

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I move an amendment—

That in paragraph (a) all the words after "within" in line 2 be struck out, and the following be inserted in lieu: "elsewhere than within an area bounded by a circle having a radius of 20 miles from the Town Hall in Perth."

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. A. J. H. SAW: I move an amendment—

That in line 3 of paragraph (b) "ten" be struck out and "fifty" inserted in lieu. As the clause now stands it will be possible to get a drink in the metropolitan area within a radius of 20 miles. The clause provides that any person can travel 10 miles from, say, Bunbury, or any other provincial town, and be entitled to obtain refreshments. The amendment will help to make the *bona fide* traveller the genuine article.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	..	6
Noes	..	..	..	..	13
					—
Majority against ..					7
					—

#### AYES.

Hon. A. Burvill	Hon. H. Seddon
Hon. J. A. Greig	Hon. H. Stewart
Hon. J. W. Hickey	Hon. A. J. H. Saw (Teller.)

#### NOES.

Hon. F. A. Baglin	Hon. J. M. Macfarlane
Hon. H. P. Colebatch	Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. J. Cornell	Hon. J. Mills
Hon. J. Duffell	Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. F. E. S. Willmott
Hon. E. H. Harris	Hon. E. Rose
Hon. A. Lovekin	(Teller.)

Amendment thus negatived.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I move an amendment—

That the proviso be struck out.

The proviso has now no meaning and must therefore be deleted.

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

Clause 76—Amendment of Section 101:

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: This clause is no longer necessary.

Clause put and negatived.

Progress reported.

*House adjourned at 10.56 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 21st November, 1922.

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

#### SWEARING-IN OF NEW MEMBER.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have received the return of the writ for the East Perth by-election. It appears from the endorsement thereon that Mr. Thomas John Hughes has been duly elected. I am prepared to swear in the hon. member.

The member for East Perth (Mr. Hughes) accordingly took and subscribed the oath, and signed the roll.

#### QUESTION—GERALDTON HARBOUR WORKS.

Mr. WILLCOCK asked the Minister for Works: In view of the fact that the investigation of the plans of the proposed harbour works at Geraldton has been completed for four or five months, when does he expect a decision to be arrived at in connection with the commencement of the work?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: The matter is under consideration.

#### QUESTION—BRUCE ROCK WATER SUPPLY.

Mr. LATHAM asked the Minister for Railways: In view of the extreme shortage of water for the townsite of Bruce Rock, will the Railway Department truck water from Merredin for railway purposes so as to make available the small supply for the residents?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: In view of the additional cost which would be incurred, it would be opposed to economical working to haul water for railway purposes whilst water is available in the dam.

#### QUESTION—IMMIGRATION RETURN.

Mr. McCALLUM (without notice) asked the Premier: When will the return, for which

I moved on the 17th October, relating to the number of immigrants whose passages back to England had been paid by the State, be presented?

The PREMIER replied: I will ask for the return to be supplied at once.

#### QUESTION—AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT.

Hon. P. COLLIER (without notice) asked the Premier: When will the report of the Auditor General be presented to Parliament?

The PREMIER replied: When the hon. member mentioned it a fortnight ago, I spoke to the Auditor General, and asked him when the report would be ready. He said he would have it ready for Parliament shortly.

Hon. P. Collier: It will be of no use to us unless we get it soon.

The PREMIER: The Auditor General has assured me it will be ready for the House soon.

#### MOTION—GOVERNMENT BUSINESS. PRECEDENCE.

The PREMIER (Hon. Sir James Mitchell—Northam) [4.40]: I move—

That for the remainder of the session, Government business shall take precedence of all motions and Orders of the Day, on all sitting days.

The motion means that for the future private members' day will be cut out altogether.

Hon. T. Walker: What about private Bills?

The PREMIER: The Bill to which the hon. member refers is now an Order of the Day. The member for Kanowna (Hon. T. Walker) has already paid something to the Treasury for the privilege of introducing that Bill, and he will pay something more before the Bill is finally dealt with.

Mr. O'Loghlen: Will he get a refund in the event of the Bill being defeated?

The PREMIER: No. There are very few motions by private members on the Notice Paper, and an opportunity will be given to deal with the business. As is usual, I will give the House an opportunity to deal with those motions which are now before it.

Mr. CORBOY (Yilgarn) [4.41]: I have a notice of motion dealing with the appeal to the Privy Council in the case of McNeil and de Bernales *versus* the Crown. I have adjourned the motion from week to week at the request of the Minister for Mines. I hope the session will not conclude without effect being given to the assurances afforded me at different times that an opportunity will be available to discuss the matter, in the event of other action not being taken.

The Premier: That motion is now an Order of the Day, and an opportunity will be given to discuss it.

Mr. A. THOMSON (Katanning) [4.42]: I would like an assurance from the Premier that item No. 24 will be discussed.

Mr. O'Loghlen: Why not sit on until March, and discuss the lot?

The Premier: I have already said that an opportunity will be given to discuss these motions.

Mr. Munsie: The member for Katanning need not worry about that item. It relates to the State Trading Concerns Act Amendment Bill.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I want the opportunity.

Mr. McCallum: You will get all the discussion on that Bill that you want. You have given no reason for passing it.

Mr. A. THOMSON: At any rate, I accept the Premier's assurance that that opportunity will be available.

Question put and passed.

#### BILL—ELECTORAL DISTRICTS.

Introduced by the Premier and read a first time.

#### BILL—PUBLIC EDUCATION ACTS AMENDMENT.

Report of Committee adopted.

#### BILL—HOSPITALS.

Second reading.

Debate resumed from the 16th November.

Hon. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [4.44]: In view of the two speeches delivered on the Bill, I expected that some of the members—if there be any member in the Chamber who supports the Bill—would rise to offer support at this juncture.

Mr. Underwood: You cannot have three speeches in succession on one side.

Hon. P. COLLIER: There are many features in the Bill of comparatively minor importance to which I am opposed, but regarding which I will not have anything to say at the present time. The Bill, in my judgment, is bad from first to last. It is a Bill which I cannot support, from Title to schedule. When the Bill of last year was introduced, it was decided after discussion in this Chamber, to remit it for the consideration of a select committee, which afterwards was created a Royal Commission, and members generally expected that something in the nature of a presentable measure would be brought down this session. But if the Bill of last year was objectionable to members of the House, taking the whole of its provisions into consideration, it was a model of perfection compared with the present Bill. It is proposed to centralise the whole of the control of our hospitals in a trust which will have its headquarters in the city of Perth. Not only will the management be centralised, but the funds available for hos-

pital purposes throughout the State will also be managed and controlled by this trust with its headquarters in the city. That policy is cumbersome in the extreme. Not only that, but it will be very costly. In addition to the staff of the Medical Department, which administers our hospitals at the present time, we shall set up another body—a trust—which will have its permanent secretary, its inspector or inspectors whose duty it will be to travel throughout the State and inspect the various hospitals which come under the purview of the trust; and so generally it must inevitably lead to the establishment of a department, the cost of which will be additional to the cost of administering the department at the present time. There is no escape from that aspect of the question. No matter how it might work out, apart from the fees payable to the members of the trust, additional expenditure will be involved. Having regard to the board as it is likely to be composed under the Bill, and also to the fact that the control and management will be centralised in Perth, I do not believe we shall secure any greater degree of efficiency than exists at present.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Less.

