

Hon. H. SEDDON: Yes, and it was protection that enabled those people to establish their machinery and provide their equipment.

Hon. A. Thomson: And under Australian conditions.

Hon. H. SEDDON: So much for the institution. The third matter I wish to refer to is national investment control. In time of war a certain amount of control is necessary, but I would be very sorry to have to submit my investment programme to Government control. I bear in mind that Western Australian Governments for years past, and the present Government particularly, have had annual amounts of as much as £3,000,000 made available to them for loan works investment. Each year the loss on the works constructed out of loan funds has steadily increased. With that example before me, I shall be indeed sorry to see the Government take control and direct investments even at a time like this. I have pointed out the conditions under which the Commonwealth Bank was established. I have answered criticisms of the alteration made in the constitution of the Commonwealth Bank. I have shown that the bank was placed in a far more stable position, one in which it could bestow greater benefits on Australia than under its previous constitution. I also contend that I have demonstrated that the use of the national credit is being carried out, and has been carried out, with highly beneficial effects upon the price system of this country. Although the war has now been going on for 15 months, the general price level has risen very little indeed. That is due to the great ability with which the board controlling the Commonwealth Bank has carried out its functions, quite regardless of what the Minister referred to as the battle between the Loan Council and the Commonwealth Bank Board. As long as those conditions are maintained, we can ensure that the banking policy will be operated in the best interests of the people. In conclusion, it is my intention to give my hearty support to the motion of Sir Hal Colebatch, because I feel that a motion such as he has moved is warranted by the public interest and will support those whom the nation has entrusted with the task of handling our wealth and credit through the war crisis.

Question put and division taken with the following results:—

Ayes	..	..	..	12
Noes	..	..	..	6
Majority for	..	..	..	6

AYES.	
Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. H. S. W. Parker
Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch	Hon. H. Seddon
Hon. L. Craig	Hon. A. Thomson
Hon. J. J. Holmes	Hon. H. Tuckey
Hon. G. W. Miles	Hon. F. R. Welsh
Hon. J. Nicholson	Hon. W. J. Mann
	(Teller.)

NOES.	
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. W. H. Kitson
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. G. B. Wood
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. G. Fraser
	(Teller.)

PAIRS.	
AYES.	NOES.
Hon. J. M. Macfarlane	Hon. C. B. Williams
Hon. J. A. Dimmitt	Hon. T. Moore
Hon. H. V. Plesse	Hon. H. L. Roche
Hon. L. B. Bolton	Hon. J. Cornell

Question thus passed.

*House adjourned at 9.9 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly.

*Wednesday, 27th November, 1940.*

	PAGE
Questions: Dairy Produce Improvement Fund .....	2273
Water supplies, Hines Hill-Totadjin pipe line .....	2274
Railways, concession fares for war service personnel .....	2274
Motions: Standing Orders suspension .....	2274
State Forests, to revoke dedication .....	2275
Bills: Industries Assistance Act Amendment, 1R..	
2R. ....	2276
Mental Treatment Act Amendment, 1R., 2R. ....	2282
Reserves, returned .....	2284
Legitimation Act Amendment, returned .....	2284
Escheat (Procedure), 1R., 2R. ....	2284
Employment Brokers Act Amendment, 3R. ....	2286
Farmers' Debts Adjustment Act Amendment, 3R. ....	2286
Profiteering Prevention Act Amendment (No. 2), report, etc. ....	2286
Fisheries Act Amendment, Council's amendments .....	2287
Annual Estimates: Votes discussed—	
Medical, Public Health and Mental Hospitals .....	2287
Chief Secretary .....	2316
Education .....	2318

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

### QUESTION—DAIRY PRODUCE IMPROVEMENT FUND.

Mr. McLARTY asked the Minister for Agriculture: 1, What amount of money has been collected each month by the Agricul-

tural Department from the Dairy Produce Improvement Fund since its inception? 2, What is the total expenditure to date from the fund? 3, How many special dairy instructors have been remunerated from the proceeds of the fund? 4, Is it his intention to appoint additional special dairy instructors? 5, If so, how many? 6, How many dairy instructors are paid from sources other than the fund?

The **MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST** (for the Minister for Agriculture) replied: 1, 1940, March, £64 19s. 3d.; April, £82 18s. 6d.; May, £74 18s. 10d.; June, £93 15s. 9d.; July, £123 14s. 7d.; August, £197 1s. 8d.; September, £264 17s. 6d.; October, £335 3s. 9d.; total, £1,237 9s. 10d. 2, Expenditure to 31st October, 1940, £571 9s. 3d. Balance in fund 31st October, 1940, £666 0s. 7d. 3, Two. 4, Yes. 5, One immediately and another as soon as funds have accumulated. 6, Ten, exclusive of herd recorders.

### QUESTION—WATER SUPPLIES.

#### *Hines Hill-Totadjin Pipe Line.*

Mr. **BOYLE** asked the Minister for Works: 1, Is he aware that the main pipe line from Hines Hill to Totadjin district has practically collapsed, thereby causing a serious loss of water? 2, Has he been advised that many settlers and thousands of head of stock have thereby been deprived of an adequate water supply? 3, In view of the age and bad condition of the pipes in this section is it the intention of the Government to re-lay the main? 4, If so, when?

The **MINISTER FOR WORKS** replied: 1, It is known that the pipe line is in a bad condition. 2, It is known that there is considerable leakage and consequent shortage. 3, Endeavour is being made to arrange finance for early renovation. 4, Answered by 3.

### QUESTION—RAILWAYS.

#### *Concession Fares for War Service Personnel.*

Mr. **WILSON** asked the Premier: 1, Which department is responsible for the delay in giving effect to the decision of the Cabinet as outlined by him in the "West Australian," of the 5th November, 1940, re-

lating to concession railway fares on the State Government railways to our soldiers in all the military camps in Western Australia? 2, When will the scheme come into operation, thus giving the soldiers much needed assistance for cheap travelling and allowing them to make periodical visits to their wives and families at their respective homes, some of which are hundreds of miles from the military camps?

The **PREMIER** replied: 1, The Railway Department was ready to put the scheme into effect immediately following the Cabinet decision on 4th November, 1940, but the military authorities have not yet concurred therein. 2, Answered by No. 1.

### MOTION—STANDING ORDERS SUSPENSION.

**THE PREMIER** (Hon. J. C. Willecock—Geraldton) [4.35]: I move—

That during the remainder of the session the Standing Orders be suspended so far as to enable Bills to be introduced without notice and to be passed through all their remaining stages on the same day, and all Messages from the Legislative Council to be taken into consideration on the same day they are received.

**HON. C. G. LATHAM** (York) [4.36]: I have no objection to the passing of this motion, and understand it is not proposed to introduce many more new Bills. The measure, the introduction of which I have just given notice, is only a small one and is intended to repeal one section of the Electoral Act. I should like, however, an undertaking from the Premier that members will have an opportunity to look at new Bills that are introduced, and also at messages that are received from another place. There should be some little delay on occasions so that we may be able to understand what is contained in the messages we receive. The trouble I have found in years gone by is that only one copy of a message from another place is received, and that goes to you, Mr. Speaker. This side of the House has great difficulty in following amendments that are made in another place on the day on which the message is received by this House. I hope the Premier will give an undertaking that an opportunity will be afforded to members to peruse documents that reach us from another place before they are finally disposed of.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: I should like to know from the Premier whether it is possible to have dealt with the two motions that I have on the notice paper.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: They have nothing to do with this motion.

The SPEAKER: This motion has to do with the introduction of new Bills, passing them through all stages, and dealing with messages from another place.

**THE PREMIER** (Hon. J. C. Willcock—Geraldton—in reply) [4.38]: I gladly give the assurance asked for by the Leader of the Opposition. All we desire is that the business may be carried on with reasonable expedition. Should any member require the adjournment of the debate on any matter so that further information may be obtained by him, no objection will be raised to that course. The debate might be adjourned for an hour or two during the same sitting, and, if this motion is carried, that can be done. The experience of members as to the promises I have given in the past in connection with a motion of this kind, should reassure them concerning what will happen on this occasion. I am willing to work in with them. We desire this motion to be passed so that business may be proceeded with expeditiously. I have no desire to take any advantage that could be derived from the passing of this motion, and shall at all times be willing and anxious to meet the wishes of members opposite in the carrying on of the business of the House.

Question put and passed.

## MOTION—STATE FORESTS.

### *To Revoke Dedication.*

**THE PREMIER** (Hon. J. C. Willcock—Geraldton) [4.39] I move—

That the proposal for the partial revocation of State Forests Nos. 4, 9, 22, 24, 25, 26, 27, 29, 35, 37, 38 and 39, laid on the Table of the Legislative Assembly by command of His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor on 26th November, 1940, be carried out.

Members are aware of the procedure that must be followed under the Forests Act. Under that legislation large areas of land in this State have been dedicated to forestry purposes. It is laid down that Parliament it-

self must ratify and approve of any land that is taken away from the Forests Department, land that has once been dedicated to forestry purposes. The procedure laid down is that first of all the proposed revocation should go through Executive Council. The Governor then sends it up to Parliament. The proposal is laid on the table of the House with a plan showing exactly what the excisions are going to be, and then Parliament either approves or disapproves of the excisions of the areas from the land that has been dedicated by Parliament to forestry purposes. The Conservator is very jealous of these forestry lands, and is unwilling that any land which is used for forestry purposes should be excised. There are, however, small areas of land in various parts of the State which are portions of Class A reserves dedicated to forestry purposes, but are not much used for those purposes. They do, however, prove very useful to settlers for various reasons. There may be a small piece of land adjoining two holdings or another piece of land upon which it is desired to erect a home. There are also areas that have been cut over and are of no use for regeneration purposes. They may, however, be very useful to adjoining settlers, and for that reason it may be desired to excise small portions of such forestry land. The House need have no fear that there is any anxiety to dispense with portions of our forest areas. The Conservator of Forests is extremely jealous of the heritage of his department and in no circumstances would he recommend the alienation of any land of value for forest purposes. Members recognise the reason for the introduction of this type of motion annually, just as they know the position regarding the customary reserve Bills. Particulars regarding the areas to be excised were laid on the Table of the House yesterday for the perusal of members, and I shall not go through all the particulars. Thirty areas are dealt with and I shall mention a few that may be regarded as representative and will afford members some idea of the reasons for the requested excisions. I shall mention the first five which are as follows—

Area No. 1.—1½ miles south-west of Yornup. About 22 acres to be exchanged for area resumed for access to State forest.

Area No. 2.—3 miles south-west of Yornup. About 160 acres practically all non-jarrah country. Applied for by son of adjacent settler.

Area No. 3.—4½ miles north of Jarrahdale. About 32 acres carrying no timber. Required by adjoining settler for pasture.

Area No. 4.—3 miles north-east of Jarrahdale. About 25 acres carrying no timber. To be made available as an addition to an adjoining holding for market garden purposes.

Area No. 5.—2 miles north-east of Jarrahdale. About 2½ acres carrying no timber of value. Required by adjoining market gardener to provide high ground for residence.

Right throughout, such reasons as those I have indicated apply to the excisions. I made a point of consulting members of the districts concerned about these matters and they have had an opportunity to look through the proposals. There is strong justification for the excision of these areas.

**HON. C. G. LATHAM** (York) [4.43]: I have looked through the proposals which were laid on the Table of the House yesterday, and I do not know that any exception can be taken to the suggested excisions. I know the Conservator of Forests very well. At one time I was Minister for Lands and during my occupancy of that position I found the Conservator a most difficult man to deal with when it came to any proposal to take away from his control land that had been reserved for forest purposes. I would like some more information from the Premier regarding Area No. 22, which is situated eight miles west of Boyup Brook. The area to be excised is just under 4,000 acres. Seeing that I know the Conservator so well, I was struck by the large area that is to be excised. Is it proposed to make the land available to one person or is it to be sub-divided? From a grazing point of view, the land in that part of the State is very valuable. It would be a pity to allow such a large area to get into the hands of one person, who may later on sub-divide it. Rather would we prefer to see a number of families settled on such a large area. If the Premier assures me that it is not proposed to hand over the whole area, except, of course, for sub-divisional purposes, I shall raise no objection to the motion. Casting my memory back over the days of my Ministerial office, I remember that the Conservator of Forests used to tell

me that there was absolutely no more land that could be excised. Notwithstanding that, I notice that each year excisions are made. I quite appreciate the fact that the interests of the State are well safeguarded by the keen desire of the Conservator to retain all lands suitable for re-forestation purposes.

**MR. WILLMOTT** (Sussex) [4.45]: Only one area mentioned in the list covered by the revocations is situated in my electorate. I refer to an area of 50 acres south of Nanup. I mentioned this matter to the Conservator of Forests about seven or eight months ago and I am pleased to know that he and the Premier as Minister for Forests have agreed to the excision. The effect will be that a settler who has held a triangular block will now, by the addition of these 50 acres, be able to square up the block, which will be much more satisfactory. I desire to extend my thanks to the Premier and to the Conservator for their action.

**THE PREMIER** (Hon. J. C. Willcock—Geraldton—in reply) [4.47]: With regard to the large area to which the Leader of the Opposition referred, applications have been received from two or three adjoining settlers for portions of the area. The land will revert to the Lands Department, the officers of which will deal with applications for sub-divisions as required. It will not be made available to one settler only. The country is not good forest land, but can be developed into excellent pasture propositions.

Question put and passed.

On motion by the Premier, resolution transmitted to the Council and its concurrence desired therein.

## **BILL—INDUSTRIES ASSISTANCE ACT AMENDMENT.**

*First Reading.*

Introduced by the Premier and read a first time.

*Second Reading.*

**THE PREMIER** (Hon. J. C. Willcock—Geraldton) [4.49] in moving the second reading said: This Bill deals with the very

urgent question of drought relief and has been made necessary by the disastrous drought with which practically the whole of Australia has been afflicted. It has been perhaps the worst in our history, being more serious than that of 1914 because of the wider extent of settlement and the tremendous increase in stock since that year. Not only have crops been most disappointing, but there is also a shortage of feed and water for stock. It is estimated that the harvest for this State is unlikely to reach 20,000,000 bushels. Certainly it will not exceed that total by any great amount. Last year the yield was 40,000,000 bushels. The estimated yield for the whole of Australia is less than half that of last year. The latest estimate I saw was from 90,000,000 to 95,000,000 bushels as against 210,000,000 bushels last year.

As soon as it was perceived that the feed position would become serious, the Government took action to secure a supply of hay and chaff, with the result that no serious shortage is expected. The drought has been widespread throughout Australia and farmers are in need of assistance to carry them through this calamity. Strong representations were made to the Commonwealth Government which agreed to advance or make itself responsible to the States for the sum of £2,770,000 to be divided as follows:—New South Wales, £750,000; Victoria, £600,000; Queensland, £250,000; South Australia, £600,000; Western Australia, £570,000; Tasmania, nil.

I want to draw attention to the fact that the States are responsible for the repayment of the whole of that money. The Commonwealth undertook to meet full interest for the first year. That is to say, whatever advances are made to settlers will be without interest for the first 12 months. The currency of the loan is expected to be seven years and the Commonwealth has accepted responsibility for half the interest payments for the last six years. It is not expected there will be any need for people to make capital repayments for three years, though if some find themselves out of trouble and able to repay any of the money advanced, they may do so. The tentative arrangement is that the State will make itself responsible for the repayment of this amount to the Commonwealth during the last four of the seven years for which the advance will be

made. In spite of urgent representations by telegraph when the proposal was first made, and later at the Premiers' Conference, the Commonwealth steadfastly refused to undertake responsibility for repayment of the advance. I stressed the fact that we in Western Australia have suffered from a series of droughts and that it was inevitable that a substantial proportion of the amount advanced would not be repaid; and, moreover, as the wheat industry represented such a high proportion of our national income it would be much more difficult for Western Australia to make good the deficiency than it would be for the more industrialised States. However, all arguments seemed to be of no avail. The Commonwealth Government remained adamant and would not accept responsibility for any portion of the principal though, as a result of our conference last Monday, it agreed to extend from four to six years the period for which it will pay half the interest. As no better terms could be obtained from the Commonwealth Government and the necessities of the situation were such that we had to have money for drought relief, we accepted the advance on those conditions. It is disconcerting to hear people talk about a Commonwealth grant for drought relief. I read reports in the Press on my way back from the Eastern States, and I think the Leader of the Opposition made some reference of that kind. I do not want anybody to have the impression that the Commonwealth Government is making a grant for drought relief.

Hon. C. G. Latham: It has made grants in years gone by; these are advances.

The PREMIER: I know that it was a slip of the tongue on the part of the Leader of the Opposition. When I saw the report I said I knew that the Leader of the Opposition was under no misapprehension because he carefully studies all the proposals made. The Commonwealth Government has made grants for a period of years for drought relief and many other purposes, but the money now made available is not a grant. It is being lent to provide relief, and the State has to make itself responsible for the return of every penny within a period of seven years.

Mr. Stubbs: It is very unfair.

The PREMIER: I said it was unfair and unjust; in fact, I told the Commonwealth

authorities that I thought it was a shocking proposal. Every time a farmer drinks a cup of tea or smokes a cigarette or is prosperous enough to be able to buy a bottle of beer, the Commonwealth Government takes tribute. The State Government does not get anything from the farmers except when they are running their farms remuneratively. Members will admit that even the railway charges imposed for the carriage of wheat and super are not profitable to the Government. We do not make any money out of the traffic. Every machine, every spare part of a machine, every bag and every other thing the farmer wants is subject to some imposition. Whenever a farmer buys anything, the Commonwealth holds out its hand and demands payment in the form of excise duty or sales tax.

Hon. C. G. Latham: It does not impose sales tax on farmers' requisites.

The PREMIER: No, but there are other things the farmer uses upon which sales tax is imposed. For instance, if he wants to buy some timber to erect a shed, a charge is imposed on that.

Mr. Boyle: There are primage charges, too.

The PREMIER: Yes. The farmer has to pay all the time. If his wife drinks a cup of tea or buys a box of powder, without which no lady to-day seems to be able to exist, the farmer has to pay toll to the Commonwealth. While the amount may be small so far as the individual farmer is concerned, the aggregate amount spread over 50,000 or 60,000 farmers is large. Yet when the farmers are faced with a catastrophe and ask the Commonwealth Government to carry them through, the Government will not accept the responsibility. I know that some farmers will not be able to repay this money. The Commonwealth Government knows that. It has passed a Rural Relief Act and given us money for the purpose of writing down debts. This writing down is not sufficient to establish the farmer on a firm foundation but is sufficient only to enable him barely to carry on. Unless farmers are very lucky, in some instances they will not be able to pay back the money advanced. The condition upon which the advance has been made is that if the farmers do not repay it, the State will have to do so.

Mr. Stubbs: I hope the farmers do not pay it back.

The PREMIER: I hope they do, because, if they do not, I shall have to pay it on behalf of the people of the State. In fact we all hope they will be able to repay the money. We hope that as a result of the advancing of this money, of good seasons, and a reasonably remunerative price, they will be in a position to repay the money. As to those farmers whose circumstances are such that they cannot repay it, the State will have to accept responsibility for the money.

