

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 16th October, 1924.

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

BILL—TREASURY BILLS ACT AMENDMENT.

Introduced by the Minister for Lands (for the Premier), and read a first time.

BILL—WORKERS' COMPENSATION ACT AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

Resumed from the previous sitting; Mr. Angelo in the Chair, the Minister for Works in charge of the Bill.

Clause 11—Amendment of Section 18 (partly considered):

Mr. SAMPSON: When Subclause (2) of Clause 11 was under consideration, progress was reported, the member for West Perth having submitted to the Minister in charge of the Bill a request for the deletion of Subclause (2). The Minister proposed to explain the matter to the Committee.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: This Bill provides for appeals only to the full Arbitration Court, and cuts out the Supreme Court, the High Court, and other courts. Therefore the subclause in question is unnecessary. I am advised that it was not necessary even in the parent Act, as its purposes are provided for by the common law.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 12—Amendment of Section 1 of First Schedule:

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Subclause (3) provides for a maximum weekly payment to an incapacitated worker of £3 10s. In Queensland the maximum is £2 10s.

The Minister for Works: No; it is £3 10s., the same as under this Bill.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Queensland law must have been amended very recently.

The Minister for Works: No.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I know that the total payments under this clause cannot exceed £750. Under the existing Act, however, the maximum weekly payment is £2 10s. I had intended to move an amendment in this connection.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Subclause (6) proposes to strike out of the existing Act the limitation of £1 for medical expenses, which limitation I think the Committee will agree is farcical. Probably it was inserted to defeat the intention of the clause. Under the Bill as drafted, medical and ambulance and hospital expenses are unlimited. That is the case in some States of the American Union; in others such expenses are limited to three, four, or five years' wages; in others again they are limited to a period of six, nine, or twelve months. The practice of the Eastern States of the Commonwealth in this connection varies. The insurance companies inform me that it will be difficult to cover an indefinite liability. I now propose to make a limit.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: In Queensland the limit is £50, and in Victoria £75.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: One cannot do justice to all cases; in some cases almost any maximum would prove inadequate. There are parts of the Yilgarn goldfield without doctors at all, and the doctor will not go out there, except under a guarantee of £50.

Mr. Corboy: He demands the wiring of the £50 before he gets into his car.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: In the North-West if a serious accident occurs, necessitating an operation, the surgeon has to be taken out by aeroplane. That runs into big money for transport, apart altogether from the surgeon's fees.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Under the Bill, a worker may injure himself going to work.

Mr. Taylor: He is more likely to injure himself going home.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That has no bearing on it. The method in the Bill is the correct one, namely to say that all reasonable medical expenses shall be met; for whenever we impose a limitation we are bound to inflict hardship somewhere. However, owing to the difficulty pointed to by the insurance companies, I propose to limit the amount to £100.

Mr. Taylor: That is to cover everything?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, everything. I move an amendment—

That after "proviso" in line 2 the words "and the insertion of the words 'not exceeding in the aggregate £100' in place thereof" be inserted.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It is not proposed to compensate to the full any man who is seriously injured. That could not be done. What is desired is that a man should get a fixed sum on injury, something to help him along. A man can take out cover for himself, and I suppose where men are working in dangerous places that is done now.

Mr. Taylor: Very seldom.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: But it can be done. Even the Minister for Works imposes a limitation. Common sense must

have some say in these matters. Men must have work first. No compensation is payable to the man out of work who falls down and breaks a leg. This provision of medical attention is probably the only one in the Bill that will be really appreciated by the average worker. It is not often that a man loses a limb.

Mr. Heron: Very often in mining.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Not very often. So, of course, the payment of medical fees is more important to the worker than the payment of compensation for the loss of a limb; because it is the medical fees that worry the unfortunate man who has to go to hospital. In Queensland the limit is £50, and in Victoria, £75. The Minister might reasonably have adopted one or other of those amounts. As I say, this is the only clause in the Bill worth anything to the worker. If the limit of actual compensation is fixed at £750, with this amendment it will become £850. Our duty is to provide adequately for the care of the workers and the protection of the employers. Sometimes we have to protect the worker from his friends. I have no objection to providing adequate medical attention for him. I will not oppose the amendment.

Mr. CORBOY: I am glad the Leader of the Opposition has agreed that it is proper to provide adequate medical attention. I regret that the Minister has found it necessary to limit medical attention to £100, but I realise the difficulty with which he is confronted. The Leader of the Opposition said the Minister might reasonably have adopted one or other of the limitations imposed in the Eastern States. In my opinion £100 is too low.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Your model State, Queensland, has made it £50.

Mr. CORBOY: Queensland perhaps is not faced with the difficulties that confront us. In Queensland £50 might be sufficient under the conditions prevailing there. The hon. member is in no better position to judge of that than am I. In many districts in this State, £100 will not be sufficient. In one instance a doctor insisted upon £50 being wired to him before starting on a journey, the double distance of which totalled 280 miles, and he arrived at Ravensthorpe 10 minutes after the patient had died. In another instance a doctor was required to go out 108 miles from Southern Cross. Doctors in the outback parts are frequently called upon to travel long distances to attend injured men, and in such instances £100 will not be sufficient. That sum, however, should cover a majority of cases.

Mr. MANN: May not the maximum become the minimum?

Mr. Corboy: No, only the actual expense will be payable.

Mr. MANN: If a doctor knows £100 is available, he may claim the full amount.

Mr. Stubbs: He would be a poor old doctor if he did.

Mr. MANN: The Minister should consider the point.

Mr. TAYLOR: In some parts of the State £100 will not be sufficient, while in many parts it will be too much. With the widely varying conditions prevailing in a big State like Western Australia, it is very difficult to fix an amount. I hope the provision will not be abused in the settled parts. The insurance companies will know what they have to meet and will base their premiums accordingly.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: An employer will be liable for medical expenses up to £100, and in addition will have to provide artificial limbs and funeral expenses, the last named amounting to £20.

The Minister for Works: He will not have to pay the lot.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: That shows the limited vision of the hon. member. Those are the claims that may be made in respect of employees.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There will be a limit of £100 for medical expenses, which will include first aid and the services of a specialist. It is in the interests of both parties to have a specialist, because the patient would probably make a quicker recovery and thus the liability would be lessened. In addition, an artificial limb must be provided or funeral expenses. In some places renewals of artificial limbs are also provided for. Roughly, £135 would be the aggregate liability.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: If a man in walking breaks his leg, he is protected. If a man in talking dislocates his jaw, he is protected.

The Minister for Works: We know you are joking, but a lot of people might take you seriously.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It is a serious matter to make a man responsible for his employees when they are out of his control. If on a station after working hours men were dancing, the owner of the property would have to protect them. The liability is made the greater by reason of having to protect employees to and from their work.

Clause, as amended, put and passed

Clause 13—Insertion of a section in First Schedule:

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: To ascertain the actual weekly wage or remuneration of a piece-worker or a casual we have to take the amount that the worker might be expected to earn in a week "if he worked for the hours and at the speed usual with him." Does this mean that if a man gets beyond his usual speed a rate will be fixed somewhat higher than it would otherwise be?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Bill provides that the weekly wage shall be the average for 12 months, and not that which a man is earning at the time of the accident. This clause provides a means of ascertain-

ing the amount of a man's earnings. The Act shows how the average is arrived at, and no difficulty has occurred under it in the past. The earnings of a piece-worker vary considerably. He is not always fully employed, so that his earnings have to be averaged.

Mr. George: Apart from clearing and timber working, not much piecework is done in this State.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: A good deal of piecework is done in the bootmaking and clothing trades, as well as in the mining industry. These computations have now been reduced to a fine art.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 14—agreed to.

Clause 15—Amendment of Section 16 of first schedule:

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I suppose the idea of the Minister is that six months' trial will prove the total incapacity of the man injured, and thereupon an annuity can be obtained by the worker at either his option or that of the employer. So long as the amount does not exceed £750, the provision may be a good one, but in the case of a young man, the annuity from such an amount would not benefit him very greatly. He might prefer the whole amount with which he could start a business.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The clause does not say that the annuity must be purchased, but that the lump sum must be sufficient with which to buy that annuity. The maximum amount involved is £750.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: This is possible with compulsory insurance, but would not be possible where the individual employer was personally liable.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 16—Amendment of Section 20 of first schedule:

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I see that union secretaries are cropping up again here. Very soon the worker will not be able to call his soul his own. The clause sets out that a union secretary or union official may intervene when an agreement has been arrived at between the employer and the worker for the compounding of a lump sum in settlement of a claim. The worker is to have no choice. This clause may deprive him of something the employer is willing to concede. We are apt to underrate the intelligence of the worker and overrate the rationality of employers.

The Minister for Works: You are a wonderful optimist.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I am not a damned fool! I know it is a crime to be an optimist when all men are pessimists. What the Minister says is that the worker and the employer may come to an arrangement, but this great Pooh Bah of a union secretary, who is to control the lives of the

workers, can intervene and ask for a variation of the agreement.

Mr. Teesdale: The secretary butts in and makes trouble.

Mr. Thomson: That is his job.

Mr. Panton: That is not his job.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: If the worker desires the union official to intervene, why cannot he go to him? The unions have no more authority over the great mass of the workers than we have individually.

Mr. Heron: The members themselves are the union.

Mr. Teesdale: But a man sells his soul when he pays 10s. for his ticket.

Mr. Wilson: Monger had great authority over some of you!

Mr. Hughes: And he was a hard boss, too.

The Minister for Works: I can give the Leader of the Opposition information on the point that will satisfy him.

Mr. Corboy: More optimism!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The objection to a worker compounding with his employer for a lump settlement is that such actions affect the whole body of the workers concerned in the industry, for every such settlement is taken as a precedent and sooner or later is applied to other workers. If the compounding is for a considerably reduced amount, that agreement vitally affects the great mass of the workers. The whole of an organisation is as much concerned in that settlement as is the individual. Two instances come to my mind that should convince the Leader of the Opposition. I handled them myself. There was an old man working in the bush alone. His eyesight was destroyed by splinters and he was taken to the Old Men's Home. A lawyer from an insurance company interviewed him and fixed an agreement for the payment of £40 in full settlement of the old chap's claim. He was being conducted by another inmate to the city, and they sat in a compartment in the railway train opposite to a friend of mine who overheard their conversation. He said to them, "Before you settle on any amount, go to the Trades Hall and see McCallum." They saw me and I went to the insurance office to inquire about it. When I got there I found that the cheque had been made out for £40 in full settlement. That was the amount they considered he was entitled to! I got him £400 and the locket I am wearing now was presented to me for my action.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Then the old man spent some of his money badly.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I did not receive the locket from him. I do not take blind men's money. There was another case at a foundry. An immigrant was working with an emery stone when it exploded and split his right arm open. He ended up with a stiff wrist, and to a fitter that is tantamount to meaning that he must change his occupation. In those days a signed authority to act was required. I went to the works

and secured from the man the necessary signed authority. I went to the insurance company to effect a settlement. When they found that I was on the job they would not come to terms. When that young man went to the office to draw his pay at the works, they said to him, "Now you are in for it. You have no chance. We will take you from court to court and it will cost you more than you can get. We will force you to the High Court and you will be a ruined man." They scared the young fellow so much that he cancelled my authority and settled for £20 for the loss of his arm.

Mr. George: That was a shame!

Mr. Teesdale: It was rotten!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: These two instances show how essential it is that the secretary of a union shall have the right to step in and object to any such arrangement.

Mr. Teesdale: Was there any question of full liability involved?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No. As the Act stands at present it provides that only those directly interested can object to a settlement. If the person directly concerned objects to a proposal for a settlement, the matter can be taken to court for decision. Surely no man is more interested in such matters than union secretaries who have to look after the interests of their members.

Mr. Sampson: Were particulars of the cases you have mentioned ever published?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I did not see that much could be obtained by that means. If hon. members only knew the hours I have argued with insurance companies in endeavours to secure decent settlements, the companies having two or three lawyers to represent them, while I had only my own wits to pit against them, they would appreciate the necessity for the clause.

Mr. Sampson: It is hard to believe that companies would act as you suggest.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I look upon the clause as one of the most essential in the Bill. When Mr. A. S. Canning was a magistrate here he frequently heard union secretaries in objection to agreements, because he held that the secretary was interested, as members for whom he acted would be affected by any decision he might give. Other magistrates did not adopt that view. The two instances I have cited should be sufficient to demonstrate to the Leader of the Opposition the necessity for union officials being represented when settlements are being arranged.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Minister has not satisfied me. He has said that men have not been paid fair compensation but he has not satisfied the Committee that the worker had any chance of securing any more. As to the company threatening the employee, as suggested, that they would take him from court to court, I do not see that the company could possibly win such a case. I have no objection to an injured person getting a union official to act for

him, but the clause provides that where a union secretary may not be wanted, he shall be allowed to intervene. That is going too far. All union secretaries are not reasonable men. What right have we to say that a union secretary or some other union official shall have the right to ask that an agreement entered into between the worker and the employer, which does not affect anyone else, shall be varied? The Minister could provide that no worker shall be paid less compensation than is a fair amount. We could appoint assessors to decide on the amount.

The Minister for Works: There is provision for that now in the existing law.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: We could provide for a case being re-opened.

The Minister for Works: By whom?

Mr. Sleeman: The union secretary!

