

The **MINISTER FOR LANDS**: If the hon. member will look through any of the Estimates for former years, he will see that the same item has appeared regularly.

The **CHAIRMAN**: It is quite the usual item.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: It is wrong.

The **MINISTER FOR LANDS**: I did not deal specifically with this item, but I did take up a similar item under another heading with the Under Secretary, and he told me that it was not known when a contingency would arise, necessitating the expenditure of additional money. That is why the item appears. The money may never be required.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Town Planning, £1,003—agreed to.

Vote — Farmers' Debts Adjustment, £2,706—agreed to.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 10.43 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 20th October, 1931.

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

QUESTION—SECESSION, REFERENDUM.

Mr. J. MacCallum **SMITH** asked the Premier: In view of imminent action by the Federal Government to take a referendum on the question of unification and

other constitutional changes, will he state when he intends to give effect to the recent resolution of this House asking for a Bill to provide for the taking of a referendum on secession?

The **PREMIER** replied: The necessary Bill will be introduced.

ASSENT TO BILL.

Message from the Administrator received and read notifying assent to the State Savings Bank Transfer Bill.

BILL—LAND ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

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

BILL—LAND TAX AND INCOME TAX (No. 2).

Message.

Message from the Administrator received and read recommending appropriation for the purposes of the Bill.

Second Reading.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir James Mitchell—Northam) [4.39] in moving the second reading said: Before I deal with the Bill may I say how pleased we all are to see the member for Forrest (Miss Holman) back in her place in the House after a long illness. We hope she has thoroughly recovered and that we shall see her more often in future. The Bill is one that is customarily presented at this period of the year. There are two variations on this occasion. It is necessary to render some assistance to the primary producers. Every member is fully alive to the difficult position in which the primary producers in the pastoral areas and agricultural areas find themselves. The alteration, as compared with last year, is that the land tax will not be levied this year on pastoral leases and on improved land devoted to the agricultural, horticulture, pastoral or grazing purposes. This will mean a sacrifice to the Treasury. We expect to lose £37,000 cash, and the total tax will amount to £85,000. We have already built up considerable debts against land holders because of their inability to

pay owing to the fall in the prices of their commodities, and it is not desirable, I think, to add to those debts, which producers will find very difficult to pay, at any rate in the near future. This is not very much relief, but it is some relief, and will help in a slight way to reduce the cost of production. I think it will be agreed that the work of the primary producers for the community warrants some sacrifice. An enormous amount of money is owing to the Treasury by people on the land, and if it could be collected, we as a Government would be in fairly easy circumstances. It is essential that the loss of revenue occasioned by granting this relief be made good in some other way. Revenue from all sources is declining, for the reason I have advanced for reducing land taxation on improved agricultural and pastoral land. To make good the sacrifice, I propose that the reduction of 33 1/3rd per cent. on income tax shall be reduced to 20 per cent. This is estimated to yield not less than £31,000 for the year. An amendment of the Stamp Act, to be introduced presently, will provide additional revenue, so that on the whole we shall a little more than make good the loss of revenue caused by granting the relief to primary producers. In these difficult times it is hard to make such reductions, but the people for whom the relief is intended are having a bad time, and everything possible should be done to assist them in their troubles. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. P. Collier, debate adjourned.

BILL—STAMP ACT AMENDMENT (No. 4).

Message.

Message from the Administrator received and read recommending appropriation for the purposes of the Bill.

Second Reading.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir James Mitchell—Northam) [4.44] in moving the second reading said: This Bill provides for the tightening up of the existing Act, and proposes to increase the stamp duty on cheques, on demand drafts and on hire-purchase agreements.

The first amendment deals with the cancellation of stamps affixed to documents. Under the present Act stamps are cancelled by some person authorised to do this work. This cancellation is effected by that person writing across the stamp, initialling it, or by adopting other effective means for cancellation. I am sorry to say there has been a considerable amount of fraud in connection with this business. Recently £19 worth of stamps came from overseas in one lot, and £17 worth in another. They were stamps which obviously had been used before, but cleaned by the removal of the ink which had been used in the cancellation. The stamps were impounded and were submitted to the Government Analyst for examination. It is beyond doubt that the stamps had previously been used and cancelled. It is impossible to say how far this sort of thing has gone.

Hon. P. Collier: The stamps came from overseas?

The PREMIER: These two lots did. This sort of thing is possible in connection with shipping documents, when the documents have ceased to be of further use. The stamps might be taken off and cleaned, and this we find can easily be done. These particular stamps arrived in Perth. It is possible that stamps have been used within the State without our knowing it, but the others happened to come from overseas. They were presented to the Treasury. There were some indications that all was not well. The inquiry showed conclusively that they were old stamps that had been doctored. I do not say this without being able to tell the House that exhaustive tests were made to ascertain the correctness of the assertion. There is not to my mind the slightest doubt that these stamps had been used.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: Do the people concerned give any reason for wanting to get a rebate upon them?

The PREMIER: Of course they wanted the money.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: Did the people who purchased the stamps give any reason why they wanted their money back?

The PREMIER: They happen to be in France and Belgium where it is not easy to get a rebate.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: They must have had some agent here.

The PREMIER: Anything can be presented for collection through a bank in one's

own country to a bank here. In this case the stamps came under our notice. We have got them and we have not paid for them. They were sent out because the people concerned wanted the money. The man who sent them out may be quite innocent.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: You do not say when you sell stamps you will give the money back if they are not used?

The PREMIER: If the hon. member had bought stamps for which he had no use, he would get a refund on returning them.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: Yes, after giving a reasonable explanation.

The PREMIER: It would not be quite fair to withhold a refund in such circumstances. In this particular case no money has been paid. One of the reasons for bringing down this Bill is to cover such things. Obviously these stamps ought never to have been presented. It is not only because of this transaction that we are bringing down the Bill. Documents expire by the effluxion of time, and thus the stamps upon them become of no value. They can easily be removed.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: As a rule people do not buy a lot of stamps in anticipation that they may want to use them.

The PREMIER: Not as a rule. Does the hon. member think that people who hold a lot of stamps should not demand their money back if they desire to return the stamps?

Hon. J. C. Willcock: They should give a reasonable explanation why they purchased them, and why they have not used them.

The PREMIER: As these people are in Belgium and France there is no chance of getting hold of them, and we have retained their stamps.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: That is dishonourable if everything is all right.

The PREMIER: Everything is not right. These stamps may be affixed to another document, sent to some person authorised to cancel them, and may again be cancelled. We ought to remove every possibility of fraud. We are therefore taking steps, by this Bill, to do our utmost to guard against fraud. There are several ways of doing this. It was thought that the stamps might be embossed. That, however, proved to be almost an impossibility. It would not be very convenient for business people in distant places. The various States were communicated with, and we finally decided to

adopt the method in use in Victoria, that of perforating stamps.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: That is an obvious remedy.

The PREMIER: Even that is not absolutely a perfect guarantee. The authorities in Victoria have had similar experiences. They adopted this means to overcome the difficulty, and it is now said that it is almost impossible to remove a stamp after perforation without destroying it. There are persons authorised to cancel stamps now in the larger centres, and they will be authorised to perforate stamps. I hope this change-over can be effected with a minimum of inconvenience. It is necessary that steps should be taken to protect the revenue. We find that the cancellation marks are easy to remove, and it is necessary we should take the step we propose. It is also proposed to alter the proceedings in regard to demand drafts. Members will realise that demand drafts are now subject only to a duty of 1d. Under the amendment they will be subject to a duty of 2d. It is found that some of these demand drafts are given on the understanding that the demand shall not be made for payment until some definite time has elapsed. The transactions are sometimes covered by agreement. We understand the practice regarding demand drafts is to have an understanding as to payment in order to avoid stamp duty, which a fixed-period draft or promissory note would have to carry. A promissory note might be payable on demand or on some fixed date. If by agreement a man can arrange that a demand note is not payable until three months after date, he can call it a demand draft, and the revenue will not be contributed to as is intended. We, therefore, propose that in such cases a demand draft must bear the ordinary promissory note stamp. We have adopted this from the Victorian Act, by which steps have already been taken to prevent demand drafts there from being treated as promissory notes and the stamp duty evaded. It is intended to increase to 2d. the stamp duty on cheques and on demand drafts. This is already in force in New South Wales, New Zealand and Victoria. I would call the attention of members to a provision whereby the stamps due to be affixed on a transfer of land under contract of sale shall be affixed to the contract. The Leader

of the Opposition brought down a Bill in 1926 to provide that with each sale there should be an additional stamp duty. Brown may sell to Jones for £100, the block may be passed on to Smith, and from Smith to somebody else. Under the old system only one set of stamps was affixed to the documents until the final transfer was registered. That was altered by the Leader of the Opposition. Now the duty has to follow each sale, although the registration may not finally take place until the land has changed hands several times. It has been found that the final purchaser has been called upon to pay stamp duty on the several transactions. In one case this ran into a considerable amount. The stamp duty will not be increased by this means. The same stamp duty will be paid, but it will be paid a little sooner. The stamp will have to be affixed with each transaction dealing with the one particular block.

Hon. A. McCallum: That gets over the transfer by direction business.

The PREMIER: Yes. The contract will have to be stamped each time a sale is effected, and finally when registration is made there will be no additional duty payable, but the duty will be paid earlier, and will affect the subsequent transactions. If a contract does not go through, provision is made for the refund of the amount spent on stamping such documents. I think that will commend itself to members generally.

Hon. J. C. Willecock: A contract should not be a contract until it is registered.

Hon. P. Collier: Land may change hands many times and yet not be registered.

The PREMIER: Yes.

Hon. P. Collier: It has been done.

The PREMIER: Yes, and sometimes large amounts have been involved. There is another provision which deals with walk-in and walk-out sales. There may be a sale of property. This may comprise the property itself, livestock, furniture and effects, and indeed anything, and the sale may be for a lump sum. In some cases the price set against the land may be made low, because that is subject to a stamp duty, whereas the price set upon the goods or the stock may be increased accordingly. We propose that if there is any doubt as to the genuineness of such values, a valuation of the land may be obtained so that we may ascertain if the proper amount of duty has been collected.

The Government consider that that is the right course to adopt. There have already been some cases in which it ought to have been adopted.

Hon. J. C. Willecock: By whom? By the Assessor of Stamps?

The PREMIER: Yes, by the Assessor of Stamps if he found that the transaction was not quite genuine, that too much value was being put on the movables and too little on the land. That is entirely right. A check on such transactions is necessary. An extensive business has grown up in regard to the hire-purchase systems. Except as regards agreements relating to sewing machines and so forth, these documents are really bills of sale, and should be registered and stamped in the same way as bills of sale. At present the stamp duty on hire-purchase agreements is 2s. 6d., irrespective of value. If the proposed amendment is carried, the stamp duty on these agreements will be the same as on bills of sale, namely, 1s. 3d. for every £50 up to £300, and thereafter 2s. 6d. for every £100. The business done under hire-purchase agreements is particularly for the sale of machinery and other things of that kind. The document is really a bill of sale with special provision for registration. A hire-purchase agreement can be registered without the seven days' notice which must be given in the case of an ordinary bill of sale. It is, however, for every intent and purpose a bill of sale, although taken before the delivery of the goods; and for that reason the law provides that it may be registered without notice. In every other respect it is an ordinary bill of sale, and ought to be stamped accordingly. Those are the only amendments proposed. I think that in particular the amendment which safeguards the revenue in case of the use of adhesive stamps will commend itself to the House. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. P. Collier, debate adjourned.

BILL—DIVIDEND DUTIES ACT AMENDMENT.

Message.

Message from the Governor received and read, recommending appropriation for the purposes of the Bill.

Second Reading.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir James Mitchell—Northam) [5.6] in moving the second reading said: The two amendments proposed by the Bill are comparatively small. The object of the first is to prevent dual taxation of a company's profits. As the ex-Treasurer will know, there are cases where a parent company declares a dividend and that dividend is paid to a subsidiary company, whereupon further dividend duty is claimed on the same money. In the case of a superphosphate company, for instance, a dividend has been declared and paid to the Westralian Farmers' Phosphate Company, and then distributed to the shareholders, who were the proper persons to receive the dividend in the first place. It has been the practice each year to pass an Executive Council order remitting the second duty, which is really not payable; one cannot collect twice on the same profit, although it is distributed, as in this case, through the subsidiary company. The amendment, if made, will render it unnecessary to forego each year the collection of the second amount of duty on the dividend paid. I do not know that for the moment the amendment will cover more than the superphosphate company to which I have referred, and the Westralian Farmers' Phosphate Company. I ask the House to agree to the proposal. The second amendment provides that insurance companies receiving premiums or contracts through brokers or agents in this State shall pay duty on them. A considerable amount of business is done in Western Australia by outside companies without payment of taxation. Lloyds, for instance, do a considerable business; and I do not think it will be argued that they ought not to pay taxation here. The duty is 2 per cent. on the amount of premium. It is a simple matter in that way to tax outside companies doing business in Western Australia. The amendment proposes that all companies carrying on business here, whether domiciled here or elsewhere, shall pay the same amount of dividend duty. Probably a considerable amount of revenue has been lost by reason of our failure to tax brokers or agents operating here in the name of a company domiciled outside our borders.

Hon. P. Collier: Does the amendment apply in other directions besides insurance?

The PREMIER: No. It provides that in future all insurance business done here shall pay duty.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Have Lloyds actually been exempt from duty?

The PREMIER: There has been no power to tax them, because they are not located here; they merely secure their business here.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: All the same, they have collected enormous revenue here.

The PREMIER: Yes, and therefore it is proposed that if the business is secured here it shall carry the duty. That is what the proposed amendment will effect.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: It is a pity we could not make the amendment retrospective.

The PREMIER: Yes; but that, I am afraid, cannot be done.

Hon. P. Collier: The people have had the benefit of lower premiums as the result of the operation of Lloyds.

The PREMIER: There is no doubt about that.

Hon. P. Collier: Lloyds have acted as a policeman on the insurance companies here.

The PREMIER: At the same time, there is no justification for their escaping taxation.

Hon. P. Collier: There are 55 fire insurance companies here, and one got the same quotation from all of them until Lloyds came in and made them come down to reason. In fact, one gets the same quotation from the 55 companies even now, though they accept insurances at 10 or 15 per cent. less than the rates obtaining before Lloyds intervened.

The PREMIER: But they should not be exempt from taxation.

Hon. P. Collier: That is so.

The PREMIER: All people doing insurance business here, whether having offices in this State or not should be placed on the same footing as regards taxation.