The question with which we are faced is that of making the best use of the £570,000 advanced to this State. There is some uncertainty concerning the manner in which the money will be raised. At the conference we discussed the whole matter and there were verbal exchanges between the members of the conference, but we do not yet know exactly how the money will be raised. As a matter of fact, we should have reached a conclusion on this point, but members are aware of the political situation in the Federal arena. Mr. Fadden had been in the position of Treasurer for only three or four weeks and had a tremendous task to frame the Budget proposals of the Commonwealth Government. Consequently, all his time has been occupied by that particular job, and he has had no time to consider the ramifications of the various proposals for raising this sum of money. The conference recognised that Mr. Fadden had been occupied in an intensive job during the last three or four weeks and could not be expected to make detailed arrangements for the raising of this money. Those arrangements will have to be held over for some time. The Commonwealth Government, however, has said that this amount will be made available to the State for drought relief, not as a gift, I emphasise again, but as a loan for which we are responsible. I do not know whether this amount will be added to the loan programmes of the States, what the terms will be, or even what the interest rate will be. We have a general understanding, but it is not sufficiently lucid to permit of my including any figures as to rates in this Bill. Members will observe that we have taken power under the measure to make regulations to meet that position.

The principle on which we propose to deal with this money is that the State will accept responsibility for all the administration costs, and whatever terms we get from the Com-

monwealth Government in the shape of interest rebate or cheap money will be passed on to the farmers. For instance, the Commonwealth Government has said it will not charge the State Governments any interest on the money for the first 12 months. We propose to hand that benefit to the farmers. Any farmer who receives drought relief money this year will pay no interest whatever on it for this year. If a farmer can get out of debt and repay it some day, all the better. For the next six years the Commonwealth Government has undertaken to pay half the interest. As the State will have to pay only half the interest rate, we propose to charge the farmers only half the interest rate. However, I do not know at what rate the loan will be floated or at what rate the Commonwealth will advance the money to us for re-advancement to the farmers. Still, all the concessions we get from an interest-paying standpoint will be passed on to the farmers.

Mr. Stubbs: You put up a good fight for the farmers.

The PREMIER: Whatever we have been able to get for the farmers, we do not want to deprive them of it. We will hand over whatever concessions we receive. I might mention that we bought a considerable quantity of chaff. We paid money for it and advanced that money. We have not yet received the money from the Commonwealth Government, and we are not sufficiently financial as a State to carry much in the shape of an outlay of that kind.

Mr. Seward: You have paid cash?

The PREMIER: We had to expend money for the purchase of hay; in some instances we had to pay cash for it in the country.

Mr. Berry: How much of that hay has been sold?

The PREMIER: We have not yet sold any. We have bought it for the purpose of converting it into chaff in order to be able to supply fodder for starving stock.

Mr. Seward: Not much cash has been paid over yet.

The PREMIER: No, but whatever the amount may be, we have to pay interest on that portion of our overdraft. The point I wish to make is that anything we have done along those lines is not being charged to the farmers.

Mr. Berry: Have any applications yet been received for that chaff?

The PREMIER: Yes, some, but not as many as we would like to have. I propose to deal with that aspect later, but I may mention now that there seems to be a general tardiness on the part of farmers to apply. I do not say they are blameworthy in that regard. One evening two or three months ago I received a deputation representative of the agricultural industry, and if the position had not altered for the better since that time, we would have had thousands of applications for fodder to keep the stock alive.

Mr. Seward: Water is the worst trouble now.

The PREMIER: That is so. The position has improved considerably since I received the deputation, and most of the farmers, though they cannot see daylight ahead, realise that they have enough fodder to keep their stock supplied for the present. Until they know what their requirements are, they probably will be tardy in making application. We would like to get applications promptly from those who require fodder to keep their stock alive in order that we may make an intelligent survey of the whole position.

The Government has examined all the legislative proposals of the various States. Different methods are being adopted to deal with the money provided for drought relief purposes. South Australia has an Act; Queensland has a special Act; Victoria has an Act, and in New South Wales the matter is being dealt with under the Rural Relief Act. We thought in the first instance that it might be necessary to pass special legislation to deal with the matter here. After having thoroughly examined the whole position and appreciated what could be done in consultation with the Agricultural Bank Commissioners, who will administer these loans, we concluded that a simple amendment of the Industries Assistance Act would suffice to give the requisite power to deal with this drought relief money. First of all the matter seemed very complicated. Many of the farmers who have I.A.B. advances at the present time are paying 5 per cent. interest, and we thought it would complicate matters to advance this drought relief money to the same clients under different conditions. It would mean the keeping of special accounts, and we thought that

probably special legislation would have to be introduced. After considering all the circumstances, however, we came to the conclusion that it would be better to deal with the matter under the Industries Assistance Act, principally because the Act has been in operation for about 26 years. In consequence, all the farmers, all the financial institutions, the Agricultural Bank authorities and all concerned are conversant with the provisions of the Act. They know what sort of treatment has been meted out under the Act; they know how it has been administered; in short they know all about it. If we passed fresh legislation containing some of the provisions of the Industries Assistance Act, they might appear to be very harsh. As I said, those interested know how the Industries Assistance Act has been administered; they know its effect and the way the Bank has stood aside and allowed merchants the right to take liens for superphosphate, etc. Therefore, we decided that, if we made these drought relief advances in accordance with the practice well known and well understood, there would be no ambiguity about the procedure and people would know exactly where they stood.

We propose to make a short amendment to Section 14 of the Industries Assistance Act to provide that any future advances made under the Act shall be subject to such terms and conditions as to the rate of interest, the repayment of principal and other matters as may be prescribed by regulation. Regulations will then be passed providing that, in connection with the amount of £570,000 to be issued this year as drought relief, no interest will be charged to the farmer for the first year and only half interest will be charged for the next six years. Appropriate regulations will also be made concerning repayment of the advances. We do not intend to make any alterations to the existing conditions of ordinary I.A.B. advances.

The difficulty confronting us in the matter of putting into the measure exactly what we propose to do is that no finality has been reached. There is no formal agreement between the Commonwealth Government and the State Government even yet. We have a general understanding, but it has not been reduced to writing. Therefore we cannot say to the House, "Here is a statement of

what the Commonwealth proposes to do and what we have accepted, and here are our signatures for you to see." But we have a general understanding of the position, and I have no doubt that what has been approved at the conference will form the basis of an agreement that will ultimately be signed. The arrangement, however, is not so specific as to enable us at this stage to put the details into an Act of Parliament. Therefore we propose to amend the Industries Assistance Act so that we may make regulations and pass on the benefits of this drought relief money to the farmers. There are certainly some benefits attaching to these loans. There is a provision in the Industries Assistance Act that interest at the rate of 6 per cent. may be charged on all advances, although the Treasury has made a rebate, bringing the rate to 5 per cent.

Mr. Boyle: How will the clients of the Associated Banks fare under this measure?

The PREMIER: Just the same as under the Industries Assistance Act. Farmers, financial institutions, machinery and super firms have all had experience of the Act. If it is necessary for the Agricultural Bank to stand aside in order that they might take a lien over the crop for any purpose such as the supplying of super, etc., the same administration as has characterised the Act will be observed in future.

Mr. Seward: Have the banks agreed to accept this amendment of the Act?

The PREMIER: I do not know.

Mr. Seward: That is important.

The PREMIER: What will happen under this measure is that it will not be of any advantage to repay the money. While the proceeds can be taken, we do not want to make the farmer repay the amount being advanced because this money represents a very considerable concession. After the deduction of whatever amount is necessary for expenses, the money will be handed back to the farmers to enable them to carry on in other years if they need the assistance. Suppose the farmers had a bumper crop and the price proved to be 3s. 10d. less the charges, which would be about 3s. 2d. at the farms, they might be able to get out of debt as regards the drought relief advances. A farmer might say, "This advance has enabled me to pull through and I can now carry on as before."

Mr. Hughes: What about the first and second mortgagees?

The PREMIER: If the farmer comes under the I.A.B. conditions, he will come under the provisions of the Industries Assistance Act.

Mr. Seward: Of course he will.

The PREMIER: I have not considered the matter thoroughly, but if the mortgagees does not like to come under those conditions—

Mr. Hughes: That is what is worrying the St. George's Terrace people.

The PREMIER: The conditions under which we operate are so well known as to be understood by all concerned. They have had 26 years' experience of the Industries Assistance Act.

Mr. Seward: The trouble is they cannot estimate their liability.

The PREMIER: That is so. Still, the methods governing the administration of the Act by the Agricultural Bank Commissioners are so well known that everyone understands how they and the Government will act, and the manner in which the whole thing will be done.

Mr. Watts: In effect, are you not making this money available to Agricultural Bank clients only?

The PREMIER: No. We are anxious that those people whose credit resources are such that they cannot receive any further assistance from the parties holding mortgages over their properties shall also secure help from this Commonwealth fund. The parties holding mortgages should be very glad indeed if somebody else comes along willing to assist the farmer. If it is necessary to readvance money to such farmers to enable them to carry on, re-advances will be granted to them, and they will not be required to make any repayments for the first three years unless they are well able to do so.

Mr. Seward: That is all right for Agricultural Bank clients.

The PREMIER: If a financial institution says that it can go no further with regard to a property, and if somebody else says, "I am prepared to do it if the bank will not do it," then the position—

Mr. Watts: That cannot be done without the necessary permission from the first charge.

The PREMIER: The Minister for Lands has had conferences with the financial institutions regarding the matter, and he is convinced that the position can be worked out for the benefit of the farmer.

Mr. Hughes: It will be said that you give an advance on terms and that this will work out to the advantage of the financial institutions.

The PREMIER: The whole purpose of the money is that it shall be made available to farmers who are in trouble. If they can obtain assistance from other quarters, there is no objection to their doing so. In fact, the Queensland measure provides that if a man can get credit anywhere else, he is not entitled to obtain any Government money. On the other hand, if a farmer cannot be carried on without drought relief money, a mutually satisfactory arrangement can doubtless be made. Even under Section 51 of the Agricultural Bank Act and under the Industries Assistance Act the Government stands aside and allows clients to obtain loans for superphosphate or things of that kind. We allow a first charge for such purposes; and that is the kind of procedure which will obtain under this Bill, if passed.

Mr. Doney: Is it possible yet to make an estimate of the likely number of applicants?

The PREMIER: The Agricultural Bank inspectors, who are stationed all over the country, had furnished fully detailed reports, and we made a careful estimate of the amount of money that would be required. I think it worked out at between £200 and £300 for each farm. I think the amount of the fund will cover all requirements. As the members for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. Doney) is aware, an Agricultural Bank inspector has an excellent idea of the prospects of settlers in any given area over which he exercises control. I may add that the information as regards Western Australia was far more complete than the information regarding any other State. Some of the reports submitted were three or four weeks old, and even during that period weather conditions had become such as to improve grass and fodder conditions somewhat. The information in our possession indicates that the amount of the drought relief fund will suffice for farmers who find themselves in difficult circumstances.

Mr. Doney: Would you consider an application for funds for a water supply?

The PREMIER: Yes. The corresponding Queensland measure deals with that aspect particularly, water being the most important consideration in connection with dairy farming, even more important than fodder. Of course we cannot carry water two or three hundred miles every day for stock; in such circumstances it would be better to shift the stock.

Mr. Doney: I refer to such a proposal as boring for water.

The PREMIER: Yes. To-day I heard the Minister for Water Supplies making arrangements with the Minister for Lands in respect of districts where there is fodder but no water at all. This Bill covers water. In fact, it covers everything that is required for the purpose of rehabilitating drought-stricken farmers. After extremely careful consideration we have arrived at the conclusion that this is the best way to deal with the question. Our experience of legislation of this nature has, in the main, been fairly happy. Everybody concerned knows all about the Industries Assistance Board and its administration. Therefore, rather than have a new Act we decided to treat the matter in this manner. The only necessity for amending the Act here in question is to make its provisions more elastic for the benefit of the farmer, so that he can receive the benefit of cheap interest, which benefit would be denied to him under the Act as it now stands. The Act provides that farmers must be charged 6 per cent. interest. The Bill amends Section 14 of the Act in such a manner that past transactions remain valid but that in respect of future assistance made out of the drought relief money the interest shall be less. I cannot state the exact rate of borrowing at the moment, but I believe it will be about  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. Therefore I can say the money will be advanced to farmers at certainly not more than 2 per cent. I repeat, the Act provides that a rate of 6 per cent. must be charged. For the rigid provision of the Industries Assistance Act we take power to make regulations declaring what the interest charge and the terms of repayment shall be under this Bill. We propose to make regulations enabling us to pass on the benefits of the drought relief money to the

farmers on terms less burdensome than the terms prescribed by the Industries Assistance Act. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. C. G. Latham, debate adjourned.

## **BILL—MENTAL TREATMENT ACT AMENDMENT.**

### *First Reading.*

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

### *Second Reading.*

**THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH** (Hon. A. H. Panton—Leederville) [5.26] in moving the second reading said: This Bill is short but highly essential. Medical science has made such progress of late years that it is possible to obtain by special treatments beneficial results in the case of mentally affected persons who reach a certain stage. For that reason the Government has built hospital wards both at the Claremont Mental Hospital and at the Heathcote Reception Home. I have no desire at present to go into details of the two systems of treatment referred to; but they necessitate special wards, which have been built. Unfortunately, however, the Defence Department has taken over the Claremont wards and thus prevents special treatment being rendered to patients. Therefore we are back in the same position as previously regarding Claremont, the Defence Department having found themselves in need of a hospital for soldiers.

Hon. C. G. Latham: The Defence Department will need those wards only temporarily.

**THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH:** We do not know for how long the department will need them. It proposes to build a hospital for military patients, but has not yet started it. Under Subsection (1) of Section 98 of the Lunacy Act the Superintendent is permitted to transfer certified patients to such places as the Perth Hospital for special treatment. The Mental Treatment Act under which Heathcote is conducted provides in Sections 3 and 4 that any person suffering from mental or nervous disorder who has not been found, declared, or certified

to be insane, may be received into a hospital or reception home. In this case Heathcote is the reception home.

The words "has not been found, declared, or certified to be insane" expressly exclude hospitals established and reception homes constituted under and for the purposes of the Act from the category of places to which an insane patient in a hospital for the insane can be sent or transferred under Subsection (1) of Section 98 of the Lunacy Act. The military authorities having taken over Claremont, we are now unable to transfer any of the patients from Claremont to Heathcote for special treatment. The Bill provides merely that a certified patient may be transferred from a mental hospital to Heathcote, or other reception home, for special treatment. He may be there for a week or a fortnight, and then he can be re-transferred to Claremont. Under the Act as it stands the Inspector General for Insane can transfer certified patients only to the Perth Hospital, and that institution is not suitable for the purpose of the special treatments. This is purely a temporary measure, but nevertheless an urgent one by reason of the fact that we have been deprived of the Claremont facilities. The patients transferred will be at Heathcote only for brief periods, and only for such special treatment as the Superintendent may decide upon. It may be argued that we want to use the Heathcote institution for the purpose of treating people who have been declared insane, but that is not the idea. What is proposed is to send patients from the Claremont institution for treatment at Heathcote.

Mr. Hughes: You could do that by discharging the patient.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Yes, but we are not likely to do that.

Mr. Hughes: Why not? You would have control over the patient just the same.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I am not the Inspector General. If, after treatment at Heathcote, patients were found to be insane they would be returned to Claremont.

Mr. Hughes: That course might be better than making Heathcote a mental asylum.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: In my opinion, that would not be a good way out of the difficulty. There is nothing to be

afraid of, as nobody wishes to make Heathcote a hospital for the insane.

Mr. Hughes: That is its strong point; it is not a hospital for the insane.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I agree. If there were any possibility of getting the hospital at Claremont back within a reasonable time, say a month or three months, I would not be introducing this measure. But the new hospital has not been started; tenders have not even been called, and members are aware how long it takes to erect a hospital for 120 patients and provide the necessary equipment. It is unfair to ask that persons requiring this treatment should remain at Claremont. The treatment cannot be given in the presence of other patients; it must be given privately, in a theatre, where there are proper facilities. I point out that this is merely a temporary measure.

Mr. Hughes: For psychological reasons, it has always been said that Heathcote is not a hospital for the insane, but an institution for the treatment of nervous disorders.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I admit that Heathcote is a reception home where patients can be detained for six months. If then the authorities certify that the patients are insane, they are transferred to the Claremont institution. I agree that that is right and proper; but I also believe I would not be doing my duty as Minister for Health by denying certain patients at Claremont the opportunity to go to Heathcote to obtain treatment requiring not more than 10 days. They would receive injections and if the treatment proved successful and they recovered, they would be discharged. On the other hand, should the treatment not prove successful, they would be sent back to Claremont. I am not indulging in "sob stuff," but I am putting up a plea that the persons to whom I have referred should have the opportunity to obtain the treatment which this Bill proposes they may receive. If members are afraid that the effect of the Bill will be to make the Heathcote institution a hospital for the insane, then I will welcome any amendment that may be moved to overcome that difficulty. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On the motion of Mr. Sampson, debate adjourned.

**BILL—RESERVES.**

Returned from the Council with amendments.

**BILL—LEGITIMATION ACT  
AMENDMENT.**

Returned from the Council with amendments.

**BILL—ESCHEAT (PROCEDURE).**

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

*Second Reading.*

**THE MINISTER FOR JUSTICE** (Hon. E. Nulsen—Kanowna) [5.37] in moving the second reading said: This Bill is of a rather technical nature, but it is not a serious measure. At the outset, I may say it will prove more helpful to claimants than to the Crown. It will cheapen and clarify the present procedure relating to escheat. "Escheat" is a word of ancient use in English law and originates from the French word "eschoir," which means, literally, "to happen." In English law the word was applied to the reversion of land which occurred when the landholder died without natural or legal heirs. Under the Feudal system, land was granted, either by the Crown or the Lord of the Manor; and it reverted or returned to the Crown or the Lord of the Manor upon the landholder dying without leaving issue. In the Middle Ages the right to escheat was a valuable asset from the point of view of both the Crown and the Lord of the Manor, because a profit was made when a landholder died leaving no issue. The value of this right was gradually whittled down as the modern system of landholding developed, and particularly when landholders generally became entitled to devise their land by will. The right of escheat could often be defeated by will even if the landholder had no issue, because he could will his land to someone outside his own family.

At the present time it might be said that escheat arises when a person dies without leaving a will and he has no next-of-kin; or when he leaves a will and all the beneficiaries die before the testator and leave no next-of-kin, and the testator dies eventually with-

out leaving any next-of-kin. These circumstances might seem highly improbable, but strangely enough they occur with relative frequency. The most common example occurs under the provisions of the Administration Act. That Act provides that if a husband or wife dies without a will the surviving party to the marriage takes the first £500 of the estate and a third of the balance, the remaining two-thirds being divided amongst the next-of-kin. Sometimes it happens that there are no next-of-kin; in that case one-half of the remainder of the estate escheats to the Crown.

The law in Western Australia relating to escheat is very obscure, and the Acts governing it and the practice thereunder are not generally known. The word itself is seldom used. The latest reference which I can find in any statute occurs in the Curator of Intestate Estates Act, 1918. In Section 16 it is stated that if any real estate vested in the curator escheats to His Majesty the same may be sold and the proceeds paid into the Treasury for the benefit of Consolidated Revenue. Section 24 of the same Act provides for similar action with respect to ownerless moneys in the hands of the Curator.