Hon. P. COLLIER: My belief is it will be much less. It will be more costly and less efficient. A perusal of the Bill leaves one no escape from that opinion. Take the trust: It would appear that those responsible for drafting the Bill puzzled their brains in order to discover the most unworkable and impracticable method possible for the establishment of the trust. First of all, there are to be three members elected by the local governing bodies, one by the municipalities and road boards within 50 miles of the city of Perth. The Bill itself does not inform us as to the method to be employed in the nomination or election of that representative. Is it to be that a conference will be called of all the representatives of the local authorities within an area of 50 miles of Perth for the purpose of nominating their representative on the trust? If that should be the method, how is the voting to be arranged? Will it be that each local authority will have one vote, or that each member of every one of the local authorities interested shall have an individual vote? No doubt the method of election or nomination will be prescribed by regulation. The Bill does not give any indication whatever as to the method. It seems to be an almost hopeless proposition to expect a satisfactory election by these methods. But if this is so with regard to the local authorities within an area of 50 miles of Perth, what difficulties may we expect the local bodies throughout the mining areas of this State to encounter in their endeavour to elect a representative on the trust, a representative who will be in touch with their wants and requirements and who will be satisfactory to all of them. The mining areas of the State extend from portions of the North-West right through the Murchison and Eastern Goldfields down to Ravensthorpe in the South-West, and yet it is expected that the local authorities

throughout that vast area will be able to come to a satisfactory agreement as to who shall represent them on the trust. The same thing applies to the representative of the agricultural and pastoral areas. The road boards away in the far North-West will be supposed to collaborate or confer with the road boards throughout the agricultural areas beyond the area of 50 miles from Perth with a view to electing a representative. It is a hopelessly impracticable proposition. It would have been much better and much easier to have a trust appointed by the Government straight out without reference to the local governing bodies. No matter who might be nominated or how many might be nominated, it is impossible that the person to be elected can be known to all the local governing authorities in the remote portions of the State. His fitness, merits or qualifications could not possibly be known to the major portion of those called upon to nominate him, and so it seems that nothing more cumbersome or impracticable could have been devised for the appointment of the trust. It appears that at least three of the seven members of the trust will be doctors. As was pointed out by the member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin) last week, a fact which will be known to all members who have had experience of the control of hospitals, it is not desirable that the medical profession should exercise a preponderating influence in the management and control of our hospitals. But it seems that at least three if not four of the seven members of the trust will be doctors.

Hon. T. Walker: Is there anything to prevent the whole lot being doctors?

Hon. P. COLLIER: No, except the unlikelihood of the local governing bodies, who have the right to nominate three members of the trust, selecting doctors as their representatives, unless they select doctors located in the metropolitan area. That, however, is unlikely. The trust, too, are to be given enormous powers. Although they will have the power to delegate the control to local boards in the various districts, nevertheless the absolute and final management and control and say will rest with the trust, who will be centralised and situated in Perth. Although the power to manage hospitals may be granted to local boards, these boards may not do anything except with the concurrence and approval of the central trust. The boards will be merely fetch-and-carry bodies. They will have to fetch and carry as instructed by the trust. They will have to do or not do those things directed by the trust if the trust desire to exercise their powers. To establish control of this kind is a poor substitute for the comparatively democratic control and management we have had in the past. Some members of the local boards will be elected, not by the taxpayers, not by those who will contribute to the funds for the maintenance of the hospitals, but by subscribers in the various districts. There is an anomaly here.

A subscriber who donates to the funds of a hospital an amount exceeding £1—say an amount of one guinea—will be entitled to vote for the election of members of the board but the person in the district who may pay the tax under the Bill, £5, £10, or £20 a year, will have no voice or vote whatever in the appointment of the board.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: And the person who pays £1 can get it remitted from the amount of his tax.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Assume that a person receives £240 a year, on that he would pay £1 by way of tax. He may contribute 21s. as a subscription to the local hospital, and when his tax becomes due he can get a refund of the £1 paid.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: And get a vote.

Hon. P. COLLIER: So that the total amount he would pay for the year would be only £1. By virtue of the payment of £1, he would be entitled to vote for the members of the local board.

Mr. Davies: Was that suggested by the Royal Commission?

Hon. P. COLLIER: I do not think any Royal Commission would make such a proposition.

Mr. Davies: The Bill is said to have been framed largely on the recommendations of the Royal Commission.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That is what has been said, but the Bill diverges very widely from the recommendations of the Royal Commission. I hope the hon. member will not be misled by statements of that kind. When a Minister desires to create a favourable impression for his Bill, he begins by saying, "This Bill is modelled largely on the recommendations of the Royal Commission. Of course there are one or two points which we were unable to adopt, but it is framed largely on the recommendations of the Royal Commission." That is what a Minister says in order to gain for his Bill a kindly welcome. This Bill has not been framed on the recommendations of the Royal Commission, more particularly in its vital parts. A person who is in a position to make a subscription of one guinea direct to the funds of a hospital will be entitled to a vote for the election of members of the board, who will control the hospital. But the person who pays the tax may pay any amount at all in the form of deductions weekly from his wages or salary to the extent of £5, £10 or £20 a year and will have no vote whatever.

Mr. Underwood: One of the alleged advantages of the Bill is that it will do away with the beggins.

Hon. P. COLLIER: We shall not get away from the begging, although it is stated in the Press this morning that the Bill will be likely to obviate the undesirable practice of cadging from that section of the community who are inclined to respond to such appeals.

Mr. Underwood: I said "beggins." I do not like the word cadging.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The word cadging would not appeal to the hon. member's classi-

cal mind, although the word is used by the leader writer in this morning's paper. This Bill actually creates and gives statutory recognition of the policy of cadging. It provides for the appointment of a visiting advisory committee. It goes on to say what may be done to raise funds towards the maintenance of hospitals. It actually uses the word solicit. The advisory board may solicit funds, donations or subscriptions in any manner they desire. The Bill gives official recognition to the policy of cadging. The soliciting of funds for hospitals has been carried on to an undesirable extent in the past, but under this Bill not only will all of the undesirable features of the past be continued, but we shall have, in addition to the organisations which have taken up the work in the past, a visiting committee that will have official recognition. The taxpayers have no rights whatever. The additional money that is to be levied does not entitle those who will find it to any rights whatever that they do not possess at present. This seems to me very unfair. The point raised by the member for Beverley (Mr. Broun) will appeal to every member. We know that no matter how charitably disposed persons may be, when Parliament imposes a tax which is in the form of a charity tax, or money is raised by compulsory taxation for the purpose of maintaining hospitals, those who have voluntarily contributed in the past will cease to do so in future. There can be no doubt about that. People will not, if forced to pay a tax, at the same time pay out voluntarily as they have done in the past. The effect of the Bill will be that we shall lose the equivalent of the sums which have hitherto been donated under this heading. Coming to the matter of taxation, it is here that it is borne in upon us that the title of the Bill is incorrect. Instead of its being described as a Hospitals Bill it should be described as a Bill for the raising of £100,000 additional revenue. The Bill was not introduced for the purpose of securing more effective control or the better maintenance of hospitals, but for the sole purpose of raising this sum. The question of the present machinery for managing and controlling hospitals being satisfactory or otherwise is not taken into account. It was not the object of the Bill to deal with this question. All that was required was to raise an additional £100,000 towards the Consolidated Revenue of the State. Why should there be a special Act and a special tax for the purpose of raising money to carry on our hospitals? Is there any more need for taxation for this purpose than there is for taxation in connection with other functions of State? Why should there be a departure from the practice of the past in this respect?

