system of patient fee collection that has been in operation in this State has been most efficiently worked, and collections from this source are very much higher than in any other part of Australia. The financial administration of hospitals here has undoubtedly in the past been economical, and within the limits of the money available, efficient, and there is no

reason to think that given better financial conditions the efficiency of administration will suffer. There are two checks upon any tendency in this direction:—First of all the Minister is in complete control of the Departmental machinery, and in connection with the funds which he administers, independently of the national hospital benefit fund, can insist wherever necessary on due economy being observed. It has also to be remembered that if the scheme is adopted the hospitals will practically embark upon this scheme having considerable leeway to make up. To mention only two hospitals, although those that are worst off financially, the Children's Hospital at the present time is in debt to the extent of between £3,500 and £4,000, and the position is getting a little worse each month. The Perth Hospital commenced the financial year with a debit balance of £1,200. By the end of October this debit balance had increased to £3,800: the hospital is going back at the rate of about £500 per month. So far as departmental hospitals and departmental subsidies are concerned, here, too, there will, when this scheme commences, be considerable leeway to make up. The amount to be contributed to hospitals by Consolidated Revenue was stabilised at a definite figure when the Entertainments Tax was inaugurated. Last year the department spent approximately £8,000 more than it received, that £8,000 being an ingoing balance at the 1st July, 1927, which was lying unexpended from the Entertainments Tax. This year, however, only the stabilised amount can be made available from Consolidated Revenue, so that actually the departmental activities are £8,000 worse off than they were last year: and there is also to be faced, so far as departmental hospitals are concerned, the natural increase of expenditure due to an increased number of patients, so that the departmental hospitals will, as it were, build up a debit balance of £8,000 to £10,000 when this new scheme is inaugurated. Notwithstanding what revenue may be received as the result of this scheme the Treasury will not benefit. The same amount the Treasury has been contributing to the hospitals will still be contributed. Consequently any money received under the scheme will be utilised in the same way as the money from the entertainments tax, namely, in hospital services in this State.

Hon. Sir William Lathlain: You have spent a lot of the money in buildings.

The HONORARY MINISTER: And it will be necessary in future to spend a lot more money in buildings. It is an unfortunate position, but I fail to see any way out of it. I know that some of the hospitals are not only too small but are in very bad condition and really ought to be pulled down and rebuilt. The time is not far distant when a lot of money will have to be spent on the erection of additional buildings at the Perth Hospital, and the same thing applies to almost every centre. At the present time, and until the scheme has proved itself to be able to provide funds for any other purpose, it is not intended to utilise such funds for other than the maintenance of hospitals. When the leeway has been made up and the fund is running well, on the basis of the estimates already referred to, it would appear that there will be some £65,000 to £70,000 additional available, compared with the funds now at the disposal of hospitals. It is hoped that experience will prove that funds will be available for necessary structural improvements and additions, as well as for improvements in equipment, furnishings, staffing, etc. One construction item alone need here be referred to, and that is the very necessary provision of some up-to-date and sufficient intermediate hospital for the metropolitan area. It is an anomaly that throughout the area outside the metropolitan area any person, no matter what his income, may be admitted to any hospital. At the three large public hospitals in the metropolitan area, however, the great bulk of the professional work is done gratuitously by honorary medical staffs, and this means that only persons of very moderate means may be admitted. From every point of view, it is most desirable that the large section of the community now excluded from public hospitals should be permitted to have the benefit of the up-to-date equipment and of the special treatment which is available at such institutions. If this national hospital benefit fund scheme proves to be as financially successful as is hoped, then so soon as the financial stability of the fund has been assured and the necessary maintenance requirements of the various hospitals have been met, steps will be taken to set funds aside to make provision for an adequate hospital in which any member of the community may be received, and at which