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Certainly not! Union secretaries do no work apart from their offices; they do not work with other men on jobs.

Mr. Wilson: They do sometimes.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Very few of them.

Mr. Wilson: I was a secretary of a union and had a thousand coal miners under my control, and I got £5 a quarter.

Mr. Marshall: You look like it, too, poor little fellow!

Mr. Panton: It must have been a Scotch coal mine!

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: This is bad law, and that is all I have to say about it. Why do we not provide in all our laws for intervention by union secretaries? I would support a clause that would have the effect of compelling companies to pay whatever amount was right, where there was a settlement to be made between the parties. I would support a clause that would cover the worker even after he had gone that far. I am not supporting a clause which says that a union secretary shall have superior authority to the person concerned. If someone is to be appointed to determine whether the amount is fair or not it would be better for the Minister to say that in the case of a settlement under the schedule, the agreement should be submitted to the registrar or some other public official.

Mr. PANTON: I do not understand why there should be all this objection to union secretaries.

Mr. Corboy: The Opposition must talk about something.

Mr. PANTON: Members of the Opposition must surely realise that industrial organisations are here to stay, and those bodies are as much entitled to employ an officer to look after their interests, as any other section of the community. Invariably the worker who is a member of an industrial organisation—and I suppose 80 odd per cent. of them are members—goes to the secretary for advice.

Mr. Teesdale: Surely some of those members have as much intellect as their secretaries?

Mr. Corboy: But usually the secretary is more conversant with the Act.

Mr. PANTON: I have no doubt that there are scores of members who have more intellect than the secretaries, but the secretaries are paid to study industrial legislation.

Mr. George: You make them specialists.

Mr. PANTON: I am not going to say that every secretary gives the best advice, but he gives the best advice he can, and almost invariably it is a good deal better than advice given by lawyers. It stands to reason that this should be so; because union secretaries make a study of industrial legislation. Hon. members opposite can go into any union secretary's office and they will find everywhere Acts of Parliament dealing with industrial legislation very well worn through constant handling.

Mr. Teesdale: Yes, the secretaries make cushions of them.

Mr. PANTON: The hon. member is not too familiar with the manner in which Acts of Parliament are bound, or he would know that they are too hard to use in that way. The fact remains that a union secretary is the best man to do the job. If union secretaries were given a great deal more power than they have now, many existing difficulties would disappear.

Mr. George: Most of them have aggressive jaws.

Mr. Corboy: They need them when they meet you.

Mr. PANTON: The man who gets to the top of the tree needs to have an aggressive jaw.

Mr. MARSHALL: I would not have risen but for a remark made by the Leader of the Opposition which perhaps I misunderstood. I think he made the statement that injured parties were never approached by insurance companies—

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: No, no.

Mr. MARSHALL: Then I misunderstood the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Teesdale: Well, having misunderstood him, sit down.

Mr. MARSHALL: No one will ever understand the member for Roebourne. I do not know why our friends opposite seem to have such a dislike for union secretaries. They certainly belie the statements that they do not see any reason why union secretaries should interfere in these matters. Because after all immediately a union secretary is prepared to desert his principles of to-day to adopt the principles of my friends opposite to-morrow, he is just as good a companion as they are. As soon as he rats, then he is acceptable to our friends opposite.

Mr. George: We have no room for rats.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! There is nothing about rats in the Bill.

Mr. MARSHALL: Just imagine an hon. member taking exception to a union secretary looking after the affairs of his union and doing the job he is paid for. If some members here did their work as conscienti-

ously as union secretaries do it, the State would benefit.

Mr. Teesdale: Speak for Murehison.

Mr. MARSHALL: That is all I rose to say.

Mr. Teesdale: And that was not much.

Mr. MARSHALL: Why do members opposite take such a stand against union secretaries? We never hear them take to task the secretary of the Employers' Federation or the secretary of the Pastoralists' Association or the Master Bakers' or Master Butchers' Associations.

Mr. Teesdale: The box factory secretaries we cannot stand.

Mr. MARSHALL: Opposition members attack those who cannot hit back.

Mr. Teesdale: Those secretaries who tear infants from their mothers' breasts.

Mr. MARSHALL: Members opposite, because they are not able to enslave the average industrialist, attack the union secretaries who look after the interests of the industrialist. Members opposite have the audacity to say that union secretaries cause trouble. They certainly cannot do it unless there is somebody to cause trouble with.

Mr. Sampson: It is very wicked on the part of anyone to hold opposite views.

Mr. MARSHALL: By Act of Parliament union secretaries should be given more authority when they are dealing with the welfare of the industrialists of the State. I regret very much that the Minister has not seen fit to introduce into this Bill a provision making it illegal, under a heavy penalty, to approach any injured worker with a view to cutting down any compensation provided by this measure. I have known the agent of an insurance company to approach an injured man while he was still laid up, and I have known an injured miner, an illiterate foreigner, to be induced to sign a most unjust agreement with an insurance company in such circumstances. Union secretaries should certainly be permitted to see that their members are not exploited, but receive justice. We do not object to the Employers' Federation and its secretary looking after the interests of individual employers.

Mr. WILSON: As a union secretary I have known only two cases out of the very large number I was concerned with wherein the insurance companies did not fight the claim to the last ditch. A Collier resident named Young lost nearly half his foot in an accident, and the insurance company had the damned audacity to offer him a paltry £20. I stepped in and got the man a fair go. True, union representatives will sometimes give bad advice; I may have done so myself. But the union secretary makes the industrial laws his special study. Union secretaries are not necessarily out for their own advantage, as I may instance from the fact that when holding the position of secretary to a Victorian union numbering 1,100 members I received a salary of £5 per quarter. Injured men and widows are frequently brow-

beaten by the agents of insurance companies. Union representatives fight such cases for people who are unable to defend their own interests. There are insurance companies that would take a man down for his socks.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I have known of generous settlements.

Mr. WILSON: I know of disgraceful settlements.

Mr. George: Surely there have been some decent settlements.

Mr. WILSON: Yes; but there have been some extraordinarily bad settlements for the workers, and it is to prevent such settlements that the union representative is wanted there. This clause is not directed against the good employer.

Mr. GEORGE: The references to union secretaries should be taken in good part by hon. members opposite. My sympathies have always been with the union secretaries. The object of hon. members opposite is really to save a man from himself. Union discipline is pretty good, and the worker of to-day knows that his union represents him and that the secretary is specially trained in the matter of industrial laws. As a rule, an injured man goes straight away to the union secretary; or if he does not do it, his wife does, or his mate does.

Mr. Hughes: Not in all cases by any means.

Mr. GEORGE: Why not insert in the clause words to the effect that no settlement shall be made by an injured party except through the instrumentality of his union secretary? The clause as it stands means that the registration of a settlement made in good faith by an injured man may be blocked by his union secretary. Why should not such a man be allowed to fry in his own fat, instead of the employer being put to further trouble and expense? Small employers would not be able to carry on extended litigation. Though I do not agree with it, a provision might, I suggest, be inserted to the effect that members of unions must do all their industrial legal business through the union secretary.

Mr. Hughes: Will you let the secretary plead the case in court?

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. GEORGE: The object of the Arbitration Act Amendment Bill and of the Bill now before us is to secure to the workers the protection they are entitled to. Members of the Opposition do not object to men receiving fair compensation, but we contend the fullest consideration should be given to the employers. It is not in the interests of the workers that the employers' resources should be depleted to such an extent that they may not be able to carry on. The incidence of the impost would not fall so heavily on combines and large industrial enterprises,

but in a pioneering country such as Western Australia, expenditure piled on expenditure may seriously interfere with the ability of smaller employers to continue operations. I think the object of the Minister would be achieved if he were to provide that members of unions should conduct these negotiations through the secretaries of their respective organisations. As the clause stands, it is possible that after the employee and the employer have agreed regarding the compensation to be paid, a union secretary may, without adequate reason, intervene and put the employer to still further expense in settling the matter, without advancing the interests of the worker at all.

Mr. MILLINGTON: The object of the clause is not so much to give recognition to union officials as to protect the injured worker. Members of the Opposition say they do not object to compensation being paid, and that being so, they should be willing to assist in affording the necessary protection to workers. I have had experience in conducting these negotiations and the difficulty is that the injured workers do not know, as a rule, what they are entitled to. They may accept settlements that not only work an injustice to themselves, but to other workers because those settlements are taken as precedents. Managers of companies know settlements that take place in other States as well as in Western Australia, and know what the law is. Thus a worker, unacquainted with the law, can be bluffed easily. I give some companies credit for a desire to give the injured worker a reasonable deal, but in hundreds of instances I have known them to drive hard bargains. In one instance an insurance company offered a man who had injured a finger, but had not quite lost the use of it, £15 by way of compensation, whereas he was entitled by law to £50. When I went to see the manager, he agreed, without any explanation whatever, to pay the £50. Recently a man came from Kalgoorlie with an injured eye. An insurance company offered him £50 compensation, and after a very brief discussion gave him £120. In another instance, a man was offered £50 for the loss of a thumb, although the company knew that he was entitled to anything from £100 to £120. Again after a brief discussion they paid him something over £100. There is competition amongst companies and if a manager makes a good settlement he gets a certain amount of credit, the other companies get to know about it and when other injured workers apply for their compensation those settlements are quoted. Had there been a union official in the district, the instance given by the member for Roebourne would not have happened, for the union official would have told the man what he was entitled to.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: A magistrate would also tell the man that.

Mr. MILLINGTON: Under the present law objections have been taken by union officials as suggested in the clause. Surely members of the Opposition will not assist companies to deliberately defeat the law by endeavouring to effect settlements on a lower rate of compensation than is provided by the Act.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Certainly not.

Mr. MILLINGTON: Then the Opposition should assist in preventing such occurrences and agree to the clause.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: No company worthy of the name would wish to do other than a fair thing to an injured worker. We object, however, to giving the power to union secretaries to intervene except at the request of injured men. If anything of the sort is to be done it should be by an official controlled by the Minister and not by a union secretary.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 17—agreed to.

Clause 18—Substitution of new Second Schedule:

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The schedule sets up percentage values different from those in the existing schedule. For the major injuries it is quite right to provide the maximum amount payable, which the Minister has fixed at £750. On the other hand, some of the other amounts payable are altogether disproportionate. For the loss of either arm or the greater part thereof, the schedule provides for the payment of £675, whereas for the loss of both hands, or both eyes, the amount payable is £750, or only £75 more. That does not seem a fair proportionate difference. For the loss of a leg the worker is to be entitled to £600, as against £750 for both feet. So it is all along the line. The percentages are not proportionate to those contained in the schedule to the parent Act and are altogether disproportionate to the maximum payments provided. A man is to get £250 for the loss of a thumb, whereas he previously got £150. I do not know how the Minister has arrived at this scale. I should like him to tell us on what basis he worked in compiling it.

Mr. TEESDALE: Provision ought to be made that if a man is compensated for more than one injury under this schedule he should not be entitled to receive a greater sum than the maximum set down.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That is provided.

Mr. TEESDALE: I do not see it. If a man loses a foot, and the hearing of one ear, he is to receive £825, which is more than he would receive if he lost the sight of both eyes. No provision is made that he shall not be compensated for more than one injury.

The Minister for Works: If he suffers two injuries he cannot claim more than the maximum.

Mr. GEORGE: The Minister might give us some information in respect to the compilation of the schedule. For most of the injuries the schedule in the Queensland Act provides sums considerably below those given here.

The Minister for Works: I do not think so.

Mr. GEORGE: For example, according to this schedule, the loss of hearing entitles a man to £600, whereas in Queensland the amount is £375. Complete deafness of one ear entitles a man to £300 in Western Australia, whereas in Queensland only £75 is provided. Yet Queensland is regarded by Labour as being in the forefront of advancement in industrial matters. Therefore, I should like to hear the Minister's reasons for the much higher figures shown here.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: In compiling the schedule I had before me the schedules in all the Acts I could collect, the Queensland Act as well as the Acts in the Old World. I am utterly dissatisfied with the schedules in our existing Act, and I have set this out as being a fair thing.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Does the Minister think that if a man is to get only £750 for the loss of both eyes it is reasonable to say that £600 should be paid for the loss of a leg? Of course, no one would lose a leg for £600. But that is not the point.

The Minister for Works: No, the point is that the greater sum is too small.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It would be if it were possible to provide an amount sufficient to compensate a man for the loss he suffers. No Workers' Compensation Act can do that, for it would mean that the cost of insurance would be so high that wages would have to be reduced. Each injury should bear some relation to the maximum.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 19—Addition of Third Schedule:

Mr. SAMPSON: The schedule includes a number of complaints or diseases that it will be difficult to prove have been contracted as the result of industrial conditions. Take anthrax: according to the statement in the schedule, anthrax arises from wool combing, wool scouring, and the handling of hides, skins, etc. But if we are to rely upon a standard work, such as Black's Medical Dictionary, we find that anthrax can be contracted by other means, and is even known by other names, such as malignant pustules, and wool sorter's disease. The schedule declares that zymotic diseases arise from any industrial process. According to Black's dictionary zymotic diseases are epidemic, endemic, contagious or sporadic diseases supposed to be produced by some morbid principle acting on the system like a ferment. So it will be seen that, in respect of zymotic diseases, the schedule is not borne out by this medical work. Cancer, too, is described in the schedule as a disease brought about by an industrial process. Here again the schedule is at variance with Black's Medical

Dictionary, which declares that the cause of cancer is still undiscovered. If it could be shown that cancer arose from any industrial process I should certainly say the disease ought to be included in the schedule; but there is an absence of knowledge on the subject which, I think, renders the inclusion of the disease in the schedule quite unwarranted. (Chrome ulceration is also included and the description against it is "any process involving the use of chromic acid or bi-chromate of ammonium, potassium, or sodium, or their preparations." "Black's Medical Dictionary" says—

"Chromic acid is a caustic much used in small operations on the nose and throat. Its appearance is that of deep crimson crystals. Two of its salts, chromate and bi-chromate of potassium, are much used for paints and dyes of various shades of yellow and orange, and are poisonous. In the process of manufacture of these substances, workmen who neglect to wash the skin carefully are apt to suffer from ulcers. These are caused by a deposit of the chromate acid or its salts in cracks of the skin, which is thereby destroyed, leaving a callous ulcer with hard, thick edges, very difficult to heal.