Mr. Mann: Was not the idea to do away with the collection of subscriptions?

Hon. P. COLLIER: The Bill does not do away with it. There will be less money available under the Bill for hospitals than there was last year. If it was necessary to raise subscriptions all over the State under the

policy that obtained in the past, will it not also be necessary to do so in the future? The cost of such functions of State as charities, education, police and so on is borne by the Consolidated Revenue. An amount is raised each year by direct taxation through the land and income tax, through dividend duties, the totalisator tax, stamp duties, and in other ways, for the upkeep of these departments. It is the function of Government to raise by taxation a sum sufficient to enable them to carry on the departments of State. If the Government find that the money at their disposal, that is the total sum raised by means of taxation, is not sufficient to enable them properly to carry out their functions, the logical and reasonable course to pursue is to bring down a Bill for the imposition of additional taxation.

Hon. T. Walker: They do so now under this disguise.

Hon. P. COLLIER: If that policy were pursued, the matter could be dealt with solely as a taxation question.

Mr. Underwood: Or we could cut out something.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes. If it is desired to raise an additional sum of £100,000 the duty of the Government is to adopt the ordinary methods for doing so, as I have indicated. What is there special about hospitals that a Bill of this sort need be introduced for the raising of money? If we are going to adopt this new principle, why not extend it to other departments? Why not say we want a special tax to raise money to cover the cost of education? Does not education affect everyone in the State? If this form of taxation can be logically defended, it can equally well be defended in the case of education. The same argument would apply to police. That is a non-revenue producing department, but is just as essential to the State as the carrying on of our hospitals. Why not bring down a special Bill to raise money to cover the cost of our police force? The same thing may be said in the case of our charities. Last week on the Estimates we discussed outdoor relief to women with dependants, covering a sum of about £90,000, which is approximately the amount required for the maintenance of our hospitals. If we are justified in bringing down a special Bill to raise money for hospitals, why not do so for the purpose of raising money for our charities, our State children, and our Lunacy Department, and for every other non-revenue producing department of State? The principle is bad. We should not single out one particular department in a manner like this by imposing a special tax, to be devoted to it. If additional revenue is necessary it should be raised upon more equitable lines. This Bill provides for a flat rate of taxation. That is to say, a person who is in receipt of only £1 a week would pay the equivalent to that which is paid by the man who is in receipt of £1,000 or £10,000 a year. That principle of a flat rate has never been recognised in

connection with taxation of this kind in Western Australia or any other State. The principle of taxation has always followed the lines of a levy upon those who will have to pay, in proportion to their ability to pay. That is the principle we adopt in connection with our income tax. Whilst we start at 2d. or 3d. in the pound, we increase the amount to 2s. 6d. in the pound in the case of a man in receipt of a large income. We recognise the principle that the tax should be imposed in accordance with the power and the capacity of a person to pay. This Bill reverses the principle that has always been recognised. It says that an apprentice, or a boy or girl who is only earning 10s. a week, will pay proportionately the same amount of tax as the man in receipt of a large income. That form of taxation is iniquitous, and represents a departure from the well-established principle of raising funds for carrying on the functions of State. There is no justification for this, because the question of hospitals is no more important than that of most other departments of State. Instead of adopting the principle contained in the Bill of raising money for hospitals, why not adopt the logical course of saying that the million pounds, or so, that is ordinarily required by way of taxation for carrying on the functions of State is insufficient? Let the Government then bring down a special Bill and ask for the endorsement of Parliament to enable them to raise an extra sum of money by way of taxation to cover this extra expenditure. That is the only logical and consistent attitude to adopt. The Bill under review would never have been introduced except that it is desired to raise this money. We should never have seen it so far as hospitals are concerned but for that fact. If we want the money, let us raise it as we have raised other money, by means of taxation. There is no reason for a departure in this case. I should like to know on what ground the maintenance of hospitals has been singled out in this way, when education, charities, and other departments have been put on one side. There is no reason for this special attention to hospitals. If we are justified in imposing taxation for the one, we are justified in doing so for the other departments. If that is so, we should repeal all our forms of taxation and bring in a special tax for education, for hospitals, for police, for charities, for lunacy, and so on, so that we may have a separate tax to cover each of the different services. Let us see how this works out. Last year there were 38,000 persons in the State who paid income tax. Under this Bill it is estimated there will be 140,000 persons paying tax. That is to say, the Bill will levy upon 100,000 persons in the State who to-day are exempt from taxation under our Income Tax Act. Now, why are those 100,000 persons whom this Bill will rope in exempt at the present time? It will be admitted that the exemption under the Income Tax Act is very low; £156 in the case of a married person or one with dependants,

and £100 for a single person without dependants. It is generally conceded that the Income Tax Act calls for payment upon every person in the State who is in a position to pay taxation.

The Premier: There are 100,000 able-bodied men.

Hon. P. COLLIER: If those 100,000 able-bodied men were receiving sufficient salary or wage to enable them to pay any taxation, they would be paying under the Income Tax Act. The very fact that they are not paying under that Act is proof that they are receiving an income which does not permit of their paying taxation, which does not, in the judgment of Parliament, justify the levying of any taxation upon them. Our Income Tax Act says that every person in a position to pay shall pay.

Mr. Underwood: If it does not say that, let us alter it so as to make it provide for that.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes. Nobody will argue that we are not taxing right down to the bread line, and in fact below the bread line when we tax a married man with £156 a year, or a single person in receipt of £2 a week. If we are now going to obtain payment of a hospital tax from 100,000 persons who to-day are exempt under the Income Tax Act, it is conclusive proof that we are proposing to tax people who cannot afford to pay taxation. There can be no getting away from that argument. The proper and logical method would be to amend our Income Tax Act if the present taxation is not sufficient. Lower the exemption or increase the rate of taxation, if necessary; but raise something additional under the Income Tax Act in accordance with the principle laid down by that measure, namely a progressive rate of tax according to the capacity of the person concerned to pay. On reference to last year's report of the Commissioner of Taxation, I find that the total amount of income assessed for taxation in that year was £7,796,000. Calculating that at a penny in the pound, it means that we would get under this Bill £32,487. That is to say, from the total amount upon which income tax was paid last year, this penny in the pound would produce £32,000 odd. It also means that levying on the same basis we must levy upon 16½ millions of income which was exempt from payment of income tax last year, and exempt only by reason of the fact that those earning the 16½ million were in receipt of incomes below the exemption limit.

The Minister for Mines: No. That amount has already been exempted. Part of that would have been earned by those paying now, because it would have been already exempted.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I do not follow the Minister.