all the most up-to-date facilities for medical, surgical, and nursing care may be available. Of course, it would be understood that at such a hospital patients will be expected to make their own arrangements with their respective physicians and surgeons, the relationship of the patient to the doctor being that of the private patient. I think I have given a fair outline of the Bill. There is a lot of detail one could give, but I do not think it necessary for I hope the Bill will receive the whole-hearted support of members. When we get into Committee the detailed information I speak of can be given as required. There is great necessity for putting our hospital finance on a better footing than it has been in the past. In my opinion this scheme is the only available scheme in a concrete form which will do that satisfactorily. There may be other suggestions that up to a point would meet the present position, but I do not know of any scheme that will cover the situation in the same way as this scheme will do. The incidence of the scheme is equitable in that all persons receiving income from any source will be called upon to contribute to the fund and will be entitled to hospital treatment because they are contributors. They will be entitled to hospital treatment whether at a public hospital, a departmental hospital, a committee hospital, or a private hospital. In all cases the same allowance will be made from the fund to the hospital no matter in which category the hospital may be.

Hon. C. H. Wittenoom: What will be the position regarding companies paying dividend duty?

The HONORARY MINISTER: That point is adequately met. It can be referred to in Committee. The provisions in the Bill regarding payments by firms and companies is quite satisfactory. They will pay only on the dividend duty paid. It is on a pro rata scale, and I do not think there can be any objection to it. There are in the Bill other points that may require explanation in Committee where I shall be pleased to give every information. I trust members will give the Bill their hearty support and that before long we shall be able to say that in point of hospital finance Western Australia has taken the lead throughout the Commonwealth. I move—

That the Bill now be read a second time.

**HON. SIR EDWARD WITTENOOM** (North) [10.59]: I have listened with interest to the explanation by the Honorary Minister, and I desire to enter a strong protest against the action of the Government in bringing down a Bill of this importance at so late a stage of the session. We are within a week of the conclusion of the session. We find ourselves concerned with conferences and debates on the Loan Bill and the Appropriation Bill, and yet we are now asked to go into an involved measure like this, one that will mean further taxation upon the people. We all know the trouble and annoyance we experience because of the present taxation system, and the difficulty of making out our returns at the end of every July. We are now asked to pass another measure of a similar description except that it is more involved. To show what trouble people are likely to have, let me quote Clause 4, which says—

Except as hereinafter provided, every person in receipt of income, salary or wages, shall contribute to the Fund an amount calculated at such rate (not exceeding one penny half-penny in the pound, in respect of such income, salary or wages), and during such time, as Parliament may declare and enact. A little further on in the Bill we find what this means. Let us see the worry and trouble that will give us.

**Hon. E. H. Gray:** Look at the pleasure of paying in the money!

**Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM:** The Bill says—

Every person paying salary or wages to any other person shall be responsible for the payment by such person of the contribution to the Fund by means of such stamps on each occasion that any payment of salary or wages is made, and shall provide and supply to the payee the requisite stamps on payment by him of the value thereof.

Look at the trouble all this will involve. We are asked to do all this for the purpose of raising funds for the hospitals. If we had listened seriously to the Honorary Minister, who tried to make a good case out of bad premises, we would have thought he was endeavouring to turn the hospitals into an industry. There is more work and money involved in this proposal than ordinarily would carry on a State industry. That is all this amounts to. It is due to bad management, and not due to anything else.

The Honorary Minister: Bad management by whom?

**Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM:** It is the result of the introduction of people into the hospitals who should pay for their treatment and should not get it at the public expense. The Bill is brought down for that purpose. It is involved and will be very unpopular. There will also be difficulty in collecting the money. In the circumstances, I intend to vote against the second reading. I am of opinion that the Perth Hospital is conducted on altogether wrong lines. It has developed into a sort of miniature Parliament. It has a large board but has not the proper adjunct that should be associated with every Parliament, namely, a substantial treasury. That seems to be the trouble. Only two classes of persons should be admitted into the public hospital, those who cannot afford to pay, and those who are the victims of sudden accidents. These are the people the Government should be called upon to support. I understand at present that the hospital is a sort of home from home. People attend there who can well afford to pay, but do not do so. Where does all this sickness come from? The Honorary Minister referred to an increase in sickness of 6 per cent. and to the number of extra hospitals that have been established. How can we account for all this sickness in a healthy country like ours? I am not asking the Honorary Minister, because he is not a professional man. Why do we want all these hospitals and patients? There seems to be some reason for it. I cannot understand it. Unnecessary expenses are incurred in our hospitals, and the public are asked to pay.