"Thus there seems justification for the inclusion of chrome ulceration. Dermatitis—any industrial process—is thus described—

"Any inflammation of the skin, though the name is usually restricted to those affections in which the cuticle comes off in large flakes, leaving a red surface behind.

I know a patient who continually lost the skin of both hands, and he had never been engaged in an industrial process. These matters should be referred to men medically qualified to express an opinion, before we approve of them.

The Minister for Works: You have taken no notice of what I told you.

Mr. SAMPSON: Does the Minister propose to submit these matters to medical authorities?

The Minister for Works: I told you the list emanated from medical authorities.

Mr. SAMPSON: I have quoted from a standard work passages that indicate certain of these diseases should not be included.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am surprised that this matter should be treated so lightly by some members opposite.

Mr. Latham: No one is treating it lightly.

Mr. Sampson: I object to anyone saying I am treating it lightly.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I said some members opposite.

Mr. Latham: Well, name them!

Hon. S. W. Munsie: The member for York, by his interjections, for one.

Mr. Latham: Nothing of the kind.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: When I introduced the Bill I explained that the schedule of diseases was that approved of by the Interstate Conference of the chief medical officers of the Commonwealth and

the chief inspectors of factories, not a conference of trade union secretaries, Labour agitators, or party politicians. The conference consisted of Dr. Park, Acting Director General of Health for the Commonwealth; Dr. Robertson, Director Industrial Hygiene Division of the Commonwealth Department of Health; Dr. Badham, Medical Officer of Industrial Hygiene, New South Wales; Mr. G. H. Taylor, Railway Medical Officer of New South Wales; Mr. W. I. Taylor, Chief Inspector of Factories and Investigation Officer, New South Wales; Mr. E. Robertson, Chairman of the Victorian Health Commission; Mr. H. M. Murphy, Secretary for Labour, Melbourne; Dr. Ramsay Smith, Chairman of Central Board of Health of South Australia; Dr. E. Atkinson, Commissioner of Public Health, Western Australia; Mr. C. Bradshaw, Chief Inspector of Factories, Western Australia; and Mr. Reynolds, Chief Inspector of Factories, Tasmania. The schedule emanated from that conference. I have not added to, or taken away, one line of their recommendations. These are the most highly qualified men in the Commonwealth and they agreed to the following motion:—

It is desirable that each State of the Commonwealth should have in effective operation legislation controlling occupations dangerous to the health of those employed therein, and that every Australian State should afford compensation for industrial diseases.

Dr. Atkinson says: "This resolution was carried unhesitatingly and unanimously," and he also says there is not the least doubt each of the States will adopt it. It happens that we are the first to move, because our Bill was on the stocks at the time. Members argue that these diseases are not all the outcome of occupations followed by workers. But the member for Swan might contract every disease in the schedule, and unless he could show it was contracted in the course of his occupation, he could not come under the Act.

Mr. Teesdale: You will admit that cancer would be rather difficult to prove?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The first step necessary is for the doctor of the worker to certify that the man is suffering from an industrial disease under the Act, contracted in following his occupation. The certificate goes to the Chief Medical Officer, who investigates, and if there is any dispute the insurance company may call in their doctor. If there is a disagreement, the matter is referred to a medical referee, and there is an appeal from him to the Court of Arbitration. It must be shown clearly and distinctly that the disease arose from following the occupation; otherwise the worker would not come under the provisions of the Act.

Mr. Sampson: Did the conference agree it was possible to determine at what stage cancer is contracted?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, industrial cancer. To show how fair I have been, in the first draft of the Bill, I provided for cancer under two headings, according to the British law, namely, for chimney sweeps' cancer, and for cancer applying to the meat trade, but the conference carried a resolution applying it to all industrial occupations. This afternoon I discussed the matter with Dr. Atkinson, and he told me industrial cancer is well known to the medical profession and is easily traceable to several occupations, notably those involving the use of pitch and tar and petroleum oils, and amongst chimney sweeps. If there be a case of general cancer that cannot be traced to the worker's occupation, the sufferer will not come under the Act. Zymotic diseases will chiefly arise amongst employees engaged in hospital and ambulance work.

Mr. Davy: Suppose a man caught influenza or bubonic plague while on his way home from work in a tram, would he be covered?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No.

Mr. Davy: Why not?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Because he would not have caught it in following his occupation.

Mr. Davy: But he is covered until he reaches home.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I remind the hon. member of the first step necessary to get a certificate that the disease was contracted in the course of the worker's occupation. I know how difficult it will be to substantiate a worker's claim. I know how conservative are the bulk of the medical profession. When they know their certificates will be examined by other medical men and are subject to appeal to the court, they will be exceedingly careful in giving a certificate. My fear is that they will construe the Act not liberally but in the other direction. A number of these diseases are compensable only when contracted in specified industries. All the safeguards necessary are set out here. This schedule is not the product of the Government or of any party politics. It is the product of the most highly qualified men in the Continent, and I have not added to it or taken from it in any way.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You are the foster parent.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I would have liked to add to it, but decided to adhere to the decision of the conference. I have put into it no diseases that would tend to benefit the party to which I belong. I hope the schedule will not be treated in the party spirit. It was adopted by impartial men, and is set down here without alteration.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Minister says the schedule was recommended by medical men, but having adopted it he must take the responsibility of it.

The Minister for Works: I do not want to disown it.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: His remarks sounded like that. This is the first time we have covered industrial diseases in this way, and the Minister might have told us more about the schedule. They were not all medical men who made up this list.

The Minister for Railways: All the medical men who were there agreed to it.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Minister says so.

The Minister for Works: I do not say so, but I read from their report.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I do not doubt the Minister. We cannot get anything from him, so we will have to be content.

Mr. SAMPSON: The position is awkward. Medical science has not been able to determine the cause of cancer. If it can be identified and proved to arise from certain industrial occupations, provision should be made for that. If a clerk develops lung trouble through working in ill ventilated premises, he too should be protected. To what do the asterisks refer?

The Minister for Works: These are the notifiable diseases.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 20—Amendment of third schedule:

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: What is the idea of striking out the words "any distance"?

The Minister for Works: They are meaningless.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 21—agreed to.

Postponed Clause 4—Amendment of Section 6:

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I undertook to have this looked into with a view to seeing that the maximum amount involved would be £750. I move an amendment—

That in proposed Subsection 4, paragraph (b) the words "Nothing in this subsection or the second schedule shall limit the amount of" be struck out and "subject to paragraph (f) this subsection shall not limit or affect the" be inserted in lieu.

Mr. DAVY: Before the Minister goes on with this amendment I wish to move to wipe out the second schedule altogether. It is an unfair and illogical way to assess compensation, particularly if we are going to make a lump sum of it. I see no reason why a man who has received permanent internal injuries preventing him from working should not be on the same footing as the man who has lost, say, two legs. If the idea is that the second schedule shall provide compensation for pain and suffering, why is not the man who loses his nose getting any compensation? Why should the more spectacular kind of injury be picked out for special treatment? A man ought to be compensated for the loss of his

earning capacity. If that is to be the basis, I shall be in favour of wiping out the limit. The second schedule should be abolished, as being unjust to the worker, and also as being illogical.

Amendment, by leave, temporarily withdrawn.

Mr. DAVY: I move an amendment—

That paragraph (a) of proposed Subsection 4 be struck out.

Amendment put and negatived.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I again move my amendment—

That in proposed Subsection 4, paragraph (b) the words "Nothing in this subsection or the second schedule shall limit the amount of" be struck out and "subject to paragraph (f) this subsection shall not limit or affect the" be inserted in lieu.

Mr. DAVY: Even with this amendment there will be a distinct contradiction in the terms of the clause. Whether the court would hold in the end that the Minister's intention has been expressed or not, I should not like to say; but we shall get the anomalous position of having in this paragraph the words "which shall be paid as lump sums without deduction," and in the next paragraph the words "no amount so recovered shall be deducted from the compensation payable in accordance with the said table."

The Minister for Works: The whole thing is subject to paragraph (f).

Mr. DAVY: I fear there will be all sorts of misunderstandings.

Amendment put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I move an amendment—

That in paragraph (f) of proposed Subsection 4 the words "compensation under paragraph (b) of this subsection and to" be struck out.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. DAVY: Subclause 5 proposes to give a discretion to the Minister to decide by what industrial magistrate proceedings under this measure, that is to say a claim by a worker, shall be heard. That seems to me a novel and extraordinary proposition. Does the Minister insist upon it? I know of no other law in this community or anywhere else enabling a Minister of the Crown to decide what kind of judge shall hear a case. In addition, we find that the proceedings are to be taken in the local court and that any appeal is to be to the Arbitration Court. Under the Industrial Arbitration Act Amendment Bill, which the Minister hopes will become law soon, the President of the Arbitration Court may not be a lawyer at all; and so we may have three absolute laymen endeavouring to wrestle with the problems of this measure.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: We shall get commonsense then.

Mr. DAVY: Uninformed common sense is no more likely to get to the truth of the thing than, shall I say, rare sense. It does seem extraordinary that in respect of this measure, which is perhaps the most complicated piece of legislation we have, raising intricate questions of interpretation, the final decision as to what the measure means may possibly be in the hands of laymen. And a man who has a claim made against him under the measure will be unable to be represented before the Arbitration Court, which forbids the appearance of lawyers except in enforcement cases. We may see the spectacle of a man going into the Arbitration Court and arguing his own case on appeal. The Minister will find that his amendments have further complicated the position.

The Minister for Works: I am told they have every lawyer on the Terrace thinking.

Mr. DAVY: Yes; and those are the problems which the Minister proposes shall be dealt with by a bench of laymen in the Arbitration Court. I admit that in New Zealand for some time past appeals have been heard by the Arbitration Court; but the President of that court must, I understand, be a lawyer. Further, lawyers are not debarred from arguing cases before the New Zealand Arbitration Court. Then, too, the New Zealand law provides, under the Declaratory Judgments Act, that anybody can get the interpretation of a statute by taking out an originating summons and having the matter heard by the Full Court. Thus in New Zealand a point of doubt can go to the Full Court and a proper decision can be obtained. But here we shall have industrial magistrates appointed by the Minister, and a bench of laymen. It seems to me that the clause will lead to confusion of the worst kind. I had hoped that the Minister might consider a proposal to leave the law as it stands at present. I would like to hear him define what the words "if the Minister so directs" really mean. Why should the Minister take power to say before what magistrate a case is to be dealt with?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The member for West Perth has entirely misunderstood the clause. It is suggested that industrial magistrates shall be appointed in given districts, but it is not thought that we will be able to appoint such magistrates in every district. The clause merely provides that the Minister shall have power to appoint an industrial magistrate to hear a case.

Mr. Davy: But it does not say so.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is quite clear that that is what it does mean. When the Minister appoints an industrial magistrate in an area, the case will be heard before that magistrate. That is clearly set out and hon. members know that it is there.

Mr. Davy: That is not a fair thing to say.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is fair. The remarks of some hon. members are tiresome.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Now you are getting abusive.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am not. You have used strong language, and I am tired of it. If I had said what you have said, I would have been called to order long ago. We do not say that we shall be able to appoint industrial magistrates for every district and the clause will enable the Minister to appoint a magistrate to deal with a case to be heard in a district where there is no industrial magistrate already appointed. It is set out as plainly as possible. I do not think that anyone reading the clause will doubt it.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: We will not be talked to by the Minister in such a way! He is here to explain his proposals to the Committee. If he will not do that fairly, he will be talked to squarely. The clause gives the Minister power to say that a case shall be heard before such industrial magistrate as he may direct. I do not know why the Minister should object to the suggestion we make that the clause means that the Minister may direct a case to be heard, not before the local court, but before an industrial magistrate should he so direct. That is what the clause states distinctly.

Mr. DAVY: It is unfair for the Minister to make such statements about my remarks. When he catches me speaking dishonestly about a clause, I will give him leave to say that I am dishonest and shall not ask him to withdraw his statement. I have given my honest opinion regarding the effect of the first paragraph of the subclause. I claim that it sets out that the Minister may direct that any particular case shall be heard by an industrial magistrate. If I were not perfectly satisfied as to the meaning of the words, I would not have the impudence to express my opinion to the Committee. I may be wrong, but the Minister has no right to say I am expressing dishonest opinions. If the Minister's intention is as he states, I suggest he may possibly be wrong and that he should ask for the opinion of someone else, and in the event of his ascertaining that he is wrong, make the necessary amendment.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It is surprising to me that the Minister has kept his temper for so long. Nothing but innuendoes have been thrown across the floor of the House since the Bill has been before members.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Who has done that?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I object to the term "scandalous proceedings" being hurled across at us from time to time. We did not adopt such tactics when we were sitting in Opposition. Any Bill brought

before us was treated on its merits without any such innuendoes.