Hon. P. Collier: Yes. That will not drive Lloyds out of the business.

The PREMIER: No. I think the House will agree that the taxation should apply uniformly.

Hon. P. Collier: Quite so, but Lloyds have been a benefactor to many of our people by forcing down rates.

The PREMIER: Probably that fact may represent the reason why this amendment has not been proposed before.

Hon. P. Collier: Lloyds have saved the Government a lot of money.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: They broke the ring.

The PREMIER: In future they will pay the same duty as other insurance companies, no more and no less. Nobody can object to that, and therefore I commend the measure to hon. members. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. P. Collier, debate adjourned.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1931-32.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from the 15th October; Mr. Richardson in the Chair.

Department of the Minister for Medical and Public Health (Hon. C. G. Latham, Minister).

Vote—Medical, £53,336:

THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC HEALTH (Hon. C. G. Latham—York) [5.11]: Hon. members will observe a considerable decrease in the expenditure under this vote for the current year. The reduction is due to the fact of money having been collected during the year through the medium of the hospital tax for the maintenance of hospitals. During the first six months a total of £64,834 was collected, considerably less than estimated by the Health Department upon the introduction of the legislation. This is probably explained by the fact that two months were needed to get the collecting machinery into working order. I am glad to say that the machinery seems to be working fairly satisfactorily. It is, naturally, difficult to get everybody to carry out new legislation in its entirety; and there have been heartburnings because of action taken by the Crown Law authorities against persons evading the law. Generally speaking, however, it can be claimed that the fund has been satisfactorily collected and satisfactorily administered. City hospitals have received a fair amount of financial help which the Treasurer would have been unable to afford them but for the fund. There has been very little complaint indeed from hon. members regarding country hospitals, and I think it will be agreed that the Government have met most of the cases in which they have been asked to provide funds. At the end of last month the fund showed a credit of £4,254. While it is extremely difficult to

forecast the revenue, particularly in view of financial emergency legislation that has been passed, I hope there will be sufficient funds to maintain the hospitals without need for drawing on Consolidated Revenue for any additional amount. During the last financial year the gross amount drawn from Consolidated Revenue was £71,716; but against that there were revenues, mainly in the shape of patients' fees, totalling £23,856, leaving a net amount of £47,860. There has been little new activity in the department during the current financial year, except that there has been an alteration as regards the lazarette in the North. The Federal authorities have a lazarette at Port Darwin, and as that institution is able to provide far more expert treatment than is the case in our lazarette at Cossack, the Government thought it advisable to send our patients to Port Darwin.

Mr. Coverley: The patients got highly satisfactory treatment in Derby.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: That is so, but the expert advice available at the Federal institution is far better.

Mr. Raphael: The results will show whether that is so.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: The cost of maintaining our patients in the Federal institution will be 50 per cent. less than the cost at Cossack has been.

Mr. Coverley: You will have the expense of sending them to Darwin.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: But that cost will equal what we have to spend in maintaining them for one year, so that in the aggregate we will save money.

Mr. Coverley: I do not think you will.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: We have the figures.

Mr. Coverley: Where did you get them?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: They are official.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: At any rate, it costs a good deal to get them to the lazarette.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Yes, the cost of transport was £500, but there should be a saving after that first cost. If additional lepers are found in the North-West, we shall have to hold them for a while until we can arrange for their transfer to the lazarette at Darwin. That will mean additional expense.

Mr. Coverley: You will never clean the natives up unless you do what the road

boards have been requesting for so long. They want the Government to send a medical officer through the country on an inspection.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: And that will cost a great deal of money that cannot be provided at the present juncture. It is not a mere question of the payment of the professional fees; the cost of transport in the North-West would be immense.

Mr. Coverley: That is so, but you would collect the whole of the lepers at once, and they would be sent on to Darwin.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I am afraid it would be impossible successfully to carry out what the hon. member desires. I know that is the ideal way of handling the problem, but I am afraid that once the aborigines find out that there is an inspection to be held, they will be off like the wind.

Mr. Coverley: That is so much theory.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I am afraid it would prove to be the fact. However, the Government have decided to give this system a trial, and I believe it will be much more satisfactory to all concerned. It should represent a saving of money to the State compared with the expenditure incurred in previous years. Some considerable time ago legislation was passed ratifying an arrangement with the Federal Government under which the latter agreed to provide a subsidy on the pound for pound basis with a limit of £2,600 to deal with the medical inspection at ports in connection with venereal diseases. The Federal Government last year notified us that they did not intend to provide any further funds under that arrangement, and they made their decision retrospective over a period of three months. Thus in December last the State Government found themselves without the Federal subsidy, and with the necessity to meet additional expenditure that we thought would have been recouped to us by the Federal authorities. There were other commitments that had been entered into and which the State Government had to carry over the next year, without the advantage of any subsidy from the Federal Government.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: What happened at the seaports? Did the Commonwealth Government provide no money at all for the services rendered?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Nothing at all. The Federal Government entered into an international agreement to undertake this work at the ports. They did so without consulting the State, and now the State has to shoulder the expense. We have made repeated attempts to get the Commonwealth Government to carry out the responsibilities attached to the international agreement, but so far we have not been successful.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: It was a pretty harsh action for the Federal Government to take.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Not only have the State Government to provide treatment when necessary under the provisions of the agreement, but we also have to make arrangements for transportation of patients to the next port. It will be within the memory of some hon. members that we had considerable difficulty at Geraldton in connection with some Chinese who were left with us. This arrangement is proving a very costly one. As it is, the State will have to accept the responsibility for the time being, until we succeed in inducing the Federal Government to accept their proportion.

Mr. Coverley: You should stand up to the Federal Government.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Perhaps the hon. member will be able to tell me how we can do so more than we have already done. The matter was taken up with the Prime Minister, and when the last medical conference was held at Canberra, we asked the Commissioner of Public Health, Dr. Atkinson, to take the question up with the medical authorities there, but unfortunately we have not been able to secure any arrangement satisfactory from the State's point of view. Of course, we have the pound for pound subsidy still in connection with buildings that are erected, but the buildings are of a cheap class and we are not compensated for the additional expense. During the year, we maintained, as far as we could, the service as previously carried out, but I think the treatment extended to us by the Federal authorities has been most unfair. I thought it advisable to mention the matter to hon. members so that they would be acquainted with the position, and realise what treatment has been meted out to the State authorities.

Hon. J. C. Willecock: But it was a legal obligation on the part of the Federal Government.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Yes; it seems to me a shocking state of affairs. One Government apparently can commit another Government under the provisions of an international agreement and then, after carrying on for a while, withdraw and throw the financial responsibility on to the other Government, which had never been consulted in the matter.

Mr. Coverley: It is more than shocking.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: It was a rotten thing to do. We can get no consideration. I have particulars regarding the various items of expenditure, and I shall be glad to reply to questions hon. members may desire to ask. During the year the financial situation necessitated the closing of the psychological clinic. At the time, I gave an undertaking that the clinic would be left in its entirety so that if in future it was possible to provide the money to carry on psychological investigations again, the instruments and other requisites would be there intact. Recently a request was received from the University authorities for permission to use the equipment. If that permission is granted, it will be on condition only that the instruments and equipment are used where they are in the clinic at present, and that those who use them can satisfy us that they are able to do so without risk of injury to the plant. Thus the valuable instruments installed will be available in the future when we carry on psychological work again. I regret that the finances to-day will not permit of that being done.

MR. RAPHAEL (Victoria Park) [5.22]: I cannot see any reference to the subsidy paid to the dental clinic.

The Minister for Health: Are you dealing with an item?

Mr. RAPHAEL: No, I am speaking generally on the Estimates. I cannot find any mention of that subsidy and shall be glad if the Minister will let me know where provision is made under that heading.

HON. S. W. MUNSIE (Hannans) [5.23]: I have to admit that I cannot understand the Estimates. I am sorry to say that the explanation the Minister has furnished has simply made it clear as mud.

The Minister for Health: But they are the same old Estimates, put up in the same old way.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: The Minister may think so, but I want further information before I shall be satisfied on that point. Regarding the Minister's statement with reference to the treatment of lepers, I believe that, in the interests of the patients and of the State as well, the Government acted quite properly in accepting the offer of the Federal authorities and in transferring the lepers to the lazarette at Darwin. My six years' experience with the Medical Department demonstrated to me that there is not the slightest doubt the treatment of leprosy represents a special branch of study, and that there are very few doctors in Australia who know anything about that treatment. In those circumstances, seeing that there is available at Darwin an expert medical man who has made leprosy and its treatment a lifelong study, I believe the Government acted quite correctly when they entered into the agreement outlined with the Federal Government. I believe the new arrangement will prove less expensive to the State, and all lepers will be treated in the one compound at Darwin. I will not discuss the general financial position in relation to the Health Department, but I would like some explanation regarding the financing of the Health Estimates. I will put one interesting question to the Minister, and I hope he will be able to answer it satisfactorily. If he can do so, it will be of great benefit to many members of the Committee. When the Estimates for 1930-31 were before us, and during the year when the Hospital Fund Bill was under consideration, I protested against the attitude adopted by the Government in commandeering the entertainments tax and devoting the proceeds to Consolidated Revenue instead of to the hospitals. The Premier, who was supported by the Minister for Health, said that the Government had allocated £36,000 for the maintenance of public hospitals, that being the estimated amount to be received from the collections of fees charged to patients. That applied to Government and public hospitals, not to committee-run hospitals, because the committees in charge of such institutions used the financial returns received to conduct the hospitals themselves. The Minister for Health supported the Premier when he suggested that the Government would receive £36,000 a year from those collections. At the time

I said that, in my opinion, the Government would be exceptionally lucky if they collected £6,000, let alone £36,000. They estimated that the Government would receive £156,000 from the hospital tax. Half of that amount would represent £78,000, to be collected in the half year. The other day the Minister informed me that the collections for the half year commencing on the 1st January and ending on the 30th June had amounted to £64,834. That statement has been repeated to-day, so that the Government are rather short of expectations under that heading. I cannot understand why the Government were of the opinion that they would collect £36,000 from the public hospitals after they had introduced the hospital fund legislation under which people were compelled to pay the hospital tax, and in respect of which the Government guaranteed free treatment to the majority of the people who were to pay that £36,000. It is beyond my comprehension as to how or where the Government thought they would get that amount. What has happened? The Premier took away £38,000 that had been collected under the heading of entertainments tax during the previous year. He introduced amending legislation and the tax was doubled, so that the Premier anticipated getting double the amount of revenue, which would be paid into Consolidated Revenue. Then he was charitable enough to give the hospitals £36,000. In 1929-30, the last complete financial year when no hospital tax was levied, £40,572 was collected in fees at the public hospitals. For six months of the financial year 1930-31, when the hospital tax was imposed, the collections fell to £23,856, or in other words, £16,716 less than was collected in the previous financial year. The Premier this year estimates to receive £18,106 less than he collected last year. And on these Estimates the Premier is estimating to receive £5,750 in fees—not the £36,000 that he said he was giving to the hospitals. Strange to say, they are the only figures in the Estimates that can be made to balance in any circumstances. As a matter of fact, if we take the £16,716 less than was collected for the half-year of this year, the last financial year to which these Estimates apply, and the £18,106 less that the Premier estimates to get this year, together they make £34,822. If we subtract that from what was collected in 1929-30, we get the amount for which the Premier is budgeting this year, £5,750. Still, but on the last Estimates and

on the Hospital Fund Bill the Government boasted that they would collect £36,000 per annum from hospital fees. It was not possible. They have not done it, and they cannot do it no matter how long they may remain in power. Now I am coming to the question I referred to, and to which I hope the Minister will be able to give a satisfactory reply. The figures on the Estimates show that there was spent from Consolidated Revenue last year £108,575. But they have not spent it; there is no doubt about that. I asked in the House what amount had been spent out of Consolidated Revenue for the maintenance of the hospitals during the whole of last year, and the reply I got was, £47,860. As a matter of fact, we have the balance sheet submitted to us this year, the same as last year, regarding the entertainments tax, and we find that for the first half of the year the Government spent £47,786 from Consolidated Revenue. The total amount is £47,860. So since the introduction of the hospitals tax they have spent £74 from revenue. There is no doubt about that, for here in the Estimates is the balance sheet giving the amounts spent and showing how they were spent. The total amount is £64,530, of which £16,744 was from entertainments tax, the balance of £47,786 being from revenue. The total amount spent was £74 more than that for the whole year. And, most remarkable, we find in these Estimates the line "Amount rebated to hospital fund."

The Minister for Health: You will get a balance sheet for that later.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: It will be a very interesting balance sheet. If we turn over the page we find the Vote "Public Health," which comes under the hospital fund scheme. There again we find the line "£500 rebated to the hospital fund." The question I want the Minister to answer is, how has he paid £89,562 from £64,834?

The Minister for Health: I cannot do it.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: If you cannot do that, you cannot explain your own Estimates.

The Minister for Works: He would require to go back to school and start all over again.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: It would be very interesting to learn how any Government can pay £89,562 out of £64,834. Certainly the Minister would require to go to school again and learn new methods of arithmetic.

The Minister for Works: It is high finance.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: Yes, and it is the same right through the Estimates. There is scarcely a page of these Estimates whereon there is not a rebate to some fund. When we go through the Estimates to find out what money has been collected in this fund we discover that in most cases the rebate is nearly double the amount of the fund to which it has been rebated. Without wishing to be offensive, I say these Estimates are absolutely incorrect, are misleading to the public. Can the Minister explain these Estimates and let us know really what money he has spent? The Estimates show the total expenditure under the Medical Vote as £204,499. And underneath that we get the line "Rebate to hospital fund £142,500." Yet they have collected only £64,000 in all. I suggest that the reason for it is this: the way in which the Medical Vote estimates and the Unemployed Relief estimates are drafted here shows where the Premier has got his 22½ per cent. reduction on public expenditure—he has been spending from loan moneys. There is no doubt about it. This is all very misleading. The Minister will not argue that he spent out of Consolidated Revenue last year £108,575.

The Minister for Health: No, the amount is £85,362.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: That is what you rebate to the hospital fund. You give the whole expenditure here as £108,575, and your estimate of the expenditure this year is £63,000. These are Revenue Estimates, and where it is shown that the money has been spent out of revenue, it should be the amount that has been spent, it should not be faked. I say these Estimates are faked. They are not true, not a correct record of the department's functions.

The Minister for Health: The same old accountant is still there.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: I do not care what accountant may be there. In many places in these Estimates, I think on the front page summary of every Vote, there is given this year an extra column in which we are taken back to 1929-30. Why go back to 1929-30?