Actually, the principles of escheat have been perpetuated in effect by the Road Districts Act, 1919-1933, in the provisions of that Act dealing with the sale of land for unpaid rates. Section 278 of that Act empowers a road board to sell land on which rates have been unpaid for five years. Certain procedure must be followed and eventually the land is put up for sale. If the land is not sold, certain other provisions of the Act must be observed and eventually the land reverts in the Crown. Again, under the Audit Act, 1904, if any money comes into the hands of a public servant, by virtue of his office, for the use or benefit of any person, such money is eventually paid into a trust fund at the Treasurer's direction. If the money remains unclaimed for six years it is carried forward to Consolidated Revenue. Both these examples could be classed as a modern form of escheat authorised by statute.

The law of escheat in the proper sense is contained in four Ordinances, 31 Victoriae No. 2 (1867), 31 Victoriae No. 3 (1867), 32 Victoriae No. 1 (1868) and 33 Victoriae No.

1 (1869). These are old Ordinances which were passed before the State had responsible government and which follow closely the English legislation in force at the time. The Ordinance 31 *Victoriæ*, No. 2, is a short Ordinance which provides that certain casual revenue—including revenue from escheated estates—paid into the Treasury shall be disposed of from time to time in such manner and for such public purposes as Parliament may direct. It is also provided that the Governor may at any time repay to any person who proves his claim any sums of moneys which have been appropriated to Consolidated Revenue through an escheated estate. Thus it will be seen from that Ordinance that even though the Crown did exercise its right to escheat, any person could come along at a later date, and, if he could prove his lawful claim, the Governor would have to pay out of Consolidated Revenue the amount due to the claimant. The next Ordinance, 31 *Victoriæ* No. 3, declares the law and practice in cases of escheat. This Ordinance provides that before any estate can be claimed by the Crown by way of escheat an inquiry has to be taken by the sheriff before a jury of ten persons. The sheriff is empowered to summon any witnesses and the inquest is to be held in the Supreme Court, Perth, after publication in the "Government Gazette" of the time and place. Anyone who claims a title to the property can appear and support his claim and give evidence. If the finding of the inquiry is against the Crown, the sheriff can still apply to the Supreme Court for an order for another inquiry. If the finding of the inquest is in favour of the Crown, any disappointed claimant can take further action and have the matter brought on for trial before the Chief Justice and a jury. On this inquiry the decision of the original inquest may be altered or approved. Finally, if, after all the necessary proceedings have been brought to a conclusion and it is decided that the property has passed to the Crown by way of escheat, the Sheriff can seize and sell the escheated property and the proceeds are to be paid as directed by the Governor. The Ordinance 32 *Victoriæ* No. 1 is very short and contains only one section. It amends in immaterial details two provisions in the Ordinance 31 *Victoriæ* No. 3. The Ordinance 33 *Victoriæ* No. 1 has a preamble

which states that it has been deemed advisable to enable persons having claims or demands of a moral or equitable character and which in ordinary circumstances would not be enforceable against property escheated under the Ordinance 31, *Victoriæ* No. 3, to make a claim against such escheated property or the proceeds thereof. This Ordinance is intended to give illegitimate persons the right to claim escheated property or proceeds thereof just as if they had a legal right. There are many faults in the wording of this particular Ordinance but its general intention seems quite clear. It contains two sections and provides that the Governor may order escheated property or its proceeds to be given, granted or paid in such manner as the Governor may think fit to persons who have a moral claim thereto.

The sum total of all these Ordinances is—

- (a) Before any property can escheat to the Crown an inquest has to be held before a jury of ten persons.
- (b) If the decision of the jury is finally in favour of the Crown, an order for escheat of the property is made and the property or the proceeds thereof pass to the Crown.
- (c) The proceeds may be paid into consolidated revenue.
- (d) Even after they have been appropriated to consolidated revenue persons with either a lawful or a moral claim can come forward and, in the first case, if the claim is proved, the Governor must repay and, in the second case, if the claim is proved the Governor may make a payment to such persons and in such proportions as he thinks fit.

It must be admitted that the procedure with respect to obtaining an order of escheat is cumbersome, expensive and out of date. It is considered that the system should be altered so that the procedure can be simplified and the cost reduced.

Orders for the sale of property where there are known beneficiaries can be obtained by executors, administrators and the Curator by an application to a judge of the Supreme Court. It is submitted that an order to deal with property which (after exhaustive inquiries) is found to be ownerless should be put on the same footing.

Recently a case has come before the Crown Law Officers which exemplifies the necessity for this Bill. A person who has

worked and developed an agricultural property for many years in the belief that the property belonged lawfully to his mother, now finds, on her death, that he cannot obtain the title. Actually there is no owner of the property but his mother could have obtained a title if advantage had been taken of the Escheat Ordinances. The person concerned is not now able to do so (although his claim is apparently sound) because he cannot afford the estimated cost of £40, associated with the calling together of a jury and the expensive process prescribed by the Ordinances. Also, he is not able to obtain a possessory title.

This Bill is not introduced for the benefit of the Crown so much as for the benefit of claimants. As previously explained, the Crown must always hand over to a successful claimant and consolidated revenue is charged for that purpose. This is the history and these are the circumstances which gave rise to the present Bill which aims to simplify, clarify and cheapen the procedure relating to escheat. The Bill contains 13 clauses and a schedule. It repeals the old Ordinances and brings the whole of the law regarding escheat into one short statute.

Shortly, the practice will be as follows:—

- (a) A report is made to the Crown Solicitor that property appears to be without an owner.
- (b) The Crown Solicitor, after full inquiry, may then make application to a judge of the Supreme Court in Chambers for an order declaring that the property has become the property of the Crown by way of escheat.
- (c) Notice of the hearing of the application will be advertised in the "Government Gazette" and if land is involved a notice will be posted on the land.
- (d) Any person who claims an interest in the property can appear on the hearing in Chambers and state his case.
- (e) The judge, on hearing the application and all the matter presented to him thereon, may make an order of escheat.
- (f) If the judge makes such an order the sheriff can then proceed to a sale of the escheated property and after payment of all fees, etc., pay the balance into the Treasury.
- (g) The Governor may repay out of consolidated revenue the amount due to

any person who eventually proves a lawful claim.

- (h) The Governor may, if no legal claimant comes forward, make an order in favour of a moral claimant.

The Bill provides that upon a sale of land or an order of the Governor in Council in favour of the moral claimant, the sheriff may execute a transfer of the land to the purchaser or the moral claimant, as the case may be, and the Registrar of Titles must accept and register any such transfer.

Once the Governor makes an order in favour of a moral claimant the rights of all persons with respect to the escheated property shall cease both as against the Crown and against the moral claimant. It must be stressed that this Bill does not alter the law of escheat in any material particular, nor are any greater rights conferred than already exist. The Bill really codifies the law and reduces into one statute the provisions of four Ordinances. Its main object is to simplify the procedure which now exists and to make it more expeditious and less costly. If the Bill becomes an Act, it will facilitate the process of escheat and will be helpful to claimants and will not in any way be detrimental to the Government. I do not expect that there will be any objection to the measure because a full inquiry will always be made by the Crown Law officers, and the same process as has been carried out for many years will be adopted in the future. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Doney, debate adjourned.

## **BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.**

- 1, Employment Brokers Act Amendment.
- 2, Farmers' Debts Adjustment Act Amendment.

Transmitted to the Council.

## **BILL—PROFITEERING PREVENTION ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).**

*Report, etc.*

Report of Committee adopted.

Bill read a third time, and transmitted to the Council.

# **BILL—FISHERIES ACT AMENDMENT.**

## *Council's Amendments.*

Schedule of four amendments made by the Council now considered.

## *In Committee.*

Mr. Marshall in the Chair; the Minister for the North-West in charge of the Bill.

No. 1. Clause 4—Delete the word "five" in line 27 and substitute the word "ten":

**THE MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST:** I have no objection to the amendment. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

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

No. 2. Clause 8—Insert after the word "furnish" in line 27 the words "or furnishing any false or inaccurate information in any":

**THE MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST:** The addition of these words to the clause will have the effect of clarifying it. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

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

No. 3. Clause 11: Add to proposed new section 26B, a subsection to stand as subsection (4) as follows:—(4) When any such proclamation includes an area of State forest, access to and the use of streams within such area for the purpose of fishing, or other activities of any society registered under the provisions of this Act, shall be subject to such conditions as the Minister for Forests on the recommendation of the Conservator of Forests may consider necessary for the protection of the State forest. Nothing contained in this Act shall authorise entry on any portion of a State forest or timber reserve which is the subject of planting or regeneration and on which trespass is prohibited under the provisions of the Forests Act, 1918-1931:

**THE MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST:** This amendment was requested by the Conservator of Forests. It applies to a section of the Act which gives statutory powers to registered societies that are in control of trout hatcheries in permanent

waters within forestry reservations. It is merely a precautionary addition to the Act. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

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

No. 4. Clause 19: Insert after the word "Minister" in line 29 the words "and in the manner prescribed":

**THE MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST:** This is an additional safeguard which has been inserted by another place. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

**Hon. C. G. LATHAM:** Government property can only be disposed of through the Tender Board. I do not know whether the words "in the manner prescribed" refer to the Tender Board or to what will be prescribed by regulation. It is not to be expected that confiscated fish should be sold through the Tender Board. I think we should indicate what these words mean. I therefore move—

That the amendment be amended by adding the words "by regulation."

I do not want the Tender Board to have to worry about fish.

**The Minister for the North-West:** I have no objection to the amendment.

Amendment put and passed; the Council's amendment, as amended, agreed to.

Resolutions reported, the report adopted and a message accordingly returned to the Council desiring its concurrence in the amendment made by the Assembly.

## **ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1940-41.**

### *In Committee of Supply.*

Resumed from the 19th November; Mr. Marshall in the Chair.

*Note—Medical, £41,153:*

**THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH (Hon. A. H. Panton—Leederville) [6.6]:** As is the case with all other departments, the Medical Department is feeling the strain of the war, particularly in regard to the dearth of medical officers and the difficulty of obtaining the very necessary serums and drugs from overseas. The Medical Department depends upon the National Hospital

Fund, as members know, for the maintenance of hospitals. For the financial year ended the 30th June last the hospital tax produced £271,689, and hospital fees collected totalled £4,808, making a total of £326,497. During the year just closed, Treasury grants on account of buildings (capital expenditure) totalled £61,000, and recoup on account of indigent natives, etc., £1,843. The grant of £61,000 from the Treasury was to cover capital expenditure during the year ended the 30th June last (£29,000), and for capital expenditure on buildings, etc., for the current year (£32,000), making the total of £61,000. Of the total amount collected in tax, revenue received and Treasury grants, £209,721 has been spent on country hospitals, for buildings (£16,162) and maintenance (£193,559) and £153,812 on metropolitan hospitals, for buildings (£15,466) and maintenance (£138,352).

For the current year the old practice of paying assisted hospitals a small subsidy, and then from month to month making up each hospital's deficit, has been abolished. These are hospitals that are conducted by committees. In the past they have been subsidised by various amounts, some small and some larger, and from month to month or quarter to quarter, according to the manner in which the accounts were kept, they have been assisted to the amount of the deficit shown in their accounts. That practice has gone on for many years. As is so often the case in a procedure of that kind, I am afraid there was just a little tendency towards slackness. Some 18 months ago, after visiting many hospitals, I arrived at the conclusion that we were not getting that efficiency we had a right to expect in our hospital services for the amount expended. I went carefully into the whole position departmentally, with the officers and inspectors, and discussed it with hospital secretaries throughout the State and officers in our own hospitals. There are two sets of hospitals in the State. Some of them are conducted entirely by the department. There are old hospitals, or hospitals that were built and started as Government institutions many years ago, such as those at Bunbury, Albany, Busselton, York, and so on. These are old-established places, and for some reason they have always been Government hospitals. No committee has ever been formed to look after them, and we have been unable to induce any committee to take

an interest in them. At Albany, however, an advisory committee is doing a good job. These hospitals are looked upon as Government institutions and are conducted through the departmental officers. Other hospitals have grown up in the wheat belt and the South-West as the country has developed. They have been provided for the most part by local residents out of money found by them, and are conducted by local committees. There is a difference between what are termed governmental hospitals and hospitals that are run by committees. The committee hospitals are those to which I refer as having received an annual subsidy plus their deficit from month to month or quarter to quarter. As I have said, we arrived at the conclusion that we were not getting the efficiency we had the right to expect. That was due to various causes into which I will not now go. A big change has been effected. I want members to understand some of the reasons for this change. Most of the committees that are managing the hospitals have little or no experience of hospital management, and depend to a large extent upon their matrons. Some of our matrons are particularly good housekeepers, and others are wonderfully good nurses but know nothing about housekeeping. The administration has therefore suffered. After going carefully into the matter and straightening out the finances up to the end of June, of this year, we decided to agree to pay from the National Hospital Fund a certain sum per annum based on the expenditure per bed and on what was regarded as a reasonable cost. The bed average per day throughout the year is the important aspect of all hospital work.

Mr. McLarty: What happens in the case of a sudden influx of patients?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I am speaking about normal times. In ordinary circumstances the more patients a hospital takes in per day, the less should be the cost per patient. When there is a sudden influx of patients that system does not work out so well. Country hospitals on such occasions have to call up extra nurses, transport them a long distance, and pay them the extra rate provided by the award. That breaks down the ordinary daily average cost. I am only speaking of the cost in normal times. When there are additional reasons for increased costs, such as the sudden influx of a number of patients,

we would regard those as special circumstances and a payment would be made over and above the annual subsidy. That applies to assisted hospitals. The whole subject has been well discussed with departmental officers and secretaries and chairmen of committees. Our own departmental officers in our hospitals, the matrons and doctors, have been notified of the change and they know how much they will receive during the current year.

*Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.*

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I was dealing with the question of subsidies for hospitals and the tightening up of hospital expenditure. I want members to appreciate the fact that while we are attempting to secure greater efficiency and a tightening up in connection with hospital expenditure, this does not involve in any way the lessening of efficiency or the institution of a cheese-paring financial policy. In view of the fact that so many men have gone overseas on active service and because of drought conditions, a serious effect on hospital revenue is to be expected. While endeavouring to secure the greatest efficiency in return for the expenditure undertaken, we must endeavour to live within our means. With that end in view, hospital finance is being closely watched. To give members some idea of the number of indigent patients who receive attention in our hospitals, it will be interesting to learn that during the year 1940 we had to write off £24,105 13s. 2d. as uncollectable debts due to our hospitals. Some of that total indebtedness may, of course, have been outstanding for a year or two.

During the past twelve months no new hospitals were opened, but many improvements were effected to existing institutions. The provision of a new hospital was authorised for Big Bell, the expenditure for which will be included in the current year's estimates. This work will cost, with equipment, between £5,000 and £6,000. As members are aware, Big Bell is situated far away from other centres of population and the nearest hospital—not a very elaborate one—is at Cue. In view of the large number of men employed at Big Bell, the decision was arrived at to establish a hospital there. At Kalgoorlie, the local municipal council completed a sewerage system for the

main portion of the town and the Kalgoorlie Hospital has been connected with the system at a cost of £2,000. The Kalgoorlie Hospital is a very fine institution. Last year one wing was completely burnt out and a new structure has been built in its place. Fortunately, the fire was unattended with accidents to patients or staff. As a result of that conflagration, the Kalgoorlie institution is now a very fine up-to-date hospital.

Hon. N. Keenan: What was the new wing built of—wood and iron?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Yes. In addition, works have been carried out, or are in course of construction, at many other hospitals. These undertakings include additions to the maternity accommodation at Margaret River; renovations to nurses' quarters at Busselton; renovations and additions to the accommodation for natives at Carnarvon; the conversion of old buildings at Coolgardie into nurses' quarters; the construction of a new theatre, dispensary and other improvements at Marble Bar; provision for more accommodation for nurses at Wooroloo; extensive improvements to the kitchen and cooking equipment and also additional machinery in the laundry at the Fremantle Hospital, additional ward accommodation and nurses' quarters at Reedys; additional nurses' quarters and ward accommodation at Norseman; a new maternity hospital at Leonora; improvements to the kitchen block and renovations at Geraldton, and additional ward and staff accommodation at Northampton. Members will see that the work undertaken in connection with our hospitals has been spread over a wide area. Practically the whole of the activities referred to has been made possible by the assistance secured through the Lotteries Commission and as a result of money raised locally.

Last year when I introduced the departmental Estimates, I was able to report that work had been commenced on the first section of a progressive programme for the rebuilding of the Perth Hospital. That work is now progressing and another two or three years will elapse before the task will be completed.

Dealing now with the medical services, for the year ended the 30th June last, the expenditure under this heading showed a decrease of £1,157 compared with that of the

previous year. This result was mainly due to the department's inability to obtain a doctor for Marble Bar. That is one of the positions in the North-West for which the department pays a doctor a salary of £1,000 a year and collects the fees earned by the doctor. Owing to the shortage of medical men, this position has been vacant for a long time, and the work at Marble Bar is being attended to by the district medical officer at Port Hedland. In order to do so, the doctor has had the use of the aeroplane, which is available in connection with the aerial medical services. There was an increase in revenue of £496 due to the increased collections of medical officers' accounts in the North-West. There are four doctors engaged in that part of the State and they debit us with their accounts and the department collects the amounts on their behalf. I may say that the North-West represents one section of the State where the collections of medical debts shows a high percentage.

At the Old Men's Home some work has been carried out. The institution has remained practically full throughout the year. During that period a new range was installed and other improvements effected. General improvements to the wards were put in hand, and that work is still in progress. The member for Nedlands (Hon. N. Keenan) is a frequent visitor to the institution, and he will agree that the improvements carried out during the 12 months have added materially to the efficiency of the institution.

The suitability of the present building used as the Women's Home has been discussed on more than one occasion. It has received attention at the hands of Cabinet, but so far no definite action has been taken respecting the suggestions advanced from time to time. I hope the time is not far distant when we shall be able either to improve the present building or to secure a new home for the women.

Dealing with the Health Department, members will be interested to know that the work of diphtheria immunisation, which has been in progress during the past three years, has continued to receive attention, and this requires expenditure by the department on the provision of free anatoxin to local health authorities. All other expenditure in connection with this work is provided by the local authority. To date some 45,000 chil-

dren have been protected against the disease, and there is a definite decline in the incidence of diphtheria. The Committee will appreciate that fact, and I hope that parents will assist the local governing authorities, who are carrying out such wonderful work in this regard, by ensuring that all young children will be immunised against diphtheria. To date, so far as I have been able to gather, there has not been one instance of diphtheria occurring in a child who had been immunised.

Mr. Sampson: Is it very costly to the parent?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: No.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: It is free.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: The department provides the anatoxin, but I think a small fee is charged for the work carried out by doctors. The fee has been arrived at by arrangement between the medical men and the local authorities. The first injection is in the nature of a trial and then there are three subsequent injections, with intervals of a week between each. It is quite a small matter and the children take little or no notice of it. My grandson told me that he felt a prick, and that was all there was to it.