The Minister for Mines: Of those who earned the 7¼ millions a portion have already been exempted under the Income Tax Act.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Last year's taxable amount was 7¼ millions, after deduction of all exemptions.

The Minister for Mines: The best figure to take is the full amount of income of those who paid tax last year.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Without allowing for deductions, that amount last year, according to the report, was 10 millions. It requires 24 millions to give us £100,000 at a penny in the pound. If the total amount of income, as per the return, was ten millions last year, it means that the amount upon which this penny in the pound will have to be levied in order to produce £100,000, is 14 millions—14 millions which to-day is exempt from income tax. Surely that is a clear indication that the Bill proposes to encroach upon the earnings of people who cannot afford to pay any tax whatever. That is proved because, if they could afford to pay, they would already be paying income tax.

Mr. Teesdale: That was a unanimous recommendation by the whole of the Commission.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I do not care what it was, but I believe the Commission were under the impression that this money to be raised under the Bill would be an annual amount in addition to that set aside by the Government for maintenance of hospitals. Therefore the Commission recommended this penny in the pound. But, instead of that, the Government step in and substitute the tax under this Bill for the expenditure of the department as it has been from year to year.

The Premier: That was intended.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I do not know what was intended. The members of the Commission say this was not intended. I cannot vouch for what was intended. However, the members of the Commission declare that when they recommended the penny in the pound tax, their intention was that the Government should make provision for hospitals in the future as they had done in the past, and that the additional money to be raised under this Bill would be the extra amount required for the maintenance of our hospitals, the amount that now has to be begged and raised in other ways. The House might be disposed to listen to the raising of a hospital tax if that were the policy proposed to be adopted, although I, for my part, should not endorse such a method in any circumstances. I would not endorse the imposition of a penny in the pound on boys and girls earning 10s. or 15s. a week, and on shop assistants earning, say, £1 per week—workers not receiving sufficient to pay for boots to take them to their work.

Mr. Lambert: The proposal of the Bill is a subterfuge.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes, a subterfuge to increase taxation. Take the ordinary working man in receipt of £4 or £4 10s. per week. He contributes to hospital funds and medical funds an average of between £4 and £5 per year, irrespective of funds to which a married man must belong if he is going to take ordinary precautions against sickness or other

difficulties coming upon himself or his family. On top of that £4 or £5 per year, this man on £4 10s. per week is to be called upon to pay another £1 per annum.

Mr. Harrison: The payments he now makes are chiefly medical?

Hon. P. COLLIER: Chiefly medical; lodges and medical. I say the House would not be justified in doing what is proposed, and I hope the Bill will be rejected on the second reading. If it were possible to amend the measure in a manner that would make it satisfactory, perhaps we would be justified in passing the second reading with a view to amendment in Committee. But I am convinced that so many amendments would be required, that every clause from the first to the last would have to be drastically altered. It is not possible for private members to draft amendments which would make the Bill satisfactory. If on the main principle of the Bill the House were agreed, we might satisfactorily amend the details in Committee. But the Bill has been drafted on wrong lines. The principle of it is wrong from beginning to end. That being so, it does not seem possible at this late stage of the session, when we are within three or four weeks of closing down, when we have on the Notice Paper a large volume of work awaiting consideration, for the House to make this a satisfactory measure. There is no urgent call for the Bill so far as the management of our hospitals is concerned. In introducing the Bill the Colonial Secretary declared that the measure would not have been brought down but for the fact that the Government wanted the additional money.

The Colonial Secretary: One reason was the need for more uniform legislation for the control of hospitals.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The Colonial Secretary did not speak about uniform control, or about correcting anomalies in the management of hospitals. He did say that the Bill would not have been brought down but for the fact that the Government desired to raise more money. If the Minister will look up his speech in "Hansard," he will find that those are the words he used.

Mr. Underwood: But he did not mean to say that.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The Minister said that if it were possible to provide funds from Consolidated Revenue, this Bill would not have been brought down.

Mr. Willcock: He let the cat out of the bag.

Hon. P. COLLIER: There is no urgency for the Bill therefore, from the aspect of management or control of hospitals. The only purpose of the Bill is to raise more money.

The Colonial Secretary: That is one of its purposes.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Its only purpose. It would not have been brought down, the Colonial Secretary said, but for that. Nothing with regard to the management and control of our hospitals was of sufficient importance to justify the bringing down of a Bill. Only

the desire and need for more money caused the measure to be introduced. If the Government want more money, there are other ways of obtaining it. That being so, I hope the House will reject this Bill on the second reading.

[The Deputy Speaker took the Chair.]

Mr. GIBSON (Fremantle) [5.30]: Notwithstanding the hostile criticism of the Bill, I hope members will agree to the second reading; for although some of that criticism may be justified, I think we can so shape the Bill that it will tend to improve our hospital system. To anybody who has been associated with the workings of our hospitals, it must be evident that legislation of some sort is required. Realising that, the Government last session brought down a Bill which met with a very hostile reception.

Hon. P. Collier: It was an infinitely better Bill than this one.

Mr. GIBSON: The opposition to that Bill was mainly on the ground that the proposed incidence of taxation was unfair. That Bill was referred to a select committee, of which I was a member. Later, that committee was converted into a Royal Commission. I assume the Premier has given a good deal of consideration to that Commission's report, and also to the evidence taken before the Commission. Not one of the witnesses examined was satisfied with the Bill of last session. In pursuance of instructions from the House, the Royal Commission visited various parts of the State. It may not be out of place if I review some of the knowledge we gained on those trips. We found that there were in all 52 hospitals. The Perth and Fremantle hospitals are controlled by bodies appointed by the Government. The Children's Hospital is governed by a committee elected by the subscribers, and the King Edward Hospital is controlled by the Government. Of the 52 hospitals, 19 are controlled by the Government. There are 26 committee hospitals. The financial position of those hospitals is exceedingly embarrassing to the committees concerned. The Perth and Fremantle hospitals are dependent on subsidies received from the Government. Last year the Perth Hospital received £28,000 and the Fremantle Hospital £6,000. Voluntary donations are practically non-existent, and so the opposition to the suggested taxation on the score that it will affect voluntary donations is baseless. Last year the Perth Hospital received in donations £943, of which £530 was subscribed by the W.A.T.C. Committee hospitals are supported by subscriptions provided by members of the local community. Such a hospital is that at Leonora. It so happens that for several years I was treasurer of that institution. To the support of that hospital married men pay 1s. 9d. per week and single men 1s. 3d. per week, for which each is entitled to hospital accommodation for himself, and the married man to medical attention and medicine in his home in addition.

It will be seen, therefore, that the people outback are carrying a fairly heavy burden in respect of hospital maintenance.

Mr. Marshall: You are merely proposing additional taxation.

Mr. GIBSON: It was never my intention to impose additional taxation on those men; rather would I do anything I could to relieve them from the heavy fees they are paying. That will be one of the results if the Bill passes. In all the districts visited we found the hospital committees financially embarrassed. In some of the hospitals the conditions were far from satisfactory. One in particular was in a most dilapidated condition.

Hon. P. Collier: The Bill will not get them out of their financial difficulties.