The Minister for Health: That is to show that the 20 per cent. reduction is being made in conformity with the Premiers' Plan.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: That was the explanation given by the Premier the other

night. However, I do not wish to argue from that standpoint. If the Government are honestly carrying out the Premiers' Plan, it is necessary to show in these Estimates the actual expenditure of last year. But the Government insert a column showing that they expended £108,000 from revenue—when they know they have done nothing of the kind—and then rebate £89,062 to the hospital fund, moneys collected by the tax, when they have collected only £64,000. I want to know how it is done. Perhaps the Attorney General, who has just come in, can explain it.

Hon. P. Collier: He has trouble enough of his own immediately ahead of him.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: I want to know from the Minister to what he is rebating this £89,062. In the Estimates we are told it is being rebated to the hospital fund. It is not possible to rebate that amount to the hospital fund, for the Minister admits—we have his reply to my formal question—that he collected only £64,834. So, certainly the £89,062 is not rebated to the hospital fund. I want the Minister to explain how he comes to show an expenditure of £108,578 from revenue. It certainly needs some explanation. Then there are one or two minor points about which I should like some information. If the Minister will turn to last year's Estimates he will see there in the same balance sheet of entertainments tax that there was unallocated £1,417. This balance sheet shows the actual amount collected for the half-year. But they have brought forward £1,146 out of the unallocated amount of £1,417. Where is the discrepancy, nearly £300? What has become of it? Is it unforeseen expenditure, or have the Government spent it somewhere else? For this latest balance sheet of the entertainments tax is the last we shall see in this Parliament, because it is to be taken into Consolidated Revenue. Last year they had an undistributed balance of £1,417, and this year they show £1,146. What has become of the difference? It is not to be found in the Estimates, for I have been all through them in search of it and have consulted the Public Accounts and still cannot find it. Also I have asked outside accountants how they can rebate a fund to an amount greater than the fund itself: and they have said it cannot be done. But seemingly it has been done here, for it is shown on the Estimates

as having actually been done. Will the Minister explain it—if he can? Now one other thing I wish to say: I know the Government are having a strenuous time in finance, that they are hard up against it, but undoubtedly the Minister did promise, even last year when the Estimates were before the House, that the Infant Health Department would not suffer by the introduction of the Hospital Fund Bill. Things were not then as bad as they are now, but four months after that, when the Hospital Fund Bill was before the House, the Minister again said definitely that the Infant Health Department would not suffer through the Hospital Fund Bill, that their money would be kept as it was then. The Government have applied the 20 per cent. reduction to the different infant health centres, and personally I am very sorry that they have done so. If there is any expenditure in the State that is justified it is the expenditure directed towards preventing sickness rather than curing it. We are spending a fair amount of money every year on sickness, and the hospital tax is applied in that way; everything is devoted to the work of curing people that have become ill. On the other hand the expenditure from the infant health vote is directed towards rearing a healthier community, particularly healthier children, and giving them a better start in life and in that way preventing them from contracting the many diseases children are heir to. A few weeks back I was pleased to read a statement by the Minister in which he lauded the work of the Infant Health Association. The Minister quoted figures that are nothing short of remarkable, when he mentioned that 78 per cent. of the babies born in Western Australia last year attended one or other of the infant health centres. That, indeed, is a remarkable record. It is also very satisfactory to notice that infant mortality is dropping each year. This also is due almost entirely to the work performed by the infant health associations. Therefore I am sorry indeed that the Government have had to take the step of reducing the vote by 20 per cent. Instead of receiving £100, a centre will now get only £80 each year. You, Mr. Chairman are aware from the knowledge gained in your own district, and I, too, am aware from experience obtained throughout the State, that many infant health centres were having a difficult time, and that it was

hard for them to maintain clinics in their districts, even with the subsidy of £100 a year. Now the centres are being deprived of 20 per cent. and they are being set a much harder task than was theirs in years gone by, when it was possible to collect a fair amount of money. The mere fact of the Government reducing a subsidy becomes an incentive to people to reduce their subscriptions. I hope the Minister will seize the opportunity to restore the subsidy to its original amount, and so render greater assistance to prevent sickness instead of in the direction of curing it.

MR. RAPHAEL (Victoria Park) [5.50]: I wish to add a few words in support of what has been said by the member for Hannans about infant health centres.

The Minister for Lands: The hon. member has already spoken.

The **CHAIRMAN**: No, the hon. member merely asked a few questions.

Mr. RAPHAEL: There is an infant health centre at Victoria Park, and it has had a hard struggle for years in this working man's suburb. On any day of the week there may be seen there a crowd of women and children who avail themselves of the opportunity to receive that aid they are not able to get in other directions. I notice by the Estimates that it is now proposed to abolish the subsidy granted to the dental clinic. I have gone carefully through the Estimates, and I find that the item has been omitted. I do not know whether it is the intention of the Government not to pay that subsidy, but certainly it does not appear on the Estimates. If it is the Minister's intention to stop the subsidy this year, I hope he will reconsider his decision, and decide to grant, not only the £900 that has been given to the dental hospital in the past, but, in view of the unemployment that prevails and the urgent need there is for additional assistance being rendered, the amount will be increased to £1,500.

The Minister for Health: How are we going to get the money?

Mr. RAPHAEL: The money should be found because this is an urgent necessity. The care of the teeth should receive greater consideration at the hands of the Government. We have the spectacle every day of people going to the hospital in need of attention. Most of these people have doctor's certificates which set out

that attention must be given them immediately, but we find they are turned away. Even in the Attorney General's own electorate I heard of the case of a man who is breaking up chiefly because he requires this attention and is not able to get it. At the present time a small subsidy is granted to this hospital, but the people are charged practically the same fees as are asked by outside dentists.

The Minister for Health: You know the hospital does honorary work.

Mr. RAPHAEL: Undoubtedly the operators there are honorary dentists, and additional work is being done by apprentices. The apprentices have to pay a huge premium and while serving their term receive no wages. The work could be done there for 50 per cent. of the charges imposed at the present time. The charges amount to pretty well the same figure as those imposed by outside dentists. That being the case, it is absurd for the Government to stipulate that before an upper and lower denture can be turned out by this hospital a fee of four guineas must be paid.

The Minister for Health: That is not so.

Mr. RAPHAEL: It is the Government's instruction to the hospital that this charge must be made.

The Minister for Health: Nothing of the sort.

Mr. RAPHAEL: That is what they say.

The Minister for Health: Well, it is not true; we have nothing to do with it; it is a board of control that governs it, just like the Perth Hospital Board.

Mr. Panton: You are getting the blame for it, anyway.

Mr. RAPHAEL: That is what these people are told when they go there for attention, that the Government's instruction is that a fee of four guineas must be charged. As long a period of 18 months has elapsed in the case of patients who have had their teeth removed before they have been able to get them replaced. Even when some of these patients have made application for the teeth to be replaced they are told that the Government will not permit the work to be done until a fee of four guineas is paid.

The Minister for Health: Well, that's cheap.

Mr. RAPHAEL: It is not cheap; it could be done for unemployed people for half that amount, and a profit shown. It

is a different proposition when a man has to pay the full fee for outside professional attendance, because then the mechanic has to be paid as well. At the hospital the young apprentices who receive no wages do the mechanical work in most instances. I consider that one-third of what the dental hospital charges should be quite sufficient. If necessary, I can supply figures to the Government to show that what I am stating is correct. I appeal to the Minister to put an amount on the Estimates to enable indigent people to receive free dental attention. In every other country of the world there are free dental clinics. I trust the Minister will do something more than smile benignly on us, and that he will see that action is taken in the direction of assisting people who have had their teeth extracted, to have them replaced free of charge. In times such as these not many people can afford to pay four guineas.

MR. COVERLEY (Kimberley) [5.55]: I wish to offer a few remarks on this Vote to show the Minister that all country hospitals are not satisfied with the treatment they receive, as he would expect us to believe. He told us that there were no complaints from country hospitals, but there is one in my electorate that has been carried on purely by voluntary subscription since its inception many years ago, that has now cause for complaint. The hospital was very much appreciated by the people of the district—I refer to Hall's Creek. After the inauguration of the hospital tax, those who had been in the habit of subscribing towards the maintenance of the institution, ceased to do so; and rightly so, since they contend that if they pay taxation towards the upkeep of hospitals it is the duty of the Government to finance the hospitals, this particular one as well as those in other country districts. On behalf of the Hall's Creek Hospital I have written on several occasions to the Minister controlling the hospitals department, to inquire what financial assistance would be given to this institution. On each occasion I received the usual departmental evasive reply, and to this moment I have not the faintest idea what the Hall's Creek Hospital is likely to receive. I am making these few remarks because I do not wish it to appear in "Hansard" that

the Minister's remarks about no complaints having come from country hospitals have not been challenged. The Minister also made reference to leprosy in the North: I have a slight knowledge of the existence of the disease by reason of the fact that there is a lazarette in my district. The attention that is being given to those who are suffering from leprosy in the North could not be improved upon, even though the member for Hannans (Hon. S. W. Munsie) declared that there are very few people in Australia who have the professional ability to deal with the disease. I declare that the doctor in Derby has been responsible for the cure of many cases. I do not wish to be misunderstood.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: The lazarette has not been in existence at Derby for the last three or four years.

Mr. COVERLEY: That is so; it was transferred to Roebourne. It is one of the places where Governments in the past have wasted money. People in the district complained that natives suffering from leprosy were not properly isolated, that they were permitted to mingle with the other natives. They were receiving the best of attention and the doctor in Derby turned out many cases as cured. There are several natives in the district who have had the disease and who show no signs of a recurrence of the complaint. No doubt the decision to move the lazarette from Roebourne was a wise one if it means a saving of money.

The Minister for Health: It was also to provide expert advice.

Mr. COVERLEY: I care not what the expert advice at Darwin may be; no more could be done for the natives there than was done by the doctor at Derby.

Mr. Marshall: They can kill them much quicker at Darwin.

Mr. COVERLEY: When the Government were contemplating the transfer of the lazarette from Derby, they should have considered the request by the road boards to make a thorough examination of all natives in the Kimberley district. I know the departmental attitude to a proposal of that kind; it is that immediately an inspection of the kind is suggested, the natives will run away and hide in the ranges. Probably that is correct in certain circumstances, but if the doctor at Derby, and a local identity who had manifested some sympathy towards the natives, had been sent out, and had taken

the precaution to advise the different station managers when they would be calling, every native within miles of the place would have been there to be inspected. They would have had no fear of the local doctor. If a doctor were sent from the city, however, he would be a stranger, and the natives would regard him as one likely to order their confinement to some part of the country about which they know nothing and desired to know nothing. If I were told that I was to be examined and I was afraid of being confined somewhere for the rest of my life, I would take some catching, too. Unless a thorough inspection is made of the natives throughout the Kimberley district, the present expense will recur. Only now and again when a native is found suffering from the disease in an advanced stage is he sent into hospital, and the Government have then to incur the expense of transferring him to Darwin. Had the advice of the road boards been adopted and an inspection made, the whole of the affected natives could have been shipped to Darwin at the one expense.

MR. WITHERS (Bunbury) [6.5]: I support the remarks of the member for Hannans (Hon. S. W. Munsie) against the reduction of the subsidy to the infant health centres. There was a definite undertaking by the Government to contribute £100, provided the local authority contributed £25 towards the formation and upkeep of a centre. If the Government repudiate their part of the contract, the local authorities will be quite justified in asking that their share of the subsidy be reduced 25 per cent. Were that done, I do not know how long the infant health centres could be kept open. Those institutions have done magnificent work. The records show that, since their inception, infant mortality has decreased considerably. The expenditure is amply justified because of the medical expense that is obviated in after years. The Government are saving only £265 by reducing all the centres in the State, and that is not true economy. It means £20 to each centre, which is not much to the Government, but is a large sum to a centre struggling to get contributions for its maintenance. I attended a meeting of the Bunbury centre yesterday. The institution there is hard up for funds. With the reduction of the Government subsidy, the unemployment distress prevailing, and the hopelessness of appealing to

the public for funds, it may be necessary to close a centre in an outlying district. The Bunbury centre extends its operations to Donnybrook, and the sister there gives advice to mothers living miles inland. Thus the centre has proved helpful, not only to visiting mothers, but to mothers far removed from the centre. I hope the Minister will try to restore the £20 a year to each centre and encourage the people who have devoted so much of their time, energy and interest to keeping those institutions open. It has been difficult to educate the people, and particularly the mothers, to the value of the infant health centres, but to-day they are beginning to realise the value. If, through a reduction of the Government subsidy, it becomes necessary to close some of the centres, it will be difficult to re-establish them in future. I understood that the Hospital Act provided that a married man receiving less than £230 a year was entitled to free treatment in a Government hospital. I brought a case before the department of a man who had received an account for £12 odd for treatment for his wife in the Bunbury hospital, although he had earned only £175 in the last 12 months. The department have advised him that he does not come within the provisions of the Act, and have requested him to make arrangements to pay the amount. The Government should keep faith with the people. Does it mean that free treatment is not to be given in Government hospitals, although a hospital tax is charged? I hope the Minister will explain the position. If people are taxed for hospital treatment and are eligible to receive treatment, they should not be worried with accounts as that man has been.