Mr. Sampson: It unfortunately involves a lot of travelling for parents.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: That is not so. The local authorities arrange for halls so that the people do not have to travel long distances. The dental van, which has proved a great boon to children in remote areas, has considerably increased the scope of the usefulness of the schools' dental staff. This service is not only being continued, but our earnest desire is to supplement it at the earliest opportunity. I have received letters from people in different parts of the State inquiring when the van will be in their district. I want those people and also members of this Committee to realise the huge extent of Western Australia. We are endeavouring to work to a time-table so that we can reach the children in the outback centres.

The work of leprosy control and treatment has been carried on extensively in the North-West, and 200 cases of the disease are now cared for at the new leprosarium established a few years ago. Twenty cases previously cared for by the Commonwealth Government at Darwin have recently been

returned to the care of the State and are now housed at the institution at Derby. The medical officer appointed to supplement the leprosy patrol work of the medical officer of the Native Affairs Department, has travelled far in the Kimberleys and brought to light many cases of this disease. His salary is provided from the funds of the National Health and Medical Research Council and the cost of his transport and maintenance is borne by the State. Dr. Davis is the doctor, and he is carrying out wonderful work in the remote parts of the State. I took the opportunity to visit the leprosarium at Derby twice during my recent trip through the North-West, and I was pleased to note the wonderful work that is being carried out there. It was pitiful to see 200 of our unfortunate aborigines receiving treatment there for leprosy. We are gathering them in from different parts of the Kimberleys, and I hope the time will soon arrive when we can say that, so far as we can ascertain, those outer areas are clear of this dread disease. The North-West Medical Service has continued to function satisfactorily and has brought to the people in that part of the State much improved facilities. As I have already indicated, difficulty is experienced in securing the services of doctors, and at present we are three short in the North-West alone. That is a pity because under the scheme that was arranged, each station in the North was within an hour or an hour and a half of a doctor. Contact could be established by means of the pedal sets, and the doctor could travel by aeroplane to the point where his services were required. The flying doctors at Port Hedland and Wyndham have been carrying out wonderful work, and we have every reason to be proud of the scheme. I hope that after the next examination at the University, at which a large number of medical students will sit, we shall have the services of some active young men who will participate in this work.

Mr. Mann: Are they to sit for the finals?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Yes.

Mr. Mann: When?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Beginning next month, I think. We hope to get a number of smart young men as a result, men who will be prepared to jump into a plane and fly to stations in the back country when required.

Mr. Mann: Will those young men not have to walk the hospitals first?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Not necessarily. They may sign on for three years, and at the end of two and a half years they can secure time off to enable them to travel abroad to take post-graduate courses if they so desire. I am afraid, however, that the army will attract most of them because they can start off as captains and not as privates. The departmental bacteriological and pathological laboratory has functioned normally during the year and has dealt with an enormous number of specimens for hospitals and medical practitioners throughout the State. Work has also been carried out for the military authorities and for other Government departments, particularly regarding water supplies and other matters concerning the public health. The question of water supplies for the military authorities is of importance. Members may not know that when transports arrive at Fremantle, the whole of the water required for the vessels has to be analysed by the laboratory. The water has to be drawn off when the ships arrive and has to be examined, and the water to be supplied to the boats has to be similarly treated.

Infant health centres are being subsidised in increasing numbers. They are regularly visited and their work supervised by a departmental officer. The value of these centres in the reduction of infant mortality cannot be over-estimated. Medical men and indeed all have recognised that the nursing sisters are doing a wonderful work. This activity is being greatly extended. Next Friday I shall be visiting the district of the member for Nelson (Mr. J. H. Smith) to open a centre at Bridgetown.

The provision of insulin for the treatment of diabetes in the case of persons unable to purchase it continues, as it is the only means of saving life or maintaining normal activity in many of these cases. Cod liver oil is also supplied either free or at cost price to tubercular patients requiring it. This service too, is being extended. In almost every goldfield—at Wiluna, Meekatharra and other places—where there are tubercular cases or where people show signs of infection, the department is supplying cod liver oil free or at cost price.

Mr. Marshall: It is a positive blessing to the miners.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: It is a blessing to the miners and something of which we are proud. That work will continue so long as we can secure the services of someone to take charge of the distribution. The supervision of public health measures of sanitation and the inspection of meat in abattoirs continues to be efficiently carried on by the inspectorial staff of the department as also is the supervision by the departmental nurses of maternity homes and tubercular patients in their homes.

The following institutions are under the control of the Mental Hospitals Department:—Claremont Mental Hospital, Greenplace Mental Hospital, Whitby Falls Mental Hospital, Lemnos Soldiers' Mental Hospital and Heathcote Reception Home. On the 31st December last there were 1,482 persons certified as insane in the State as against 1,477 on the 31st December of the previous year, an increase of five. During the year the number of deaths was 92 and discharges 40, of which 15 were discharged as recovered. At Heathcote, during the year ended the 31st December last, the number of admissions was 420, of which 81 were re-admissions. Of the cases discharged 248 were recovered or relieved and 62 not improved. Thirty-five patients died in the home and 85 were transferred to hospitals for the insane. The number of patients in Heathcote at the 31st December was 86. The new admission and treatment block at the Claremont Mental Hospital has now been completed and equipped but, owing to accommodation being urgently required by the military authorities, has been temporarily occupied by them. The new block at Heathcote has been completed and is expected to be put into use within the next month. The developmental work is being carried on steadily at the property taken over at Wokalup. Members will recall that the Wokalup property was purchased with a view to establishing a farm settlement there for a large number of people at present in the mental institutions. Medical opinion is that it will be of great benefit to many of these folk to have their time occupied in the growing of a few vegetables or doing odd jobs in the open air instead of being, as at present, behind stone walls.

Rapid progress is being made with that enterprise and before many months have passed we hope the Treasurer will be able to see his way clear to enable us to establish patients on the property under the new scheme.

Mr. Sampson: Are you speaking of Whitby Falls?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: No; I am speaking of the property at Wokalup. There is not sufficient room, nor could sufficient water be provided at Whitby without tremendous cost to enable us to launch such a scheme there. There is accommodation for only 20 patients there and we want to provide for 200 or more. At Wokalup we have land in an ideal situation. There are 360 acres of flat country that will grow anything. When the work is properly established it will represent a great improvement on the present system.

[Mr. Withers took the Chair.]

MR. NEEDHAM (Perth) [7.50]: I compliment the Minister for Health on the comprehensive statement he made in presenting the Estimates of his department and also on the very sympathetic manner in which he is administering that department, which to my mind is the most important in the State, being concerned as it is with the health of the community. Even before assuming Ministerial office the Minister had considerable experience of health matters by reason of his association with the Perth Hospital Board. The department is doing a splendid work in attending to the sick of the community and endeavouring to bring to their aid all the advantages of science helpful to the physician and the surgeon. Our medical and nursing staff are performing a splendid service and I desire to pay a tribute to the particularly fine work of the honorary medical staff of the Perth Hospital.

The Minister for Health: Hear, hear!

Mr. NEEDHAM: When I became a member of the Perth Hospital Board I found that I had previously possessed only a very vague idea of what they were doing in an honorary capacity. The steel structure of the new Perth Hospital is now towering high towards the skyline. It is the beginning of one of the most modern buildings of its kind in the southern hemisphere. Within its walls the sick of our State will be able to receive the most modern treatment possible. The new hospital is an-

other monument to Labour administration. It was long talked about and the necessity for it was often referred to in this Chamber and outside.

Mr. Sampson: Surely it is not a party proposition.

Mr. NEEDHAM: It was left to a Labour Government to do the work.

Mr. Mann: You are spoiling a good speech.

Mr. NEEDHAM: That is only one of the monuments to Labour administration in this State. The King Edward Memorial Hospital is another. The member for Nedlands (Hon. N. Keenan) does not agree, but it is a fact.

Mr. McLarty: Labour has been in power for 15 years.

Hon. N. Keenan: It would be a God-send if Labour went out of power.

Mr. NEEDHAM: The fact remains that those two buildings are monuments to Labour administration. There are many other monuments that could be mentioned, such as the Canning dam. I have perused the report issued under the Hospital Fund Act for the year ended the 30th June, 1940, and found in that document some very interesting and enlightening figures. It points out that the gross cost of all hospitals increased during the years 1934 to 1940 by 63.5 per cent. and the work done during that period increased by 10.9 per cent. The revenue, mostly derived from patients' fees, increased by only 48.4 per cent. Those figures give food for serious thought and we must find some method of bridging the gap between the rising cost of administration and the income available to meet increased charges. I realise that would be a difficult proposition in normal times and that it is particularly difficult now when we are in a state of war. In peace time a method might have been suggested—and perhaps developed—of bridging the gap I have mentioned, but just now I would not dare to attempt to suggest a way of obtaining revenue to make up the deficiency. But it has to be remembered that the cost of administration will continually rise and something will have to be done to increase the revenue to meet the increased costs, if our sick and infirm are to get the very best treatment they deserve. The department has been aware of the tendency of hospital costs to rise out of proportion to the income derived. This has been due largely to causes

beyond the control of the hospital managements. That brings me to an incident that occurred towards the end of June, 1939, when the Perth Hospital Board resigned in a body. That board comprised men who, except for myself, had considerable experience.

Mr. Sampson: Which Government was in power then?

Mr. NEEDHAM: The Labour Government of today was in office at that time. The chairman of the board was Mr. Hawkins and the other members were Mr. J. Tyson, Mr. P. J. Mooney and myself. The Minister for Health was a member of the Board until he took Ministerial office. The gentlemen I have mentioned had experience varying from 15 to 20 years. My own experience extended over only 16 months. The board found itself in difficulties in regard to the increasing cost of administration. For some time the board constituted as I have indicated was subjected to many reminders by the departmental head, Mr. Huelin, that the costs of management were increasing beyond the income to meet them. We realised it, and endeavoured to keep down costs as far as possible. The board had several interviews with the Minister (Hon. A. H. Panton) and the departmental head (Mr. Huelin), and was asked to cut down expenditure. The reply of the board was that it could not do so if due regard was to be paid to the best and most modern treatment for in-patients and out-patients. The board pointed out that if the most modern treatment was to be accorded to patients, which was the least they should receive, the management costs would continue to increase, and proceeded to mention the factors responsible for the increase. There was an increase in the number of patients, and increased costs were brought about through industrial awards and agreements, shorter hours, etc.

At that time we advised the Minister and the Under Secretary that if these facts were not recognised, the board would have to resign. The board did resign and a new board was appointed consisting of Mr. Huelin, Under Secretary of the Health Department, Dr. Atkinson, Principal Medical Officer, and Mr. Reid, Under Treasurer. Each of these officers is a man of considerable experience and high administrative ability, and I have not one word to say against any of them. What I wish to do is to point out that de-

spite the ability of those three departmental heads, the administrative costs are still increasing, as shown by the report on the Hospital Fund Act tabled a little while ago. I repeat that despite their individual and collective administrative ability, hospital costs are still going up, as is shown by the report for the year ended the 30th June, 1940. Proportionate increases in the administrative costs have been due, firstly, to the larger number of patients treated; secondly, to the cost of the basic wage increases; thirdly, to the cost of the nurses' award amendments and operation of the hours provision; fourthly, to the cost of awards and agreements relating to the domestic staff; and, fifthly, to the increase in commodity prices. To summarise the whole position, the average daily cost per patient in the year 1931-32 was 9s. 3d., and the average daily cost per patient in 1939-40 was 12s. 7d. Owing to the causes I have mentioned increased costs were and are inescapable.

I mention these facts in order to prove that the board was justified in the action it took. Instead of the expenditure and the income being balanced, the position since the new board took control has not improved. Again, I do not wish to blame the board; I am simply pointing out the reasons for the increased cost of administration as experienced by the board. There is another reason why costs have gone up. Since the resignation of the board an additional annual expenditure has been incurred through the appointment of a manager of the Perth Hospital at a salary of £600 a year. I am sure that the gentleman is worth the money. During the regime of the board, and through all the years from the inception of the Perth Hospital, the secretary of the hospital was also in essence and fact the manager. In the past few months a man has been brought from Melbourne—a very able man, I understand—and appointed manager at a salary of £600 a year, thus increasing the cost. All this goes to prove that just as medical science advances, provided patients committed to the care of our hospitals are to receive in their treatment all the advantages of advanced medical and surgical science, then increased hospital management costs are inescapable.

Recently I read an excellent article in the Perth Hospital magazine entitled "One Hundred Years of Healing." I commend that article to the attention of mem-

bers because it shows what wonderful work has been done by our Health and Medical Department in the treatment of the sick and infirm. I trust that the good work will be continued and that when normal times return and peace on earth again prevails—if it ever does—we shall be able to regard the matter of hospital management in a more liberal light, realising that the money expended for the preservation of the health of the community is money well spent that will give us a return a thousand-fold.

**MR. STUBBS** (Wagin) [8.8]: The Estimates now under consideration are highly important to the life of the community. I do not propose to traverse the ground that was covered last week when we debated a Bill introduced by the member for Pingelly, but in my judgment the matter of health outweighs in importance anything else that we may discuss in this Chamber. I do not wish to be parochial. Probably there are other members who have grievances from their constituencies equally as strong as those I receive from the far-flung portions of my electorate. This must be my excuse for bringing before the Committee facts that cannot be disputed by the Minister or the Government. In my electorate there are 500 people located at least 100 miles from the nearest doctor or nurse. The Minister already knows that in the Ravenshorpe district there is a hospital, with provision for 14 beds and fully equipped with all the appliances for giving surgical and medical treatment, that has been closed for two or three years, simply because the services of neither a doctor nor a nurse can be obtained. The Minister has been there and well knows that the statement I am making is correct. A sum of three-quarters of a million is being expended in the city of Perth at present to build another hospital. Can the Minister deny that?

Member: No bite!

Mr. Needham: That is a hospital for the whole of the State.

Mr. STUBBS: I hope I am not trampling on the corns of the member for Perth when I say that Perth already has a hospital, and so has Ravenshorpe, but we cannot get either a doctor or a nurse to go to Ravenshorpe. Will the member for Perth dispute my statement that the people down there are

about tired of living under the existing conditions?

Mr. Needham: I do not dare to contradict you.

Mr. STUBBS: I am not saying anything that is not true. What answer would the member for Perth give to his constituents if he occupied my position? The position in the country to-day is anything but satisfactory. If the people in the far-flung areas, distant from either doctor or nurse, came to the city to live, what would become of the city? It is the production of wealth from the soil, gained through the pluck and enterprise of families who have gone out into the back areas, that has brought prosperity to the city. Those people are living under conditions that the member for Perth could not credit unless he went there and saw for himself. That is why I referred to him when I drew a comparison between the conditions of the people in the city, who have doctors and nurses almost at their doors, and the people in the country, who are without doctors and nurses. If the hon. member resided at Ravensthorpe and had a family of five or six children and could not get attention from either doctor or nurse, I do not think he would have interjected as he did.

Mr. Needham: I did not say anything against those people.

Mr. STUBBS: I ask the Committee to remember that unless steps are taken by the Government—whether by imposing increased taxation or not, I cannot say—there are many families in the country who have reached the breaking point. They have had three or four bad seasons and their difficulties are due to no fault of their own. They are unable to meet their obligations. They cannot pay their store-keeper; they cannot meet their machinery bills or their accounts for superphosphate because, in some instances, the crops have not come above ground. All I want the Committee to bear in mind when considering the vote is whether a sufficient sum is provided to do justice to the people in the back areas. I say definitely, no. The Government should wake up to the seriousness of the position of those people in the sparsely populated portions of the State, and tell them that a little more money will be placed on the Estimates to keep them from coming to the city. I have no desire

to criticise Ministers in the tight corner in which they find themselves owing to circumstances over which they have no control—bad seasons and other disabilities which were never foreseen; but I do ask the Minister for Health to remember that the amount of money placed at his disposal is not sufficient to allow him to be fair in regard to amounts placed at the disposal of country hospitals, especially in districts where there is neither doctor nor nurse. Applications for the services of nurses by letter or by advertisement, offering £5 per week and found, are turned down because nurses do not want to go into the back areas. These are irrefutable facts. I trust the Minister in his reply will be able to tell me that he will relieve the serious position existing in the sparsely populated districts, including my electorate. Then will the people listen to what the hon. gentleman has to say in response to the humble appeal I make on their behalf. I know better than any other member of the Chamber that the position is far more serious than is generally realised. Cannot some additional money be found in order at least to provide a nurse to look after people living a hundred miles from a doctor? An accident may occur at any time, and the people do not know whether the victim will reach the nearest hospital alive or dead. My criticisms are not levelled at the Government. I want the Committee to become conversant with the position in the back areas of Western Australia as that position truly is.

**MR. MARSHALL** (Murchison) [8.20]: My reason for rising is to enter emphatic protest against the despotic administration of the department and to reply to the speech of the member for Perth. However, there are other matters to which I shall refer because of their importance to people located at long distances from the capital city. I have discovered recently that the King Edward Memorial Hospital in Subiaco provides accommodation for expectant mothers and that it has a wonderful reputation and enjoys the confidence of at all events most of the women resident on the goldfields. It is recognised to be a marvellous institution. Women travel long distances to reach that hospital when occasion arises. Recently a young married woman journeyed all the way

from Wiluna, but on arrival in Perth discovered that because her husband's income exceeded a certain sum per week she was not entitled to be admitted to the King Edward Memorial Hospital. I take strong exception to such a regulation. It has to be remembered that in most of our goldfields towns with the exception naturally or Kalgoorlie and Boulder, there is only one doctor. In some of them there is no doctor at all, and not even a hospital. But there are in those towns married women who are expected to become mothers of the next generation in Western Australia. Because the husband in the case I have mentioned earns something in excess of the basic wage, or the basic wage itself, the wife is not entitled to admission to the maternity hospital. The Minister will probably say this is due to funds not being available for additions to the hospital. Even if that be so, the hard-and-fast rule as to the basic wage or over should not obtain. In some goldfields towns the needs of women are not provided for as regards either a doctor or a hospital when they are about to undergo the experience of becoming mothers. That there should be any restriction whatever upon the admission of expectant mothers to maternity hospitals is most deplorable. However, that recalls the deplorable state of our finances to-day. No matter where we look or where we go, whatever the public utility or the public asset may be, in every case there is financial starvation. And that position will become aggravated as time goes on. I desire to draw members' attention to the fact that the Treasurer when introducing the Estimates stated that the hospital fund has now to carry interest on loan moneys expended on buildings for hospital purposes. I believe that to be an innovation. I draw attention to the matter because if the fund is to carry interest, there will be less to spend on hospital buildings and equipment and accommodation. I was here when the hospital tax came into operation.

The Premier: You do not know half as much as I know about the administration of the fund.

Mr. MARSHALL: That may be so.

The Premier. The Government lends the institutions money, on which they pay interest.

Mr. MARSHALL: Yes. The fund is now to carry an interest burden.

The Premier: The money used to be furnished out of revenue.

Mr. MARSHALL: The principle is very bad indeed. I well remember when the present Premier was sitting by me on the Opposition benches, we attacked the then Government very bitterly on that score. We knew how to attack, and when to attack. Upon the inauguration of the hospital fund we were led to believe that the hospital tax was to bring in an amount additional to what was then provided for hospital purposes from Consolidated Revenue. If my memory serves me rightly, Consolidated Revenue provided something like £100,000 annually towards maintenance and requisites of hospitals and everything else of that nature. The amount was used to assist not only committee hospitals but also Government hospitals. To our amazement we discovered, upon the Estimates being brought down, that they did not provide a penny for the hospitals.