Mr. GIBSON: In this hospital the beds were a disgrace, and should have been thrown out on the rubbish heap. Unfortunately, there were no funds with which to replace anything thrown out. That was in one of the biggest towns in the agricultural areas. As affording some illustration of the financial position of the hospitals, let us consider Fremantle. At present they have outstanding amounts aggregating £1,406, amounts owing to local tradesmen for groceries, meat, and other necessary commodities.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: How will the Bill improve the position, seeing that the subsidy will be even less than it is now?

Mr. GIBSON: The month's accounts amount to £981, the salaries to £376 10s. and the Government grant to £416, leaving £40 with which to pay the balance. Of course, it will have to be made up by maintenance fees and donations, to which the Fremantle people contribute much more liberally than do those of Perth. Had the maintenance fees earned been collected, the hospital would have been able to meet its liabilities; for the fees earned were £7,297, whereas the amount collected was only £2,684 or one-third, showing that two out of every three patients paid nothing for their support in the hospital. The X-ray plant is obsolete and requires to be replaced. Also the treatment of patients is seriously handicapped by lack of a bedside X-ray plant, for which there is no money. Recently two fracture patients were so seriously injured that they could not be taken to the room containing the big X-ray plant, and so they had to wait a fortnight until their general condition had sufficiently improved to allow of their removal to that room. Had the bedside plant been there for the examination of the fractures, those patients could have been fixed up much more quickly, and so a saving would have been effected in maintenance fees. Some £500 is required to bring up the supply of bedding material to normal requirements. Moreover, the installation of a rainwater storage service would represent a considerable saving in the laundry work, for the service water supplied has a very injurious effect on the clothing. To place the hospital in an efficient condition would entail an expenditure of £5,000. The Children's Hospital expects a deficit of £6,000 this year.

Last year they received a subsidy of £750. Members will appreciate the wonderful work being done by this institution, containing patients from all over the State. It is quite unquestionable that for the continuance of this good work further financial assistance is required. The Royal Commission arrived at certain conclusions. They found that the lack of uniform control was hampering the efficient work of hospitals, and that each hospital was in financial difficulties. The Commission made certain recommendations, one being the appointment of the proposed board of control. Of course, this is one of the two recommendations which have led to so much hostile criticism. The board of control would effect considerable improvement in working. It is not necessary to explain the difficulty which individual committees have in dealing with Government departments. I can give one or two instances coming within my own knowledge.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The individual hospitals can more easily deal with a Government department than could a trust, which would meet only once a month.

Mr. GIBSON: During the last influenza epidemic our hospital committee in 3½ days erected a building costing £106. After the epidemic had passed, we secured from the Government permission to use the building as a children's hall. The Government also agreed to line the place with lathes and plaster and erect a verandah. It took the department 15 weeks to do the work, at a cost of £206. Had the hospital people been able to do it themselves, it would have been finished in a quarter the time and at half the cost. Until quite recently, if a window were broken in a hospital it took three or four weeks to get it repaired. First it had to be reported to the Health Department, who notified the Public Works Department, who thereupon sent somebody down to examine it.

Mr. Chesson: The same thing will occur under the Bill.

Mr. GIBSON: No, if the Bill be passed the local committee will have authority to do all that work, expending their own money on it.

Mr. Underwood: They will have authority to apply to the trust.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: When I was on the hospital board they used to do that sort of thing themselves.

Mr. GIBSON: They do not do it now, if only for the reason that there is no money. Another advantage arising from the appointment of the trust would be the co-ordinating of the work of providing hospital staffs. At present each committee appoints its own staff. If that work could be co-ordinated by a central body, it would make for much more efficient working of the system. Again, we would have cheaper supplies. At present each individual committee is buying separately, with the result that it has not the advantage of the low prices which could be secured if purchases were made in large quantities. I had an instance not very long ago. A certain firm had a large number of ther-



monometers which they wanted to sell. There was no authority to purchase thermometers, and so the Medical Department could not buy them. Shortly afterwards the price of thermometers trebled, and in the end the State had to pay three times as much as would have been paid had the proposed board been in existence. Then there would be considerable advantage in the removal of control from the department to the central body, for we should have a much more sympathetic distribution of funds than we can get departmentally. If there is any better proposition than that suggested in the Bill, it can be considered. I am not particularly anxious about the appointment of the board. I have always found that the Medical Department are capable of doing everything that is necessary, and when the Bill is in Committee I shall be pleased to support any proposal that is advanced that will prevent the transfer of the control of the hospitals to any other department. With regard to the constitution of the proposed trust, the reason for suggesting that two of the members should represent the Medical Department was because of the fact that for years past the Principal Medical Officer and the secretary of the department have been carrying on the work of administration, and that therefore it was not possible to suggest any two who would be more suitable. They had both knowledge and experience to guide them. Then with regard to a representative of the British Medical Association, I was anxious that that body should not be overlooked. There should be a representative with expert knowledge and with a knowledge of hospital architecture as well.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: What about the Principal Medical Officer?

Mr. GIBSON: It has been suggested that the British Medical Association are a large union, but they are about the only union who are prepared at all times of the day or night, without fee or reward, to give their services to those who require them.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: All doctors want to get in the hospitals.

Mr. GIBSON: I realise that.

Capt. Carter: Why?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: For practice.

Mr. GIBSON: I realise, too, that surgeons and physicians wish to become members of the honorary staff. But is that not of advantage to the institution?

Mr. O'Loghlen: Who objects to it?

Mr. GIBSON: Is a man not better equipped for the experience that he gets in a hospital? In the event of the Bill going through it is only right that due recognition should be given to the work done by the British Medical Association for the suffering poor of the community.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: A lot of doctors disagree with you on that point.

Mr. GIBSON: I realise that in addition to desiring to assist sufferers, medical men are keen on becoming members of the staffs of hospitals in order to acquire experience that

it may be possible to get there only. At the same time they are getting that experience for the benefit of the community. That is why I am anxious that the British Medical Association should have the right to appoint one of their number on the board. It has been suggested that there will be four medical men on the board. Personally, I believe that the number will be only two.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Three. You are the first who has mentioned four.

Hon. P. Collier: I said three, possibly four.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Provision is made for three.

Hon. P. Collier: It is possible that three will be appointed.

Mr. GIBSON: Objection has been taken to the method it is proposed to adopt in connection with the appointment of the board. My belief is that the method is the most simple that could be followed. It is proposed to follow the practice adopted in connection with the appointment of the fire brigades board. It has also been suggested that the appointment of this board will mean the creation of another fee-earning institution. It will be seen by the Bill that the fees to be paid will not exceed £350.

Mr. Underwood: And travelling expenses.

Mr. GIBSON: If the board is constituted as proposed, no one will suggest that a man should travel to the city from outback without having his expenses paid.

Mr. Underwood: Why should he travel?

Mr. GIBSON: Would the hon. member have him sacrifice his wages during the period of absence from his district? Moreover it would not be possible for the board to go to him; he must go to the board. It has also been stated in the course of debate that this is not a Hospitals Bill, that it is a taxation Bill. Of course it is a taxation Bill. Personally I would have no objection to its being called a hospitals taxation Bill. Taxation does not seem to be very acceptable to those who are obliged to pay it. I wish to make the point clear that it was not the intention of the Commission, when suggesting the tax of a penny in the £1, to relieve to any extent the Consolidated Revenue. The idea of imposing the tax was to supplement what was provided by the Government, because we knew that it would require twice as much as was drawn from Consolidated Revenue to put the hospitals of the State on a proper footing.