MR. SAMPSON (Swan) [6.10]: I had hoped that the Minister would refer to the operation of the X-ray equipment provided at Wooroloo Sanatorium during the last 12 months or so. The funds were subscribed by the patients, staff, visitors, the Wooroloo welfare fund, and various well-wishers. For a long time the patients at Wooroloo have been at a disadvantage because of the absence of X-ray equipment, as it was impossible to observe the progress of the disease with any degree of certainty. A modern X-ray plant was essential if the resident medical officer and other medical men were to do their best for the patients. I know this matter is near to the heart of the Min-

ister. I think the member for Hannans was Minister when the Wooroloo welfare fund and other organisations first discussed the matter, and we received from him considerable sympathy. Later a deputation waited on his successor, the present Minister, and he, notwithstanding the financial difficulties of the State, reaffirmed the promise of an £800 subsidy towards the purchase of the equipment. At a later stage the money was made available. The installation of the plant marks a big step forward in the organisation of the institution for the treatment of T.B. The committee, throughout their efforts to raise the necessary money, received the greatest assistance from the resident medical officer, his assistant, and the matron. Many of the staff gave of their spare time to organise various efforts to raise funds. It is not an easy matter in times like the present to raise £800, but the united efforts proved successful. The practical assistance rendered by the patients themselves was a tribute to their recognition of the importance of the equipment. For many years the need for installing X-ray plant had been recognised. A medical man who visited the sanatorium expressed the view that until such equipment was provided, it would be impossible to give the requisite scientific and expert attention to the patients. I hope the Minister will give us information of the results that have followed the installation of the plant.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH
(Hon. C. G. Latham—York—in reply)
[7.30]: The member for Hannans has asked me to explain some figures. This I am unable to do. I do not understand why the amount is shown as £1,146 brought forward from the previous year in connection with the entertainments tax, when for the year before the amount was £1,400. I will make inquiries and see what has become of the money. We have not changed the account, and the accountant has not been instructed to fake the figures, as suggested by the hon. member.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: You admit you cannot understand the figures yourself.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: In all probability the £89,000 shown in the second last column under the heading of "increase" should be shown as a decrease. The figure

for last year was £204,499, of which we expended £197,637. From that £197,637 we have rebated to the hospital fund £89,062.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: How have you done that when you have only collected £64,000?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Some of the money came from more than one source. For the first half-year we had the amusement tax as well.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: If you add the amusement tax to the actual amount you collected, you still will not get £89,000.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I make it £88,690.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: You have given the balance sheet showing the expenditure. That was before you got the hospital tax.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: The revenue for the last half year was made up of £64,834, plus £23,856, represented by patients' fees. Some revenue came in from other sources. That would not represent the whole of the revenue.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: It is the whole of the revenue from anything.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: From these two sources. I am sorry the notes I have do not set out in detail how the whole of the revenue is made up.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: How do you show in the revenue column an expenditure of £108,575?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: We have spent that.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: Not from revenue.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: The £89,000 was made up of money from other sources.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: But these are the revenue Estimates.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: There is shown a rebate from the other fund.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: It shows a rebate from the £197,000. There is still left £108,000 you are supposed to have spent from revenue.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: During the year ended 30th June Consolidated Revenue provided a sum of £104,294 towards hospitals. During the last financial year £47,860 was provided, and during the current year no expenditure is debited against the Estimates for hospital services. For the last financial year the gross amount drawn from Consolidated Revenue was £71,716. Against this hospital revenue, particularly patients' fees, produced £23,856,

leaving a net amount of £47,860. I would say, therefore, there are other sources of revenue, probably in the shape of fees.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: The Minister must not forget that he did not receive the £23,000. That was collected prior to the Hospital Fund Act coming into operation, and it went into Consolidated Revenue.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: The hospital fund produced a revenue of £64,834. In addition there was paid into the fund £15,247, made up of patients' fees collected in the hospitals that are departmentally managed, making a total credited to the trust fund of £80,081 12s. 1d. Out of this amount the whole of the hospital services for the half year were maintained. At the 30th June there was a credit balance remaining in the fund of £4,254. The figures are difficult to follow, but when the Auditor General's report comes along it will show whether the amounts have been misplaced or not. The Hospital Fund Act provides that a balance sheet shall be made out and audited and presented to Parliament annually. I have tried to find out when the balance sheet will be presented. I hope that will be during the week. I will do my best to ascertain how the expenditure was made up.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: The balance sheet should show how the money was spent.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: There were some complications. During January we had to take money out of Consolidated Revenue for the maintenance of our hospitals. We also did this during part of February. The first money did not come in until about the 10th February. There would, therefore, be approximately eight months during which these rebates would have to be taken.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: But you only started on the 1st January: eight months did not elapse by the 30th June.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: The money was not available. We had to start from nothing. The difference between what we actually collected and what was taken from Consolidated Revenue had to be refunded to the Treasury. A good deal has been said about infant health centres. I am very sorry there is any necessity for a reduction in the vote. The legislation that was passed recently made it obligatory upon the Government to reduce all these grants.

It was a condition of the Plan that all adjustable expenditure should be cut down by 20 per cent. I do not anticipate that any infant health centre will be closed during the year because of the reduction.

Mr. Kenneally: They will find it hard to keep going.

Mr. Sleeman: There is a possibility that some centres will have to close.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I hope not. I agree with the member for Hannans that the cheapest method is to start the children off well so that they will not require hospital treatment when they grow up. A deputation representative of the various bodies in the metropolitan area waited on me the other day, and assured me that they would be able to carry on during the year. It is expected that those who have entered into leases of buildings will be able to get a reduction in their rents. If they have borrowed money they will get a reduction in the rate of interest. I know of one body that has borrowed money for a building. There will be a reduction in interest in that case. When the whole thing is adjusted it will not be the loss of Government revenue that will necessitate a closing of any of these centres. The question is whether the people will be able to provide their quotas towards the maintenance of these centres. One of the places that ought to be able to maintain an infant health centre is Collie, but that centre was closed during the year. Per head of the population there should be more money in circulation in Collie than in any other of our towns.

Mr. Marshall: The earning power at Collie has been enormously reduced.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Only recently. Fremantle and other places are bravely carrying on this good work. We shall give all the encouragement we can, but the difficulty will be to get the necessary funds collected. I do not think there is much room for complaint with respect to the hospital at Hall's Creek. The agreement that was entered into there was, I think, arranged by the member for Hannans when he was Minister.

Mr. Coverley: Yes.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: We have undertaken with these people that although they have entered into an agreement to do certain things, because of the legislation that has been passed we will find them

the amount required under the Act for the maintenance of patients who will receive benefits therefrom. I am surprised to know that we have not given these people some consideration. I will look up the papers and see what the position is.

Mr. Coverley: The department have given evasive answers to our communications.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I am surprised at the hon. member accepting evasive answers.

Mr. Panton: We are surprised that you should allow evasive answers to go out.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I am not always responsible. If the hon. member has written to me he cannot say I have not given his letters my personal attention. Neither can he say that my replies have been evasive.

Mr. Sleeman: Your replies are always of a non-committal character.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: The last time I wrote to the hon. member, he expressed appreciation of the nature of my reply. The X-ray plant at Wooroloo has been in operation for some time, with great benefit to the patients, who formerly had to be brought to Perth for examination. The work is now done on the spot.

Mr. Marshall: There is a human X-ray at Wooroloo, the Chief Resident Medical Officer.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I regard him as a very good man indeed, who has given satisfaction to everybody.

Mr. Marshall: I think he is the best officer you have.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I am glad to hear the hon. member say that. I have seen the plant at Wooroloo, and I understand that it is of the greatest benefit to patients. However, it is impossible to supply at once all that is required throughout a large State like Western Australia. During the administration of my predecessor a huge amount of work was done, but we have not now the necessary funds.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: The X-ray plant at Wooroloo does not represent treatment.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: No.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: It gives the medical man opportunities to observe the progress of cases.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Yes, to watch the cases. The Government endeavours to administer the hospital fund as equit-

ably as possible among the various institutions. With a new scheme, however, it is difficult to give consideration wherever it is required. I shall hasten the production of the balance sheet of the fund, because I recognise that the Chamber is entitled to have it.

Items, Chief Resident Medical Officer £1,020, Assistant Resident Medical Officer £465, Secretary £465:

Hon. P. COLLIER: These three items show increases. I fail to understand the figures, as I am not aware that any increases in salaries have been granted during recent months.

The Minister for Health: I think the increases refer to the residences of the officers. Residences are being charged for now.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The items show substantial increases, whereas all other salaries show substantial decreases by reason of the reductions which have been made.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Emoluments are now paid in cash, whereas previously house rent, for example, was given. House rent is now included in salary.

Hon. P. Collier: And rent is being paid?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Yes, rent is charged. In the case of the Assistant Resident Medical Officer the increase is due to a change-over.

Hon. P. Collier: All these officers are residents?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Yes, and the values of their residences are now charged.

Hon. P. Collier: That applies to all three items?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Yes.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Public Health, £30,345:

Item, Infant Welfare Centres, £1,600:

Mr. SLEEMAN: The Minister seems to think the centres will be able to carry on during the year, but the probability is that some of them will have to close. The reduction made in this item appears frivolous relatively to Government finance generally. There are not many clinics in the State, and the gain will be inappreciable. The Subiaco Municipal Council grant £100 from municipal funds to each centre, but the Fremantle Municipal Council do not grant any-

thing like that amount. People who have supported the Fremantle clinic liberally in the past are not able to give now. As a result the Fremantle clinic is in debt. I fear that during this financial year the institution will have to close unless additional funds are provided. Money might be taken from the succeeding item for the purposes of this one. The hands of the Federal Government might be forced to make a grant in respect of the succeeding item. Apparently the Federal Government call the tune and this State has to pay.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Fremantle in the past has raised considerable sums for its hospitals. Knowing the difficulties of the port, the Government took over the responsibility for the Fremantle Hospital and found practically the whole of the funds required to maintain the institution. In addition, several thousands of pounds have been paid by the Government to meet arrears.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: But for years the Government gave an annual subsidy of £6,750 to the Fremantle Hospital.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: The present Government have contributed to the upkeep of the Fremantle Hospital a good deal more than has been collected through the hospital tax in Fremantle.

Mr. Sleeman: But the Fremantle Hospital, like the Perth Hospital, treats patients from outlying districts.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: The vote is provided out of Consolidated Revenue, and if I went to the Treasurer a dozen times I could not at present secure more money for it. If things improve, I shall see what can be done.

Item, Venereal Diseases treatment, upkeep of clinics, payment for medical service, drugs, etc. £2,750:

Mr. MARSHALL: In his introductory statement the Minister said that the Federal Government had an agreement of an international character relating to the control of venereal disease, and that while the Federal Government made all arrangements for treatment and so forth, they left the State to foot the bill. What is the exact position? The State, if it has to pay, should have a say in the making of the arrangements. The State is better situated to deal with the matter.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: The arrangement, which was made at a Geneva

conference, refers to seafaring men at ports. They are to be treated; and if they are able to proceed to the next port of call without further treatment, they are to be given enough to last them to that port. The agreement between the State and the Commonwealth was that each should provide 50 per cent. of the expenditure, £2,600. This agreement continued until December, 1930, when the Commonwealth notified us that after the expiration of the financial year they would be unable to make any further payment. That left us three months in arrears. They paid us quarterly prior to that. When the first quarterly payment was due, we found we had no money to come from the Federal authorities, for they had cancelled the agreement without consulting us. We had to face the position as it was before the international agreement was entered into. I understand there was always some provision made for treatment of these patients at our ports before the international agreement was arrived at, but under that agreement a set of conditions was laid down that had to be strictly adhered to. To-day we are limited in our funds, due to the fact that we had to incur considerable expenditure.

Hon. S. W. Munsie : Before the international agreement was entered into, there was nothing to compel the State to provide clinics.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: And I do not think there is anything in the international agreement to compel the State to do so. I think it is an obligation that rests upon the Federal Government. The fact remains that the agreement has been cancelled without consultation with the State regarding the financial effect. In all probability we are committed to the international arrangement, without deriving any corresponding benefit. Although we have taken this matter up with the Federal Government we have not secured any redress. When Dr. Atkinson was at Canberra a few months ago, I asked him to go into the question again and in a note he submitted to me he said—

Representations, both in writing and personally, have been made, but although verbal promises have been given for a revision of the matter, nothing has materialised. The department has consequently had to review its methods, and reduce its payments as far as possible, seeing that the State has now to bear the whole expense.

We are endeavouring to maintain the whole of the outfits we provided for this work.

Mr. Marshall: Under our laws, treatment is compulsory.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I do not know that it is compulsory to provide them with free treatment.

Mr. Marshall: Seamen are subject to our laws once they enter our ports.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I do not know the exact position; perhaps the hon. member knows more about it than I do. I have merely attempted to give the facts to the Committee.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: This is rather peculiar. The Minister has correctly told the Committee that the Commonwealth Government agreed to provide a subsidy on the basis of £1 for £1 up to a maximum of £2,600. They abided by that agreement religiously. I draw the Minister's attention to the fact that last year the Government spent £3,900. The Federal Government have cut out the subsidy and now the Minister provides £2,750 for the current year, or a reduction of £1,150. Can the Minister give us any idea of how he will carry out this work without the Commonwealth subsidy, seeing that he has reduced his own Estimates?

The Minister for Health: We have not had any expenditure since June.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: Has the Minister consulted the Principal Medical Officer regarding the possibility of providing the medical treatment specified under our laws? Thanks to a former member for Pilbara (Mr. Underwood), we have the most up-to-date laws under this heading that operate in any part of the world. Notification of venereal diseases is compulsory in this State. Can the Minister provide the treatment specified in the Act in view of the reduced vote?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Yes. Hitherto free treatment has been provided for everyone suffering from these diseases. That is not being done now, and people who can afford to pay for treatment are required to do so. We provide the accommodation and charge fees accordingly. If a person cannot afford to pay, he will probably be debited with the charge, but will not be forced to pay. It is anticipated there will be a considerable saving due to the fact that we are now levying charges. We were forced

to do something of the sort when the Commonwealth subsidy was taken from us.

Mr. MARSHALL: I understand that under our legislation treatment of venereal diseases is to be free.

The Minister for Health: No; we went into that phase.

Mr. MARSHALL: But our Act provides that we shall provide free treatment. The Health Act permits a medical practitioner to levy charges and if he is not able to secure them from the patient, he can secure a recoup from the Government.

The Attorney General: The only compulsion is on the individual to undergo treatment.

Mr. MARSHALL: And we compel him to be treated free.

The Attorney General: No, we merely compel him to be treated.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: As the hon. member knows, these diseases are notifiable. We do not compel the individual to receive treatment at our clinics, but if he is not able to secure treatment by a private medical man, we compel the patient to attend a clinic. I raised this particular point with the authorities, but after reference to the Act, the Crown Law Department said there was nothing definite regarding free treatment.

Mr. RAPHAEL: I want the Minister to give me an assurance regarding the matter I dealt with earlier in the evening.

The Minister for Health: You are too late now.

The CHAIRMAN: We are dealing with a later item. I cannot allow the discussion.

Vote put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: By way of personal explanation, I want to assure the member for Victoria Park that I am sorry I omitted to give him the information he sought when I was replying. Money is provided under the Hospital Fund Act, and £900, less 20 per cent., has been set aside for that purpose.

Mr. Raphael: Then you are not going to provide anything in addition?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: No, we cannot afford it.

This concluded the Estimates of the Medical and Health Departments.

Department of the Attorney General (Hon. T. A. L. Davy, Minister).