Mr. Teesdale: That was rather mild to some of the terms you used.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: When the term "scandalous" is applied to the Minister, it applies to everyone on the Government side of the House.

Mr. Teesdale: That expression has not been used once to-night.

The Minister for Works: It has been used a dozen times.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: When the member for West Perth was speaking, the term was used by another hon. member, and it is about time that sort of thing stopped.

Mr. Teesdale: It can be said that a clause is a scandalous one without any reflection being cast on the Minister.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The whole Bill has been referred to as scandalous. The measure merely seeks to afford protection to the workers.

Mr. Teesdale: And we want to help you.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Some members of the Opposition do, others do not. I hope the Opposition will follow the example set by Labour members when they were sitting in Opposition.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You need not flatter yourself!

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I am not. I am merely quoting the present Leader of the Opposition who frequently said that we had helped him while he was in charge of the Government. When the Leader of the Opposition throws accusations across the floor of the Chamber, saying that these are scandalous proceedings, it is time that he stopped it. I expect the same treatment from him as we extended to him, and we don't want any more of this sort of thing. A fair number of the magistrates now are lawyers, but they are not termed industrial magistrates to-day.

Mr. Davy: I do not say there is anything wrong in the Minister appointing certain persons to be industrial magistrates.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It may be that at Northam there is no resident magistrate. The Minister, therefore, is to be given power to direct that a case to be dealt with there, shall be heard before an industrial magistrate or a resident magistrate. There is nothing wrong about that. I am certain that the persons concerned will welcome the provision. How many times have we known of cases being postponed so that the hearing may be taken before a resident magistrate?

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: But the clause may have the effect of permitting the Minister to take the case away from a court where there is a resident magistrate.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That is not so. I have read the Bill and have not taken other people's brains for it.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You have no right to be offensive.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: When people are offensive to me, I will be offensive to them. I have tried to avoid it.

Mr. Teesdale: Don't ruin your reputation now.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I cannot stand too much of it. The clause will be of benefit to those affected by the Bill. I hope this particular provision will not be required, but it may have the effect of preventing accidents. Owing to the neglect of some employers to spend a few pounds to provide safeguards in connection with machinery, and thus protect the workers, many accidents have occurred. The Bill may have the effect of causing those improvements to be made.

Mr. DAVY: The Minister may appoint industrial magistrates in Perth, Albany, or Northam, for instance, and in each case those magistrates would probably be the resident magistrate or police magistrate. It may be that the resident magistrate at Bunbury may not be appointed an industrial magistrate. There is nothing to provide that all magistrates shall be appointed industrial magistrates. That being so, the clause will give the Minister power to say that a case that would be tried in Bunbury, shall be tried in Perth because there is no industrial magistrate at Bunbury.

The Minister for Lands: Or he may appoint the magistrate in Perth to go to Bunbury to hear it.

Mr. DAVY: That seems to me to be wrong.

The Minister for Lands: How many times did the late Government appoint a resident magistrate to try cases that a judge should have dealt with?

Mr. DAVY: That is a different proposition altogether. That applied to criminal cases and the appointment of a special commissioner saved the necessity for sending a judge to some distant centre. I understand the Minister does not really intend this, but at all events the words appear to me to be wrong.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Minister for Lands, apparently, did not understand the position as it has been explained by the member for West Perth (Mr. Davy). In any case, if we regard a statement as scandalous, we are entitled to say so.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: But you should say it in a polite way.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: We try to.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

New clause:

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I move—

That the following new clause be added:—(1) It shall not be necessary to proclaim that the whole of this Act shall come into operation on one date, but the several sections and schedules may be proclaimed to come into operation on such dates as are respectively fixed by proclamation: Provided that, notwithstanding that a date has been so fixed for the coming into operation of any section or schedule, such

date may, at any time prior to that date, be postponed to such later date as is fixed by proclamation. (2) The Governor may, by any such proclamation, limit the operation of section five, so far as it extends to the diseases mentioned in the first column of the Third Schedule set opposite the words "Mining, or quarrying, or stone crushing or cutting" as the description of process, to any defined portion of the State; and may, by any subsequent proclamation, extend the operation as aforesaid of that section to any other defined portion of the State.

In some instances it will take time to effect industrial insurance. Outside of mining there may not be much difficulty, but in the mining industry some organisation will have to be created, particularly if it be found that large numbers of men working in the mines are suffering from industrial diseases. The Government, of course, will take no action to throw these men out of employment until some organisation has been created to relieve them.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That is sensible.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If a large number of men be affected, and it cannot be arranged for them to continue in the industry, the Government will set about finding other employment for them, all of which will take time. Then it may fall out that we shall have arrangements made in one part of the State, while not being ready for the Act in other parts of the State. So it is proposed that proclamation may be issued in respect of one part of the State on one date, and in respect of other parts of the State on subsequent dates.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Parts of the Act to parts of the State.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, just as machinery is created to meet the position.

New clause put and passed.

New clause:

Mr. TEESDALE: I move—

That the following new clause be added to stand as Clause 7:—Section 7 of the principal Act is amended by—(a) Deleting the words "and before the worker has voluntarily left the employment in which he was injured" in Subsection (a). (b) Deleting the word "sir" in lines two and four of subsection (b), and substituting therefor the word "twelve." (c) Inserting after the word "proceedings" in line three of proviso (b) the words "if it is shown that the employer has not been prejudiced in his defence by such failure or."

Proposed paragraph (a) will not do anybody an injury. There is no occasion to stress paragraph (b). The time provided is not sufficient in a case occurring far from the coast. Before a man can get down to the coast and give proper notice, the time has elapsed. There can be no objection to paragraph (c). It will be very beneficial. I know a man who was unconscious in hospital for 2½ months and was convalescent

out on the station for 3½ months. When he came to Perth the time had elapsed. Not only did the insurance company fight, but they took the case through two courts. The injured man lost the case and had to pay the costs. He is now in the Old Men's Home without a farthing, and is a physical wreck.

New clause put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1924-25.

In Committee of Supply.

Debate resumed from the previous day on the Treasurer's Financial Statement and on the Annual Estimates; Mr. Lutey in the Chair.

Note: Legislative Council, £1,346.

Mr. THOMSON (Katanning) [9.15]: This is about the tenth opportunity I have had to discuss the annual Budget, and from my general experience I realise that whatever opposition we may offer, whatever remedies we may suggest, or whatever proposals we may advance for better administration, all are taken as read. However, it has become an established custom for members to discuss the Estimates, and as the people and even members are foolish enough to believe we are the custodians of the public purse, it is perhaps advisable to say a few words if only to preserve that fallacy. The average member of Parliament has as much to do with the finances of the State as has an elector at Roebourne or in some other remote part of the State. We are afforded the glorious privilege of being permitted to criticise, but we have no opportunity to alter. In my earlier days I used to keenly scrutinise the whole of the Estimates and offer various suggestions. Sometimes I received a solemn assurance from the Minister that it was impossible to do without the item I questioned, and sometimes I was lucky enough to get an item reduced by £1 before members passed on merrily to the next vote. The figures presented by the Premier differ little from those presented to us year after year. Certainly they show what a wonderful country Western Australia is when such a small population is able to carry such large financial responsibilities.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Are we carrying them?

Mr. THOMSON: Whether we are or not, the value of every man, woman and child in the State is £148 7s. 6d. There are probably few members who, if they could be brought to believe they had received that sum, would consider themselves well off.

The Minister for Lands: While that is the indebtedness on paper, it is not the actual indebtedness, because there are the assets represented by the public utilities.

Mr. THOMSON: I admit that. When we remember that we owe the considerable

sum of £82,000,000, it must impress us as being a stupendous burden. If we make allowance for the sinking fund, which stands at £9,373,571, our indebtedness is reduced to 33¼ millions. We have very valuable assets, and a considerable sum has been expended on developmental work. From the State point of view it is satisfactory that the financial year closed with an apparent deficit less by £69,425 than the amount estimated. I do not claim to know so much as the Leader of the Opposition last night claimed to know. He said he knew more about the figures than did the Premier. I do not claim to have such knowledge of public finance as that hon. member claims, but it seems one might reasonably wonder whether the figures as submitted are genuine. I believe the ways of the various Treasurers are something like those of the heathen Chinee—somewhat wily and devious. I believe there has been a fair amount of juggling with figures. We have been handling vast sums of money; we have been faced with a deficit for years, and we have been borrowing money to pay our sinking fund and to meet a good many of our liabilities. But I am not going to criticise the Budget or the financial proposals of the Government. The whole of the expenditure to which they are committed is practically a legacy from the previous Government.

Mr. Latham: Is not most of it the legacy of the Public Service Commissioner?

Mr. THOMSON: It is a legacy from the previous Government, and it is most astonishing to hear the member for York suggest that the responsibility rests with the Public Service Commissioner.

Mr. Latham: These Estimates are composed chiefly of salaries.

Mr. THOMSON: The Public Service Commissioner is only an officer to see that the Acts promulgated from time to time are given effect to.

The Minister for Lands: He controls approximately £500,000.

Mr. THOMSON: But he has absolutely no say in the expenditure of that money; he is governed by the various Acts of Parliament and by the decisions of the Appeal Board.

Mr. Latham: And the Arbitration Court.

Mr. THOMSON: To blame the Public Service Commissioner is absurd. I do not propose to criticise the financial proposals of the present Administration. I shall reserve my criticism until next year, when probably they will have at least some good deeds to their credit, and probably a few misdeeds to account for. The Premier expects to receive a revenue of £3,164,305, or an increase of £298,710 over that of last year. He expects to spend £3,353,272, an increase over last year's expenditure of £258,519, leaving an estimated deficit on the year's operations of £188,967, a reduction of £40,191 on the deficit of last year. That is very satisfactory. The Government must have felt elated with the advice tendered them by the Leader

of the Opposition in the course of his long speech last night, and with his assurance that the finances had been squared. I sincerely hope his statement is correct. The hon. member laid claim to having performed the task of squaring the ledger, and he pointed out that the State was now more prosperous than when he assumed office. I admit that it is, but in this respect Western-Australia is no exception. It would be most pitiful if Western Australia were the only State in the Commonwealth that was not making progress. Thank God, the whole of the countries throughout the world are slowly but surely recovering from the effects of the great war and we in common with others are improving our position. I have no doubt that next year the anticipations of the Premier will be realised. The Premier pointed out that the sinking fund payments this year would amount to £235,651, or £46,684 more than the estimated deficit. He stressed the point, as had previous Treasurers, that but for the contributions to the sinking fund, the State would this year show a surplus of £46,684. That would be the result if this State were financing on the same basis as are the other States. I have had the temerity on many occasions to discuss the sinking fund, and I repeat the statement I have made several times, that attention should be given to the sinking fund. A committee should be appointed to inquire into the working of the sinking fund. This year the Treasury has given us fuller information than we have had before. For the first time to my knowledge we have particulars of Loan Acts interest and sinking fund, showing our indebtedness in London and in Australia. We also have details of the sinking fund and investments. Return No. 11 shows that the total of the sinking fund on the 31st March last was £9,373,571, of which contributions from revenue totalled £6,041,538, interest on investments £3,149,107, and discounts on purchases, less brokerage and expenses, £1,077,454. This is a phase upon which I wish to touch. We are told we have no right to interfere with the sinking fund. Our total indebtedness in London is 41½ million pounds. In the hands of the trustees we have a little over 9¼ million pounds. I do not pose as an expert, but endeavour to study the affairs and finances of the State just as I would study my own affairs. It seems absurd that we should purchase our old stock on the London market at a discount. We purchase at, say, £75, and the face value of the stock is £100. We put that stock into our sinking fund and continue to pay, if it is at 3½ per cent., 3½ per cent. interest on the £100. But we have borrowed £75 at 6 per cent. with which to purchase that bond, so that we continue to pay 3½ on the original bond, plus £4 10s., which is equivalent to the interest on £75. I hope I have made myself clear. To my way of thinking we are actually paying 8 per cent. interest on the bond. The matter is one that should be inquired into by ex-

perts. If we purchase a bond for £75, the face value of which to the State is £100, it is very good business to cancel it, for our indebtedness is thus reduced. It is shown on Return 11 that we have benefited to the tune of £1,077,454 by purchasing our own stock at a discount. I do not suggest that we should repudiate the sinking fund, for that would influence our financial position. All the arrangements we have entered into we must honourably carry out. Seeing that we have this huge sum in the hands of the trustees in London, and that we have had to borrow money ourselves, it is time inquiry was made to see whether it would not be sound finance to alter the Act, and bring it into line with exactly the conditions that apply to a Crown Colony or Crown agents. The sinking fund was brought into being when we were a Crown colony. We have agents in England who have entire charge of the moneys that are borrowed, all of which will eventually be repaid in 1935. These agents have power to withdraw a certain number of bonds every year if they desire. The method I suggest might place our finances in a better position, and assist the Treasurer. The Treasurer estimates that he has to find this year for the sinking fund £235,651. To clear up the matter some investigation should be made by experts to see whether it would not be a practicable proposition, instead of paying double interest as we are doing, to cancel the bonds we purchase. If I had an overdraft at my bank and undertook to reduce it by £100 a year, and had to borrow the money and to continue paying interest on the £100 I redeemed from the bank and on the £100 I borrowed, thus paying double interest, most people would say that I ought to put my affairs into the hands of an accountant. After dealing with the anticipated revenue, the Premier went on to say that he would insist on rigid economies in the Government departments although there was very little scope for reduced expenditure there. This has been said year after year. When he was asked privately whether certain reductions should be made, one Minister said that he had been the blanky lizard of his crowd because he had been quite sincere in his youth and inexperience. After cutting his estimates to the bone, the Treasurer made an additional cut into them and placed him in an unsatisfactory position. I have no doubt the wily heads of our various departments took good care when they made up their Estimates to allow for this annual cut. One Government instituted a suggestions board, through the agency of which, I believe, one or two valuable suggestions were made. The greatest difficulty facing the Treasurer is that the various departmental heads are those to whom the Ministers have to appeal for advice as to how economies can be effected. Is it likely these heads will say they can make a drastic cut here or there? If they did so it would be an admission that for years they had

been neglecting their duties in the administration of their departments. As members of Parliament, we think we know that there is considerable overlapping in the departments. There is not that co-ordination between them that should exist. Instead of the Government throwing the whole responsibility of the administration of the departments upon the shoulders of the Public Service Commissioner, the Under Secretaries should be allocated a certain sum of money, and given authority and power, within certain limits, to spend such money as they thought fit. By this means a great deal of the present circumlocution could be overcome. The Minister for Health is in charge of his department. All the money for buildings, however, is in the hands of the Minister for Works. The Minister for Health has, therefore, to ask the Minister for Works if he will do certain things.