Mr. Sampson. We provided £50,000.

Mr. MARSHALL: A heated debate ensued, in which the Premier and I, with others then sitting in Opposition, took part. We pointed out that the Government's proceeding was contemptible, that it was a back-door method of obtaining taxation, that it was utterly wrong in principle. Consolidated Revenue should carry its fair share of the burden. Now it is relieving itself of interest payments, on the ground that it makes some contribution to the capital cost of hospitals. Those contributions should be made voluntarily, and without any condition having reference to the interest burden. By virtue of the hospital tax plus the amusement tax, and numerous other God-forsaken taxes, Consolidated Revenue has been relieved for years. Nowadays I do not know which way to look to avoid seeing a tax.

Disillusionment has come to some people from to-day's paper. They now realise that they will have to give some consideration to the subject of taxes, even if they enjoy fairly high salaries. I think the Minister for Health promised the people of the Murchison to see that insurance companies operating under the Workers' Compensation Act paid their just dues and correct liabilities for hospital treatment of beneficiaries who had sustained injuries in the mines. I understood that the Minister promised something would be done to bring about a levelling-up of the cost of hospital

treatment and the amounts that should be paid by employers. However, the employers have stepped out of the picture, leaving the matter between beneficiaries and insurers. Undoubtedly our hospitals in industrial centres, where accidents are numerous, are being cheated out of a fair and reasonable reward for the services they render; and this is because of limitations under the Workers' Compensation Act. The Minister should give serious consideration towards obtaining for our hospitals what is right and proper in the circumstances.

On last year's Estimates I protested strongly against the desire of the department to coerce Murchison miners into increasing their weekly contributions to the hospital fund. On that occasion I pointed out that while medical and hospital attention were given in return for the contributions, those benefits were subject to certain reservations and limitations, major operations being excluded and also midwifery and tubercular cases.

I do not doubt there are other cases not covered by that agreement. People on the Murchison were paying 1s. 6d., which I would point out, for the information of the Committee, does not concern contributions made for hospital attention under the Workers' Compensation Act. The contribution of 1s. 6d. is over and above that payment, and provides for hospital and medical attention other than that mentioned in the Workers' Compensation Act. It appears to me that because there is a semblance of prosperity—or alleged prosperity—on the goldfields, and because the workers there, by comparison, are earning high wages, they are open to exploitation. If an extra tax or some extra charge is imposed by the Government we generally find in these days that the goldfields people carry it. Although the basic wage for the goldfields is higher than is the basic wage for the metropolitan area and the rural districts, the goldfields worker enjoys no great privilege because of that fact; the extra amount is eaten up by the cost of living. In all taxation imposed, whether voluntarily or by legislation, the goldfields worker pays the maximum. He pays more by way of hospital tax, financial emergency tax and income tax than do most other workers, without regard to the fact that the cost of living on the goldfields is much higher than it is in other parts of the State. No allow-

ance is made for that. Simply because the goldfields worker receives more by way of remuneration for his labour, he is called upon to pay a higher tax. The burden of taxation falls inequitably upon him. Ultimately, and this is what I am protesting against, the people of Cue and Big Bell increased their contributions to 1s. 6d. per week. I protested to the Minister against the increase: and, strange to say, when the session closed and I went to Big Bell, this subject was being heatedly discussed between the department and the subscribers: in other words, I walked right into the fire. There was a public meeting, one of the biggest public meetings I have attended on the Murchison for many years. The meeting unanimously decided that it would not agree to any further increase in the weekly contribution. The Press reported that I took the opportunity to speak at the meeting, and no doubt departmental officers observed the report, because a Mr. Wilson, who is an officer of the department, telephoned me requesting an interview. I saw him and we had a long talk. He suggested that I should endeavour to influence these people to agree to an increase in their contributions from 1s. 6d. to 2s.; but he advanced no argument that convinced me or caused me to change my ideas as to the weekly contribution. We should consider the matter from this angle: I think only the timber workers, the Collie coalminers and the workers on the goldfields contribute to funds of this description. Are such contributions made a condition of employment in the metropolitan area?

The Minister for Health: No.

Mr. MARSHALL: There are workers in the metropolitan area who subscribe nothing at all for hospital or medical attention. Apparently, they take no interest whatever in their own welfare so far as hospital or medical attention is concerned. No doubt they can obtain such services; but whether they pay for them or not is quite another question. I have heard some discussion with regard to the writing-off of large sums of money.

The Minister for Health: It is all in the country, every penny of it.

Mr. MARSHALL: That may be so, but much of it has come from the goldfields. What I take exception to is that the workers in the towns I have mentioned were coerced into increasing the contribution to 2s. I

defended the Minister and his Government at the meeting to which I have referred. I told the meeting that notwithstanding the people had been coerced, they had voted in favour of the payment and were entitled to get that for which they voted. But the Minister was negligent, because last year when the Health Estimates were before Parliament I protested against this increase. I wrote to the Minister pointing out to him the dictatorial reply that I received from the Under-Secretary.

The Minister for Health: It was not the Under-Secretary.

Mr. MARSHALL: I am not concerned about the person who drafted the reply for the Minister.

The Minister for Health: I drafted my own reply.

Mr. MARSHALL: I complained about the Minister's action, because had I been in his place and heard the discussion, I would have been watchful with regard to the reply to a letter such as I wrote. I will read the letter sent by the Public Health Department to the secretary of the Cue Hospital, dated the 21st December. It states:—

Dear Sir: With reference to your letter of the 11th ultimo, this was overlooked on our file, but we note that your subscribers would not agree to increase the rate of subscription as suggested by the department.

Are they aware that future assistance to the Cue hospital depends on their increasing their rate of subscription? You should advise your subscribers that we cannot make any further grants from the hospital fund until their rate of subscription is increased to 2s. per week.

In regard to the purchase of provisions, the figures taken out by you are clear proof that you would make a considerable saving by purchasing through the Government Stores Department. We can quite understand the local storekeepers opposing this move, as they apparently show a very considerable margin of profit in their dealings with the hospital. As the money to meet your deficits is found from the Hospital Fund, then we must insist on your purchasing in the cheapest market, which in your case is through the Government Stores Department.

Yours faithfully

A. Copping,  
for Under Secretary.

Things have come to a pretty pass when a servant of the State—an ordinary paid official of the State—can tell those who employ him exactly what will and will not be done with funds of this description. Had

that letter come from the Minister himself I would have protested; but it came from a departmental officer. I recall that once the member for Boulder (Hon. P. Collier) referred to uncivil civil servants.

The Minister for Health: Mr. Copping is the most courteous officer in the department.

Mr. MARSHALL: Yes, but he was not responsible for the letter. I blame the Minister, because I wrote to him from Meekatharra on the 28th February last as follows:—

Dear Sir: I would be pleased if you would let me know if you at any time gave instructions, or even agreed, that a minute, such as the enclosed, should be released. As this may be the first knowledge you have of the enclosed, I would be pleased to know if such is the case, if you now concur in this dictatorial attitude of the secretary concerned; and if not, what action you propose to take in order to prevent an ordinary servant of the State adopting a like attitude in the future.

I have the Minister's reply, it covers over two foolscap sheets and outlines all the ramifications between the Medical Department and the Cue Hospital Committee. But no answer was given to the question which I asked the Minister. As a matter of fact, the letter only gave me information with which I was thoroughly conversant. It was a simple way of evading my letter, which was never really answered. The Minister made some reference to it. I will read the paragraph.

The Minister for Health: Read the whole letter.

Mr. MARSHALL: No, it is not necessary.

Hon. C. G. Latham: It is a long one and we would like to hear it.

Mr. MARSHALL: Is it not remarkable that members are treated as being beneath the status of an ordinary servant of the State? What a member says on the floor of this House counts for nothing.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Did the Minister sign that letter?

Mr. MARSHALL: The letter was written by him.

The Minister for Health: Yes, but I am talking about the letter Mr. Copping wrote. It was written to the secretary of the hospital.

Mr. MARSHALL: Yes. Have I no right to take exception to such treatment? No servant of the State has the right to say

what these funds shall or shall not be used for. Even had the Minister signed the letter, I would have protested.

The Minister for Health: All right.

Mr. MARSHALL: Until everyone in constant employment contributes an equal amount, I will protest. Further burdens are not going to be cast on the goldfields people with my sanction. I am sick and tired of it all. Let that be understood. Ministers ought to take control of their departmental officers and not permit them to write such letters as the one I have read. Departmental officers seem to be getting out of control; they are dictating even to members. We cannot do anything in this House, although we represent the people.

Mr. McDonald: Quite true.

The Minister for Health: Soothe him on!

Mr. MARSHALL: I require no soothing on or soothing off.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. MARSHALL: What I take strong exception to is, as I have said, that when increased charges or increased taxation is imposed, the goldfields people carry a larger share of the burden than they should; and it is the goldfields people who return Labour members to this Parliament.

Mr. Holman: And timber-workers, too.

Mr. MARSHALL: That is so. The only reference the Minister made to my letter is the paragraph to which I have referred. It reads—

I feel sure you will agree the department has been very long-suffering.

The Minister for Health: Hear, hear! We are suffering a bit to-night, too.

Mr. MARSHALL: The Minister will suffer a little more as far as I am concerned. I shall use my privileges and rights in this Chamber in defence of my constituents. Were the circumstances to be reversed, I would probably be inclined to take up the Minister's attitude. So long as my electors had not to pay 2s. a week I would probably not complain. That is problematical, and I am not arguing about it. Much of the taxation imposed upon people on the goldfields will go towards the upkeep of the Perth Hospital or in servicing the amount of loan money involved in the expenditure on that hospital.

Mr. Needham: People from the goldfields will go to the Perth Hospital.

Mr. MARSHALL: They will provided they can get to it. Sick people cannot walk very far. People in the metropolitan area will enjoy the service provided by the Perth Hospital because they can get there.

Mr. Needham: Not all of them.

Mr. MARSHALL: Very few of the electors of Murchison will have an opportunity to attend the Perth Hospital because they cannot afford to travel that distance. I have heard murmurings about the attitude of departmental officers and I warn members of the Committee that if they do not protest and see that their rights and privileges as representatives of the people are observed, they will deserve all they get. For hours on end over a period of years I have complained about the administration. I have brought concrete evidence and facts in regard to maladministration, but no consideration has been given to my statements. We may hear some more about the matter as we progress with the Estimates.

Mr. Stubbs: Why do not you bring the matter up in the Party room?

Mr. MARSHALL: I am not as parochial as the member for Wagin (Mr. Stubbs). I represent the people of the Murchison and I take the opportunity presented to me to ventilate grievances on the floor of this House. I refuse to allow departmental officers to dictate to my electors and I always will. The Minister could have avoided this. He was warned about the matter when we last dealt with these Estimates. What actually happened is that Mr. Wilson went to the Big Bell mine and conferred with the manager of the mine, one of the greatest despots this country has ever seen. Notice was given that a meeting would be held at 11.30 a.m., but the nature of the business to be discussed was not specified. All men employed on and around the surface of the mine were stopped working and sent to the meeting. I checked up on this letter, which tells what happened because I have been to the Big Bell mine two or three times since. The letter was written on the 18th May and I have checked the accuracy of the statements contained in it by inquiries from many of the people concerned. The letter states—

I suppose you have heard the result of Wilson's visit to Big Bell. Pitt put up a notice stating that a meeting would be held in the dormitory at 11.30 a.m. to place a matter of vital importance before employees. No further

intimation of what the meeting was for was given. Employees on shift were stopped and sent along. Pitt told the meeting that the Government refused to build the hospital at Big Bell unless the men paid 2s. per week subscription. Wilson told the meeting that they would have to consider winding up the Cue fund and members would then be treated as private patients if they refused to pay 2s.

There we have a departmental officer co-operating with an employer to intimidate the men. Notwithstanding that, I still maintain they had no right to vote as they did. But when the mine manager and the boss stood over them and they were threatened that no hospital would be provided, there was practically no opportunity for them to extract themselves from a very invidious position. I take strong exception to what happened: firstly to the dictatorial nature of letters of the sort I have read tonight and then to the coercive tactics employed by a departmental officer in co-operation with the employer.

Mr. Abbott: That is not correct. There is nothing in that letter to indicate that there was any coercion by the employer.

Mr. MARSHALL: The hon. member has not worked very long for an employer. In order to show the hon. member that he is entirely wrong, I will quote further from the letter.

The Minister for Health: Who is it from?

Mr. MARSHALL: The writer states—

As the result of a resolution carried at a previous meeting of our union—similar to the one at the public meeting—some of us winder drivers withdrew from the fund. Pitt called me into his office this morning and threatened to sack me on the spot if I would not pay into the fund. I told him I was bound by the resolution carried at our union meeting and he has given me 10 days to change my mind or I am finished.

Mr. Hughes: He dare not do it. They would stop the mine.

The Minister for Health: Is that letter from Bowler?

Mr. MARSHALL: It is signed by Bowler.

The Minister for Health: I will tell you something about Bowler in regard to this business.

Mr. MARSHALL: The Minister can tell me what he likes. I know what Bowler did when he came down and everything else about the matter. The Minister can say what he likes about Bowler; what he did and what he did not do. I will say this for Bowler, that he is a fighter and a stickler for Labour principles.

The Minister for Health: I am not suggesting that he is not, but he is a double-crosser all the same.

Mr. MARSHALL: He is not.

The Minister for Health: He double-crossed me in my office. I will tell you about it directly.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. MARSHALL: Probably the Minister can tell me something I do not know because I was not with him on that occasion, but I have met Bowler.

The Minister for Health: So have I.

Mr. MARSHALL: What he did on this occasion was the correct thing to do. What he did in the Minister's office I do not know. I hope I will not constantly have to take up this attitude on these Estimates, but I suppose that what is considered to be the maximum obtainable from the people of this district having been secured, those benefitting will be satisfied for some time anyhow. I take strong exception to what has happened. There are hospitals in this State solely controlled and paid for by this Government. They are Government-controlled hospitals; and that is Labour policy. Yet the people have to be taxed and pay contributions to Consolidated Revenue to keep those hospitals going. There are no committees, no local efforts, no hospital funds, nothing at all. Everything comes from Consolidated Revenue or from this fund to which the miners on the Murchison contribute more than their fair share in comparison with their earnings. While these anomalies continue, I will not be satisfied and I refuse to allow any further impositions to be placed on the people of the goldfields.

MR. HOLMAN (Forrest) [8.52]: It is 12 months all but a day since I last spoke on these Estimates. I was then quite willing to congratulate the Minister on the way he treated hospitals in the South-West. Although I agree with some of the sentiments of the member for Murchison (Mr. Marshall) I cannot say that I have been so badly treated. I had an opportunity to place before the Minister the case for the establishment of a hospital at Donnybrook. The agitation for such an institution had extended over 20 years and I am pleased to say that the Minister at last saw his way clear to assist us. On the 27th March of this year a deputation waited on him and

the case was submitted to him once more. He was told that the district hospital committee had about £1,400 in hand for the building of a local hospital. I believe he realised that the committee had a good case, especially as Donnybrook is a flourishing town and will continue to grow and is, moreover, some considerable distance from any hospital. The nearest institutions are at Bunbury and Bridgetown. Finally the Minister agreed to make available to the committee the sum of £2,000. The Lotteries Commission was then interviewed and from that organisation another £2,000 was received for which we were very thankful. That left the committee £1,000 short of the amount required to provide a ten-bed hospital, such as is needed for a town the size of Donnybrook. Officials then entered into negotiations with the Commonwealth Bank with a view to securing a loan, the raising of which was being sponsored by the Preston Road Board. A considerable sum of money has been expended in connection with the matter. Tenders were then called for the building of the hospital. The work on the ground was commenced and a well was installed at a cost of £70.

All this was done, and then the Preston Road Board was surprised to learn that it was not to be permitted to raise the loan. That has placed the board in an awkward predicament. The ratepayers had agreed to the flotation of the loan and a levy was made to provide for its repayment. Some of the levy has already been collected, but now the loan cannot be raised. Consequently I am speaking with a dual purpose tonight: on the one hand to pat the Minister on the back and on the other hand to raise a protest, though against whom I do not know. Twenty years were required to persuade a Minister to grant £2,000 towards a hospital, and after all that has been done, the work cannot be proceeded with. The member for Murchison spoke about a lot of institutions being starved for money, but the Preston Road Board is not even allowed to borrow money for its hospital.

The Minister for Health: Who will not allow it to do so?

Mr. HOLMAN: The Minister is becoming impatient. The committee got into touch with the Under Treasurer and asked him why the board was not allowed to borrow the money. It also established contact with Mr. Prowse, M.H.R., who inter-

viewed the then Federal Treasurer, Mr. Spender. Mr. Spender stated in a letter to Mr. Prowse:—

The schedule of works to be undertaken by local bodies in Western Australia and the amount of loan money allotted to that State for the current financial year were determined after full consideration had been given to the claims of all local bodies by the State authorities and the Loan Council. Moreover, under the Capital Issues Regulations, borrowings by a local body which does not exceed £25,000 in any year are approved by the State Treasurer, subject to the terms of issue being satisfactory, without reference to me. As the Western Australian Treasurer has informed the Preston Road Board that the matter will have to remain in abeyance for the time being, I do not think it would be proper for me, having regard to all the circumstances, to interfere in the matter.

That letter is dated the 21st October, 1940. After a copy of the letter had been handed to me, and I was requested by the Preston Road Board and the hospital committee to go into the matter, I got into touch with the State Treasurer and placed the case before him. It is peculiar that the Federal Treasurer, Mr. Spender, did not know enough about Loan Council business, loan allocations, or the work of the Co-ordinator, to give a proper answer to the question put to him. The State Treasurer has told us now that under the National Security Capital Issues Regulations he was authorised to approve of loans to local governing bodies of amounts not exceeding £25,000. It is evident from his communication that the Co-ordinator of Works, Sir Harry Brown, is responsible for the Donnybrook Hospital Committee not being allowed to borrow money, or to do so through the Preston Road Board. I believe the idea is to keep more money in circulation for war efforts. Seeing that this is only a matter of £1,000, I do not regard that as a very good excuse. With regard to war efforts, we heard this week of matters relating to the decentralisation of certain defence works. Most members are in favour of decentralisation. I believe also we should have the same idea in regard to hospitals, especially because of the war incidence. As there may be necessity for the decentralisation of hospitals, those people who are endeavouring to help themselves should not have their efforts stultified by the Co-ordinator in this manner. I fail to see why some local governing bodies have been allowed to borrow money, I understand, for additions

to existing hospitals when Donnybrook, which is in dire need of a hospital, is not allowed even to borrow money for a new building. The Co-ordinator must of necessity have had some information that has a direct bearing upon works that have been allowed in this State.