Vote—Attorney General, £72,734:

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. T. A. L. Davy—West Perth) [8.10]: I do not think I need take up much of the time of the Committee in general observations regarding the Estimates for the Attorney General's Department. There may be some matters about which some information will be required, and where it is within my power to do so, I shall be pleased to furnish it. The Attorney General's Department is not a large revenue producer. The principal sources of revenue, upon which it depends for contributions to the public purse, are probate duty and liquor licenses, each of which is estimated to produce something in the neighbourhood of £70,000.

Hon. A. McCallum: What about street betting? The fines derived from that source represent one of the biggest items of revenue.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: If the hon. member examines the position carefully, he will see that the department is not compensated by a large amount. I do not think it would be wise for any Government to base Estimates on the expectation of their citizens breaking the law.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: You are collecting about £113 a week.

Hon. A. McCallum: Prosecutions regarding street betting and other offences constitute one of the principal functions of Government to-day.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I do not think that represents quite an accurate statement. No one would suggest that citizens have been prosecuted with a view to raising revenue.

Hon. A. McCallum: Quite a lot of people are making that suggestion.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Probably those who have been prosecuted.

Mr. Kenneally: When you are short, you send the police out on a foraging expedition.

Mr. Marshall: That is what they say, too.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I do not really think the hon. member suggests anything of the sort. If that accusation can be laid at the doors of the present Government, it can be made equally against the Labour Government, because the same activities were manifest then. With regard to probate, that represents at all times a matter of guesswork. There may be a substan-

tial variation in a particular year because of the deaths of a number of wealthy people. On the other hand there may be a considerable reduction, because not many people have died.

Mr. Wells: There are not many wealthy people to die.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The Estimates this year may not be reached, because, for some extraordinary reason, in these hard times people are dying with less frequency.

Hon. A. McCallum: They cannot afford it.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: In fact, the undertakers regard the position somewhat seriously.

Hon. A. McCallum: People cannot afford to call in the doctors.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: A suggestion has been made by somewhat malicious persons that because people cannot afford to pay doctors' fees, they are safer nowadays from the skill, or lack of skill, of the medical profession. The law courts themselves constitute a source of revenue, and strangely enough in hard times—perhaps I should not say "strangely," but rather "naturally"—the revenue is affected in two ways, one adversely and one favourably.

Mr. Sleeman: People cannot afford to consult solicitors.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: In times such as these, litigation is less and the fees derived from fought cases are less. On the other hand, there are many people who cannot pay their debts, and thus there is an added volume of business in the Local Courts. The expenditure of the Attorney General's Department is difficult to reduce. There is a reduction shown in the Estimates due to the reclassification and the financial emergency legislation. Retrenchment has been achieved where possible. Unfortunately, we have had to reduce expenditure on such things as law books, although there we have taken care to keep going all the periodicals which come in from year to year, since any cessation of purchasing would make a break in the series. One item of expenditure which tends to rise is the defence of destitute persons under the Poor Persons Legal Assistance Act. Naturally, at a time such as this, there are far more people unable to finance their own litigation, and we have had a very large number of requests, all

of which have been granted in proper cases, for assistance to enable persons either to claim or to defend their rights.

Mr. Sleeman: Have you struck out divorces?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: No, we have not struck out divorces, but when the amount available is limited, that sum, I think, ought to be restricted to the preserving of a person's rights to property, or liberty, rather than be extended to what is frequently the luxury of divorce.

Mr. Kenneally: Very often liberty is concerned there, too.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: It may be, but we have had some very astonishing requests in the way of applications for assistance to people to secure divorces. I had one case in which a man, an inmate of the Wooroloo Sanatorium, desired to be divorced from his wife. When I pressed him for the reason why he wanted this divorce, he said that once he got the divorce he would get out and go home to England. Perhaps that might have been a very good reason, but I do not think that, at a time like this, we ought to spend money on such cases.

Hon. M. F. Troy: How could marriage prevent him from going to England?

The Minister for Lands: He has to get his wife's permission before he leaves the State.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Members will agree that where there is only a limited sum available for this purpose, we must carefully scrutinise the way in which it is spent. It seems to me that expenditure on defending people charged with crime, which might mean imprisonment, or to enable people to assert some genuine claims to property or money, or expenditure to enable persons to defend their rights, is very much more important than that we should spend it on litigation for a change of status as a citizen. However, if circumstances show that failure to secure a divorce will inflict hardship, we approve. I think I need say nothing more of a general nature on these Estimates. I will be pleased to answer questions that may be asked me. I should point out, however, that these Estimates were prepared and set up in print before the Financial Emergency Act was passed; therefore members will notice that the reduction in the columns is the reclassification reduction, and that the additional reduction brought about by the Financial

Emergency Act appears in a separate figure in the second last line of page 59, the amount being £6,574. That necessarily has to be added to the reclassification reduction in order to bring it up to the 18 per cent., 20 per cent., and 22½ per cent. respectively.

HON. J. C. WILLCOCK (Geraldton) [8.20]: I do not propose to discuss these Estimates at any length, but I did think the Government would have had something to say in regard to the amalgamation of the electoral rolls. The State rolls are controlled by this department. The previous Government made three attempts to secure an amalgamation of the rolls, Federal and State. It would have meant a very considerable convenience to a great number of people, and would have saved the joint taxpayers, Commonwealth and State, a large amount of money. The legislation introduced for the purpose by the previous Government was rejected, I think, purely as the result of political party prejudice. I can see no other reason for it. While, perhaps, that might have been justified at that stage, it can by no means be justified at this stage, when we have to take every conceivable step towards efficiency and economy. The amalgamation of the rolls would mean a very considerable difference in the cost of printing and stationery, and would afford great convenience to the electors. It has been achieved in every other State in the Commonwealth, and there is no reason why it should not be achieved in this State. It is only a matter of bringing down a Bill to give the Government power to make the necessary arrangements. Just as the necessary papers in regard to the State Savings Bank have been in the office of the Treasurer, so, in regard to the amalgamation of the rolls, the whole thing could be taken up and carried through within two or three weeks, for probably very little time would be required to put the necessary Bill through Parliament. Naturally, the officers and staff in the State Electoral Office would have their rights and interests preserved. The services of the Chief Electoral Officer for the State no doubt would be availed of by the Commonwealth in the event of the rolls being amalgamated. The Government should give serious attention to this project. As I say, I was disappointed when the Minister failed to give us any indication of the intentions of the Government in this respect.

One other matter which the Minister did not touch upon is the question of legal costs which lawyers are entitled to claim. There is, of course, a set scale of fees, and 10 or 12 years ago the Executive Council gave approval to amended Supreme Court rules entitling lawyers to charge 20 per cent. more than the fees set out in the scale. A time of financial stress such as the present is an opportune time to repeal that provision for the 20 per cent. increase which was allowed 10 or 12 years ago. I notice it is estimated that the revenue from liquor licenses will be increased by £15,000.

Hon. P. Collier: That is impossible.

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: I, too, think it is impossible, but it is here set down in cold print. Perhaps it includes some proposed increased taxation of licenses. If so, the Premier undoubtedly should give the House the information. But I do not think it could have been in the Treasurer's mind to impose increased taxation on liquor licenses, else he would have told us something about it. If there is to be no increased taxation, I cannot see the slightest possibility of the Government receiving £15,000 more from liquor licenses than they received last year. At a time like this, when the spending capacity of the people is seriously reduced, there does not seem to me any possibility of this estimated increased revenue, being received. It may be a clerical error, but the forecast is here in the Estimates. In going round the country, particularly in my own electorate, I learn that the hotelkeepers are finding it almost impossible to carry on. They have to pay an increased excise duty on beer, the sales tax has risen from 2½ per cent. to 6 per cent., and their turnover has substantially decreased. So, as I say, I see no chance of the Government realising this estimate of increased revenue.

The Minister for Railways: There was something wrong with last year's collections.

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: Did not the estimated amount of revenue come in?

The Minister for Railways: I am judging by the previous year's collections. There was a tremendous falling off last year.

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: Naturally. These days, with thousands of men out of work, and consequently with no loose spending silver, liquor is a positive luxury.

Mr. Angelo: Would it not come in as taxation?

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: There is a minimum margin of 5 per cent. on the gross proceeds; that is the only taxation.

The Attorney General: But it depends on the sales.

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: No, it depends on the annual rental value. If a man is paying £1,000 in rent, the minimum license fee is £100, but if 5 per cent. of his purchases amounts to £100, he has to pay an extra amount.

The Attorney General: But these licenses depend on sales, nothing else.

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: No. I went into this matter the other day in my own electorate, and I found that the minimum license fee is more than the 5 per cent. of the licensee's purchases.

The Attorney General: There may be a few such cases.

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: In these times, with a decreased turnover, the licensees find that the minimum license fee is just about equal to 5 per cent. of their purchases. Of course it would make very little difference. However, the Minister for Railways thinks there was something woefully astray in the small revenue derived last year. I think it is only natural in this luxury trade, which largely depends on a man's loose silver.

The Minister for Railways: But there was such a large reduction.

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: It was pretty heavy, but if the hon. member were asked to say whether it was not to be expected, he would reply that it was. It is common knowledge that the trade done in city hotels is not half as great as it was two years ago. Naturally the revenue will be decreased by something like that amount. There is no occasion for surprise that the revenue from licenses should decrease by 25 per cent. There is reason for surprise that the Treasurer should anticipate an increase of over 25 per cent. from licenses this year. The Minister referred to the amount of money available for the defence of destitute persons. I suppose we may take it for granted that if an increased amount is required, it will be provided within the limits of the policy laid down by the Minister.

The Attorney General: We will not allow any just cause to go undefended.

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: The expenditure last year was £224 and the amount estimated

this year is £100. I am glad to have the assurance of the Attorney General that no just case will go undefended.

MR. MARSHALL: (Murchison) [8.32]: In these times when the Government are so desirous of economising, they might well give attention to the sum of over £2,000 paid to the licensing board out of Consolidated Revenue. I admit that there is shown a recoup recoverable from the Licensing Compensation Fund of £2,938. Many members believe that the board have rendered valuable service to the State. With that I agree, but the board have outlived their usefulness. In rendering the State service, the board have made many serious mistakes. I do not know how much money remains in the compensation fund, but 12 months ago it was only a small amount, and the whole cost of the board will become a burden on the taxpayers. The time is opportune to abolish the board. They have not performed the service that some members imagine. An unfair comparison is often made between the liquor trade under existing legislation and under the old law. When the board came into existence they had new legislation to work under, and the extra powers conferred and the reforms insisted upon made it possible for them to improve the trade. I believe we would have got equally good service from the licensing magistrates had they had similar legislation to work under. The board will become a financial burden that we cannot afford. No money is being paid into the compensation fund now. Payments to it ceased three or four years ago; consequently there has been a drain on the fund. I think the Attorney General must admit that little money remains in the fund. I object to the Licensing Board developing into a board of architects. They possess no professional knowledge and yet they set out to stipulate what sort of building shall be erected, where the windows shall be situated, and what size the rooms shall be, just to make themselves appear to be of some importance. At Wiluna a licensee was compelled to add six rooms to his premises. He asked the permission of the board and, after much trouble, obtained it. The board demanded plans and specifications. One would think that Wiluna was an up-to-date city with architects, surveyors, accountants and everything else, instead of a small town of

a couple of hundred people. Still the board had to appear important and they demanded plans and specifications. Who was to draft them, goodness only knows. There was no one at Wiluna to do it. Eventually plans and specifications were obtained, and provision was made for windows to be opposite the doors, which was the right thing in such a climate in order to get a current of air. The board, however, objected, and insisted on the windows being placed immediately alongside the doors. I wish the three members of the board could be locked in one of those rooms on a hot summer day. They interfere in matters that they know nothing about and act as persecutors. In my electorate some years ago they visited a little town having two hotels. One had eight permanent boarders and was making a profit of £700 a year; the other had no boarders and was showing a loss. Those facts were placed before the board, but the board closed the popular hotel and allowed the other to continue. That is the sort of treatment we have received from the board. The warden in my electorate has a better knowledge of the hotel requirements of the district than the board have or are ever likely to have. Apart from those considerations, the cost of the board is too great. The licensing magistrates could do the work equally well under the existing law. The board would never have secured the improvements in the trade if they had had to work under the old law. Their success has been entirely due to the greater powers conferred by the existing Act. If the board went out of existence to-morrow, they would never be missed. The licensing magistrates could do the work better, especially in places far removed from the city. In the metropolitan area the magistrates are more fully occupied than are the wardens in the country, and the board might be more suitable there. The wardens are closely in touch with the requirements of the district, the climatic conditions and the desires of the people, and can cater for them better than the board, who put in most of their time in the larger centres. I should like the Attorney General to say how much money is left in the compensation fund. Assuming the fund has been exhausted, do the Government intend that the expense of maintaining the board shall be cast upon

the taxpayers? If so, I shall oppose the continuance of the board.

The Minister for Railways: The whole three members have had goldfields experience and know something about it.

Mr. MARSHALL: I could give the Minister instances of their work such as I have quoted of Wiluna. There was much correspondence about the Wiluna case, but the board had their own way.

HON. M. F. TROY (Mt. Magnet) [8.43]: Contrary to the member for Murchison, I must speak a good word for the Licensing Board. The board are the servants of Parliament and of the State, and when we find them doing good work, we should support them. Despite the experience of the hon. member, I find that the board have done good work in raising the standard of hotels generally. Throughout the back country there is a distinct improvement in the accommodation of hotels, in their cleanliness, and in the general control.

Hon. P. Collier: They were dog kennels in years gone by.

Mr. Marshall: That was under the old law. Now you have the new law.

Hon. M. F. TROY: I think the Government who created the board should be commended on what has been achieved for the country. In the past the administration was unsatisfactory, and it is a striking fact that to-day there is less dissatisfaction regarding the licensing law in the back country than ever there was. In the old days complaints against the magistrates were many, but in the last few years I have noted an utter absence of complaints among the people who come into contact with the board. That is the best indication as to whether the board are giving satisfactory service or otherwise. If, as the member for Murchison says, the magistrates were competent to do this work, why did they not do it when it was their work? Magistrates administered the Licensing Act for many years.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Not this Act.

Hon. M. F. TROY: They administered the licensing laws of the country.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: They could only carry out the law as it stood.

Hon. M. F. TROY: The magistrates were also assisted by justices. Frequently the decisions given were unsatisfactory. I know of an instance in which two justices, probably not altogether disinterested, upset the

decision of a magistrate in respect of the granting of a license. Licenses were granted which ought not to have been granted.

The Attorney General: Justices used to demand the right to sit on the bench when particular licensing applications were coming along.