The Honorary Minister: The expenses are less than they are in any other part of the Commonwealth. Do you suggest no expense should be incurred?

**Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM:** People ought to be able to afford to pay the expenses of their own sickness. Let us look at the awards of the Arbitration Court. Nearly everyone receives a big wage. Surely people can contribute occasionally towards the expenses consequent upon their ill health.

The Honorary Minister: Does the basic wage take into consideration the cost of medical treatment?

**Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM:** I cannot hear the Honorary Minister.

The Honorary Minister: The hon. member does not want to hear.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: All the awards of the Arbitration Court are fairly good, and men ought to be able to pay for their own sickness instead of going into a public hospital and paying nothing.

Hon. E. H. Gray: There are many people not affected by the Arbitration awards. Take those in the country—farm labourers.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: The country people are more conscientious than the townspeople. When they go into a hospital, for the most part they pay their dues. The public hospital in Perth is an overgrown establishment. What necessity is there for a large board, with women on it as well as men?

The Honorary Minister: Is it not an honorary board?

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: I do not know. If a board consisting of a number of people is brought into existence they are sure to spend money.

The Honorary Minister: Why cavil at the work they are doing?

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: I say they are not wanted. Instead of a board we should put the hospital in the charge of a medical superintendent and abolish the board.

Hon. E. H. Gray: They used to have that in the old times, and it was no good.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: They were very successful in the old times. This board was brought into existence only because of the ambition of those people who wanted to be on it. It is a nice idea to be on a board and it takes up a certain amount of spare time. A medical superintendent could take charge of the whole business provided it was run on the lines I suggest, namely for people who cannot afford to pay and those who are involved in accidents. There are many good private hospitals in Perth to which people can go. It is, however, intended by the Government that they shall go to the Perth Public Hospital where probably they will either pay nothing or very little. I believe the institution is also a splendid home for nurses. It is I understand an ambition on the part of young women to get into it. It is a sort of nurses' club. It is really another industry.

The Honorary Minister: The hon. member does not mean what he says.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: I am not surprised that it has overrun the constable in the matter of finance. I do not wish these remarks to be applied to country hospitals which are a necessity, for the reason that there are usually no private hospitals there. Country hospitals are also necessary because accidents are continually happening, and there must be some place to which the victims can be taken. There is usually a doctor in the district, and there are no large boards and other expenses of that kind. Country hospitals are good and must be maintained. It is the city hospitals which run into money. Why are there so many sick people about?

Hon. E. H. Gray: The adulteration of food has a lot to do with it.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: The Honorary Minister certainly made a good speech. He asked what the alternative would be if we were not to find the money under this Bill. I have a very good alternative. In looking through the Appropriation Bill to-day I found the Education vote was £678,000. Let us take £178,000 off that and devote it to hospital maintenance. Half a million pounds is quite enough for the education of young people in this country. We are saddled with a lot of unnecessary expense in education. A good deal of the money could therefore be spared. All that is required in connection with State education is a good elementary school, and we have types of that which are the best in the world. There is nothing to beat them. Then we want a good training college for teachers, a good technical school and experimental farms or agricultural colleges. We do not want modern schools or high schools. We have five very good high schools—as good as are to be found anywhere. Any boy can go through one of these for 10s. a week, so long as he does not wish to go on the land. If he wishes to go in for a profession he can become a lawyer, a parson, or a doctor for 10s. a week.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Which one would you advise?

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: That would depend upon the boy. Then they have the advantage of a free University endowed by the Government.

The PRESIDENT: Order! We are not discussing education, but hospitals.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: The Honorary Minister asked whether there was any alternative to the proposed scheme. My alternative is to take so much away from the Education vote and devote it to hospitals.