The Minister for Lands: That depends on the money that is available.

Mr. THOMSON: Yes. All the money that is going to be spent by the Health Department on buildings should be allocated to it, and its Minister should have authority to send a minute to the Public Works Department saying that he wants a hospital at a certain place, estimated to cost so much, and should thus have the spending of the money. The same applies to the Education Department, whose buildings are constructed by the Public Works Department. The money involved is allocated to the Works Department, although it is the other department which says where the money is to be spent. Important works, such as the building of schools, have often been held up by the Public Works Department.

The Minister for Lands: That is only for want of money.

Mr. THOMSON: Sometimes it has been done for other reasons.

The Minister for Lands: The Public Health Department and the Education Department have no technical officers who can erect buildings.

Mr. THOMSON: I know that is a matter for the Architectural Branch, but it would be better for the Health Department and the Education Department if the money involved were allotted to them in the first place.

The Minister for Lands: The money is only allotted for expenditure, which is finally controlled by the Treasurer.

Mr. THOMSON: That is so. We could get better results by the method I suggest. Assuming that some work is required at a school in Katanning, involving a sum of over £5, the schoolmaster writes to the district inspector, who in turn writes to the Education Department in Perth. The department then writes to the Under Secretary for Public Works, who sends on the communication to the Architectural Branch. That branch then writes to the district inspector at Albany, who then goes to Katanning

to make his inspection. After that the whole matter goes back again through the same channels. That system could be largely abolished, and I hope the present Administration will make an earnest effort to overcome the circumlocution which obtains in every department. Ministers say they will stand firm for rigid economy, but for the life of me I cannot see how Ministers, overloaded as some of them are with work, will be able to know whether rigid economy is being practised or not. I maintain that the present functions of the Public Service Commissioner, functions for which he is paid a large salary, consist mainly in hearing appeals, making classifications, and deciding whether this or that man is worth only £250 or should go into the £300 grade. If we are to get practical economy in our various departments, we must have an officer appointed somewhat on the same lines as the Commissioner of Railways has appointed Mr. Backshall to be an inspector. Mr. Backshall is able to move about the branches of the Railway Department, and he reports to the Commissioner direct—not through the ordinary channel, which would mean that the Commissioner would receive such information as his officers thought he ought to have. I am greatly obliged for the keen interest members are taking in the debate.

Mr. Latham: Why draw attention to the matter?

Mr. THOMSON: I am indeed glad that so many members have remained in the Chamber—nine in all. I think I would be justified in drawing attention to the state of the House.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member cannot do that himself.

Mr. THOMSON: I hope some member will do it, if only for the fun of seeing members come in and then go out again. There should be an assistant to the Public Service Commissioner with authority to go into any department for inspection purposes. If I were in charge of a department, that inspector should have the right to come into my room and say to me, "I shall take your chair for a fortnight." A capable inspector would reveal much overlapping which under present conditions cannot be discovered. I commend the suggestion to Ministers as one which would help towards economy in administration. From the information to be found in various returns I have totted up the number of our public servants and Government employees, and I find that, including the railway service, they aggregate about 20,000, a figure which does not take in casual employees and others working in the ramifications of the civil service throughout the State. That number represents a heavy burden on the wealth producers of the State, though I do not for one moment suggest that the State does not get value for the money it spends on its Public Service. But the wealth produced in Western Australia comes mainly

from the soil, and the number of Government employees are a heavy load on the primary producers. I am indeed pleased that the Government have increased in some respects the facilities available in the Agricultural Department. Two or three additional officers have been appointed. As ten millions of money are involved in primary production, one can realise that in the past sufficient attention has not been paid to the provision of expert advice. I congratulate the Government on the new appointments they have made. As regards the Education Department, the Premier said he estimated this year's expenditure at £592,894, representing an increase over last year of £12,347. The hon. gentleman also said that he had carefully scrutinised the departmental estimates, and that the increase in the Education Department was due principally to the opening of new primary schools, the opening of the Albany High School, and increased salaries to primary teachers. It is time inquiry was made into the education system of the State, and the reason why it is costing so much money. I had occasion recently to go to the department in connection with an additional room required at a school in my electorate, the estimated cost being £40. The reply of the Director of Education was, "I am sorry, but I have not got a shilling to spend." During the past few years this State has expended about £70,000 in the erection of three buildings for high schools. The education policy of this State seems to have been built up on the inclinations and whims of successive Ministers for Education. In dealing with education one touches a subject upon which many people are very tender, but I do not hesitate to say that in my opinion that amount of £70,000 could have been better spent in affording facilities for the education of country children. By a system of bursaries we could give a number of our intelligent children opportunities to attend the secondary schools already in existence. Educationists go so far as to say that no education is wasted, and that no knowledge is wasted; but I honestly believe that we spend many thousands of pounds every year on teaching boys and girls far beyond their absolute requirements. I do not say that they are not better boys and girls for having received that education, but in view of the huge sums of money which our education system is costing us I say we want a body of practical men to go into the Education Department, when I have no doubt many frills would be cut off. Let us give our children in the country better educational facilities than they have to-day. Every country member has been inundated with requisitions for schools.

The Minister for Lands: I want about 30 now.

Mr. THOMSON: That is why I feel a little sore at the expenditure of £70,000 on

three buildings, though no doubt those buildings will perform a very useful function. However, I know of men who have sold their farms at a loss simply because they have not been able to get schools for their children and were determined not to deny them the advantages of education. I have repeatedly known parents to put their hands into their own pockets to build a school; and as soon as the attendance fell one below the minimum, the department closed the school. I know I shall be told that only a few years ago we had a Royal Commission on education. However, one member of that Commission was selected because the system he was running in New South Wales was on a par with our own system. His report was prejudged, and in fact almost written long before he came to Western Australia. He had been doing the same work in New South Wales as our Education Department is doing here. I congratulate the Government on having purchased a site for an agricultural college. Too long, in my opinion, has that section of education been neglected. The basis of Western Australia's prosperity and progress is primary production. We have spent huge sums of money in assisting people to open up the country. In order to place the returned soldiers we have loaded ourselves with heavy financial burdens. Group settlement will impose on us a total expenditure of £4,000,000. Yet for agricultural education we have so far done practically nothing. I commend the Government for having purchased a property on which to establish an agricultural college, and I trust that before long we shall see that institution functioning to the great advantage of the State. Our present system is serving to educate our young people along wrong lines. If an advertisement were inserted for a girl to act as typist in an office, one would be inundated with applications. So would it be if one advertised for a clerk. If I desired to secure the services of a carpenter, a bricklayer, or a plumber, I would be darned lucky to get one.

Mr. Sleeman: What about the high schools?

Mr. THOMSON: We are educating the youth of Western Australia—indeed, it applies practically throughout the world—to despise what may be described as manual labour. I am prepared to admit that there are many forces at work towards that end. I do not wish to debar anyone from receiving a good education, but the average boy or girl possessing an ordinary primary education, and having any ability at all, will not be kept down in Western Australia. The Premier estimated that the Railway Department would provide additional revenue amounting to £130,000 this year. I hope that that does not forecast possible increases in railway freights. I can assure the Minister for Railways that, if the Government intend to increase

freights to country districts, he will have to face serious competition from motor vehicles.

The Minister for Railways: That estimated revenue is strictly from increased business.

Mr. THOMSON: I am delighted to hear that.

Mr. Sleeman: The present Government are treating the farmers very well.

Mr. THOMSON: Speaking on behalf of the Country Party members, I am glad to say, while we do not agree with all the legislation that has been brought forward, we have had a fair deal to date.

Mr. Marshall: You have done a good bit of work with Cabinet Ministers since they have been in power.

Mr. THOMSON: That work has been in the interests of the State. I am particularly glad to hear from the Minister that it is not the intention of the Government to increase railway freights. The Railway Department has to face considerable opposition, and I propose to give an illustration to show what it means regarding passenger services. I was pleased to hear the Premier state the other evening that it was the intention of the Government to introduce a Main Roads Bill. That will be of assistance to the Government. We should compel the owners of heavy motor lorries to pay a more adequate proportion of the cost of maintaining our roads. At the present time local authorities have to provide roads that are being torn to pieces by the heavy motor traffic. Motors running from Tambellup in my electorate are competing with the railways by taking heavy loads to Perth and bringing back full loads as well. It is paying them handsomely. That is also being done from Narrogin. The sooner we have a Main Roads Bill, so as to compel the owners of lorries conveying huge loads over our roads to contribute substantially towards the revenue, the better it will be for the State. We should be able to impose a surcharge per ton on the goods carried and that will materially assist the State.

Mr. Marshall: Motor cars used for joy riding should be charged more.

The Minister for Railways: That is what the member for Katanning was saying.

Mr. Marshall: It should not apply so much to those motor lorries that are of more benefit to the State.

Mr. THOMSON: If the member for Murchison (Mr. Marshall) were to study the question, he would realise that the lorry hauling loads of five or six tons, is doing a lot of damage to our roads, without contributing anything to Consolidated Revenue apart from the motor lorry license fees. We should impose a tax of so much per ton and thus secure increased returns. It may be maintained that the faster travelling lorries do more damage. In my opinion it is possible that a motor lorry carrying 6 tons, and travelling at a slow speed, will

do less damage than one carrying a load of 2 tons and travelling at a high speed. It is the fast-travelling motor that does the damage to our roads. In order to give the Committee an illustration of what motor competition means to the Railway Department, I will cite Katanning. I own a Maxwell car, and if I come to Perth with two passengers, I have to provide two cases of benzine, costing £2 4s., oil costing 6s., and I can allow £1 for depreciation, making a total of £3 10s. The distance from Katanning to Perth is 200 miles. Thus, I can carry three persons in all, with their luggage, and bring them to Perth in eight hours at a cost of £1 3s. 4d. per head. If the same number of people were to travel from Katanning by rail, the first class fare would amount to £3 13s. 10d. per head, and if we took sleepers, it would represent an extra outlay of £1 10s. for the return journey, making a total expenditure per head of £5 3s. 10d.

The Minister for Lands: You cannot provide a sleeper in a motor car.

Mr. THOMSON: But one is not required, as the journey can be done in daylight. It takes a train 11 hours to go from Katanning to Perth, whereas the motor car lands you here in eight hours. Moreover, the train leaves Katanning at midnight and arrives at Perth at 11 o'clock the next morning. The total cost for the train journey for the three persons would be £15 11s. 6d.

Hon. J. Cunningham: What does the motor car journey work out at per mile?

Mr. THOMSON: I have not worked it out on the mileage basis, but am simply giving the actual cost to show what the competition with the railways really means. It is cheaper for a man owning a motor car to travel with his family to Perth by road than by train. Even deducting the sleepers from the railway expenses, the aggregate cost would be £11 as against £3 10s. That shows what a serious problem the railways have to face. If we are to develop the back country, it must be realised that motor cars and motor lorries are essential. We must make them pay a reasonable quota towards the upkeep of roads and so on. When I was in the Eastern States recently, I was impressed by the motor coaches used on the railways in South Australia. If any hon. member has ridden in a motor coach on the Western Australian railways down to Denmark, for instance, he has experienced a proper shaking up. If he can stand that journey without being ill, he can survive any experience on an ocean wave or any other such contrivance.

Mr. Latham: Our motor coaches were very serviceable on the spur lines in my electorate.

Mr. THOMSON: I do not say they are not serviceable.

Mr. Latham: I wish we had our motor coach back again.