Hon. P. Collier: That is the whole principle of the Bill.

Mr. GIBSON: I am not in accord with that principle. My idea was that the money raised by way of taxation should be in addition to what was found from revenue.

Hon. T. Walker: That is nowhere expressed in the Bill.

Mr. GIBSON: That is my opinion. I am not responsible for the Bill, and I hope when it reaches the Committee stage the ideas of the Royal Commission will find expression in it.

Mr. Marshall: Did the Commission wish to abolish cadging?

Mr. GIBSON: It is the duty of the healthy section of the community to look after the sick. The suggested taxation, to my mind, is fair. No one will say that to levy a penny in the £1 will cause anyone to make a sacrifice. A man earning £6 a week will be asked to contribute the price of a packet of cigarettes. That cannot be regarded as a sacrifice, especially when the individual paying it realises that the money is being devoted to the care of those unfortunate members of the community who are sick and need every care.

Hon. P. Collier: If you had to keep house and pay rent on £4 10s. a week you would find out how much money you had to spare for taxation.

Mr. GIBSON: We have to find the money. Does the Leader of the Opposition suggest that we should impose a further super tax on the income tax? Last year there were 179,000 wage earners, and of those 37,856 were taxpayers. Of that number, 26,867 earned under £6 weekly, and 6,265 earned between £6 and £10 weekly, while there were 31,132 who earned under £10 weekly. It is suggested by hon. members opposite that those individuals who do not get the advantage of hospital accommodation should not be taxed to provide this accommodation for those who could, to a certain extent, pay for their maintenance, and who at present are not contributing anything. I admit there are 3,000 people with incomes between £500 and £1,000, and that there are 1,715 who earn over £1,000 a year. I claim that the proposed tax is fair and reasonable. To show that no great hardship is going to be inflicted on anyone, let us quote the case of a club in Fremantle where last year something like £16,000 was spent, and yet during the same period the money spent on the Fremantle hospital was only £13,000. The people who found money for that institution will not regard it as a great burden when they are asked to contribute the small amount suggested.

Mr. Chesson: Some who contributed to that £13,000 do not reside in the State—the seafaring men.

Mr. GIBSON: There is another clause in the Bill which will probably attract attention, and it is the fact that his paying the tax does not give the taxpayer the right to demand hospital accommodation. It is intended in this respect that the system which exists at present shall continue. We can understand that if the right to treatment were given under the Bill to every person paying the tax, it would be necessary to enlarge the hospitals, and also to provide a huge staff of highly trained people. Then again, if everyone had the right to be treated in a hospital, we would have no honorary staff. It is not proposed to go in for a national health insurance, but the day is not far distant when it will be necessary to introduce legislation to deal with this subject, and when it comes along it will have my cordial support. It must, however, be a proposal different from

that in existence in England at the present time. I trust members will read the evidence given by Dr. McKenzie, of the Perth Hospital, on the subject of national insurance. When we were travelling round the country, we found that the committee-controlled hospitals were more costly to manage than those controlled by the department, and on investigation we found that this was due to the fact that the charges at the committee hospitals were higher than those at the Government institutions. That is probably what it means, because it is not necessary to be so economical and there is not the necessity to answer inquiries from the department as to what expenditure has been incurred.

Mr. Chesson: The patients would be better dealt with in those hospitals.

Mr. GIBSON: If the Bill be passed, it will enable us to increase the wages of the nursing staffs in the Government hospitals, and the metropolitan hospitals as well. They should be increased to a rate which I think members of this Chamber will agree will be adequate.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You cannot do that under the Bill.

Hon. P. Collier: You cannot amend the financial clauses, and they are the whole crux of the Bill.

Hon. T. Walker: They are the Bill.

Mr. GIBSON: We will see what can be done to deal with that aspect when we are considering the Bill in Committee. I shall make no reference whatever to the wages paid to the orderly and domestic staffs as their claims are being dealt with by the Arbitration Court at present. Nurses in the metropolitan hospital are working under wretched conditions. In the first year they receive 7s. a week, in addition to which they get quarters, laundry and uniforms. In the second year they get 9s. 3d. a week, and in the third year 15s. a week. During that time, of course, they are acquiring knowledge that will fit them for their future professional life. When they are qualified, after three years' work, they receive 30s. a week, while sisters in charge of a ward get 32s. a week and their keep. Hon. members should realise that it takes five years for a nurse to qualify for the position of sister in charge of a ward. Members sitting on the Opposition side of the House will not suggest that those rates of remuneration are reasonable for the work nurses perform. If the Bill be passed, it will enable us to make the lot of the nurses better than it is at the present time. In order to earn those wages, nurses have to work during the daytime for 10½ hours, for six days a week. Night nurses have to work 10 hours for six days a week. There is no question of 44 hours a week, and time and a-half, or double time for Sundays. The nurses are sweated in a most dreadful fashion, and money should be found to remunerate them more in accordance with what they deserve.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The Bill will not enable you to do that.

Mr. GIBSON: Then we will amend the Bill so as to enable us to get over the diffi-

culty. The matron at the Perth Public Hospital, who is qualified to take charge of the institution, has a staff of 104 nurses under her control, and she receives less than £3 a week. I am sure members will agree that something is wrong there, and must be altered.

Hon. P. Collier: The Bill does not alter that position.

Hon. T. Walker: If you stick to that, it will be all right.

Mr. GIBSON: We hope to amend the Bill to meet these difficulties. Sufficient money should be raised under the provisions of the Bill so that steps may be taken which will be of advantage to hospitals in the country districts. It has been mentioned that hospitals in the country districts are ill-equipped and in some cases it has been necessary for men to be sent to the metropolitan hospitals, as they cannot be treated in the locality where their accidents happen. If it is possible to have the country hospitals equipped in the way they should be, that would enable operations to be carried out in those localities and it would not be necessary to remove patients from the districts where their relatives are residing. It would not be necessary to bring them away unless there were grave reasons for doing so. The Bill will provide means to carry out some of this work.

Mr. Marshall: When Perth and Fremantle requirements are met, the money will be gone.

Mr. GIBSON: It will be possible to subsidise district nurses and maternity wards in the outlying districts.

Mr. Underwood: We have got those now, so why worry about that?

Mr. GIBSON: The country districts have not got them.

Mr. Underwood: Yes, we have.

Mr. GIBSON: There are not enough. I have been in many districts recently where practically everyone spoke about the necessity for these provisions being made.

Lieut.-Colonel Denton: We have them at Moora.

Mr. Gibson: Moora is not the universe!

Mr. Marshall: It is the axis on which it revolves.

Lieut.-Colonel Denton: It does not revolve around you, anyhow.