The PRESIDENT: An incidental reference might be made to education to illustrate the hon. member's argument, but the details of the expenditure on education cannot be gone into.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: I have almost finished. No expense should be spared to assist people in the backblocks. They should be given a good elementary education even if it costs £30 per head. If we want to induce people to go on the land we should give them the advantage of a reasonably good education. I am going to oppose this Bill unless I hear some better proposition. It is very involved. I do not think the public would put up with two income tax measures. It will also be very hard to collect the money. The Government will make themselves very unpopular. As the measure will give a good deal of dissatisfaction I think it would be a wise thing not to go on with it. I suggest that it be temporarily withdrawn after it has been debated. Let the public and the House consider it and let it be brought down again when Parliament meets to deal with the Redistribution of Seats Bill in March.

Hon. E. H. Gray: The public are clamouring for the Bill.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: I have heard a good many people clamouring against it. I do not think many understand it and I am sure the hon. member does not. I do not suppose I would convince the Honorary Minister if I proceeded any further, so unless I hear of some better proposition I intend to vote against the second reading.

On motion by Hon. A. Lovekin, debate adjourned.

## **BILL—WATER BOARDS ACT AMENDMENT.**

### *Assembly's Further Message.*

Message from the Assembly received and read, notifying that it had agreed to the recommendation of the conference on the amendments insisted upon by the Council.

## **BILL—EDUCATION.**

### *Assembly's Further Message.*

Message from the Assembly received and read, notifying that it had agreed to the recommendation of the conference on the amendment insisted upon by the Assembly.

## **BILL—ELECTORAL DISTRICTS ACT AMENDMENT.**

### *Assembly's Message.*

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

## **BILL—COAL MINES REGULATION ACT AMENDMENT.**

### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON J. EWING South-West) [11.20]: This Bill does not seem to be quite understood by some members who have spoken. The original Act was passed in 1902 and it remained unaltered until 1926, when it was amended. Though the Act worked well, and the amendments of 1926 improved it, we are now asked to agree to the Bill before us in order to alter the position regarding inspectors. The Bill proposes to eliminate Sections 36 and 37 and also to repeal Rule 49.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Do you think that is justified?

Hn. J. EWING: I think so, for the reason that the industry is being conducted in an excellent way and those interested—the workers and the employers—are satisfied that what it is sought to do is necessary. Because of an agitation on the part of the men, the Minister decided to visit Collie and take part in a conference between the owners and the representatives of the union. The outcome of the conference is the Bill we have before us. It provides for the appointment of a special inspector and a workmen's inspector in lieu of check inspectors. This does not mean any reflection on the present inspector, Mr. McVee, who has been in the Collie district for many years. Collie has been singularly fortunate in respect of the inspectors it has had and the excellent work that has been carried out

by them. That has been acknowledged by the Minister for Mines and everyone connected with the industry. Under Rule 49 miners are entitled to have check inspectors. It is proposed to abolish that and to substitute a provision for special and workmen's inspectors. At any time it may be necessary to have in such positions men with technical knowledge to determine some point that may arise. The Minister has not the power to make such appointments at the present time, and he seeks that power by the Bill now before us. It is important that this power should exist in the interests, not only of the men themselves, but of the industry. It is provided in Clause 5 that the man to be appointed shall have had at least five years practical experience in general underground mining work, and that he has passed an examination prescribed or approved by the Minister, that he shall have also a higher knowledge in connection with electricity and the general management and conduct of mines. The Act of 1902 provides for the appointment of check inspectors. There is very little difference between a check inspector appointed by the workers, and what it is now proposed to do. It is intended that the workmen's inspectors shall be appointed by the Government to act as advisers to the Minister. It is also provided that an inspector shall be removed if he is considered unsuitable. I noticed from the remarks made by the Minister in another place that it is not intended that the workmen's inspector shall be a full time officer. I believe it would be better to employ the inspector full time so that he should not be otherwise occupied in the industry.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Do you suggest he should have full time salary?