Hon. M. F. TROY: The administration was very unsatisfactory. This board has done magnificent work. There has been an utter absence of complaint in the back country. Mistakes have been made, because it is only human to make mistakes, but in the main, members of the board have done good work. They have insisted upon the standard of accommodation and comfort at hotels being materially raised. There is a cleanliness about these establishments which did not pertain in the old days. A magistrate was not as independent as is this board. A local man comes into contact with local people by reason of his living amongst them. When a man is living amongst people he cannot be altogether unbiassed. This board is a very independent organisation, and is entirely removed from the environments to which magistrates are subject. Environment has a considerable influence upon our actions. The change has been a good one for Western Australia, and so far as I can see the results have been very beneficial.

MR. ANGELO (Gascoyne) [8.48]: I am glad to hear the remarks of the member for Mt. Magnet. I have frequently had to travel around Western Australia, and have often noticed the remarkable change in the conditions associated with country hotels. I have also taken visitors from the Eastern States into different country centres, and they have remarked that our hotels are better than anything they have in the other States. It appears to me that the board have a good influence upon the trade. When a man is granted a license it is made clear to him that he enjoys a monopoly for a certain section of the country, or portion of a town or for the town itself. In return for that monopoly he is made to understand he must provide for the travelling public. How many of our country hotels carried out their duties before the advent of the board? We ought to congratulate the board on the excellent work they have done, not only in the country but in keeping our metropolitan hotels up to standard until, for their size, they are equal to anything in Australia.

HON. A. McCALLUM (South Fremantle) [8.50]: I appreciate the work done by this board. I have travelled a great deal over Australia during the last few years, and say without hesitation that our country hotels are easily the best in the continent. The present Act is different from the old one. I had some experience on the Licensing Bench in Perth for many years, sitting with local magistrates. Our present Act gives great power, and gives the board wide functions and authority, that the old Act did not give. Those who talk of having men of local influence and local knowledge on the bench to deal with licensing matters are really advocating the worst thing that it is possible to have when dealing with licensing problems. The local element is the worst feature of a licensing court. Particularly is this so in small communities such as we have. The bench used to be comprised of a magistrate and two justices. They lived in the community. They were the friends of those who held the licenses and they mixed with them in their daily lives. Those interested in the trade came before the bench, and when decisions were given, these were discussed in the community in which the justices lived. Those who were on the bench were part of the community although they sat upon the bench. It makes the position of a local bench very difficult and makes their lives as citizens almost intolerable. The local element is a wrong one to have in a licensing court. A State-wide court is the best that could be devised for the control of all licensing matters. The proposal has frequently been advanced that the court should be limited to one individual. I hope the Government will never try to bring that about. Some people advocate that one man should have charge of the whole of the licensing business. We all know in this Chamber, that when we have been discussing licensing questions a great deal of influence has been brought to bear upon all members. Even when it has been a question of only a small amendment that has been brought down we know the force of outside influence that is brought to bear. We also know the possibilities that are open in connection with this trade if once it were placed in the hands of a single individual. Whether the individual was one who would listen to reason, or was as straight and honourable as it was possible for a man to be, there would be all sorts of rumours and innuendoes fol-

lowing upon his decisions. The community could not have confidence in any one individual such as is possible in the case of a bench of three. The problem is a difficult one. So many interests have to be met. The trade enters into the life of such a big section of the community. It is essential that the board should be composed of men whose decisions will be beyond reproach, and that the public should have the greatest possible confidence in them. If we have a bench comprising one man, he could not command that confidence which a bench of three can do. The cost may be a little more, but the cost is not so much a Governmental one, because the trade pays a certain percentage of the salaries given to members of the bench. Even if all the money had to come out of revenue, the work being done by the board, and the need there is for having a court that is absolutely independent and above suspicion, would warrant the expenditure of the money. I do not say the court has not made mistakes. Its members would not be human if they did not make mistakes. So long as anyone tries to do anything, he is sure to make mistakes. As has often been said, the only individuals who do not err are those who do nothing. As soon as people attempt to do anything they are sure to make mistakes. This board has done good work both in the city and in the country. The law has proven a pretty effective one. It would be a grave mistake to make any alteration to the constitution of this board.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. T. A. L. Davy—West Perth—in reply) [8.55]: I agree with the member for South Fremantle that it would be a great mistake to revert to the old system. If we are to have our licensing laws properly administered and controlled, and a continuity of policy in the administration of the law, we must have a certain amount of centralisation. We could perhaps devise a scheme whereby we could have one member of the licensing bench who, with local men, could constitute the court in each place. We might then get continuity. I am also inclined to agree that to impose the whole duty of administering these laws upon one individual might be a little risky. This board has undoubtedly done good and important work. That is by no means, as suggested by the member for Murchison, entirely due to the new law. The old licensing

magistrates had ample powers. The amendments of the law consisted largely of the introduction of the licenses reduction portion of the Act. The old law gave the licensing magistrates full power to insist upon proper buildings, and the due observance of the obligations of the licensed victualler towards the public, quite apart from the enjoyment of his rights. In fact, if there had been one central authority administering the old Licensing Act, it is quite likely there would never have been a new Licensing Act. The board consists of three human beings, and that is enough to show that they must have made mistakes. I remember being told on one occasion, when the licensing magistrates were inspecting a northern hotel during very hot weather, that after doing their work very thoroughly they told the plump and good-natured lady licensee that everything was very nice, but that she really must get a bath-heater installed. The lady threw up her hands and said, "Bath-heater! We have to put ice in the water before we can use it." No doubt this was so as the water supply ran through pipes on the surface for about half a mile. That is a mistake that may have been made at times. No doubt the members of the bench enjoyed the joke against them as much as the lady did.

Mr. Marshall: How much is there in the compensation fund?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Not much more than enough to keep going for this year.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: About £1,000.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The time is not far distant when the expense of the court will have to come back upon revenue, but whilst the money is there it might as well be used. It would be impossible to try to distribute the surplus funds amongst those who might claim a share of them, but whilst the money is there we might as well use it for this purpose. With regard to the joint rolls, I am anxious to see them established. I do not agree that the measure which has been referred to was defeated because of any question of party prejudice. There were certain difficulties connected with it which caused it to be shelved. I do not see how party could enter into it.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: Nor could we.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Then why suggest it?

Hon. P. Collier: Two or three members over there led the Opposition to it for party reasons.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I do not think the Leader of the Opposition would suggest that when we were in Opposition we were accustomed blindly to oppose all legislation.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: It was not in this House.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I have not an intimate technical knowledge of the mysteries of another place, but I say it is a commonsense thing, when two particular Acts can reasonably be combined and administered by one body, that this ought to be done. I am not keen on seeing the joint Electoral Department handed over to the Commonwealth.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: Only in connection with the rolls.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Almost every single thing the Commonwealth do, they do more extravagantly than the State. I fear that if this matter is handed over to the Commonwealth, and the rights of State officers are conserved, we shall get the same department with double the staff and double the expense.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: That is the case now.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Yes. I want to see the work delegated by the Commonwealth to the State. That is the end I am aiming at. Let the rolls be done by our department, who do everything in a much simpler and more economical manner than the Commonwealth. The next point raised by the member for Geraldton was lawyers' costs. I hope that in the course of next week there will be a "Gazette" notice setting forth considerable reductions. The delay is due to the fact that one set of costs, litigious costs, is regulated by the judges only, while another set, conveyancing costs, is fixed by the judges and the Barristers' Board in conjunction. I anticipate that the "Gazette" notice will show a substantial reduction in both sets of costs. For legal aid to poor persons, there is a small sum on the Estimates; but the Chamber can rest assured that if there is any money for anything, no just case will be denied relief. The legal profession have gallantly played their part in making the administration of the new law a success.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: That is so.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Where there is an urgent case, a competent practitioner has invariably been found prepared, on receipt of a telephone message, to rush in and do the job. I wish to express my appreciation of the manner in which the members of the profession have done their duty. It was their moral duty; but they have assumed it legally, and have played the game remarkably well. This applies especially to half a dozen practitioners who have spared neither time nor effort to see that persons were properly represented in civil as well as in criminal cases. In a recent case a person charged with a serious crime was, at short notice, defended thoroughly well by a young lawyer; in fact, so well that I sent the lawyer a letter of appreciation. The man was duly convicted, but only after every single thing that could be advanced in his favour had been adequately stated. It is most important that no person should appear in the dock on an important charge without a thoroughly adequate defence being offered.

Item, Magistrates, £9,540:

Mr. ANGELO: Last year there were 16 magistrates, and this year there is the same number. Some time ago the Government withdrew the magistrate from Carnarvon on the score of economy. I do not see much economy in this item. The Gascoyne district made a protest; but when the Attorney General gave an assurance that the withdrawal was solely on the ground of economy and would be only temporary, no further complaint was made. Still, the Vote shows five additional clerks, representing an increase of £1,405, as against a decrease of only £1,156 in the salaries of magistrates. The Gascoyne is a highly important district, and now has to be satisfied with an occasional visit from the Geraldton magistrate. Why has it been necessary to provide five additional clerks while retaining the original number of magistrates? I ask the Attorney General to restore the Carnarvon magistrate as speedily as possible. That official has to deal with not only cases from Carnarvon, but cases from a huge district running back nearly to Meekatharra and containing 15,000 people.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: At the time the magistrate was withdrawn, if that

is the proper word, from Carnarvon, there was a terrific congestion in the metropolitan courts. Cases representing about a year's work had accumulated, and it became necessary to have another magistrate for the purpose of clearing up arrears. The reason for the arrears is that when people are poorer than they were, more petty legislation arises, more summonses are issued. When I looked around to see where a magistrate could be spared, I noticed that Carnarvon was doing only the tiniest amount of work. Upon consulting the magistrate as to whether the continuance of a full-time magistrate for that place was necessary, I was informed that it was not. When I further investigated whether the Geraldton magistrate could work Carnarvon as well as Geraldton and the other centres visited by him, he said, "Of course I could." One must move with the times. There is an aeroplane service which takes the magistrate in three or four hours from Geraldton to Carnarvon. He needs to go to Carnarvon only rarely. The Government have never withdrawn the magistrate from Carnarvon, but have merely decided that there, as in other parts of the State, one officer shall work various towns. There are still 16 magistrates, but it is quite on the cards that the number will be reduced in the near future. The Act relating to stipendiary magistrates will, I hope, be proclaimed almost immediately. The measure will not cover the whole of the 16 magistrates, provision being made for only 13, as it would be quite unsuitable to appoint stipendiary magistrates at two or three centres where the resident medical officer exercises magisterial functions as well. The increase in the number of clerks is apparent, not real. Five or six of the clerks are not employed by the Crown Law Department, but are on loan elsewhere. I had hoped to reduce the number, but the local court work has increased tremendously during these strenuous times, because of the huge amount of petty litigation. On the other hand, Supreme Court work has tended to fall off. The Crown Law Department has always been so well administered—I say this without flattery of my predecessor—that it is highly difficult to discover how economies can be made apart from reduction in salaries.

Item, Associates, £960 :

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: Provision is made for four associates, and also for four ushers. Have the Government in mind the appointment of a fourth judge? I do not wish at this stage to say anything regarding the vacancy caused by the death of the late Chief Justice, nor shall I at this opportunity congratulate the present Chief Justice, who I believe will follow in the steps of his predecessor—and that is saying a great deal. For some considerable time before the appointment of the last judge, three judges were able to carry on. The Attorney General has said repeatedly that under present conditions there is a greater amount of petty litigation, but that the big cases dealt with by the Supreme Court judges have decreased considerably.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The intention is not to make an appointment just at the moment. It is so refreshing to be able to save a little money by not making an appointment, that we are tempted not to do it. I think, however, it would be highly undesirable to endeavour to establish it as a permanency that there shall be only three judges. One cannot constitute a proper court of appeal with three judges. Particularly is that the case when there is a court of criminal appeal. If there are only two judges sitting as a court of criminal appeal and they happen to disagree, the horrible position arises that the man who has been convicted finds, on appeal, one of the judges expressing the opinion that he ought to be let off, and the other expressing the contrary opinion. That is most undesirable because in such circumstances the original verdict stands. Therefore it would be wrong to have only three judges as a permanency. For the moment the Government have been shelving the issue in order to save money. Perhaps we can go on doing that for the time being.

Vote put and passed.

This concluded the Estimates of the Attorney General's Department.

Department of Public Works and Labour (Hon. J. Lindsay, Minister).

Vote — Public Works and Buildings, £24,655 :

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. J. Lindsay—Mt. Marshall) [9.15]: I agree

with other hon. members who have said that Estimates are hard to understand. I said so on the first occasion I dealt with them in this House, and I have reported that statement on every occasion the Estimates have been before Parliament since I have been a member. Although I have had the advantage of advice of departmental under-secretaries and accountants, I am not quite sure that I understand them yet. It puts me in mind of my reading of "Hansard" many years ago when Estimates were being dealt with. At that time the member for Albany was the late Mr. R. T. Robinson. He was heckled somewhat, but Mr. Robinson explained that it was his first attempt to deal with the Estimates and, while apologising for the fact that he was a new member, he asserted that he did not quite understand them. The member for Hannans (Hon. S. W. Munsie) interjected that he had been in Parliament for many years longer than Mr. Robinson but could not understand them himself.

Hon. P. Collier: Estimates are not prepared to be understood; you would never get them through if they were thoroughly understood.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Estimates this year show a considerable reduction. They deal with many other departments as well as the Public Works Department. The Estimates are so intermixed as between departments that the reduction is more apparent than real.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Yes, 76 per cent.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That is just why I want to give hon. members some information. I do not want them to think it is possible for one department to affect a reduction of 76 per cent. The total Estimates for the year 1929-30 amounted to £113,998 and in the following year to £100,529—not a very great reduction. The real reduction in the latter year was in connection with works and maintenance. In 1931 the Government entered into a new agreement with the Federal Government, the effect of which was to amend the original Federal Aid Roads Agreement. The outcome of the amended agreement was to reduce the expenditure from revenue by £32,000. Again, in that year the grants to local governing bodies had to be reduced, and that accounted for another £21,000. In those two items alone a large proportion of the reduction of £91,941 is accounted for. Furthermore, there was the departmental

reorganisation. Since I became Minister for Works there have been some changes in the department. The Railway Construction Branch has been removed from the Works Department to the Railway Department. The effect of that was to reduce the expenditure and also the revenue of the Works Department.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: And automatically railway construction ceased.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The probability is that if I had thought that in the future there would have been money available for railway construction, the transfer would not have been quite so easy.

Hon. P. Collier: What has happened to the railway construction officers; have they been retired or transferred to the Railway Department?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: A saving of £5,100 was effected in the department by the transfer of those particular officers to the Railway Department.