Mr. THOMSON: The motor coach used in South Australia is twice the size of the type used here, and is more like one of our long tramcars. It runs more smoothly and I commend it to the notice of the Minister for Railways. I suggest he should make inquiries as to the running cost of that type of motor coach. It would be very serviceable for use on our spur lines during the slack season. Those we have are very antiquated.

Mr. Heron: They were installed by the late Government, who were not up-to-date.

Mr. THOMSON: They may have been the best offering when they were procured. It is satisfactory to know that the prospects for the coming season are excellent. We have heard a good deal, particularly from the front Opposition bench, about our wonderful agricultural prospects. I have been in this House for 10 years and each Government in power realised that the only way in which Western Australia could be made prosperous was by fostering and encouraging primary production. Owing to the unfortunate position in which we are placed in respect of Federation, we have very little chance of successfully establishing secondary industries.

Mr. Latham: We are exporting to the Eastern States.

Mr. THOMSON: Only a few lines. However, our primary industries are all important to us, and I am sure the Government will give every assistance to the agricultural and pastoral industries. We have every reason to be grateful to the Minister for Lands for his Bill amending the Industries Assistance Act. For that I thank him on behalf of many men who in my district are up against big odds, but who will now be able to take heart. The ex-Premier should have brought down that Bill, but he absolutely refused to do it. I want to say a few words about migration. The Premier told us that the Federal Government were negotiating a new agreement without consultation with the State Governments.

The Minister for Lands: Since the Premier made his speech we have been notified that the Federal Government will consult us before finalising the new agreement.

Mr. THOMSON: I am pleased to hear that.

Mr. Latham: It is a three-party agreement, and must be approved by the State.

The Minister for Lands: We are promised that now.

Mr. THOMSON: No doubt only as the result of the repeated requests made by the present Administration. Sir James Connolly has said that we can get migrants with money. When I returned from the Old Country two years ago I made the same statement. However, the ex-Premier refused to make any effort to get men with capital to come to this State.

Hon. J. Cunningham: You supported him.

Mr. THOMSON: I criticised him pretty sharply on that point. The Minister for Lands now says it is impossible to allocate

10,000 acres for men coming from overseas.

The Minister for Railways: That is for one group.

The Minister for Lands: It is against the law.

Mr. THOMSON: Then the law should be altered. Before I left for England I told the ex-Premier that if he would allocate a block of good land, I would undertake to bring out to this State the finest group of Scottish settlers that ever left Britain.

The Minister for Lands: Suppose 10,000 acres at Newdegate had been allocated for the purpose. With all the applicants we have for Newdegate land, there would have been an uproar.

Mr. THOMSON: I offered to bring them out, but the ex-Premier said it was impossible, that he could not let me have the land. Yet when he wanted to do it, he could bring out groups from Cornwall and put them straight on the land.

The Minister for Lands: Only on small areas.

Mr. THOMSON: That was exactly what I wanted. The ex-Premier said it could not be done. Yet when he wanted to do it to suit himself, it was easy enough. Surely when a man offers his services, he should receive some consideration. The late Government gave me no consideration at all. Sir James Connolly says we have not had proper publicity. I have known successful farmers going from here to England offer their services in respect of publicity. I offered mine, but I did not even get a reply.

Mr. Latham: You didn't require to get permission to advertise the State.

Mr. THOMSON: Yes, I did. If the hon. member were Home, could he go on the public platform and tell the people of the conditions here?

Mr. Latham: I certainly would.

Mr. THOMSON: We should make an effort to get the proper class of men out here. At Home we appeal to penniless people to come out to Western Australia. We have been concentrating on penniless men. Surely we should make some effort to get men with capital as well.

Mr. Latham: You could not give them prior rights over the men who are here.

Mr. THOMSON: We are giving preference to migrants coming to group settlements.

Mr. Latham: We are not.

Mr. THOMSON: We have large numbers of settlers who have gone direct from the ship to the group settlements.

Mr. Latham: There are large numbers of Australians there also.

Mr. THOMSON: Nevertheless, preference has been given to the migrants.

Mr. Latham: The Australians all want to go on wheat land, where they can make money more quickly.

Mr. THOMSON: If we can give preference to migrants without money, surely to God we can give preference to those with money! We could even put men of capital on the group settlements. If we had con-

concentrated on men with capital, we should have had much better results. I am not going to anticipate the findings of the Royal Commission, but the member for York (Mr. Latham) clearly indicated last night what his report is going to be.

Mr. Latham: I did nothing of the sort. I simply told the truth about the land. Do not put words into my mouth.

Mr. THOMSON: I hope the hon. member's estimate of the land proves to be correct. I think we could get some men of capital and we could give them a larger area.

The Minister for Lands: Those men want to go on to farms already cleared.

Mr. THOMSON: Mr. Lee Steere undertook to do what he could to get a committee formed in Perth, and if such a committee can be formed, no doubt it will receive every consideration from the Government.

Mr. Latham: No doubt there will be an opportunity after the Closer Settlement Bill goes through.

Mr. THOMSON: Such men would be of great assistance to us financially. They would make more valid efforts to remain on the land than some of the group settlers intend to do, if we can judge from the evidence already tendered. I regret that the 15 per cent. super tax is not to be reduced, especially as the Premier, when in opposition last year, voted for its abolition. I realise it is very difficult for the Premier, with such large responsibilities, to give up any revenue. The member for York (Mr. Latham) last night said he thought men who went away from Western Australia to invest their capital were poor specimens of citizens. That was not a right statement to make. A man is at liberty to better his conditions. Even if a man has made most of his money in Western Australia, if he can invest it more profitably in some other State of the Commonwealth, we should not cast reflections upon him for so doing.

Mr. Latham: I would not applaud him for doing it. I would be ashamed of him.

Mr. THOMSON: I regret that we are losing capital, but in the matter of higher incomes we are the most heavily taxed community in Australia.

Mr. Latham: They are a miserable lot to go away in order to evade a little taxation.

Mr. THOMSON: If a man in Western Australia has an income of about £6,000 a year, by the time he satisfies the Federal and State taxation authorities, he has only a trifle over £2,000 left. It is all very well to talk of patriotism, but if such a man can go to another portion of the Commonwealth and save another £1,000 out of his income, well, even the member for York would probably do the same thing. If I were similarly placed, I would have no hesitation in going to the State that would leave me with the most money.

The Minister for Lands: If he invested his money in Victoria he would have to pay

only 5d. in the pound difference, because we could not tax him on the money earned in Victoria.

Mr. Latham: That is so.

Mr. THOMSON: I do not agree with that.

The Minister for Lands: We could not tax anything earned outside Western Australia.

Mr. THOMSON: What about the absentee tax?

The Minister for Lands: There is no absentee tax now.

Mr. THOMSON: Thank goodness we were able to cut that out! That is one good thing that was done.

Mr. Latham: One good thing to the credit of the late administration.

Mr. THOMSON: I am not aware the hon. member was a member of that administration.

Mr. Latham: I did not say I was.

Mr. THOMSON: If members of the late Government require to be defended, let them come into the Chamber and defend themselves. I do not propose to deal extensively with taxation, because there will be other opportunities when the taxation Bills are under discussion. It is pleasing to me to find one or two planks of the platform, which I was instrumental in placing before the people, being given effect to by the present Government. It shows that we were able to suggest one or two things of benefit to the State. I regret that the Federal Government have decided to establish a Public Works Department in this State. Valuable and economical service has been rendered to the Federal Government by our Works Department, and it seems a rotten return for them to establish a department of their own. I hope the Government are protesting against the action of the Federal authorities.

Mr. Latham: This is the only State in which there is not a Federal Works Department.

Mr. THOMSON: Excellent services have been rendered to the Commonwealth in this State.

Mr. Latham: I admit that.

Mr. THOMSON: The Workers' Homes Board under the management of Mr. Thomas has done excellent work for the Commonwealth in connection with the awful mess they made over the war service homes.

Mr. Wilson: He is trying to palm off these homes on the people here.

Mr. THOMSON: That is his job. He would not be doing his work if he did not endeavour to sell these homes.

Mr. Wilson: If a person wants a worker's home he should not have to take one that is built by the war service people. Why should the Federal Government push their duds off on to us?

Mr. THOMSON: I agree with the view of the hon. member.

The Minister for Lands: I do not think the State is advancing any money with

which to buy service homes for anybody. They do not belong to us.

Mr. THOMSON: The view of the late Government, and I hope it will be the opinion of this Government, was that if a returned soldier wanted a home it was deemed preferable that he should have one erected under war service homes conditions. This means bringing fresh capital to the State, and enables the Workers' Homes Board to devote more of their attention to homes in the country. I regret that the Federal Government have decided to make this further invasion, which will merely mean building up another Federal Department in this State. It is not my intention to criticise the Administration at this stage. Practically all the expenditure represented in the Budget was incurred by the late Government. I recognise the heavy task placed upon the shoulders of the Premier and his colleagues, and I trust the optimism of the Leader of the Opposition will be realised, so that when the Premier brings down his next Budget he will be able to say that he has balanced the ledger.

General debate concluded; votes and items discussed as follows:—

Votes—Legislative Council, £1,346; Legislative Assembly, £2,182—agreed to.

Vote—Joint House Committee, £4,787:

Mr. THOMSON: It is the wish of the House Committee that more accommodation should be provided. I hope the Minister for Lands will make a note of this, and assist the Committee to procure the necessary rooms.

The Minister for Lands: That will not come under this vote, but it is under consideration at the moment.

Item, *Wages (kitchen, dining room and cleaners)*, £1,800:

Mr. HUGHES: Is it a fact that the staffs of the dining room and the kitchen are working abnormal hours, and not receiving the rates of pay provided by the Arbitration award for men employed in this occupation?

Mr. THOMSON: The Speaker, the President, and I are to meet the representative of the staff in order to discuss the position.

Mr. Hughes: The staff or the union?

Mr. THOMSON: The staff.

Mr. HUGHES: I stand for the principle of employees negotiating through their union. I do not favour the idea of any employer negotiating with individual members of a union.

Mr. Latham: Let us close down the dining room.

Mr. HUGHES: I would rather do that than be guilty of sweating the employees if they are working abnormal hours and not receiving proper rates of pay. By all means let us close it, if we are not prepared to pay for the meals we have and to see that the staff work proper hours. I regret that the

House Committee are not meeting the representatives of the union concerned.

Mr. Thomson: I said we are meeting a representative of the staff. He is really the secretary of the union, but we could not recognise his position.

Mr. HUGHES: The decision not to recognise the union is a grave mistake.

Mr. Thomson: We are not an industry.

Mr. HUGHES: What is the use of splitting straws? The Joint House Committee should meet the union representing the dining room employees.

Mr. Teesdale: This trouble affords a splendid illustration of the effect of an agitator approaching a peaceful staff.

Mr. HUGHES: Does the hon. member suggest that the union has not the right to protect the workers?

Mr. Teesdale: Where the worker has no grievance, it is not for the agitator to come in and create one.

Mr. HUGHES: Every man who works more than the prescribed number of hours is a menace to the other workers in the industry. Every unorganised worker is a menace to the organised workers.

The Minister for Lands: Who says that the Joint House Committee have refused to meet the union? They are meeting the secretary of the union.

Mr. HUGHES: But he is not being met as the representative of the union, and the union is not being recognised.

The Minister for Lands: How do you know?

Mr. HUGHES: The member for Katanning said so.

Mr. Thomson: I only know that the House Committee have agreed to meet a gentleman. Why flog the matter now? I will say nothing more. You can flog the subject as much as you like.

Mr. HUGHES: I do not think members want their dining room run under conditions outside the award.

Mr. Teesdale: But you will admit that the position of the stewards is unique?

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I take it some member of the Joint House Committee will reply.

Mr. HUGHES: No member will object to paying a proper charge for the meal he has in the dining room. The Joint House Committee should meet the union in the same way as all other employers meet the union. I hope that I have misunderstood the member for Katanning, and that the union is, in fact, being officially recognised.

Mr. LAMBERT: I never regarded the workers as being content with verbal fireworks and oratorical displays. When I exert myself in their behalf, I endeavour to achieve something practical. The Premier and his Ministers I know are desirous, and really over-desirous, that the House Committee should set up a standard as regards those who are employed within the precincts of Parliament House. If the member for East Perth had been as sincere as he tries to make us believe in the desire

to better the conditions of the employees in Parliament House, he would at least have consulted a member of his own party on this subject.

Mr. Hughes: You denied that you represented us.

Mr. LAMBERT: When did I do that?

Mr. Hughes: The other day.

Mr. LAMBERT: I did nothing of the sort. I denied the right to allow the control of the staff to pass into other hands. While I am on the Joint House Committee representing this branch of the legislature, I will speak and act impartially even if that does not meet with the views of the member for East Perth.

Mr. Hughes: You ignore us altogether.

Mr. LAMBERT: I would not ignore the hon. member; I would tolerate him. I am tolerant of the intolerant! The Joint House Committee, irrespective of party considerations, have given mature consideration to the position of the staff as they are affected by the Estimates and certain recommendations were made to the Treasurer. Those he has acquiesced in will provide advances such as have not been made for years. Other advances are still under consideration, while recommendations regarding the members of the staff paid from the contingent funds are also under consideration. I deplore the fact, notwithstanding that I know the member for East Perth is sincere, that this matter should have been brought forward at this stage. To-day the committee had a long discussion to ascertain whether it was possible to better the conditions of the House staff more in keeping with conditions elsewhere, but having regard to the peculiar institution we, as a Joint House Committee, have to manage. Each member of that committee is probably more desirous than even the member for East Perth to improve the conditions of those employees. Every possibility was discussed in our desire to set up a standard that could not be challenged by any organisation outside.