Hon. J. EWING: The salary will be determined by the Minister. We cannot deny to those who are engaged in mining operations the right to proper ventilation and generally conditions that will conduce to safety. It is provided in the Bill that the inspector of mines shall be the chief officer and no powers are given to the workmen's inspector of mines appointed by the Minister to do anything beyond what is set out in the Bill. He will not have the power to institute prosecutions except with the approval of the Minister. His principal duty will be to see that the mines are in good order and his reports will be acted

upon. He will have the right to bring under the notice of the departmental inspector anything that he thinks is capable of being improved.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Then he himself will have no power whatever.

Hon. J. EWING: It has been the custom to have check inspectors in mines for the last 28 years and three of them are appointed. The salary of the inspector will be paid by the Government. The three check inspectors were originally appointed by the miners who provided the salary. There need be no fear in regard to the Bill, which is fair and reasonable. The Act has been in existence for 28 years and has worked well. The present inspector of mines at Collie is an efficient officer and all are satisfied with the work that he is doing. The appointment of a workmen's inspector will not in any way be a reflection on him. I support the second reading of the Bill.

HON. E. H. H. HALL (Central) [11.30]: After listening to the remarks of Mr. Ewing, I am convinced it is my duty to vote against the Bill. He has distinctly stated that he cannot see any harm will come from the appointment of a workmen's inspector who has to be paid by the Government. I am not concerned whether any harm will come from such an appointment. What I want to be assured of is that some good will come of it.

Hon. J. Ewing: We hope it will.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: That sort of argument will not gain my vote. I cannot see that it is logical to ask Parliament to agree to the proposal.

The Honorary Minister: Why not?

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: We have factories in the metropolitan-suburban area working under a Factories Act and subject to the supervision of factories inspectors. The factories are managed and controlled by private people and the factories inspectors are appointed by the Government to ensure that the Act is complied with. By whom are the mines at Collie owned? They are owned by private people just as are the factories, and a mines inspector is appointed by the Government. Are we going to commit an act of folly, as I contend we shall do, by appointing a workmen's inspector to check the work of the Government inspector?

Hon. J. Ewing: The Government inspector has been there for 25 years.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I do not care if he has been there for 55 years. I was not in the House when the principle of workmen's inspectors was sanctioned for the gold mines. I cannot see any logical reason at all why we should have a workmen's inspector in the coal mines and I shall vote against the second reading of the Bill.

**HON. C. B. WILLIAMS** (South) [11.32]: Before the hon. member makes up his mind, I should like to say a few words. I thought it would be quite a simple matter to get the approval of members to this Bill. I congratulate Mr. Ewing on the broad-minded views he has expressed in support of the Bill. It is acknowledged in the mining industry that the workers are entitled to have a workmen's inspector, if for no other reason, to safeguard the interests of the workers. Invariably the appointee is a thoroughly qualified miner and sometimes even a better miner than any Government inspector of mines that I know. The workmen's inspector has a long experience of practical mining work, whereas the Government inspector is appointed as a purely theoretical man.

Hon. J. Ewing: There are practical men, too.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: They eventually gain the practical knowledge at the expense of the men working in the industry. I do not know of any hardship that has resulted to the employers from the appointment of workmen's inspectors in the gold mines. The men certainly have felt more satisfied that their health is safeguarded. There is no analogy between a city factory and a mine. In a factory there is no danger to health or limb. Since workmen's inspectors were appointed in the gold mines the industry has been carried on without any friction. Mr. Hall probably does not realise that if a miner has any complaint to make about his working places, he does not want to go to the Government inspector.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: He should go to the Government inspector.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: Evidently the hon member has not worked for wages or he would not say that.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: Haven't I?

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: Then the hon. member has not had much experience. A worker in any industry has more faith in his own representative than in a man supervising on behalf of the Government.

Hon. E. H. Harris: That is very open to question.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I as a worker know that if I made a complaint to the Government inspector the employer would know all about it. The union does not disclose the name of its informants any more than do the police disclose the names of their informants. Workmen's inspectors look after the interests of the workmen to the satisfaction of the employers as well as the employees. To sanction the appointment of a workmen's inspector for the coal-mining industry will impose no hardship. Mr. Ewing has represented that district for a long time and he should know. It is the unanimous wish of the conference of employers and employees, at which the Minister for Mines was present, that a workmen's inspector should be appointed, and it is up to this House to pass the Bill.