Hon. P. Collier: What are those officers doing there?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Minister for Railways will be able to answer that question; I cannot do so. It will be seen that the Estimates for this year under the heading of Engineering, Architectural, Clerical and General, total £74,751. The Estimates also show the amounts provided for other departments. In that regard I must, as I did last year, apologise for the appearance of figures in the increase column instead of in that relating to decreases. The figures given as increases should really appear as decreases. There has been a misprint.

Hon. A. McCallum: You have saved yourself; we had it marked.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The real reduction is shown on the last page. For the year 1930-31 the expenditure totalled £48,648. This year the estimated expenditure is £24,655. That expenditure is allocated as follows:—Salaries, £4,880; wages, £2,080; money expended on works, £11,275; and the amount of money provided for buildings, £6,420. The Works Department spends a fair amount of money from the Sale of Government Property Trust Fund and also from Loan Funds for other departments. The position is that last year the money expended from revenue on public works and buildings amounted to £48,648; the operat-

ing expenses on other hydraulic undertakings, £24,326; and the operating expenses on the goldfields water supply, £128,038, making a total of £201,012. The expenditure on other hydraulic undertakings refers to the operating and other expenses incurred in the running of various town water supplies not controlled by water boards, and the maintenance of drains and irrigation works. The expenditure from the Sale of Government Property Trust Fund totalled £114,401 and the expenditure from Loan Funds, £324,511, making a grand total of £639,924. The loan expenditure does not include railway construction, these works having been handed over to the control of the Railway Department about the middle of last year. The only works of magnitude carried on during the year were—

	£
Fremantle Harbour Works—reconstruction and renewals of wharves, and supply of additional gantry loaders	46,265
Geraldton Harbour Works	45,000
Goldfields Water Supply—reconditioning and deviations of the 30in. mains	17,000

The new works put in hand included—

Construction of Harvey irrigation works	39,354
Waroona irrigation work	36,000
Wellesley River canalisation works	14,772
Drainage at North Coolup	3,278
Herdsmen's Lake drainage, etc.	9,098

Owing to the shortage of funds, it was not possible to undertake the erection of any buildings other than minor works. It was, of course, necessary to curtail the staff. The number of officers, both permanent and temporary, in the employ of the department on the 1st July, 1930, was 351, and on the 1st July, 1931, 254. The expenditure on salaries last year was £100,529, while for the previous year it amounted to £113,988. It must be remembered that when an officer is retired payments do not in all instances cease immediately. Obligations have been incurred with regard to recreation and long-service leave, and at times retiring allowances and pensions have to be provided for. The amount paid in lieu of leave to officers retired last year was £5,143.

Hon. P. Collier: Does that expenditure on wages and salaries include main road expenditure?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The money is apportioned out in various direc-

tions but the Main Road Estimates are not included.

Hon. P. Collier: They are separate.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: So far as I am aware, yes.

Hon. P. Collier: At any rate, those Estimates are not included in these.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I assume they will be before the House in another way; I am not quite sure.

Hon. P. Collier: Well, we must have them in some form.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Quite so. The reduced expenditure this year is made up as follows:—

	£
Saving due to retirements and transfer of Railway Construction Branch	16,850
Saving under reclassification	5,320
Saving under Financial Emergency Act	7,052
Other consequential savings	5,337
	<hr/>
	34,559
Less increases—Director of Works, etc.	1,729
	<hr/>
Showing a net saving	£32,830

There is, as members will appreciate, little room for economy in the direction of retrenchment in the staff charged with the maintenance of the Goldfields Water Supply and other hydraulic undertakings. The staff required for collecting revenue has to be maintained and cannot be reduced to any extent. The estimated gross expenditure for this year, after allowing for reductions in consequence of the reclassification, is £74,751, and after making reductions under the Financial Emergency Act, it is estimated at £67,699. The amount is allocated as follows:—

	£
Transfer to Loan Account	30,312
Transfer to Sale of Government Property Trust Account	5,052
Further reductions made for services rendered for the Metropolitan Water Supply Department, Fremantle Harbour Trust, trading concerns, Main Roads Board, Plant suspense account, Workers' Homes Board, and Lands Department	4,716
Transfer to Goldfields Water Supply revenue section	9,699
Loan water supply undertakings	2,300
Other hydraulic undertakings, revenue	2,531
Loan Funds, hydraulic section	8,209
	<hr/>
	£62,819

The total transfer of £62,819 leaves, as a charge to Consolidated Revenue, £4,880, the amount charged to revenue last year being £7,617. The total provision on the Revenue Estimates for public works and buildings, inclusive of salaries, is £24,655, being a decrease of £23,993. Then there is £118,192 on account of the Goldfields Water Supply undertakings, a decrease of £9,846, and £21,731 in respect of other hydraulic undertakings, a saving of £2,595. Thus the total provision amounts to £164,578, which is a reduction equivalent to approximately 22½ per cent., not the large percentage indicated in the summary of the Estimates. The amount collected by the public works section of the department last year was £35,894, whereas this year the estimated revenue will amount to £18,000 only. The reduction is mainly due to the fact that the Railway Department has taken over the construction of three lines and took credit for the freight receipts earned whilst the lines were under construction. The Goldfields Water Supply receipts last year totalled £161,602, and the estimate for this year is £170,000. Although the collections from country lands decreased last year, the revenue from the mining industry increased. The revenue derived from other hydraulic undertakings last year was £39,424, while the estimated revenue for this year is £45,000. The arrears of water rates from district water supplies, excluding extensions from the Goldfields Water Supply scheme, on the 30th June of this year totalled £21,625, as compared with £3,270 on the 30th June, 1930. That indicates the difficulties under which settlers are labouring in order to meet their commitments. When speaking the other evening on the Revenue Estimates, the Premier referred to the road to Yanchep Caves as being constructed to a pleasure resort. The Estimates provide £20,000 for that road.

Mr. Sampson interjected.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It will not be on the Loan Estimates. The money does not come from loan funds. The Leader of the Opposition referred to that point and I assume for the moment that the position is in order. It will be seen from the Estimates that they include provision for the salary of the Director of Public Works and the Chairman of the Main Roads Board. Although a good deal has been said about the road to the Yanchep Caves, I have visited the locality on two occasions with the mem-

ber for the district (Mr. Thorn) and Mr. Millington. The local authority took us round and showed us some very fine land. The reason why I authorised the construction of that road was, not to open up the caves or provide a pleasure resort, but for the purpose of opening up the land I had inspected in order to assist those on that land, and others who will be taking up more of it, to bring it under production. I have all the necessary information relating to the items, and I will do my best to answer any questions.

Mr. Hegney: Would that road be classed as a development road?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, I would so class it.

Hon. A. McCallum: What are you going to do about the Main Roads Board Estimates?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not know. I do not remember those Estimates ever being here.

[Mr. Angelo took the Chair.]

HON. A. MCCALLUM (South Fremantle) [9.31]: There is not much to be said about the Public Works Estimates of revenue, because the bigger activities of that department generally come under the Loan Estimates. While the Minister wandered off on the Government Property Trust Account and the Loan Estimates, really these items before us are dealing with salaries and very little else. The main Estimates of the Works Department come under loan or under the Government Property Trust Account, and now that the Main Roads Board are under the Public Works Department, their Estimates should be under discussion too. I hope it is not to be taken that Parliament is to have no say over the expenditure on main roads. Previously we have had a full-dress debate here each year on the expenditure on the main roads, and all information has been given.

The Minister for Works: On these Estimates?

Hon. A. MCCALLUM: I am not sure, but it must have been on these Estimates, because each year there was a big item provided out of revenue, some £30,000 or £40,000, and when in office we had to give full information about it. All members were told of the work being done in the electorates, and full information was given as to the amount to be expended and the roads to be

made. The whole scheme of the year's work was laid before Parliament. But there is no mention at all of main roads in these Estimates, only just the salary of the Director of Public Works, who is also the Chairman of the Main Roads Board. Surely Parliament is not to be told that it cannot have any say in the expenditure on main roads.

The Minister for Works: I am not saying that.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: Parliament must be asked to approve the Vote. Are we to be ignored? Where is the authority for such expenditure to come from, if not from Parliament? How is it to be approved, and how is the Auditor General going to pass it unless Parliament has sanctioned the expenditure? I do not know why it is not on the Estimates.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Even Mr. Munt does not know.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: This, I think, is the first occasion on which there has been no mention of it in the Estimates.

The Minister for Works: We are not going to take the amount out of revenue.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: Not anything at all?

The Minister for Works: No. Last year we had an amount of £32,495. That represented contributions out of revenue under the Act. Now, by the amended Act we have to pay nothing, except out of loan.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: It will not be loan money. It is contributed by the Commonwealth Government to the State Government. Are we to say that money is to be handed over to departmental officers to be spent without the authority of Parliament?

The Minister for Works: You never asked the authority of Parliament to spend money on any particular road.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: The whole of the information was given to the Committee. Every member knew exactly what work was to be carried out in his electorate.

The Minister for Works: I do not remember that.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: The hon. member, when on this side of the House, complained year after year. It was his speciality to complain of and criticise Main Roads Board expenditure.

The Minister for Works: That is right. But you never brought down any Main Roads Board Estimates.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: The Main Roads Board Vote, and the whole of the activities of the board, were discussed each year. But this year we have not a figure nor an item at all. Is Parliament to be set aside and have no control over it?

The Minister for Works: Do you mean to say that previously Parliament had the right to declare whether money was to be expended on certain roads?

Hon. A. McCALLUM: Of course.

The Minister for Works: Did you ever put up a programme to Parliament?

Hon. A. McCALLUM: Yes, the whole of the programme for the five years' work.

The Minister for Works: That was only for the local authorities.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: No. It was taken to Melbourne and approved by the Premiers' Conference, after which it was brought here and approved. How would the hon. member, when on this side, have been able to complain of the Main Roads Board work if he had not the information before him? When sitting here he produced letters between him and his own local authority complaining that the Main Roads Board had done certain work, whereas he wanted it done in some other locality.

The Minister for Works: That was not here.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: Yes, it was here. The hon. member discussed it here. Where is the item for discussion now?

Mr. Sleeman: That is like the Point Walter road.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: Yes, they have denied that, and they will deny this. That reminds me: The Estimates declare there has been a decrease of 76 per cent. in the expenditure. That is the Minister's wonderful re-organisation. He told us here that he was going to re-organise himself out of a job. But it is no indication of any real saving. The Minister has admitted that some of the expenditure previously shown in this department is now undertaken by the Railway Department. And whereas the Public Works Department was once a hive of industry, to-day it is like a morgue, for there is no activity going on there at all. It would be surprising indeed if there was not shown a marked reduction in expenditure on salaries, seeing that so little work is being done in the department, which is practically shut down. I disagree with the contention of the Minister that the Yanchep

Caves Board is anything but a pleasure resort, a job for holiday makers. Even to-day it is being boomed in the Press, and it is stated that they are to build a kiosk and rest house, and are going to cater for boarders. The Press are booming it as an attraction for visitors and tourists. It would be difficult indeed to build a road anywhere in this State which would not bring an extra block or two under cultivation; but the real object in building that road was to open up the caves and serve a pleasure resort, the same as the road to the National Park. It is an absolute waste of public money, considering the condition of public finance at the moment. The expenditure should never have been approved, and if Parliament had had a say in it the money would never have been voted. I wanted to have a word or two on some of the activities of the Main Roads Board, but there is nothing here to base it on.

The CHAIRMAN: The fact that Item No. 2 deals with the salary of the Director of Public Works, who is also Chairman of the Main Roads Board, will put you in order in discussing the activities of the Main Roads Board.

Hon. P. Collier: Should I be in order in inserting an item to deal with it?

The CHAIRMAN: No, I cannot go that far.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: I hope the Minister will afford us an opportunity and will give members some information about the work being done by the Main Roads Board. In years gone by the fullest information has been given to Parliament. Every member knew the whole of the work to be done under the five-year programme. That programme is now completed and it should be indicated to Parliament what is proposed for the second five-year period. We have no particulars whatever. Surely we are entitled to know what has been done with the money.

The Minister for Works: You mean the five-years' money?

Hon. A. McCALLUM: I mean what you are getting now. You are working now under the new arrangement. There is now no restriction from the Commonwealth Government. They hand over the money to the State Government, the only stipulation being that it must be spent on roads. Parliament is not given one word of information, not a figure to indicate what is being done

with the money. In the item providing for the salary of the Director of Public Works and Chairman of the Main Roads Board, it should be indicated how much of his time is taken up with main road work, and how his salary is divided between his two jobs.

The Minister for Works: The item explains that half his salary is drawn as Director of Public Works and Buildings, and the other half as Chairman of the Main Roads Board.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: Is it estimated that half his time is taken up as Chairman of the Main Roads Board?

The Minister for Works: Not necessarily.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: Here in the Public Works Estimates we have not a line of information regarding the other half of his duties. We have no particulars at all as to how he is spending the money under his administration, and what works he is doing during half of his time.

Mr. Pantou: Perhaps he is on part time now.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: The money is contributed by the Commonwealth Government and handed over to the department. Evidently it is being expended without any control by Parliament. We are not to have a voice in it. The Minister admits he does not know anything about it. I hope he will inquire into it and bring down a programme so as to let members know how that money is to be expended. We challenged the powers of the Main Roads Board when the Act was being amended, and I moved to curtail the powers of the chairman and give the Minister wide control. I argued that Parliament would have control of the Minister and that he should be the authority to expend the money. The Minister replied, "I now have that control and authority." Where is the money accounted for?

The Minister for Works: In trust funds.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: If the Minister has authority to expend the money, where does he get the authority?

The Minister for Works: From the Act.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: The Minister told us he would have control and that he would be responsible to the House. Where does the responsibility come in? We do not know what he is doing. No information has been given us. It is coming to a pretty pass if Parliament is not to be advised. Apparently the Government are establishing an authority for the expenditure of money removed from

Parliament. That is creating an autocracy. An individual is to have the right to expend money and not be responsible to the country! It is unheard of. We are entitled to have the information and I press for it. We should have an account of the work for the past year and the programme for the future. When we were in office no information was denied members. A plan was tabled and every member received a letter setting forth the works proposed in his district. Now it is all hidden up.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: There is no work.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: I am referring to the money collected by the Commonwealth Government under the petrol tax and handed to the State Government without any restriction, except that it be expended on roads. I shall have something more to say on Public Works activities when we come to the Property Trust Account. It is mainly under Loan Estimates that public works are discussed. These Estimates provide chiefly for salaries.