Mr. Hughes: The union had to come to light before you got a move on.

Mr. LAMBERT: The union did not move in the matter before the member for Coolgardie did, nor did the member for East Perth. The Speaker brought forward certain suggestions regarding one or two of the staff and that led to a review of the whole position. During the review certain suggestions were made that the waiters and others should join a union. Those employees were at liberty to join a union.

Mr. Thomson: No one objected to that.

Mr. LAMBERT: That is so.

Mr. Latham: They should not require to join a union to get decent wages!

Mr. LAMBERT: I would not sit on the committee for five minutes if it were necessary for our employees to belong to a union in order to get what I consider a just standard of wages and conditions set up in Parliament House. Irrespective of party

considerations, it is the desire of every member of the Joint House Committee to secure that end. The position of Parliament is peculiar, for I do not know what authority we would have to enter into and register an industrial agreement with a union. We are quite prepared to do that and to endeavour to overcome all possible legal difficulties.

Mr. CHESSON: As another member of the Joint House Committee I wish to endorse the remarks of the member for Coolgardie. We are desirous of giving every consideration to the staff in order to improve their conditions and to increase their remuneration. The matter was brought up by the member for Coolgardie prior to the union having anything to do with it. Together with the Speaker, he interviewed the Treasurer and urged increases for the staff.

Mr. Teesdale: And it was done without any pressure from outside.

Mr. CHESSON: There was no pressure at all. The committee have appointed a subcommittee to meet representatives of the union to talk matters over to ascertain if we cannot dispose of whatever difficulties there may be. That shows that we are prepared to discuss matters with the union representatives. There is another aspect that members should not overlook. The committee desire more consideration for the staff on the part of members themselves. Often the waiters are overworked, because of the actions of a few members who remain behind on the premises for an hour or two after both Houses have adjourned. That sort of thing makes it impossible for the committee to do much to improve the conditions of the staff. Surely, at most, one hour after both Houses have adjourned should be sufficient, and after that time members should be off the premises.

Mr. Teesdale: Not in the bar, anyhow.

Mr. CHESSON: Unless members show some consideration along these lines, the committee cannot secure that betterment of conditions for the staff they would desire. Too often members themselves are at fault. I am sorry the matter has been brought up to-night. The committee have met, the differences will be adjusted, and whatever extra remuneration is granted will start probably from to-day. The Joint House Committee are prepared to treat the staff well.

Mr. MARSHALL: I am glad to know that some improvement in the rates of pay to the servants of Parliament is contemplated by the Joint House Committee. It was a member of the House of Commons, advocating better treatment of the staff, who first declared that the Government should be a model employer.

Mr. Teesdale: You must recognise the difference between Parliament House and a café.

Mr. MARSHALL: I do. If a man is paid £2 per week in a café, he ought to get £4 at Parliament House. Members of

Parliament require the maximum of civility and attention, and should pay for it. The domestic staff up here have not had a fair deal.

Mr. Teesdale: Yet there are plenty of others very ready to take their positions.

Mr. MARSHALL: Because so many are out of work. When unemployment is in evidence, we can get cheap labour. But we should not be taking advantage of anything of the sort. I am glad to hear that the servants of Parliament House are to receive fair remuneration at last. What the member for East Perth (Mr. Hughes) said was, in large measure, correct. One prominent and wealthy man, not a member of this Chamber, took strong exception to the union secretary being allowed to interview the Joint House Committee.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You must not discuss members of another place.

Mr. MARSHALL: I am not doing so. I hope the Joint House Committee will see to it that in future the Government shall be regarded as a model employer.

Mr. Teesdale: But members are responsible for the late hours of the staff.

Mr. MARSHALL: The controller should be given to understand that the refreshment room must be closed within half an hour after the House rises.

Mr. Chesson: We will arrange for that.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I am surprised to hear from a member of the House Committee that the hours of employees are lengthened owing to some members remaining on the premises for a considerable period after the House rises. If this be so, it would be a good thing to close the refreshment room at a certain hour every night irrespective of whether the House is sitting.

Mr. Teesdale: Oh, give us a chance!

Mr. SLEEMAN: If we are kept here late at night we shall be in no worse position than other people who have to work at night. They cannot get a nip of whisky when they want it.

Mr. Teesdale: What about tea and coffee?

Mr. SLEEMAN: They cannot get that, either. When there is an all-night sitting, surely we can get through without having the refreshment room open! I believe the staff will receive fair consideration at the hands of the House Committee.

Mr. HUGHES: The matter was put to the member for Coolgardie.

Mr. Lambert: When was it raised?

Mr. HUGHES: The hon. member knows. I cannot allow him to say that we should have raised the question with him first of all. I hope recognition will be given to this union, and that the House Committee will act as we expect other employers to act. When the refreshment room attendants are obliged to work overtime, they should be paid overtime rates. I would not give any consideration to the Parliamentary refreshment room beyond what is extended to licensed premises. We are not entitled to compel one section of the community to

close their premises at 9 o'clock and to keep ourselves outside the law.

Mr. Marshall: There are refreshments other than intoxicants served here.

Mr. HUGHES: I did not mention intoxicants.

Mr. Latham: And every other business house is closed at night.

Mr. HUGHES: A lot of people have to work after 9 p.m.

Mr. J. H. Smith: They are entitled to refreshments, are they not?

Mr. HUGHES: Then we must do away with 9 o'clock closing. There should not be one law for us and another for the rest of the community. If liquor be cut off for the rest of the people—

The Minister for Lands: You could cut it off here for my part.

Mr. HUGHES: And for my part too.

Mr. Latham: Let us strike out the item.

Mr. HUGHES: We provide a closing hour for licensed premises, and the Parliamentary refreshment room should not be exempted.

Mr. J. H. Smith: Then why not make it 11 p.m. all over the State?

Mr. HUGHES: If we provide that tearooms in town shall close at 11 p.m., this refreshment room should close at the same hour.

Mr. J. H. Smith: Do the tearoom employees start work at 4.30 p.m.?

Mr. HUGHES: We hold that it does not matter when an establishment opens, but there is an hour at which it must close.

Mr. Chesson: We have no right to be here at this time of the night.

Mr. HUGHES: We are not the only persons working at this hour of the night. Many men who work at night would be glad of a cup of tea when they knock off at 12.30 or 1 a.m.

Mr. Teesdale: They take it with them.

Mr. HUGHES: Because the law will not allow tearooms to remain open and supply them.

Mr. Teesdale: Do you suggest that we should bring a bill to this place?

Mr. HUGHES: We should submit to the same law that we impose upon other people.

Hon. J. Cunningham: You are too mean to make use of the bar.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. HUGHES: That is a degrading sort of argument to introduce. I do not like alcoholic liquors and therefore I do not take them.

Mr. Teesdale: You cannot stand them; that is why.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Members must refrain from interjecting.

Mr. HUGHES: I have never taken alcohol and I am not going to be forced by anyone to do so.

Hon. J. Cunningham: You are afraid to trust yourself.

Mr. HUGHES: I object to an assertion that, because I do not want alcohol, I am too mean to buy it.

Hon. J. Cunningham: You are too cowardly to try it.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Members must refrain from making personal interjections.

Mr. HUGHES: It is degrading to Parliament to have to put up with this sort of thing. I resent it strongly. If I want a cup of tea, I have it, and do not insult the member for Kalgoolie because he does not wish to partake of one also.

Hon. J. Cunningham: You could not be insulting.

The CHAIRMAN: The Honorary Minister must keep order.

Mr. HUGHES: The best thing I can do is to move that progress be reported.

The CHAIRMAN: You cannot do so after making a speech.

Mr. Wilson: Why should you? Others want to speak besides yourself.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. HUGHES: If it is found necessary to keep the employees of the House beyond a certain time they should be paid overtime rates.

Mr. Latham: No one objects to that.

Mr. HUGHES: I hope the House Committee will fix a 44-hour week for the employees, and pay them overtime if they work beyond those hours.

Mr. WILSON: This species of cheap notoriety is really a diatribe against members generally. After spending many years in this House, I assert that I have never been in a more decent Assembly than this.

Mr. Hughes: Have I cast any aspersions upon this Assembly?

Mr. WILSON: If members remain here working for the country, they are entitled to get their tea, lemonade or whisky if they want it within reasonable hours. Why should we belittle ourselves? If we employ servants they should be the best paid in the land. If they are kept after hours, we should see that they are paid overtime.

Mr. Hughes: Then you agree with me?

Mr. WILSON: Yes, but not with all that blatherskite against people who hold a view contrary to that of the hon. member.

Mr. Hughes: Do you think I should stand these insults?

Mr. WILSON: No man should stand any insult, but should be careful not to cast innuendoes at other people.

Mr. Teesdale: And a new chum, too.

Mr. WILSON: I do not like Parliament being held cheaply.

Mr. Teesdale: You have the Committee with you.

Mr. WILSON: If the House rises, say, at 11 o'clock, it is right that no more liquor should be served after, say, 11.30. I protest against these cheap fireworks at the expense of other members.

Mr. Teesdale: Catherine wheels and squibs!

Mr. WILSON: Sometimes a man forgets himself. I am prepared to leave matters in the hands of the House Committee. If

it does not do its work, let us pass a vote of censure upon it.

Mr. LAMBERT: The House Committee have considered that certain restrictions can reasonably be imposed upon members, but they were obliged to have regard for the peculiar position of Parliament and the delicacy of the circumstances. They have thought it advisable that the refreshment room should be closed an hour after Parliament rises. If this meets with the approval of members, it will be adopted. The House Committee are trying to do all they can to see that the House is conducted in a manner that will be appreciated by everyone.

Mr. LATHAM: We have selected a House Committee to conduct these affairs. We on this side want to see the staff well paid. If there is not sufficient money in the vote for this purpose, it is the duty of the House Committee to ask for an increase. We have found the staff most considerate and attentive, and there was no necessity for all this display to-night. So long as we pay our employees, we have the right to ask for any comforts we can get.

Mr. HUGHES: The member for Collie is wrong. I did not cast aspersions upon anyone.

Mr. Wilson: You do not know when you are casting aspersions.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. HUGHES: I objected to what I considered was an insult. I had no intention of casting aspersions upon anyone, but no member is at liberty to insult me with impunity. I hope I shall never indulge in insult, but I reserve to myself the right to hit back if I am hit.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Joint Printing Committee, £3,731:

Mr. MARSHALL: This vote includes the payments to the "Hansard" reporters, who of recent years, probably because of a greater congestion of business in Parliament and of the more numerous Royal Commissions appointed, have been compelled to work much more strenuously than was expected of them formerly. Their salaries no doubt were reasonable in days gone by. It was an understood thing that when recess came the "Hansard" reporters would be able to enjoy a few months' respite, like members of Parliament. For several years past, however, that privilege has been denied them. Seeing that they have now to work harder and longer than before, I think the Joint Printing Committee might consider the advisableness of recognising this fact in their remuneration. I need not elaborate upon the importance of the work of the "Hansard" staff, nor upon their efficiency and courtesy.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Hear, hear!

Mr. MARSHALL: I commend my suggestion to the notice of the Printing Committee.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—*Joint Library Committee*, £325:

Item, *Sub-librarian*, £50:

Mr. WILSON: The Sub-librarian, I find, is also the Clerk Assistant, and his services are remunerated with a total of £400 per annum. Anyone who has observed the work of the Clerk Assistant knows him to be a very painstaking officer who does a great deal for the House. The salary might well be increased from £50 to £100. The corresponding position of Clerk Assistant in South Australia carries a salary of £500 a year. I do not believe that South Australia has a more efficient Clerk Assistant than Western Australia has in Mr. Steere. If the Clerk of the Assembly get £600, the Clerk Assistant should get three-quarters of that amount. I observe that in connection with this Assembly four officers are receiving increases, and as Mr. Steere's salary has remained unaltered for years it is up to the House Committee to grant him an increase. The Clerk Assistant does some really fine work for the House.

The Minister for Lands: We are now dealing with the item Sub-librarian. Moreover, the man who does the work doesn't get the money.

Mr. WILSON: I commend the matter to the attention of the House Committee.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The amount of £50, which has been paid for some years, is quite sufficient for the work of the Sub-librarian. As a fact, the office clerk mostly does the work, as anyone who is in the habit of going to the library knows.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: But a lot of work has to be done before the books reach the library.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I think the office clerk should have some credit for his work, as well as other officers. For the attention that is given to the library, the Sub-librarian is well paid with £50.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The item for the Librarian, I notice, is struck out altogether.

The Minister for Lands: Read the footnote and see whether we have a Librarian.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Sub-librarian has done good work. We have an excellent library, which is well selected and well managed, and we should pay our Sub-librarian a great deal more. Without any responsibility for a library, the clerk Assistant in another place receives a higher salary. Really, the Sub-librarian should be appointed Librarian and get the amount of the discarded item.

Mr. Lambert: What are his duties?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: He keeps the library in order, and orders new books, and supervises generally. Parliament has declared that there shall be only a Sub-librarian.