Mr. GIBSON: It should be possible to make provision for patients being dealt with more satisfactorily than at the present time. The question of the relationship of friendly societies to the Bill has been mentioned. Friendly societies should be supported but they cannot claim as a right, if the Bill be passed, to any relief from taxation. What they pay at the present time is purely an insurance that in time of sickness they can get medical attention in their own homes, and medicine at cheap rates. It does not entitle them to any hospital accommodation. Friendly societies are doing a great work, and I recognise that they are, to a certain extent, relieving the Government of the necessity for looking after a section of the people. If the

second reading of the Bill be agreed to, I will not be averse to making provision for any member of a friendly society to receive accommodation in a hospital at half the rates to be paid by those who are not members. Reference has been made to intermediate hospitals as well. This is one of the most difficult propositions we have to face. While men are earning £6, £7 or £8 a week they find it absolutely impossible to meet the charges levied upon patients by private hospitals. It is said they should be debarred from going into public hospitals because they are not indigent. We know what hospital fees are and the comfort that is required at times of sickness. We suggest it might be possible to overcome this difficulty by the establishment of intermediate hospitals or of wards in connection with existing hospitals. We are up against difficulties and we are told that patients who are not paying do not receive as good treatment as those who pay. If a man is prepared to pay something towards his maintenance and treatment, he can, it is suggested, be taken into public institutions and there be followed by the doctor he desires to treat him. This proposal is in opposition to the private hospitals that may be in existence at the present time, but hon. members will realise that the attention in private hospitals cannot compare with that given in the public institutions. I am not attempting to belittle the work carried out at private hospitals but I believe that is the position. I hope sympathetic consideration will be given to the Bill. I think the standard of a country's civilisation can be measured by the consideration shown for its suffering citizens. I trust Western Australia will give a lead to other parts of the Commonwealth and establish a reputation for the way it looks after its suffering poor.

Mr. PICKERING (Sussex) [6.10]: When one casts one's mind back over last session and the present session, one must realise that there are certain reasons actuating the Minister controlling hospitals and also Parliament in taking such action as has been adopted in connection with hospitals legislation. In the first instance we had submitted to us a Bill by the member for Beverley (Mr. Broun), who was then Colonial Secretary. It was very different from the present Bill. The then Colonial Secretary was actuated in bringing forward a measure because there was a great deficiency in the funds available for such institutions, and no matter how we may blind ourselves to the fact, and camouflage it by saying we should have amended legislation, it is abundantly clear that that is the position. It is absolutely essential that some legislation should be passed to place these institutions on a much better financial basis than that on which they are at the present time. Those who have had experience in connection with hospitals, and I suppose most of us have had more or less experience, must recognise the onerous duties confronting the members of committees in

charge of hospitals, in the country districts in particular. When one recognises the responsibilities and anxieties attaching to the work of such committees, it is a matter of great regret that the institutions are in such a deplorable condition. It seems to me that, probably, these were the reasons for bringing forward the Bill now before us for consideration. To those who have taken the trouble to read the report of the Royal Commission it seems futile to say that the Bill does not fairly represent the recommendations of the Commission. If we take the recommendations as they appear at the end of the report, we find that the first deals with finance. Surely financial conditions are largely embraced within the provisions of the Bill. Then there follow certain suggestions for central hospital administration and local hospital administration as well. Further on in the recommendations, however, there appears the following recommendation:—

That where local managing committees are not appointed, the Governor be authorised to appoint local visiting and advisory committees. That any such committee include nominees from the local governing authorities and be authorised to collect subscriptions and to spend same on the welfare and comfort of the patients and staff of the district hospital and be further empowered to perform such other duties as may be conferred by the trust.

In spite of the legislation which is sought to be enacted by the Bill, we are confronted with a similar position, inasmuch as we are to be called upon for subscriptions to further subsidise these institutions. There is no doubt that the Bill is more or less a taxation measure. It must be such, but it has introduced, to my mind, a phase of taxation that is new to the State. I refer to taxation for specific purposes. As was pointedly remarked by the Leader of the Opposition, if we are to agree to this phase of taxation, it may be a phase adopted to meet any emergency. If we adopt the precedent, that must needs be the necessary corollary.

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

Mr. PICKERING: Before tea I was dealing with the form of taxation. The member for Fremantle (Mr. Gibson) requested members to read the evidence of Dr. Mackenzie. I was rather struck by the doctor's opening remarks. On page 21 he stated—

It should be remembered that under the Bill, with its proposed system of taxation, there may arise a demand for payment for all medical services rendered in hospital. If through taxation every person in the community has to contribute to the maintenance of hospitals, it follows that every person will demand equal opportunity for treatment in hospital. This may mean cutting out the honorary medical officers, because it will certainly affect private practice. It would mean practically the nationalisation of hospitals.

One of the outstanding features of the Bill is the negation of that statement. On further perusal of the evidence, I take it that this is based upon the fact that the Commission, in making their recommendations for a tax not exceeding one penny in the pound had in mind that the amount to be raised by such taxation should be in addition to any sum what at present was given by the Government by way of subsidy. When we turn to the Estimates we find that this is evidently not the intention of the Government. It appears that the Government expect to save that sum which it is intended should be subscribed by way of taxation under this Bill. The second recommendation of the Commission is on the lines of the trust, and I must say I am not altogether in sympathy with the trust as proposed in the Bill. I do not like the representation of the trust as it affects the country districts. A central trust will more or less have its attention concentrated upon the large centres in which it operates, and I fear that the allocation of funds may not be in the best interests of the lesser hospitals. If we are to have a trust, I would prefer two trusts—one to care particularly for the outside districts and one general trust to look after the metropolitan area. By these means we might hope to have representation on the trust which will be true representation instead of that which is suggested. When we think that the trust is to contain three members representing the local authorities of the State, we must realise how difficult it will be to get adequate representation from the wide areas over which that choice will be spread. There will be very great difficulty indeed confronting the trust in allocating the funds, and this is one of the most important phases. The question of funds is the mainspring lying at the back of this legislation, and when I consider the position of the hospital in my district, I realise how great will be the responsibility thrown upon any trust to undertake the division of the funds. The next question is that of district boards which are to replace the present hospital committees. The hospitals have experienced very great difficulty in securing adequate committees to control them, and I do not know that the suggested boards are likely to meet with more success. I do not like the aspect referred to by the Leader of the Opposition that the election of certain members of the board will rest with subscribers, more particularly when one remembers that anyone voluntarily subscribing a sum of over £1 will have that amount credited to the tax proposed to be debited to him under the Bill. If it is to be a privilege of subscribers who pay subscriptions in addition to taxation to have the power of voting for the boards, there should be no exemption in respect of the amount given by way of subscriptions. I had hoped that with the adoption of a Bill, after the mature consideration it had received at the hands of the select committee and Royal Commission, the question of subscriptions would have been eliminated but, in spite of all the recommendations of

the Royal Commission and the after-consultation of the Minister with his responsible officers, they have not been able to arrive at a position when they can dispense with additional subscriptions. I pointed out previously that evidently the Commission, after mature consideration, had concluded that it would be necessary to have subscriptions. The question that arises is whether, after people have been taxed for this specific purpose, it will not be a very difficult matter to induce them to give further subscriptions. When we remember how difficult it is to get additions to hospitals to-day, the difficulty of getting subscriptions will be increased by the measure before us. At the Busselton hospital strenuous efforts have been made to get a maternity ward, but the conditions imposed by the department have been such as to preclude the erection of that ward. I do not see much ground for hoping for a solution of these difficulties under this measure. One phase of the Bill which appeals to me is that there is no privilege attaching to the tax. The Bill gives no right to attendance in hospital or anything of that kind. It does not permit of the admission to a hospital of anyone except indigents.