**HON. W. J. MANN** (South-West) [11.36]: I intend to support the Bill for the reason that its provisions have been agreed upon by all the parties concerned. I do not claim to have any extensive knowledge of coal mining, but I am given to understand that in the ordinary course of work many things crop up that call for an immediate decision and that decision can best be arrived at by applying to the workmen's inspector.

Hon. E. H. Harris: He has no right to give a decision on anything. He has no power at all.

The Honorary Minister: Do you object to a workmen's inspector?

Hon. W. J. MANN: There are many small things that crop up from time to time on which a decision is required and I understand the men could go to their inspector and put their case to him. If they considered a working place was unsafe and he agreed with them, action would be taken to make it safe. If, on the other hand, a complaint was frivolous, the workmen's inspector would take no action. I understand that is one of the reasons why the men desire to have a workmen's inspector and why the company have no objection to it. I support the Bill.

**HON. G. FRASER** (West) [11.38]: Unlike Mr. Hall, I place a lot of reliance on what Mr. Ewing has told us about coal mining, because I doubt whether any mem-

ber has a greater knowledge of the industry than he possesses. His remarks should carry considerable weight. Mr. Williams touched on another phase of the question, namely the confidence of the miners in a workmen's inspector. I know from experience that the workers place more confidence in the views of their inspector and approach him and discuss phases of their working conditions much more freely with him than with a Government inspector. Many men might consider that portions of the mine workings are unsafe but, rather than go to the Government inspector, they would possibly continue to work under those conditions. The man who believes he has a grievance will not give the same efficient work as if he is satisfied. But he will approach a workmen's inspector and, if he is in the wrong, the inspector will tell him so. The views of the workmen's inspector will relieve the man's mind and much better work will be done by him. If a workmen's inspector is appointed there will be no great cost entailed. Mr. Ewing told us that the workmen's inspector is to take the place of three check inspectors, the appointment of whom has operated in the industry for 28 years. If this proposal will put coal mine inspection on a sounder basis than it has been in the past, the House should agree to the Bill.

On motion by Hon. E. H. Harris, debate adjourned.

### **BILL—RESERVES.**

#### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

**HON. SIR WILLIAM LATHLAIN** (Metropolitan Suburban) [11.41]: Clause 14 indicates that Perth suburban lot 402 at South Perth is to be acquired by the State Savings Bank and utilised for the erection of buildings for use by the bank. The sum of £450 is to be paid for it. Clause 15 sets out that Merredin lot 116 may be acquired by the same bank and for that block the price is to be £600. I do not know whether the blocks are of similar size, but £600 seems to be a lot of money to pay for a block at Merredin, while it is possible to get a block at South Perth for £450. I shall support the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

#### *In Committee.*

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment and the report adopted.

### **BILL—ROADS CLOSURE (No. 2.)**

#### *In Committee, etc.*

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

*House adjourned at 11.50 p.m.*

## **Legislative Assembly,**

*Thursday, 13th December, 1928.*

	PAGE
Question: Railways—1, Yarramony Eastward; 2, Brookton-Dale	2464
Bills: State Trading Concerns Act Amendment, 2R.	2465
Water Boards Act Amendment, Conference Managers' report	2475
Education, Conference Managers' report	2475
Electoral Districts Act Amendment, Council's amendment	2478
Lake Grace-Karlgarin Railway, returned	2481
Dog Act Amendment, Council's further message	2481
Education, Council's further message	2481
Water Boards Act Amendment, Council's further message	2481
State Trading Concerns Act Amendment, 2R., etc.	2481
Agricultural Bank Act Amendment, message, 2R., &c.	2498
Kojonup Cemetery, 2R.	2502
Health Act Amendment, Report, 3R.	2503
Land Act Amendment, com.	2503

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

### **QUESTIONS (2)—RAILWAYS.**

#### *Yarramony Eastward.*

Mr. GRIFFITHS asked the Minister for Works: When is it intended to start utilising the £5,000 provided on the Loan Estimates for the work preliminary to the