Mr. Lambert: I consider that we keep some rubbishy old books in the library; they are not worth reading.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The hon. member requires scientific books, while other

members desire literature of other descriptions. Ours is an excellent library, and we should not hesitate to pay Mr. Steere for the work he does.

Mr. MARSHALL: I agree with the Leader of the Opposition. The Clerk of the Assembly has far more work to do than the Clerk in the Council. The position of Librarian, which carried with it an allowance of £150 a year, was held by our Clerk, who received £450, thus bringing up his salary to £600. The salary of the Clerk in the Council has been increased to £600, although he does not have anything like as much to do as our official. Seeing that the £150 for the Librarian has been deducted, it would almost appear as though that money has been wasted in the past, inasmuch as the Estimates now show no payment for that position.

The Minister for Lands: That item was included as a bluff. The money is accounted for in its proper place in the Estimates now.

Mr. MARSHALL: If the Minister for Lands contends that the Clerk in the Council does as much work as the Clerk of the Assembly, I disagree with him.

Mr. LAMBERT: As indicated by the Minister for Lands, the inclusion of the vote of £150 for the Librarian in past Estimates was misleading. That money is now transferred to the salary of the Clerk of the Assembly, which now appears as £600. As the Clerk of the Assembly is not carrying out the duties of Librarian, the Estimates should not provide any such entry, suggesting that he was doing work that entitled him to £150 a year. Although the Parliamentary Library looks nice, it could be considerably improved.

Mr. Teesdale: If you had your way you would have all books on the shelves that dealt with mining matters, particularly about manganese.

Mr. LAMBERT: Not at all. I would see that the library was reasonably informative.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: So it is.

Mr. LAMBERT: Our library should not consist of the latest works of fiction dealing with the flapper type and men of leisure. We should have books dealing with the latest phase of economics and the latest developments in commerce and industry. There is not to be found in the library at present any work that would impress itself upon a gathering of blackfellows. Our library should consist wholly and solely of works that will improve our knowledge and understanding and be of assistance to us in discussing matters of State.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: We have a wonderful library, and I read the books.

The CHAIRMAN: The member for Coolgardie must keep to the point. The item deals with the Sub-librarian.

Mr. LAMBERT: I am pointing out that it is necessary to improve the standard of our library. The Parliamentary library should not be a cheap aggregation of fiction.

12 o'clock midnight.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must deal with the item before the Chair.

Mr. LAMBERT: We do not want trashy novels in the library.

Mr. Wilson: We have not five per cent. of novels in the library.

Hon. T. WALKER: The original suggestion made by the member for Collie was that we should increase the salary of the Clerk Assistant.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: On a point of order: we cannot go back to that.

The CHAIRMAN: No, we are now on item, "Grant to Library."

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Premier's Department, £10,706:

Mr. THOMSON: I should like some information in respect of several of the items shown here. For instance, "Travelling expenses to members of Parliament" reveals a decrease of £184. Then the item "Ministerial and Parliamentary Visits and State Ceremonials" shows a decrease of £775.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: These are not decreases. Actually they constitute increases. Last year we had the visit of the Special Squadron.

Mr. THOMSON: Obviously it is proposed here to save about £1,400 on two or three of these items. Then there is the item "Payment to Railway Department to cover all charges for free passes and special trains." That seems to me like double banking.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: There is no double-banking. There are certain concessions, and every time an officer goes to the Eastern States we have to pay his fare.

Vote put and passed.

Votes—Governor's Establishment, £2,189; Executive Council, £5—agreed to.

Vote—London Agency, £11,109:

Item, Exhibits for Savoy House, £50.

Mr. THOMSON: The vote shows a net decrease of £1,708. What provision is made for publicity in England? Western Australia is little known in England, outside of London.

Mr. Teesdale: Unless there is a murder.

Mr. THOMSON: Yes, a murder is broadcasted. We should expend a certain amount to give publicity to the opportunities and advantages offered by the State. We are providing £50 for exhibits at Savoy House; last year £19 was expended for the same purpose. The member for Roebourne has previously referred to these exhibits, and I agree with him that they should be maintained better than they have been in the past. Savoy House is the place to display our goods and show what we can produce.

The Minister for Railways: We did that at the Wembley Exhibition.

Mr. THOMSON: But that is over. Valuable exhibits were sent Home, and I should like to see the Government procure them for use at Savoy House and for display in other parts of England. That is what Canada is doing.

Mr. Teesdale: Those exhibits that belong to the State will go to Savoy House.

Mr. Lambert: Some of the exhibits have not been taken out of the cellar in London and a lot never left Australia.

Mr. THOMSON: Is the hon. member referring to goods sent Home for exhibition?

Mr. Lambert: Yes.

Mr. THOMSON: Then it is a damned shame.

Mr. Corboy: It is a fact, nevertheless.

Mr. THOMSON: It is a disgrace to those responsible.

Mr. Corboy: The Commonwealth Committee were responsible.

Mr. THOMSON: This State must spend money to obtain proper publicity. It would pay to get a good pressman with an extensive knowledge of Western Australia to undertake this work. Some pressmen have rendered assistance purely from patriotic motives. If we can afford money to boost a certain administration, we should be able to afford some to boost our State in England, so that we may attract men with capital.

The CHAIRMAN: We are not dealing with the exhibition now. That comes under another vote.

Mr. THOMSON: Savoy House should be properly dressed with exhibits as the show window of the State. The standard of the exhibits should be maintained; in fact, the progress of the State should be reflected in the exhibits at Savoy House. I hope the Government will secure the exhibits that were sent Home for the exhibition and place them on view at Savoy House and in other big centres.

The Minister for Lands: Those exhibits belong to the public, not to the Government, and besides you would want another storey on Savoy House.

Mr. THOMSON: Such exhibits would be of great assistance from a migration point of view. We are spending a considerable sum of money at Savoy House, and it would be penny wise and pound foolish not to spend a little more in order to obtain the best results. Provision should be made for the appointment of a duly qualified publicity agent to put forward the claims of Western Australia.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The question of advertising for migrants is in the hands of the Commonwealth. Many publications are issued disclosing the possibilities of Western Australia. The literature that has been circulated at the Exhibition dealing with this State is of a more informative and interesting nature than that dealing with any other State of the Commonwealth. I do not see why we should be called upon to spend money in attracting migrants with their own financial resources

if the Commonwealth authorities are already doing it. Western Australia never had more Press reports published in England than is the case to-day. There is no necessity to appoint a publicity officer at Savoy House because the work is already being well done. I had no idea that there had been such developments in this respect.

Mr. Thomson: That is a good thing.

[Hon. T. Walker took the Chair.]

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: There has been a change of exhibits at Savoy House.

Mr. LAMBERT: We are not getting value for our money at the Agent General's office. Last year out of a vote of £50 we spent £19 on exhibits at Savoy House.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: But they are given to us.

Mr. LAMBERT: It represents the shop window of Western Australia in London. This year it is anticipated that the great mineral, agricultural, pastoral, cotton and other resources of this State will be represented by an exhibition purchased for the miserable sum of £50.

Mr. Teesdale: You do not want gold specimens exhibited running into hundreds of pounds.

Mr. LAMBERT: There are very few exhibits. The position is scandalous. The London Agency spent £306 on upkeep of motor cars, although there is no vote for that. This year provision is made for £450 in that connection. Contrast that with £19 for exhibits!

Mr. Hughes: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman. Is the member for Coolgardie to keep on repeating "£19" indefinitely?

The CHAIRMAN: I would remind the member for Coolgardie that there is such a violation of the Standing Orders as tedious repetition.

Mr. LAMBERT: An expenditure of £1,000 would not be too much for the State's shop window in London. I would like an explanation of the expenditure of £306 on motor cars.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That is not new expenditure. It was previously distributed over the various departments for which work was done by the London Agency. The agency employs engineers and others to inspect goods purchased on behalf of the State. The expenditure, which is of many years' standing, appears in one item now so that a better record may be kept of it.

Vote put and passed.

Votes—Public Service Commissioner, £1,555; Government Motor Car Service, £3,536; Printing, £62,878; Tourist and Publicity Bureau, £1,526—agreed to.

Vote—Literary and Scientific Grants, etc., £0,175.

Item—Law Library, £100.

Mr. HUGHES: I move an amendment—

That the item be struck out.

I take this action because people who desire exclusive privileges should be prepared to pay the price of those privileges. The law library at the Supreme Court is open only to legal practitioners.

The Minister for Lands: And to the officers of the Crown Law Department.

Mr. Teesdale: Cannot a member of Parliament use the law library?

Mr. HUGHES: No, unless he is one of the anointed. If the general taxpayer is to be saddled with this expenditure, the law library should not be confined to members of the legal profession, but should be transferred preferably to the Public Library where it would be available to the general public. The last three records dealing with the incidence of income tax show that lawyers have been in receipt of an average taxable income of £700 a year, and men in receipt of such salaries should be prepared to pay for exclusive privileges they enjoy.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I hope the Committee will not agree to the amendment. The library is used by the officials of the Crown Law Department.

The CHAIRMAN: And may be used by members of Parliament.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The fees received from those who sit for examinations entitling them to become legal practitioners are also contributed towards the upkeep of the library which is necessary in order to enable our Crown Law officers to consult the latest works.

Mr. MARSHALL: While I would not agree to anything that would prevent the officers of the Crown Law Department maintaining efficiency and an up-to-date acquaintance with the latest decisions, I will not agree to a vote that is for the exclusive privilege of lawyers who can well afford to provide those privileges for themselves.

Mr. North: Lawyers have to pay so much every year for the privilege of using the library, and if they do not pay they are not allowed to do so.

Mr. MARSHALL: If that is so, I withdraw my opposition.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: For the information of hon. members I would point out that the law library is controlled by the Law and Parliamentary Library Act, 1889, Section 4 of which is as follows:—

The Law Library shall be for the use of the judges of the Supreme Court, the members of the Legislature, the law officers of the Crown, and all magistrates, free of charge, and for the use of such other persons on payment of such subscriptions and under such restrictions as the judges of the Supreme Court may from time to time determine, who shall have power from time to time to make, alter, and repeal regulations for the man-

agement of the said library: provided always, that no book in the Law Library shall be removable by any person whatever from the court house of the Supreme Court.

Mr. DAVY: This grant is a very small contribution by the community towards the maintenance of the law library. Every member of the legal profession who uses that library has to pay a substantial sum for the privilege. When the High Court of Australia come to Western Australia they have the use of the library. That library plays a substantial part in the administration of justice.

Amendment put and negatived

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Treasury, £17,619:

Mr. HUGHES: Speaking generally on this Vote, I desire to point out that, in order to discuss the Vote intelligently, we should have here the Auditor General's report on the department. The Auditor General is Parliament's watchdog, charged with seeing that the Estimates are properly expended and that the statement presented to Parliament is true and correct. We are very much in the dark when asked to pass these Estimates without having first perused the Auditor General's report. It is of no use getting that report after we have passed this Vote.

Vote put and passed.

Votes—Audit, £12,905; Compassionate Allowances, £1,437; Government Savings Bank, £34,180; Government Stores, £15,961—agreed to.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 1 a.m. (Friday.)

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 21st October, 1924.

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

QUESTION—LOTTERIES AND SWEEPS.

Hon. A. BURVILL asked the Colonial Secretary: 1, How many lotteries or sweeps have been conducted during the years 1921, 1922, and 1923, respectively, in this State? 2, On how many occasions has permission been granted by the Government to conduct such sweeps or lotteries? 3, What are the names of the societies or institutions granted such permission?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: 1, Not known. It is believed that in many cases lotteries were conducted without the knowledge of the Government. 2, 525 for the period 1921-22-23. 3, Religious bodies, Hospitals, Labour organisations, for balls and charitable purposes, Agricultural halls and other public halls, Sporting bodies for charitable purposes, R.S.P.C.A., R.S.L. and branches, Boys' Clubs, Orphanages, Benefit Societies, Children's Christmas treats and picnics, Soldiers' memorials, Benevolent Homes, Railway and Tramway Medical Funds, W.A. Police Association Widow and Orphans' Funds, Appeals for blind, Wooroloo Sanatorium, Mechanics' Institutes, Ugly men's Association, Y.A.L., Nursing Schemes, Convent Schools, Silver Chain, Maimed and Limbless Soldiers, Unemployed, Persons in distressed circumstances.

BILLS (3)—REPORT.

- 1, Noxious Weeds.
- 2, Fremantle Municipal Tramways.
- 3, Private Savings Bank.

Reports of Committee adopted.

BILL—JURY ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from 14th October.

Hon. J. E. DODD (South) [4.37]: I recognise the importance of the Bill; indeed I agree with what Dr. Saw has said in this respect. Any measure that affects the lives and liberty of the people demands our earnest consideration. Undoubtedly the jury system and any amendment thereof does affect the lives and liberty of the whole of the people. But whilst I would not lightly disregard the experiences of the past, I think we ought not to go to extremes in the new direction and allow ourselves, like the United States, to be governed by what is there termed "The dead hand of the Constitution." I have been astonished at the evolution of the jury system during the last few years. In the days of my boyhood all fatal mining accidents went to a jury of 12. Gradually that number was reduced to six, but here in Western Australia to-day it is down to three. Then, only three or four years ago, we passed the Coroners Act. On that occasion I pointed out that it meant another inroad into the jury system,