I suppose all the loan money has now been allocated, but I hope we shall not be so badly treated next year if we are allowed to apply again for the loan. I have been fighting this battle for only a short time, but representatives of the Forrest electorate have been fighting it for 20 years. Members will thus understand why I and the people of Donnybrook are opposed to the unfair treatment meted out to the district. I call the treatment unfair because through their war efforts they have already bled themselves considerably and can ill-afford to provide any more money for hospitals. They have already subscribed £1,400 towards the hospital, and in addition, up to last July, the people of Donnybrook subscribed approximately £5,000 to free of interest loans and war savings certificates. It has been said that not much further effort would be needed for the people of Donnybrook to subscribe the extra £1,000. If they did so, would that not amount to taking money out of circulation and away from war efforts, because that would be so much less that could be made available for war purposes. There is a limit to what individual citizens are able to find. I thank the Minister for the part he played in an endeavour to give us a hospital at Donnybrook. I am not going to forget the Dwellingup hospital, either. In that respect, too, the Minister has met us. On only three occasions this year have I had to ask for assistance for hospitals in my electorate, but each time I have had full satisfaction accorded to me by the Minister and his department. I congratulate him upon the interest he takes in country hospitals, and once more thank him for his treatment of my electorate.

**MRS. CARDELL-OLIVER** (Subiaco) [9.7]: I have very little to say on these Estimates. After the debate this evening I am determined that if anything perturbs me in the future I shall go direct to the Minister or to his department. I think I shall get just as much done as if I ventilated matters in this Chamber. I wish

to bring to the notice of the Minister the necessity for fumigating this Chamber.

The Minister for Health: That is a matter for the House Committee.

**Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER**: There are many germs in this Chamber.

The **CHAIRMAN**: The hon. member should bring that matter before the House Committee.

**Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER**: The Chamber could, during recess, be fumigated at very little cost. Members have colds, and mumps and measles, and my friend on my right is away with laryngitis.

**Mr. J. Hegney**: He did not necessarily catch it here.

**Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER**: I do not say these are contagious diseases but they are infectious. This Chamber needs attention. During recess, the Minister might undertake to see that it is properly disinfected. I am sure that next session he will then find more members in their seats for its duration. I am afraid, too, the Minister does not know that some of the schools, where terrible epidemics have occurred during the last few years, have not been fumigated for as many as 27 years. Indeed, I cannot find one school in the metropolitan area that has ever been fumigated. Nothing has been done in that respect to the Thomas-street school for 27 years. No one has any knowledge of its ever having been fumigated, and yet possibly 50 per cent. of the children in attendance there have suffered from various infectious diseases. The same thing can be said of the Bagot-road and other schools. During recess, a system of thorough fumigation should be undertaken throughout the schools in the metropolitan and country areas. That is all I am going to ask. It is a comparatively small matter and will not involve much cost. I think the work should be done.

**MR. W. HEGNEY** (Pilbara) [9.11]: I do not intend to inundate the Minister with a flood of verbiage. I have no complaints whatever. I have risen to express my appreciation of the actions of the Minister and his departmental officials regarding the consideration extended to the medical requirements of the North-West, with particular reference to the Pilbara district. While we regret that the services of a medical prac-

tioner have been unobtainable for the Marble Bar district, the people recognise the Government's difficulty, which has been aggravated by the needs of the Defence Department. Dr. Dicks, the resident medical officer at Port Hedland, has attended to the requirements of the Marble Bar people, and, in all sincerity, I say that the Medical Department and the people of the Pilbara district have been very fortunate indeed in securing the services of a man like Dr. Dicks who, in all respects, is following closely in the footsteps of his predecessor, Dr. Vickers—and that is saying a great deal. The Pilbara district is expanding from the mining point of view, and we hope the time is not far distant when a doctor will be stationed at that centre. Obviously, the presence of a medical man is essential to deal with the cases of emergency so likely to arise there. I also wish to express appreciation of the equipment provided for the hospital. During his recent visit to Marble Bar the Minister was impressed from that standpoint. I freely acknowledge that any request I have submitted to the department has been given serious consideration. Only recently, when representations were made to the department and to the Lotteries Commission, the latter granted a considerable sum of money for the provision of an X-ray plant in the Marble Bar hospital. I hope the plant will be installed in the near future. Quite rightly, members who have complaints to make do not hesitate to voice their views. On the other hand, when a member recognises that the Minister and the departmental officials are doing everything possible—I speak on behalf of the people outback—I regard it as but fair and just that a note of appreciation shall be sounded.

[*Mr. Marshall took the Chair.*]

**MR. McLARTY** (Murray-Wellington) [9.15]: I am glad the Minister has decided that hospital boards shall be provided with a certain sum of money. The manner in which money has been allotted in the past from the national hospital fund has not been satisfactory. Committees or boards that have exercised every possible care in connection with hospital administration in an endeavour to keep down costs, have not received amounts equal to those paid to other boards whose costs have been much higher, yet their bed averages have been about the

same. The method outlined by the Minister, whereby hospitals will be allotted a certain sum, will tend towards economy in administration throughout the State. When I perused the report dealing with the hospital fund, I noticed that the cost of hospitals ranged from 8s. 6d. to 45s. per day. I know that the 45s. hospital does not represent a fair comparison, because it will apply to a small outback area.

The Minister for Health: To Wyndham, for instance.

**Mr. McLARTY**: Yes. At any rate, there has been a great difference between the hospital costs, but the average is about 13s. 6d. per day. The half-yearly statement issued by the Medical Department shows that whereas the cost at one hospital is 8s. 6d. per day, the cost at another will be 13s. or 14s. per day. I think the new system will certainly prove helpful. I intended to ask the Minister what proportion of the hospital fees were collected. I should say the percentage would be somewhere in the vicinity of 50.

The Minister for Health: The collections would not average that percentage. For instance, Kalgoorlie is 62 per cent. and that will give you some idea of the position.

**Mr. McLARTY**: I agree that hospital committees and boards should exercise care regarding the collection of hospital accounts, and should not be hard on patients. Nevertheless, I know some boards do the work much better than others. I think there should be greater co-operation with the department in this matter. We have 60 committee-run hospitals in Western Australia, and only four of them have the advantage of full-time secretaries. In some instances the secretaries are paid small amounts.

The Minister for Health: Some act in an honorary capacity.

**Mr. McLARTY**: They would be few in number. We could not expect an honorary secretary to do very much in return for his small weekly salary and he could not devote much time to the collection of outstanding accounts. Last night I spoke of the need for additional or improved hospital accommodation in my electorate. I know that to obtain money at the present time is difficult. I would not suggest that the hospital tax be raised now, especially after having read the recent proposals of the Federal Treasurer. I would suggest,

however, that the department should subsidise country hospitals in their order of urgency. I suppose the Minister will say that that is done; perhaps to a large extent it is. What I think happens, however, is that when a certain district is fortunate enough to raise money quickly, the department grants a pound for pound subsidy. Districts not so fortunately situated as to be able to raise money cannot obtain such a subsidy, notwithstanding that hospital accommodation there is more urgently needed.

The Minister for Health: I would like to know the districts that are raising money for hospitals now.

Mr. McLARTY: The Minister no doubt realises that in these times committee hospitals experience great difficulty in raising funds. The call for funds for patriotic purposes of course must be the first call. We are all in agreement on that point. The suggestion I have made to hospital boards in my district is this: They can help our war effort and help the hospitals as well, by continuing to raise money for buildings and improvements, but lending it to the Commonwealth Government free of interest for the duration of the war. I believe the public would more readily subscribe under such conditions. Then, when peace comes, the money could be obtained from the Federal Government, plus any help that might be obtained from the department and the Lotteries Commission.

Mr. Withers: You are rather optimistic.

Mr. McLARTY: I do not think so. It is a sound proposition. We must have hospital accommodation after the war.

Mr. Withers: We will have to pay for the war, too.

Mr. McLARTY: I do not want to go into that matter. Again, there is the nurses' award. I am not complaining about it: the nurses are entitled to their award. They previously worked long hours and in some hospitals were poorly paid. In addition, many hospitals were under-staffed. But the award had added to the difficulties of committee-run hospitals. It provides that nurses shall have certain accommodation. It is not possible to provide that accommodation unless the money is available. What has the Minister to say on that point? If a hospital board were required by the

union to provide the accommodation specified by the award, and money was not available, what would be the position of the board?

The Minister for Health: It would be locked up!

Mr. McLARTY: Fortunately, a board cannot be punished in that way, so we need not lose any sleep on that score. Members of hospital boards work in an honorary capacity and devote much of their time to the affairs of the hospitals, and generally speaking they do excellent work. On their behalf, I desire to express appreciation of the action of the Minister in sending officers from the Health Department to attend hospital association meetings. As members are aware, we have these hospital associations throughout the State; they consist of representatives of half a dozen or a dozen hospital boards and meet perhaps once a quarter in various parts of the State. There is no question that the visits made by the officers of the Health Department are most helpful and certainly do much to lighten the work of the members of the hospital boards throughout the State.

HON. C. G. LATHAM (York) [9.25]: I desire to bring to the notice of the Committee the differentiation made between country and city people with respect to hospital accommodation. When the hospital fund tax was imposed in 1932, provision was made that the money raised by that taxation should be devoted to the maintenance of hospitals, that is, the running of the hospitals on the administrative and managerial side. I am afraid that now we are using these funds for building purposes only, and I raise my objection to the differential treatment of the metropolitan area and the country districts. I cannot endorse the remarks made by the member for Murray-Wellington (Mr. McLarty), because, in my opinion, his theory is altogether wrong. In the first place, country people have to find from private sources much of the money required to run their hospitals. True, we obtain money from the hospital fund—just as much as the Minister likes to dole out. Very frequently it is insufficient for our purposes. On the other hand, the Perth Hospital, the Fremantle Hospital and the Wooroloo Sanatorium can get all the money they require from the fund.

The Minister for Health: No.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Yes. Will the Minister in his reply tell the Committee how the Perth Hospital makes up its deficiency at the end of the year?

The Minister for Health: In the same way as any other hospital—out of the fund.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Of course it does. Let me contrast the position of country hospitals. First, all sorts of entertainments are held with the object of raising money to run the hospitals. Every now and again, however, it is necessary to ask the Minister for money in order to carry on. I do not object to the Perth Hospital getting all the money it requires, provided country hospitals are treated in the same way. There cannot be two policies, and so I contend the whole matter is wrong.

The Minister for Health: I am following your policy.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: My policy was definitely laid down. It is contained in the file. I said to the hospital boards, "Provided you manage your hospitals properly, we will provide you with the difference between your revenue and expenditure."

The Minister for Health: That is exactly what I have done.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Recently I have received letters from the department. It is not my intention to criticise departmental officers, as was done by the member for Murchison. I shall not do that. The letters I have received definitely state, "There is your money, that is all you are going to get." Recently some hospitals had practically to close their doors because they were not getting sufficient money to carry on.

Mr. Needham interjected.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: It would be impossible to close the Perth Hospital; the Government would have to come to its assistance. Why not ask the City of Perth, which is by far the most financial part of the State that I know of, to find one-third of the money required to build the Perth Hospital? Why not ask the Perth Road Board and the Subiaco Municipality also to find some money for the Perth Hospital? There is no logic in the treatment meted out to the metropolitan area and to the country districts.

Mr. Hughes: You just took £6,000 from us wrongfully. Surely you are not coming for more.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Where was the £6,000 taken from?

Mr. Hughes: From the City of Perth.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The hon. member means East Perth. I am not sure whether the hospital is in East Perth or not. We have a population of 216,000 in the metropolitan area, which is served by two hospitals. If you, Mr. Chairman, and I are requiring money for additions to hospitals in our districts we would have to find one-third of the money ourselves.

The Perth and the Fremantle people make no direct contributions at all. Perhaps I should correct that statement. At the Fremantle Hospital I believe a few of the wards were built by local subscription. That does not, however, apply to the Perth Hospital. I think the work to be undertaken there is to cost about £800,000, and the whole of it is to be found directly or indirectly by the Government.

Mr. Hughes: You have never heard of city residents being treated in country hospitals, I suppose?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Of course they have been. In half of the accidents that occur in country districts, city folk are involved. Ask the member for Murray-Wellington. Country hospitals provide accommodation for the injured people and restore them to health. Two city men were in the Morawa hospital for months. They paid while they were there. I disagree with the suggestion that the hospital staffs are underpaid. I want the Committee to realise that in 1930 the expenditure on hospitals was £104,000. This year it was about £267,000, and still many of our hospitals are in an impoverished condition. The reason is that we have attempted to make concessions to the staffs, to make conditions for them better than funds will permit. I agree that we should do everything we can to give people good working conditions. But when we train girls for the nursing profession we train them to earn a very good living subsequently. We help them to learn a profession which they would otherwise have no opportunity to learn. I remember the time when girls paid a premium of £50 to be trained.

Mr. J. Hegney: That applied to all trades at one time.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: If they should be paid full value for their services, why should not doctors and lawyers and aspirants for other professions be similarly paid immediately they go to the University to be trained? Is there any difference?

The Minister for Health: You do not suggest that £18 is a big payment for trainee nurses?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Every concession that is made, every shortening of the hours of labour, has to be paid for out of the £270,000 allotted to hospitals, and there is so much less available for the care of the sick. The money is being given to people who are well to the disadvantage of people who are ill.

Mr. J. Hegney: Probationers receive a very small amount.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The member for Murray-Wellington said they are underpaid.

Mr. McLarty: I said they were underpaid.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: A matron receives £150, plus keep and uniforms, and very good accommodation.

The Minister for Health: It depends on how many beds there are in the hospital.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: That was the rate some time ago; I do not know what the new rate is. I do not know whether matrons are affected by awards. Nurses are fairly well looked after. When a girl has been trained to be a nurse and secures additional work, she is paid a guinea a day.

Mr. Sampson: Not those in the Perth Hospital.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I was unfortunate enough to have to secure the services of a nurse to look after me, and her fee was a guinea a day.

The Minister for Health: It would be worth it; I'll bet she earned it!

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Some members of this House seem determined to treat these matters with levity. But what I say is true. It is all very well to say we will improve the conditions of the staff, but our first thought should be for the sick. To lay down a hard and fast rule, as suggested by the member for Murray-Wellington, to apportion money according to the number of beds, is not a scheme that could be operated effectively. There are some hospitals in which expensive drugs have to be used. I

know of one in which 30s. a week has to be spent in drugs on one patient alone. The man cannot be allowed to die, and the drug concerned is the only one that can keep him alive. I hope there will be a reasonable apportionment of money between the city and country hospitals. I know the Minister agrees with me that there should not be any differential treatment. Yet we do not seem to be able to devise a scheme whereby city folk will make some contribution to the cost of hospitals. Everything is given to city folk. They have a beautiful river running through the city and that has been further beautified for them, but the people in the country have to suffer disadvantages and disabilities. I agree with the member for Murchison (Mr. Marshall) that there should not be any differential treatment, and more consideration should be given to people in the country. Before the Minister starts being generous to people who are well, he should give consideration to those who are sick and, if necessary, supplement the hospital fund by additional taxation. Doubtless in the near future increased taxation will be necessary for the maintenance of our hospitals because costs will increase and money will depreciate to such an extent that to make ends meet will be impossible. I do not want to see additional taxation imposed if it can be avoided but I am afraid to look to the future because I know that if we are to carry out the obligations imposed upon us, we will have to pay terrifically high taxes. We need to be careful in the expenditure of our hospital funds, but I repeat that we should look after the sick first, and if there is anything left, it can be given to people who are well.

**MR. SAMPSON** (Swan) [9.37]: I was astounded to hear the member for Perth (Mr. Needham) claim that the new Perth Hospital was a monument to Labour administration.

Mr. J. Hegney: The workers are building it.

Mr. SAMPSON: That is quite beside the mark. I do not know that party politics should be introduced into hospital matters. We are all concerned in the care of the sick. The member for Perth was entirely wrong in endeavouring to make some party advantage out of this question and his statements were very much at variance with his usual atti-

tude. He said that the hospital was a monument to Labour administration. If he adopts that attitude, I will not feel that he deserves a monument. Candidly, of course, I hope he will not have one for some time. There are plenty of people who would be prepared to subscribe to a monument to the Government—

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must not discuss that question under this Vote.

Mr. SAMPSON: We are indebted to the nurses for the work they do. When I had the honour of being Minister for Health, I found that nurses were working between 56 and 65 hours a week. With the approval of the then Treasurer (Sir James Mitchell) I was successful in having the hours reduced to 48.

The Minister for Health: Where?

Mr. SAMPSON: In the Perth Hospital.

The Minister for Health: They never worked 48 hours in the Perth Hospital.

Mr. SAMPSON: Members by indulging in loud expressions—

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member will address the Chair and ignore interruptions.

Mr. SAMPSON: It will not carry conviction because some interjector shouts loudly. I have given the facts. I hope the hours are fewer than 48 now, but I consider that nurses have received very unreasonable treatment from the State. On various occasions I have urged that the profession should be made more attractive and that girls or young women should be encouraged to enter the profession of nursing at an age below that at present approved of. The time may come, perhaps before long, when very many more nurses will be required. I believe there is already a shortage of nurses, and we would be well advised to realise what a great asset a trained nurse is. Our nurses are exceedingly popular. This is proved by the fact that they are continually leaving us and going overseas.

The Minister for Health: And getting married.

Mr. SAMPSON: Yes; that is a further argument in support of my view. I hope the Minister will consider this matter further, because no doctor can do his work without the help of a nurse. The nurse is the one who gives effect to the instructions of the doctor. Undoubtedly our nurses are wonderful women, and I should like to see more nurses. We should have another trav-

elling dental clinic. Admittedly it is quite easy to say that these things are required, but if there is a tax that one can view with satisfaction, it is the tax that makes hospital service possible to the people generally, and of course the travelling dental clinic is an associated service. I am not going to dip into the past to show how little was spent on hospitals some years ago. I am quite satisfied that for what is being spent to-day, we receive as good service as it is possible to get. The cost of drugs and, in fact, all requirements has increased, but in spite of that, we should not grudge the funds necessary to make the hospital service efficient. I am naturally pleased to see the additions being erected to the Perth Hospital, although I thought that a much better location could have been found for them.

Mr. Doney: That is what everybody thinks.

The Minister for Railways: Not everybody.

Mr. SAMPSON: However, it is of no use talking of that now. I regret also that at a time when, judging from the Bill introduced by the member for Pingelly, there is a shortage of doctors, a rumour is abroad that Dr. Mitchell, the Chief Resident Officer of the Wooroloo Sanatorium, has received notice of retirement. I am particularly sorry, because Dr. Mitchell is an outstanding man. I care not what his age is—he cannot be very old—he is certainly very popular in the sanatorium, and I believe that every patient, every member of the staff and every one associated with the sanatorium will greatly regret that this most efficient and well-liked officer is about to retire. I am saying this without having my eye on the electorate, because the Wooroloo Sanatorium is not in the Swan district. For many years I have had the privilege of visiting the sanatorium, and I know how keen Dr. Mitchell is on his work. When we find a doctor who appeals to the patients as he does, we can be sure we have a doctor who is able to do the maximum amount of good for them.

In support of what the member for Wagin said, I agree that one of our first duties is to look after the hospitals located in the country, particularly those in the outback districts. As has been mentioned on various occasions, a wonderful hospital spirit

exists throughout the country. You, Mr. Chairman, have not hesitated to mention this more than once. I hope that spirit will long endure, because if it were not in existence, the task of the Minister and also of the Treasurer would be much more difficult. We may say that fair consideration is not given by the city to the matter of hospitals, but there is a different atmosphere in the city, and for some reason or other the hospital spirit is not very noticeable. The same remark applies to every city, but in country towns the spirit is wonderful, and much is done to ensure the provision of good hospital service.