MR. THORN (Toodyay) [9.49]: The Yanchep Caves road has been mentioned, and in fairness to the Minister I should say a few words. I should like to dissociate the making of the Yanchep road from the road-making in the National Park. The Minister said at the outset that he would not undertake the making of the Yanchep Caves road unless a certain area of land was to be thrown open for selection. On one side of the road there are at least 13,000 acres and on the opposite side 17,000 acres. At the Wanneroo Show last year the Minister for Agriculture announced on the authority of the Minister for Lands that a certain number of blocks would be thrown open for selection. On that understanding the Minister for Works considered my request to make the road. The road is serving a number of settlers. The expenditure represented 100 per cent. labour, the material being on the job, and I understand the Minister was quite within his rights in constructing the road. The other day a party came to me and said, "The Minister for Works is pretty hot, making a road leading out to his wife's property, the Hon. Mrs. Lindsay." I do not think the Minister has ever met the lady. The member for South Fremantle recently mentioned the fine tracts of tuart country in various parts of his electorate, chiefly Spearwood. Exactly the same class of country exists at

Wanneroo, limestone country with tuart on the high land running down to peaty swamps. The whole of that land could be utilised even in the way of small blocks, as the member for South Fremantle mentioned. The idea in the mind of the Minister was to cut the land into blocks consisting of 5 acres of swamp and 50 acres of high land. It is said that vegetable production is overdone. There is no need for selectors of the land to go in for vegetables; it could easily be utilised for dairying. It is naturally-drained country; I have never seen such well-drained country all through the limestone and I am sure the Minister intends to throw areas open, for selection. We cannot blame the State Gardens Board for stepping in and trying to make the caves attractive. I have been informed that 30 men are employed there doing useful work in the way of opening up the caves and making them attractive. It is only fair to the Minister to stress the point that he said from the outset he would not entertain the idea of constructing that road unless the land would be made available for selection. He specially stressed that under no condition would he be a party to building a road to a pleasure resort.

HON. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [9.52]: I think the Minister, on reflection, will realise that he has not given the Committee one-tenth of the information to which it is entitled on a discussion of the Estimates. Indeed, no information at all has been given. The department are still carrying on some works, some railways.

The Minister for Works: Railway construction has been transferred to the Railway Department. I explained that to the Committee.

Hon. P. COLLIER: There are roads and other works such as drainage.

The Minister for Works: I gave you the information about drainage. No roads are provided for on these Estimates.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Apparently they are not to be provided for on any other Estimates.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Well, they have ceased.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Do the Government maintain that, because the Commonwealth have now made the money available for main roads unconditionally—what is the amount, about £250,000?

The Minister for Works: We estimate £20,000 a month.

Hon. P. COLLIER: In the region of a quarter of a million. Because the Commonwealth have removed the conditions attached to the grant formerly, surely the Government do not imagine that they are to have a free hand to spend a quarter of a million how they like and where they like on roads, subject only to the decision of the Minister and his officers! Is Parliament to have no say whatever as to the manner in which the money is to be spent? It is unbelievable that any Government would imagine that it is open to them to spend the money as they like without reference to Parliament. One would think it was a personal gift to Ministers to do as they liked with. Are not we entitled to know the road programme for the year—how much is to be spent on main roads and how much on maintenance? As the member for South Fremantle remarked, the fullest possible information, together with coloured maps, was supplied to members in our time. I cannot imagine the Government believing that they need not consult members at all. What a nice position it will place some officers of the department in! They will be able to spend a large sum of money where they like and how they like without the possibility of comment or criticism from Parliament. It is an astonishing attitude to adopt. I am not making any threat but, so far as I am concerned, these Estimates and the Loan Estimates will not be passed until we have information as to how the money is to be spent. We are entitled to have it. No Government is justified in spending one pound without an appropriation of Parliament. Ministers, in their own interests and to free themselves from greater criticism later on, should acquaint Parliament with the road policy and the expenditure proposals, quite apart from the rights of members of this Chamber. Information should be given as to how the money was expended during the financial year just closed, as well as how it is proposed to expend the money during the current financial year. It is an imperative obligation on the Government to provide the information and give members an opportunity to discuss it. Regarding the Yanchep Caves road the member for Toodyay said there were 13,000 acres on one side of the road and a large area on the other side of the road, suitable for selection. What kind of land is it?

Mr. Thorn: Quite a lot of it is good land.

Hon. P. COLLIER: In the swamps. What is the rest of the land worth?

Mr. Thorn: That tuart country is quite all right.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Beautiful country! He said the Minister stated that he would not agree to spending any money on the road unless there was land for selection. In pursuance of that policy, did the Minister or the Government have a classification of the land made?

Mr. Thorn: I believe so.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Then let us have particulars of it. Let us have the report of the officers who made the classification. Did a surveyor of the Lands Department classify the land?

The Minister for Lands: Yes, a classification has been made of all except the stock route.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I would be glad to see the details of the classification. The Minister might place the report of this officer upon the Table of the House. It would be reassuring if we could look at it. I have been through that country, but I do not profess to be a judge of land. Apart from the swamps, what is there in that area? Would it have remained unoccupied for all the past generations if it was of the quality the hon. member would have us believe?

Mr. Thorn: I am not making it out as all first-class land.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Or even a fair percentage of it. Anywhere in the gullies and flats in this country it is possible to find a certain amount of good land. There may be 2 per cent. of it that could be utilised. To what use would the swamps be put? Are we to spend money making a road to open up these swamps? We have spent about £140,000 on draining Herdsman's Lake, and so far as I know a great deal of that area is still in the hands of the Government.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: A goodly portion of it is under water.

Hon. P. COLLIER: A considerable area of it is thoroughly drained, and yet there are no applications for it. We tried to dispose of the land, but were unable to do so. Whilst we have that land so near the city and cannot dispose of it, of what use is it to spend money on roads to open up areas so far away as this particular area? I should like to see the report of the officers of

the department and their classification of the land. Let us know how much is suitable for settlement. Many of the settlers at Wanneroo have resided there for a number of years. If this other land had been of so much value, it would not be lying idle today.

Mr. Thorn: There is a lot of good land in the Class A Reserve.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Is it proposed to alienate that reserve?

The Minister for Works: No.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It could only be done with the authority of Parliament.

The Minister for Works: There are some swamps in it.

Hon. P. COLLIER: There would be a danger of spoiling the holiday aspect of the park. Trippers and holiday people would probably be making raids upon the gardens and orchards of the settlers.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: There would be no use for the road then.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The Minister should give some information with regard to the works it is proposed shortly to undertake, whereby 6,000 and ultimately 10,000 men will be given employment. This is in connection with the loan from the Commonwealth Government of about £1,200,000. I think some of the works have already been mentioned by the Minister either in the House or in the Press. We might on these Estimates discuss some of the works that are to be undertaken, their utility and the manner in which they are to be carried out. I gather from the Press that it is proposed to employ about 6,000 men on part-time work. In some circumstances and in great financial stress part-time work might be justified. It is, however, a different matter providing part-time work for men who have to go into the country to get it. If their work were in the town in which they resided, and where their families resided and they had their homes, and they were not obliged to establish another home, the matter would wear a different aspect. In this instance I believe the majority of the 6,000 men are married, and it is proposed to send them into the country away from their homes. They will receive something in addition to their ordinary sustenance payments. an extra £1 a week or so, I understand, but they will actually be no better off

than they are under sustenance. They will have to support themselves where their work is, and maintain their homes wherever they are. It would be much better if, so far as this money would go, these men were all employed full time. If that were done, these unfortunate men, who have in many cases been out of work for over a year and in some instances nearly two years, would have an opportunity not only to live something more than a bare existence, but obtain clothing which is so necessary for themselves and their families. These men who have been on sustenance for a long time have had only a bare sufficiency in the way of food for themselves and their families, and no provision has been made for rent, replacement or renewal of furniture, or for actually necessary clothing. The position was not so bad for the first six months of their plight because some of them had reserves in the bank. These reserves, however, became exhausted. This was indicated in the withdrawals from the State Savings Bank during the 12 months, and, as the Premier has stated, month by month the withdrawals increased. This was due to the necessity to which these people were driven of living on their savings and withdrawing their money in order to buy the necessities of life. The savings are completely exhausted; and large numbers of these people have not even clothing fit to go out in, or boots to go to work in. Therefore it is much better to give them an opportunity to work full time for a few months, even if the money will not last too long, not last till the end of the financial year. Let them earn full wages during the time they are employed, so that they will be able to do something to replace the things which have been worn out during the past year or two. We know that large numbers of employees, both in private industry and in some of the State departments, are on part-time; but that is where they are engaged in some kind of trade, and the trade is not available. Take, for instance, the State Sawmills, which have been for a long period on half-time, week on and week off. That is unavoidable, because the Government can only employ the men to supply orders which come forward. In a sawmill one cannot employ half the number of men, but must have the full complement. One cannot put half off, and work the other half full-time. Thus, if the Government have

already timber cut for two years ahead, and cannot cut further for stock, and orders are not coming forward, there is no alternative to working part-time. The same thing applies to the State Implement Works. No work is available, and so that part-time system is forced on the Government. But that situation does not arise in this case. Here there is no obstacle whatever to working full-time. The business aspect does not arise. On public works such as drainage, roads and so forth it is quite easy for the Government to work the men full-time. I am sorry that the Minister has not made a statement on that aspect, although I recognise that the authority to spend the money, will come under the Loan Estimates. Although a smaller number will be employed working full-time than would be the case working part-time, it is more desirable that those who have to maintain two homes, one in the city and one in the country, should be given full-time. It is impossible to conceive of men being satisfied with work of this kind, parted from their families and actually no better off financially, as the additional £1 per week which they will be permitted to earn must be absorbed in the maintenance of the two homes. Another consideration, as regards men refusing to take this work and thereupon being denied sustenance, is that there are many reasons of a private and domestic nature which would prevent men from accepting part-time work in the country. Already there are too many children appearing before the Children's Court because, apparently, they have got beyond parental control even when the father is at home. To-day there are large numbers of children just leaving school, at the age when they most require parental control. If the father went away to the country, many of those children would get out of the control of the mother. That is an important aspect to be taken into consideration. With single men it is a different question; but in the case of married men whose homes are destitute now because of long unemployment, it is pretty heart-breaking for the man to go to the country knowing that he is to work only part-time, or half-time, and will receive no more income, as it were, than he would if he were to remain in the metropolitan area on sustenance. That is an aspect which I hope the Government will take into consideration and make a statement upon. I again urge that Parliament be

given an opportunity to discuss expenditure on main roads.

MR. SAMPSON (Swan) [10.15]: I support what the Minister for Works has said regarding Yanchep. In my opinion the reason why the land there has not been taken up is that it has largely been inaccessible. A road to it had not been constructed, and consequently it was impossible for those desirous of reaching that land to do so. Shows held at Osborne Park and at Wanneroo are proofs of the productivity of the country. It is wonderfully fine country, and wonderful market-gardening country.

Hon. A. McCallum: It is all loose sand. It is the hungriest stuff in the State.

Mr. SAMPSON: Some of it is loose sand. As pointed out to-night by another speaker, the tuart which grows in that district is a proof of the value of the land. In the Wanneroo district there is a great deal of tuart, and it grows right out at Yanchep. I have been there and seen it.

Hon. A. McCallum: I have been there, too.

Hon. P. Collier: It is worse than the Peel estate.

Mr. SAMPSON: It is the same class of tuart as grows in the Hamilton Hill district and at Spearwood. It indicates limestone country and splendid subsoil.

Hon. A. McCallum: There is 60 feet of sand at Yanchep.

Mr. SAMPSON: There are sandy patches which it is impossible to get through, I admit. As regards the condition of the Mundaring Weir-road, largely a pleasure road—

Hon. P. Collier: You cannot discuss that.

Mr. SAMPSON: Yes; it is permissible.

The CHAIRMAN: Is that a main road?

Mr. SAMPSON: Yes.

Hon. A. McCallum: No.

Mr. SAMPSON: Pardon me; it is a road approved by the Main Roads Board as a developmental road, and consequently—

Hon. A. McCallum: It is not under the Main Roads Board at all.

Mr. SAMPSON: The hon. member would, I am afraid, mislead the Committee, though quite unintentionally. The road from Mundaring right through to the old horse-trough on the Albany-road has been approved. It is the Welshpool-Mundaring-road, and runs from the York-road to the Albany-road.

The CHAIRMAN: Was it built by the Main Roads Board?

Mr. SAMPSON: It is under the second item. I have no desire to make these remarks to-night except with the full approval of yourself, Sir, and the Committee. I would prefer to make them to-morrow.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member will have an opportunity later, on the Loan Estimates.

Mr. SAMPSON: Since I have introduced the subject, let me say that the condition of the Mundaring-road is shocking. That road has been neglected by Governments over a long course of years. As it is a road which leads mostly to Government property, the local authority gets very little revenue from it. Representations with regard to the state of the road have been made from time to time. There is one interesting matter in connection with that road. I refer to the construction by the ex-Minister for Works (Hon. A. McCallum) of a bridge over the Helena River.

The Minister for Works: That is a pleasure resort. Surely that Minister would not construct a bridge to a pleasure resort!

Mr. SAMPSON: The road there is used largely by people travelling to inspect the Mundaring Reservoir and the Weir. The road running from Mundaring to Mundaring Weir is in a shocking state and in not nearly as good condition as the road that encircles the reservoir. I shall deal further with this matter to-morrow.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 10.22 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 21st October, 1931.

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

QUESTION—STATE IMPLEMENT WORKS.

Order for barrows.

Mr. J. H. SMITH asked the Minister for Works: 1, Is it a fact that the department has recently placed an order with the State Implement Works for several hundred navy barrows? 2, Were tenders called for the supply of these barrows? 3, Is there any check on the price that may be charged by the State Implement Works?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, Yes. 2, No. 3, Yes.

QUESTIONS (2)—FORESTS DEPARTMENT.

Sleepers Supplied.

Mr. J. H. SMITH asked the Minister for Forests: 1, Is it a fact that the Forests Department supplies to private companies sleepers cut by sustenance workers. 2, In connection with the supply of these sleepers, is it a fact that the Government are shifting sustenance workers from one district to another? 3, Is it not a fact that there are timber workers not on sustenance who could do the work without men having to be transferred from other districts?

The MINISTER FOR FORESTS replied: 1, Yes, otherwise the men must be thrown out of employment, as the Government have 1,124,000 sleepers on hand for local government requirements. 2, Yes, to a very limited extent. 3, It is the policy of