Regarding the Hospital for the Insane, I know something of the work done by the Board of Visitors. I have been present on occasions when patients have been interviewed. According to the report which has been tabled, six patients were recently discharged. That is very gratifying indeed, and we can only hope that the cures will prove to be permanent. I read with some dismay that ward No. 4, male epileptics, is overcrowded, and there is a suggestion that imbecile children should not share the same dormitory as old epileptics. This matter represents probably one of the most difficult phases of the work the Minister has to control, but it is most important. The board urges that an effort be made to educate the young epileptics and defectives because it is realised that these children are not in their right place in a mental hospital. I do not know what views the Minister may have on the subject, but it is clear that a separate institution is necessary. Many of these sick children possess a degree of mentality. The work done in other homes where these epileptic children are cared for indicates it is possible that an improvement can be effected in their condition when careful tuition is given to them. I have often visited the Seaforth Home at Gosnells, and have noted the work done for backward boys there. No doubt the Salvation Army performs a wonderful service to both backward and delinquent boys and girls. If there is one institution that is helpful to the Government, it is the Seaforth Home. It is stated in the report that there are tubercular patients in the Claremont Hospital for the Insane. That is a very undesirable state of affairs. Separate accommodation is urgently needed for them.

Mr. Hughes: They have been there for 20 years.

Mr. SAMPSON: I know.

Mr. Hughes: Why did you not move them?

Mr. SAMPSON: We moved some of them, but I think they should all be moved. It is a sad reflection upon our vaunted Christianity that this position should continue. Separate accommodation is needed for those particular patients. Those who work on the farm attached to the hospital and in the gardens should be given some consideration as a reward for duty satisfactorily performed. Life is monotonous enough to many healthy people.

Mr. Hughes: You are telling us!

Mr. SAMPSON: Monotony is one of the greatest dangers that normal people have to face. How much more is that so in the case of those who are mentally sick and who are patients at Claremont. I hope the Minister will not overlook the fact that those who are victims of mental trouble require consideration. If he is able to visit the hospital occasionally, I am sure he will do what he can in the matter. Reference is also made in the report to the discharge of two male patients. They had been in hospital for six months during which period their condition had greatly improved. When the time came for the board of visitors to declare that they were well enough to withdraw from the institution, it was found that their belongings had been stolen. That is an important matter to those concerned. These men did not desire to be patients at the hospital, but they were sent there because unfortunate circumstances caused a breakdown in their mental powers. I hope the suggestion contained in the report will receive consideration. In the course of his remarks the Minister said that further accommodation was needed at Whithy Falls. That is a very good institution for the purpose for which it was established, and I hope the required accommodation will be provided. Many patients are found at the Claremont Hospital for the Insane who, although chronically sick, mentally are harmless and could well be cared for elsewhere. The hospital is over-crowded. I urge that a farm could be developed by these chronic and harmless people, who would thus realise that life was not quite so dreary and awful as they now find it to be. For a long time it has been urged that more lavatory ac-

commodation should be provided at the Claremont hospital for use at night. In ward 2, a male ward, there is only one lavatory.

The Minister for Health: Do you think I am able to go down there several times a week to look into matters of that sort?

Mr. SAMPSON: If the Minister would visit the institution every three months I am sure that would be for the good of all.

The Minister for Health: You must have read that in the report.

Mr. SAMPSON: Yes. There has been no reference in the Press to it.

The Minister for Health: The report is laid on the Table for members to read.

Mr. SAMPSON: This has not been published. I understand the position remains as it was. There is one lavatory for 60 patients.

The Minister for Health: Rats!

Mr. SAMPSON: Then the report must be incorrect. In ward 4 there is one lavatory for 65 male patients. The board of visitors also complains about the bad condition at the hospital for harmless, chronic cases, neurotic and epileptic children, etc.

The Minister for Health: Have you heard anything about the military authorities taking over the hospital?

Mr. SAMPSON: The Minister told us about that this evening. The board suggested that these harmless, chronic cases should be boarded out. That system is followed in other countries. In England special small holding colonies are set apart for this purpose with great success. Each allottee takes one or two patients who work with their employer or patron in tilling the holding, and as a result of this congenial work many of them in time recover their mental capabilities. From a business or utilitarian standpoint the proposition is a paying one. In place of being mentally sick these people become able to care for themselves, earn their own living, and save the Government the expense of keeping them. There is a lot in the old saying that there is virtue in the newly turned soil. It appears that that virtue has an effect upon those patients who are able to do that class of work. I will conclude by saying that I am pleased to learn that the additions at Heathcote are about completed or practically ready for use. Undoubtedly those additions are a credit to all concerned. I urge the Minister to give

consideration to the establishment of a small farm colony where the chronic harmless mental cases now at the Claremont institution would have an opportunity.

The Minister for Health: If you had listened to me, you would have learnt that that work was already in hand.

Mr. SAMPSON: I did miss that. If the Minister is doing it, there is no more to say except to express my satisfaction that the work is to be carried into active effect and become, I am sure, a great blessing to those who will benefit by it.

MR. ABBOTT (North Perth) [10.2]: There is only one matter I wish to raise. The Minister made no reference to any suggestion of an intermediate hospital. The position is that many people of small or moderate means find it highly difficult to obtain the medical attention they desire. Poor people, of course, have the Perth Hospital available to them, with the very best doctors and the very best equipment. The very rich can afford to go elsewhere if they cannot secure here the attention they desire. But the people of small or moderate means to whom I have referred contribute to the hospital fund, and the Minister might consider establishing at the Perth Hospital an intermediate ward. As a matter of fact, Government hospitals make provision in that respect. At Albany, means are not a criterion in connection with admission. But that certainly is the case in Perth. Possibly when the new hospital is completed, the Minister may consider establishing an intermediate ward there, not only in relation to the question of means, but so that people of small or moderate possessions may receive the very best attention from the equipment which will be provided at that hospital.

MR. J. HEGNEY (Middle Swan) [10.4]: To-night's discussion has dealt primarily with safeguarding the adult population and repairing the ravages its health may suffer. I desire to say a few words on the other aspect— that of children just born into the world, and the maintenance of their health during the first few years of life. The department under the Infant Health Act is doing good work. The increase in the vote, I observe, amounts to £180. I hold it to be incumbent on the State to safeguard every

life that comes into the world, especially having regard to the ravages the war will make on our population. The birth rate has not increased to any extent; and statistics prove that if the birth rate does not show an increase, then at the end of say 50 or 60 years the population will decrease and the race may become decadent. From that aspect it is essential that infant life should be safeguarded in every direction. The Minister well knows that by virtue of the inauguration of infant health centres in this country and throughout the Commonwealth the death rate for infants under 12 months has been practically halved. But there could be further improvement in that direction. Having that aspect in view, it is essential that the service should be developed to a much greater extent than is the case at present. Infant health nurses are competent and qualified, but their services are spread too widely—often over three localities, with the result that a nurse is not able to give the same attention to mothers who visit a clinic as she would be able to give were her activities limited to that one clinic. The salaries of these nurses are paid out of Government subsidies of £100 plus contributions made by local government bodies. In my district these bodies have been contributing to infant health centres. My personal opinion is that the administration of such centres should be under one head. To-day the control of them is divided between two jurisdictions. To place them under one control would mean far more efficient administration. To that end the vote should be increased. There are centres which still lack such a service, due to insufficient money being provided by the Government. There is also the consideration that if we look after infant life so as to give every child a fair chance, these infants will develop into healthy adults. If we nurture the young during the formative years, possibly there may not be the same need for increased hospital votes, to obtain which we have to agitate here. Many more ills affect the modern human being as compared with his ancestors of, say, a hundred years ago. Various new diseases seem to take us away. With the modern science that protects young life, there may not be the same need for expenditure on hospitals. Children will grow up with sound bodies and sound minds, and

will be a credit to the State. Increased population is essential in view of the enormous taxes which are bound to be placed on the people. If the war continues for years, we shall have a receding population. Possibly many of the young men who go away to fight for the Commonwealth will not return. Such a result would definitely affect the population of the Commonwealth, and there would be an excessive burden cast on those who live during the currency of the loans that are being floated.

Members have heard of the late Dr. William Maloney, who was Federal member for Melbourne. Dr. Maloney in his will provided that the Medical Institute which he had founded, and through which he gave noble service to humanity, should be continued, to which end he made financial provision. He stipulated that the same fee as he had charged for medical advice and service should continue to be charged. The amount was the nominal one of 3s. 6d., which included medicine. Dr. Maloney was a wonderful philanthropist, and rendered great service to mankind. Many doctors have done very well regarding the fees they have collected from their patients, but the fact remains that many people are confronted with grave difficulties in meeting their obligations. The medical services should be reorganised so that the people generally will have a reasonable opportunity to meet their doctors' accounts. Armed with a letter of introduction from the Minister for Agriculture, I was privileged some time ago to visit a medical clinic in Brisbane. It was run on a co-operative basis and three or four medical men, with a staff of nurses, were there ready to give attention to patients. The salaries of the medical men were paid out of a common pool and a fee of £1 1s. covered the services required from any one or each of the doctors associated with the clinic. In my opinion, the cost of medical services could be reduced very considerably. While many doctors give their services in an honorary capacity, there is a large section of the people—between those whose small incomes entitle them to receive attention at hospitals, and the rich who can command what attention is required—who, when involved in medical and hospital expenses, are faced with a load of indebtedness that takes years to liquidate. In New Zealand there

is a distinct trend towards the nationalisation of the medical profession, and that applies largely in Great Britain as well. Such a policy may not be possible of attainment in Australia at present, but I think in the near future some reorganisation of our medical services will require to be undertaken. I commend the Minister for the interest he has taken in connection with infant health centres. I know he is anxious to help in every way possible, and I know that he will take every opportunity to impress upon the Premier, in his capacity as Treasurer, the necessity for additional funds for that work.

*[Mr. J. Hegney took the Chair.]*

**THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH** (Hon. A. H. Panton—Leederville—in reply) [10.14]: I thank members for the manner in which they have received the departmental Estimates. I shall not attempt to reply to all the points that have been raised. I shall inform the member for Wagin (Mr. Stubbs) that all the money in the world would not provide a doctor or nurse for Ravensthorpe at the present juncture, because none is available.

Mr. Fox: What is the population of Ravensthorpe?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I think the hon. member mentioned the population as 500, spread over a radius of 60 or 100 miles. A mine has just started operations there with 30 men in employment. Probably there will be 90 people there within the next month or two. With the prospect of great activity down there, we will be confronted with the necessity to do everything possible to provide a doctor and nurse for the fine little hospital established there. I may inform the member for North Perth (Mr. Abbott) that provision has been made in the first unit of the new Perth Hospital for 20 intermediate beds. As the hospital buildings are extended, the number of beds will be increased. I trust that in the future we shall be able to pull down the present administration and out-patient blocks in Murray-street. The intention at the moment is to construct an intermediate hospital on that site. I agree that in Australia there are two sections of people able to secure the very best medical and hospital services available. They are the very poor

and the very rich. The only means by which that difficulty can be overcome is by the provision of an intermediate hospital. We hope to deal with that phase in due course.

Mr. Fox: Can compensation claims go there too?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Yes. That is the great difference between the Perth Hospital and all other hospitals. Only those who are indigent and make a declaration to that effect, can receive attention at the Perth Hospital. I agree with the Leader of the Opposition, and have always been of the opinion, that the people of Perth should do more in support of their hospitals. At present they do little or nothing in that direction. In the country, the hospitals belong to the people and anyone can become a patient there, and his doctor can follow him in. On the other hand, a doctor cannot follow a patient into the Perth Hospital unless the doctor is a member of the honorary staff. I am glad that the member for Perth (Mr. Needham) mentioned the services of the honorary medical staff. I should have done so myself. We owe a deep debt of gratitude to the medical men of the metropolitan area. There are 63 of them who work in the Perth Hospital in an honorary capacity, and they do practically all the work. They carried out over 5,000 major operations last year. The doctors are doing a wonderful job.

Mr. Fox: The same applies at Fremantle.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: There is an intermediate ward at the Fremantle Hospital.

Mr. Fox: Yes.

Mr. Doney: Can you find no way of exercising compulsion on the people of the metropolitan area?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: For years, in season and out of season, while I was a member of the Perth Hospital Board of Management and since then, I have tried to find some such method, but I have not succeeded. If the hon. member can give me a lead, I shall be very pleased. As regards the comments of the member for Murehison (Mr. Marshall), I admit for a start that the question of the payment of 10s. 6d. a day for hospital service for patients under the Workers' Compensation Act is being looked into. If time had

been available, an attempt would have been made this session to pass legislation dealing with that phase. I am certainly not anxious to collect 10s. 6d. per day when the average cost of hospitals throughout the State is 13s. or 14s. a day. This matter has been discussed many times by the Minister for Labour and myself. It has been dealt with in Cabinet, and I trust that, in due course, a Bill will be introduced so that an attempt may be made to overcome the existing difficulty. The member for Murchison, in his usual style and in a loud voice, dealt with another matter. Ever since I have been in this House, the hon. member has taken the opportunity whenever possible to slang-wang one civil servant or another. Immediately the letter he referred to was sent out by Mr. Copping, I said to that officer, "You can make up your mind that when the Estimates come on for consideration, you will be on the mat." At the outset I want to inform the member for Murchison and any other member interested that they can take it from me that I accept the full responsibility for what the officers of my departments, be it the Mines Department or the Health Department, do in the course of their official duties. I am responsible for the policy of my departments, and the officers of the departments under my control, ever since I have been in charge, have carried on in accordance with a system I have established. When a question of policy is involved, we have a round-table conference and discuss the issue. Having decided that policy, surely I am not expected to supervise the writing of every letter sent out by the department. Hospital funds have not only just come into existence; I remember one being started on the Murchison in 1900; they have been established on our mines and timber mills ever since. One would think, to hear the member for Murchison, that the department or I had just started this scheme. What happened at Cue was this: The cost of maintenance of hospitals had increased throughout the State. There were only 50 residents at Cue, and Big Bell—18 miles away—was clamouring for a hospital. The members of the fund were informed that they could not expect to get that concession for 1s. 6d. per week, while contributors to other hospital funds in the State were paying 2s. and more per week.

It must be borne in mind that these people manage their own funds; they are not run by the department. Anyone listening to the member for Murchison would think that the department was running the fund.

During the last few months there has been in Kalgoorlie a reconstruction of all the hospital funds in that district. The mining companies have taken the matter in hand, and are deducting from the men's wages their contributions and are at the same time themselves contributing a like amount to the fund. Wiluna has its own system, its own hospital and national medical service. Two doctors are engaged there at a salary. The timber workers are also conducting a fund, which they manage themselves. It is not ours. Sometimes the department is requested to draw up an agreement between it and the members of some fund who want a concession and desire the terms to be reduced to writing. The department goes into the matter and decides whether the arrangement can be made for an individual contribution of 1s. 6d. or 2s. per week. What could be done for 1s. 6d. three or four years ago cannot be done now. The Arbitration Court has delivered an award for nurses which costs an additional £63,000 per annum. The department therefore said to these people that, in the circumstances, their contributions to the fund would have to be increased, or they would have to pay the ordinary hospital patients' rates. The department did not care which course was adopted. What happened? As I said, the people were clamouring for a hospital for Big Bell. Personally, I was struck with the necessity for a hospital at that place, because the Cue hospital was not large enough. Mr. Pitt, against whom I have nothing to say, good, bad or indifferent, came to my office. He was the manager of the Big Bell mine and was anxious to have a hospital erected at Big Bell. He said the doctor there was spending 75 per cent. of his time at Big Bell, although he lived in Cue. That was necessary as the men were, of course, working at the mine. Mr. Pitt pleaded for a hospital. He told me he could guarantee the mine would continue for another ten years. I asked him what he was prepared to do towards it. He replied, "I am prepared to build the hospital at cost and give you £2,000 towards it." That nearly took my breath away. Was I likely, Mr. Chairman,

to turn down that offer? So we had the plans prepared. The building of the hospital was started. Then a dispute occurred as to who should be the members of the committee when the hospital was completed. I said I was not interested in the personnel of the committee, and that that was a matter for the subscribers at Big Bell and Cue. Then Mr. Bowler came to Perth. I did not know him and had never met him. He visited the Health Department and discussed the matter with Mr. Wilson, who is the Assistant Under-Secretary. Mr. Wilson brought him to me, and Mr. Bowler said very definitely that until such time as he knew what the department was doing, what the plans were in regard to the hospital and who were going to be on the committee, he would not advocate that the Big Bell residents should increase their subscription. I asked him, "What do you want to know?" He replied, "I want to know all that you can tell me." I told him of everything that had occurred from the day Mr. Pitt came to my office. I informed him that he and his comrades working on the mine and the people in the town who were subscribing could elect the committee. After explaining everything to him, I asked, "Are you satisfied now?" He replied, "Yes, Mr. Panton, I am absolutely satisfied. Having heard all you have told me I shall return to Cue and advocate that the residents pay 2s. per week." He then left me and returned to Cue, where he and the member for Murchison, according to Press reports, advocated that the contribution should be reduced to 9d. Had that been done, there would have been no fund as far as I am concerned. The next thing that happened was that the secretary of the Cue Hospital wrote to the department. As I have already said, we had decided upon a policy. Mr. Copping, who was in charge at the time—the Under-Secretary was away—wrote the letter read by the member for Murchison. Mr. Copping did not write to the member for the district but to the secretary of the hospital. I have seen many letters from various people to the department that were exceedingly cheeky letters; and, were I a civil servant, I would reply in the same strain. Our civil servants are just as human as are secretaries of country hospitals. Why should they sit down and take all that is given to them? Who is the secretary of the Cue hospital? What

is the difference between him and the Under-Secretary for Health or any other person? What tommy-rot! Civil servants are citizens earning their living in the same way as the hon. member or the secretary of the Cue hospital does. Why did not the secretary of the Cue hospital write back to the department and say to Mr. Copping, "I do not think you should have written like that" or tell Mr. Copping what he thought of him? No. He runs to the member for the district, so that the member may raise the matter in this House and make a fuss. These two men were opposed to each other; why did they not settle the matter between them? Why should the secretary of the hospital run to the member for the district, like a child running to his school-master? I tell the member for Murchison that, as far as I am concerned. I will stick to my officers. I have never known one to let me down yet. As I say, we decide upon a particular policy and I expect the officers of the department to carry it out. Mr. Bowler can please himself what he does. The next thing that happened was this great meeting at which it was decided to reduce the contribution to 9d. I then said to Mr. Wilson, "You had better go to Cue." Mr. Wilson went to the Health Department from the Statistician's Department, and had not had long experience of this sort of work. However, he went to Cue, but not as a despot. He went to the employer and it was said the men were shivering, afraid. Well, I have worked with miners, and have yet to learn that a body of miners—particularly in these modern times—are going to shiver or be afraid about anything. What actually did happen? The Assistant Under-Secretary, Mr. Wilson, did the right thing. He wanted to get a lead and therefore went to the manager of the mine and told him he wanted a meeting. It was not the first time Mr. Pitt had stopped the mine for an hour or two so that the men might hold a meeting, and he did so on that day. I do not know whether Mr. Pitt was present or not, but I cannot imagine Mr. Wilson coercing anybody to do anything. He is a quiet, logical sort of chap and a logical speaker. He put up the case and the people decided to pay the 2s. Notwithstanding the oratory of the member for Murchison, notwithstanding his eloquence, I say definitely the men reversed their decision when they had a

sound logical argument put up to them. What is wrong with the hon. member is that he is sore. But he can go on attacking the officers of my department and I will go on defending them. If I have a job to do, I intend to do it as I think it should be done. There is nothing wrong with Big Bell or with the men there or with Cue itself. The hon. member's job is to help me and the department to build hospitals and keep the health of the people of this country in the best and most efficient state possible, and not to run around the country getting letters from secretaries of hospitals who have not the backbone to tell Mr. Copping what they think of him themselves. So far as the member's remarks about telling the Minister what he should do are concerned, my reply is that the Minister will do what he thinks is right, and so long as he does that he will be able to go home and say that at least one man is satisfied, and if he can do that for the rest of his life he will have done something worth while.

Vote put and passed.

*Vote—Public Health, £43,925.*

*Item, Salaries, £17,925.*

Mr. MARSHALL: I listened to the Minister's reply and I will always be prepared to admire him for justly defending his departmental officers. It is the Minister's job to defend departmental officers when they are unfairly attacked. But I have yet to know—and I will defy any Minister to tell me—when I criticised a departmental officer who did his job properly. It is because of the attitude just displayed by the Minister, because departmental officers can depend upon being defended whether they are right or wrong, that I have to rise to my feet to attack them. This sort of thing could not occur in private enterprise. If an officer did his job inefficiently, he would be dismissed immediately; but here a member can bring along as concrete a case as can possibly be obtained, proving conclusively that a job has been done inefficiently and expensively, and in spite of it the Minister will defend what has been done. That is not right. I think the Minister must agree with that. If we differ in regard to what is right or wrong, it is unfortunate that we should become heated over the matter.

The Minister for Health: I am not heated.

Mr. MARSHALL: I am holding to my opinion as to what is efficient and economical administration. I have brought cases here to the notice of a former Minister and I can prove that there has been inefficiency. I can prove it as these Estimates proceed. I was not going to speak about the matter, but I may do so now. The present Minister was not in office when the cases to which I refer were mentioned.

The Minister for Health: Then I accept no responsibility.

Mr. MARSHALL: But it was conclusively proved that there was inefficiency. In spite of that, nothing was done. The Minister said, "If there is one man in my department who deserves credit it is Mr. So-and-so." He never replied to the argument. I advanced; he never knew the facts and he did not wait to secure them. He rose to his feet to defend the man immediately. Is it any wonder that in such circumstances departmental officers are becoming autocratic? The first essential requirement from civil servants is civility.

The Minister for Health: There is no more civil crowd in the world.

Mr. MARSHALL: The letter that caused me to intervene in this matter was far from being civil. It was a threatening letter, written not to people whom the departmental officer pays but to people who pay the departmental officer to do his job. The Minister and I differ in regard to this matter. Whatever happened between Bowler and the Minister, I do not know, but I accept the Minister's statement. But when he says that Bowler and I advocated a reduction from 1s. 6d. to 9d.—

The Minister for Health: That was in the Press.

Mr. MARSHALL: I do not care what was in the Press.

The Minister for Health: When I mentioned the matter, I said "according to the Press."

Mr. MARSHALL: Oh!

The Minister for Health: If the hon. member had been listening he would have heard me.

Mr. MARSHALL: I am not denying it. What happened at the public meeting was this: I warned the people about agreeing to any form of increased taxation. I pointed out that if they wanted taxation they would get it within the next two years because of

the war; and they are getting it in no uncertain fashion. I said they must not agree to any increase, but I never argued in favour of a reduction. The gathering however, took control and said, "This is what we want." The motion was moved, it was in order, and had to be accepted. It was carried unanimously. I do not believe there was one dissentient voice. Bowler did not advocate a reduction; he explained fully the interview he had with the Minister. I did not advocate a reduction, either. My argument was, "Do not agree to an increase." They did not voluntarily agree; they were coerced. I know the people of the Murchison; I have lived nowhere else. And I know that when men are threatened with dismissal unless they take a certain course, that is coercion. Some of those men had had difficulty in securing employment and they were under no misapprehension as to what would happen if they did not agree to the proposal made. If that is not coercion, I do not know the meaning of the word.

The CHAIRMAN: I draw the attention of the hon. member to the fact that he is getting away from item No. 1.

Mr. MARSHALL: That is true. I have expressed my attitude towards departmental officers. I have eulogised one officer after another since I have been in this House and I will always give departmental officers credit for the work they do. I do not now say that on the whole they are inefficient. I have said that one is inefficient, and he is; he is costly to the department. Ministers are not justified in defending public servants who are not doing their job. I will give the Minister credit if he defends an officer who is unfairly attacked but I take strong exception to departmental officers getting on the high horse and dictating to others. Even when they are provoked they are expected to be tactful. The Minister referred to the secretary who had not the courage to tackle the job of criticising Mr. Copping direct. This man who is said not to have courage is a returned soldier and is now fighting abroad.

The Minister for Health: That does not make it any better.

Mr. MARSHALL: No, but he does not lack courage. Let me tell the Minister what happened. The departmental officer wrote this letter. I was passing through the district at the same time and was asked to

take the letter down and interview the department. I was to be furnished with further statistics. The letter was never given to me with the intention that I should adopt the attitude I did. The only grievance I have against the Minister is that when I asked him the questions, I did not get answers to those questions. The long epistle I received from the department did not answer the questions.

The Minister for Health interjected.

Mr. MARSHALL: The compilation I received, on the face of it, was framed by a departmental officer, because it was full of technical points about the administration of hospitals. I am sure the Minister did not go through the records and abstract that information for me. Only a little while ago the Minister said, "Surely I am not expected to write every letter on behalf of the department after a policy has been adopted."

The Minister for Health: You wrote direct to me.

Mr. MARSHALL: Yes.

The Minister for Health: I accept the responsibility for the answer.

Mr. MARSHALL: Then I will apologise. He is the first Minister I have known who had such an excellent grip of the detailed administration of every hospital in the country. Presumably he would write similarly to any other member. The fact remains that the letter did not answer my questions. If I am wrong I apologise, but it seemed to me as if the departmental officer wished to evade the questions.

The Minister for Health: I accept the responsibility for the letter.

Mr. MARSHALL: Then that ends it. But I will not allow departmental officers to write letters of that sort to electors of the Murchison, even if other members permit them to write in that strain to their constituents. I respect the confidence of departments and I have not attacked them in my "loud voice," but I will attack them when such action is justified. I know Mr. Copping, who is one of the finest men I have had the pleasure of meeting, civil, courteous, obliging. I do not hold him responsible for the letter that caused all the trouble. That is my attitude, and in adopting it I have only done my duty. If more members acted in the same way, we would

not often have to rise and resent letters of this sort written by departmental officers.

Item, Transport and maintenance of lepers, generally, etc., £4,800.

Mr. RODOREDA: I have a complaint to make, but it does not concern any departmental officer individually, so I may proceed without incurring the Minister's ire. I am concerned about the procedure regarding the rounding up and segregation of lepers in the North-West generally, but more particularly those discovered in the lower North-West. There was an instance in my district recently, the third of its kind in the last three or four years. Seemingly it arose from lack of co-operation between the Department of Public Health, which controls the health of the lepers, and the Department of Native Affairs, which controls the natives, particularly in respect to V.D. complaints. A leper was discovered in Roebourne and was taken by the doctor to the lock hospital at Port Hedland, about 130 miles distant. He was refused admittance and had to be transported back to Roebourne, where he was allowed to wander around the township without supervision until he could be taken to the leprosarium at Derby. I can imagine the uproar that would occur if such a thing were permitted in the metropolitan area. Surely when the Department of Native Affairs has a lock hospital at Hedland, arrangements could be made for a leper to be temporarily segregated there, and kept under some sort of supervision pending transfer to the leprosarium at Derby. The people naturally take exception to this sort of thing.

The Minister for Health: How long ago was that?

Mr. RODOREDA: Within the last five or six weeks; in fact, the native arrived at Derby within the last three or four days. This sort of thing is likely to recur. I believe that a strict investigation is being made and that all the natives are being examined periodically for leprosy, and this is causing the department a good deal of concern. Consequently an odd leper or two will be found in the lower North-West. No allowance is made for holding these lepers pending arrangements for their transport to the leprosarium. That is not fair. It has a psychological effect on the people when they

learn that a certified leper is allowed to wander around the district without supervision other than that which the local doctor might be able to exercise without having any direct control. I hope the Minister will endeavour to make temporary facilities available for holding lepers pending their transport to Derby.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I regret that this case occurred. I assure the hon. member that there is not likely to be any repetition. Only to-day a conference was held in the office of the Minister for the North-West, attended by Dr. Atkinson, Dr. Davies, who is rounding up the lepers, and the chief officer of the Department of Native Affairs. Various questions were considered and we hope to avoid anything of the sort in future.

Vote put and passed.

*Vote—Mental Hospitals and Inebriates, £127,930—agreed to.*

*Vote—Chief Secretary, £20,626:*

**THE MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST** (Hon. A. A. M. Coverley—Kimberley) [10.49]: The Department of the Chief Secretary covers a large number of activities including registry and friendly societies, prisons and observatory, as well as various small departments, and also the correspondence despatch office. This office was established approximately 26 years ago, the main object being to facilitate the transmission of correspondence, particularly inter-departmental correspondence, and incidentally, to reduce the general expense. It acts as a central depot for the exchange of departmental correspondence, conducts Government mail services to fifty country districts, and has a messenger delivery service to all firms and private residences within a certain radius of Perth, Fremantle, Kalgoorlie, Boulder and Bunbury. During 1939-40, four more country despatch offices were opened, namely, at Dowerin, Goomalling, Wyalkatchem and Kirup. The opening of further centres at Gwalia and Wooroloo is now under consideration. The officer in charge of the correspondence despatch office is also responsible for the bulk of the cleaning arrangements of the various departments, and this co-operation of the cleaning services has reduced the cost to the Government and increased the efficiency of the work. The most recent extension of

this cleaning service is in connection with the Taxation Department's new offices in Barrack-street.

The activities of the Registrar General's Department cover the registration of births, deaths and marriages, the celebration of marriages, and the issue of certified copies and extracts from entries. The statistical branch is also controlled by the Chief Secretary. That section deals with the collection and tabulation of data covering most of the activities of the State. Statistics are compiled and published relative to the following:—Agriculture and pastoral, vital, industrial, local government, overseas and interstate trade, employment and other activities. Information is also collected relative to retail prices and house rents, from which index numbers are computed and used extensively by the Arbitration Court and other bodies. The section dealing with friendly societies and the Government Actuary covers the registration of friendly societies, co-operative societies and building societies, from which returns are received and examined, and upon which a report is made annually to Parliament. Actuarial valuations of the friendly societies registered are undertaken, and various actuarial calculations are made for Government departments. The estimated revenue of the Registrar General's Department for 1940-41 shows a decrease over that of the previous year. The explanation of that is that during the last financial year the revenue was made buoyant by the demand for documents consequent upon the introduction of superannuation in the Government service. Many soldiers also desired to produce certificates to the military authorities. All that work led to an increase in revenue, but it is not expected that it will be continued throughout the current financial year.

The Prisons Department comes under the Chief Secretary. The daily average number of prisoners at Fremantle for the year was 205.9, and at the Pardelup Prison Farm it was 51.9. The system of classifying criminals is being maintained, and every care is taken to safeguard the youthful and first offenders from the criminal class. The efforts to reclaim prisoners are not confined to first offenders, but in every case, where any desire is shown by a prisoner to improve himself, encouragement is given to him. When prisoners are released, assistance is

afforded to enable them to rehabilitate themselves. The increased scale of gratuities continues, and the prisoners take more interest in their tasks and avail themselves of opportunities to become efficient in tailoring, carpentry, bootmaking and printing.

Mr. Sampson: Is there plenty of work for them?

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: They are kept well employed. At the Pardelup Prison Farm, there are about 50 prisoners under the supervision of four officers, including the officer in charge. The farm continues to make progress and to encourage first offender prisoners to rehabilitate themselves. They are engaged in afforestation work, clearing for agricultural purposes, apple-growing, sheep-breeding and dairying. Developmental work is being steadily carried on and land is being cleared for further pastures. The drainage of the Pardelup Swamp has been completed by prison labour, and cultivation will be commenced this year. The wool produced is considered to be of high standard and satisfactory returns are expected.

The Observatory also comes under the Chief Secretary. The operations of that institution, which has had special value, are numerous. The State time service is maintained efficiently as in previous years. The hourly signal from the mean time clock is transmitted to the railways, postal authorities, Fremantle Harbour Trust, broadcasting stations and the Weather Bureau. The Whitford Broadcasting network was connected during June, and, as a result, ten of the 13 broadcasting stations in this State now send out the time signals that are received directly from the Observatory mean time clock. The second beat by telephone is transmitted several times each day to the power house, watchmakers, etc., for the correct regulation of electric clocks, watches, etc. Daily at 9 a.m. and 9 p.m. the special "Onogo" signal for shipping, lighthouses, etc., is sent out by Applecross. At 1 p.m. the gun signal is given for the general public and a special signal is sent to the Post Office. During the year copies of preliminary information of earth movements were distributed to 30 co-operating centres throughout the world, and 173 earth movements were recorded. Tide tables for Port Hedland have been compiled and printed for 1941. These are of major importance to shipping.

As the tide lag and difference of height for other ports along the North-West coast have now been determined from the Port Hedland figures, the value of these tables has considerably increased. Port Hedland is the principal station for the collection of all the data for whatever scientific research is done in connection with the working out of tide tables. This information is printed in the Harbour and Lights Gazette and is available for navigation in any part of the world. It is an important part of the Observatory work.

Many visitors and societies have shown a keen interest in the Observatory, which has been the means of rendering a highly valuable educational service. The general information supplied consists of tables of sunrise and sunset, the moon's phases, moonrise and moonset, etc. There have been some changes in the management of the Observatory during the last 12 months. The Government has appointed an astronomical advisory committee, consisting of the Under-Secretary of the Chief Secretary's Department, the Surveyor-General, a representative of the University and the Government Astronomer, to advise on the general working of the institution. The appointment of this committee should benefit the Observatory and the Government by the resultant co-operation and advice of bodies closely connected with astronomical work.

Vote put and passed.

*Vote—Registry and Friendly Societies, £13,568—agreed to.*

*Vote—Prisons, £31,625:*

Mr. SAMPSON: From what I can gather, the work in connection with both the Pardelup Farm and prisons generally is being carried on very well indeed. I am glad that the prison newspaper is being maintained, thereby giving good conduct prisoners an opportunity to keep in touch with world matters. What has been done and is being done at Pardelup is greatly to the advantage of the State. Men held as prisoners there are being taught various phases of farm work, afforestation and so on, with the result that the prison has an excellent reputation. Western Australia has much to be thankful for, and much to be commended for, in regard to this work.

Vote put and passed.

*Vote—Observatory, £1,720—agreed to.*

*Vote—Education, £783,250:*

**THE MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST** (Hon. A. A. M. Coverley—Kimberley) [11.4]: This vote is somewhat similar to that which was placed before Parliament in 1939-40; and of course there is no need to make a lengthy explanation to the Committee as to why the amount of money is not much greater than it was last year. We all realise that there is a war on; and the Education Department, like every other department, has to cut its cloth according to its measure. There is a slight increase in the amount, not as much as the Minister for Education and other Ministers would like. Education is a phase of our work which we would gladly extend as far as possible; but the shortage of finance prevents us from doing so.

Mr. Doney: You are not very liberal in regard to school buildings.

**THE MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST:** Those come under the Vote for Public Buildings. The departmental estimate of its expenditure for the year 1940-41 is £783,250. Of this sum, £717,900 represents salary payments, being an increase of £11,574 over last year's expenditure under this heading. The amount allocated for school furnishings, equipment and incidental expenditure is £65,350, or £980 less than the department's actual expenditure in 1939-40. It is regretted that the position of State finance has rendered it necessary to reduce this incidental vote and thus curtail departmental expansion. Further development activities in respect of schools consolidation, manual training, household management and technical education appear to be extremely difficult. The increase of £11,574 in salary expenditure is attributable mainly to payment for higher classifications awarded to teachers and for long-service leaves granted to members of the teaching staff who enlist for active service.

The total number of schools now open is 834, of which 43 are assisted schools providing facilities for children at schools with an attendance as low as five. Of course it is not the policy or the wish of the department to establish schools where the attendance is so low. It had been hoped to in-

crease still further the number and scope of classes already being conducted at technical schools throughout the State, and to establish such classes at new centres where the demand warranted such provision. In so far as the Vote will allow, this policy will be pursued.

At present 150 student teachers are being trained at the Teachers' College, Claremont, and they will be ready for appointment as teachers when the schools re-open in February next. The correspondence classes continue to do commendable work, especially with post-primary pupils in country schools. A valuable contribution to social service is now being carried on by these classes, two members of the staff visiting and instructing crippled children in the metropolitan area who otherwise would be denied educational opportunity because of their physical infirmity.

There is not much I have to add except that I as well as the other members of the Cabinet regret that we have not more money to expend on educational facilities for the children of Western Australia. Like every other section of the community, the children have to make some sacrifices, especially while the war continues.

Progress reported.

*House adjourned at 11.9 p.m.*

## Legislative Council,

*Thursday, 28th November, 1940.*

	PAGE
Motion: Standing Orders suspension .....	2310
Bills: Margarine, report, etc. ....	2310
Builders' Registration Act Amendment, report, etc. ....	2319
Native Administration Act Amendment, reports, etc. ....	2310
Municipal Corporations Act Amendment, Com., report .....	2321
Employment Brokers Act Amendment, 2r. ....	2323
Farmers' Debts Adjustment Act Continuance, 2a., etc. ....	2320
Street Collections (Regulation), 2r. ....	2320
Protefearing Prevention Act Amendment (No. 2), 2r. ....	2331
Resolution: State Forests, to revoke dedication ...	2320

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

### MOTION—STANDING ORDERS SUSPENSION.

On motion by the Chief Secretary, resolved—

That during the remainder of the session so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as is necessary to enable Bills to be passed through all stages in one sitting, and all Messages from the Legislative Assembly to be taken into consideration forthwith and that Standing Order No. 62 (limit of time for commencing new business) be suspended during the same period.

### BILL—MARGARINE.

*Report, etc.*

Reports of Committee adopted.

Bill read a third time and returned to the Assembly with amendments.

### BILL—BUILDERS REGISTRATION ACT AMENDMENT.

*Report, etc.*

Report of Committee adopted.

Bill read a third time and returned to the Assembly with amendments.

### BILL—NATIVE ADMINISTRATION ACT AMENDMENT.

*Report, etc.*

Report of Committee adopted.

Bill read a third time and returned to the Assembly with an amendment.