Mr. Underwood: There is some doubt about the indigent, too.

Mr. PICKERING: There may be very great difficulty in arriving at a definition of "indigent." If one turns to the evidence of Dr. Stewart Mackenzie he will find some interesting matter:—

You fear that if everybody had to pay, all would be entitled to hospital treatment, and so the honorary staff would no longer act!—That is so

But the purport of the Bill is simply to impose only sufficient taxation to provide for the maintenance of indigent patients. Would the honorary staff still carry on if that were done?—We require a definition of "indigent." Not all the patients in this hospital are indigent. A lump sum 15s. a day, with his wife and one kiddie, is often better able to pay than is a man on £400 a year with a wife and three or four kiddies. Medicine hospitals and the public health must be nationalised.

Suppose we levied only the smaller imposts to provide hospital accommodation for the indigent, a superstructure could easily be built upon that?—Yes, it would give a foundation rock on which we could elaborate our nationalised medical services. Whatever Bill we pass must be the foundation for a nationalised medical service. That seems to be in the atmosphere.

Mr. Davies: You mean nationalised hospitals?

Mr. PICKERING: Yes; a nationalised hospital service. It does not seem to be a matter of experiment. It is one which has evidently proved to be satisfactory. If this be so, whatever measure we pass in this House should be framed more or less from the standpoint of adopting such a superstructure. The intermediate hospital presents

a very difficult proposition. I take into consideration the position in the Busselton hospital where anyone who is not indigent is precluded from availing himself of the advantages of the hospital. It is useless to say that we can make an intermediate ward in a hospital where the accommodation is already overtaxed. What would be the position if we said we would not allow others than indigent into the hospital until we arrived at the stage when we could have intermediate hospitals? It is a serious matter which will need very careful consideration in Committee. We have not the space at Busselton for an intermediate ward and, as I pointed out earlier, although it is most urgent that we should have additional accommodation in the way of a maternity ward, so far we have been unable to do anything in that direction, and what immediate prospect is there of being able to secure an intermediate ward?

Mr. Davies: Only by the exclusion of the indigent.

Mr. PICKERING: That is not the idea of members. We are actuated by a desire to frame a Bill to provide for the indigent primarily and principally.

The Colonial Secretary: They have a first claim.

Mr. PICKERING: But they should not preclude the use of the hospitals by those in a position to afford the medical fees charged.

Mr. Underwood: Who do you think would get in first?

Mr. PICKERING: That is the trouble. All these interjections go to illustrate how very difficult the problem is.

Mr. Underwood: The Government have not solved it.

Mr. PICKERING: I think we are a long way from solving it.

The Minister for Agriculture: Well, give us some suggestion.

Mr. PICKERING: I shall be very pleased to hear the Minister for Agriculture throw some light on the question.

Mr. Underwood: Or the Colonial Secretary.

Mr. PICKERING: Yes, or any other Minister. After my efforts to throw some light on a difficult problem, I consider it rather an impertinence on the part of the Minister for Agriculture to interject in that strain.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is not in order.

Mr. PICKERING: I will withdraw the remark. There is a clause in the Bill which seems to throw a certain responsibility on the employers of aborigines. It is as follows:—

The cost of the relief granted to an aboriginal shall, without excluding the liability of the person relieved, constitute a debt due by the employer of the aboriginal, and may be recovered by action in any court of competent jurisdiction.

This seems to aim directly at the employment of aborigines by persons in this State.

Mr. Underwood: That should be in the Aborigines Act; not here.

Mr. PICKERING: It has nothing to do with this Bill. So much has been said about obviating the necessity for collecting subscriptions that it is rather amusing to read some of the matter contained in the measure. We find such sentences as—

Solicit and receive donations and subscriptions, and expend the same on the welfare of the patients and staff.

Solicit and receive donations and subscriptions for any special object connected with the hospital, and expend such sums accordingly.

Mr. Underwood: We thought that was all to be done away with.

Mr. PICKERING: When the Bill was handed over to the Royal Commission this House thought a measure would be framed to relieve hospitals of that particular obligation. We are now imposing taxation which, on the face of it, seems inadequate. In connection with the flat rate, the point made by the "West Australian" in this morning's issue was a pertinent one. It said that the majority of those who paid would not take advantage of the hospitals, and would not be permitted to do so. Therefore, they were paying without any hope of any benefit arising therefrom. No other form of taxation has so far been suggested except an increase in income tax or perhaps land tax.

Mr. Underwood: Another suggestion is that there should be economy in the departments.

Mr. PICKERING: That is a necessary phrase.

Hon. P. Collier: The economy policy of your party would meet the position.

Mr. PICKERING: Economy of administration. We are consistent in advocating that at every turn.

Hon. P. Collier: I thought you had forgotten that plank.

Mr. Underwood: Our party never forgets anything.

Mr. PICKERING: I have endeavoured to solve this problem, and tried to arrive at some equitable basis for the collection of the tax.

Hon. P. Collier: The only equitable basis is that where the other fellow pays.

Mr. PICKERING: When I read the remarks of a prominent New South Wales labour leader, who held that the tax be 6d. in the £1, it seemed to me that the proposal for one penny in the £1 was inadequate. The payment of 2d. or 4d. a week is a very small amount, especially if it is paid weekly. I do not think the general community will object to paying this tax, when they realise that it is for hospital services, which are so essential to this State. They will not regard it as any hardship to contribute to such a service for the general good. I do not as a rule approve of the principle of taxation for specific purposes. It is strange that out of our population of over 300,000 there should be only 33,000 taxpayers. This sug-

gests that many people are evading their responsibilities.

Hon. P. Collier: And according to the judges in this Chamber that number includes all those who are in a position to pay the tax.

Mr. Underwood: If you are missing any-one, alter the machinery.

Mr. PICKERING: There must be many who are escaping taxation. It is not fair that the whole of this additional taxation should be thrust upon those who are already paying taxes. If it is beyond the power of the Government to evolve some other form of income and land tax the only alternative is to accept the method that is submitted to us in order to meet the requirements of our hospitals. When the Bill was introduced last session it provided that the taxation should be collected by another means. It was a local taxation and the funds were to be administered locally. That was the one thing in favour of that particular Bill. I do not like a centralised fund without sufficient representation to ensure equitable distribution. When the Bill is in Committee, if it reaches that stage, I hope to move an amendment which may overcome the difficulty. I fear that the trust will have its interests centred more in the big centres of the State, which should be best able to support their own hospitals. Whilst I was impressed by the remarks made by the Chairman of the Royal Commission, I cannot see that many of the recommendations of that Commission have been overlooked in this Bill. There is not much in the Bill that is not on the lines recommended by the Commission. It is necessary to amend our hospitals legislation. We must make provision for adequate funds for the upkeep of our hospitals. With regard to the Busselton hospital, we have to supplicate the Colonial Secretary for money to enable us to provide the necessary linen and bedding for additional patients thrust upon us by the immigration policy of the Premier.

The Colonial Secretary: Not thrust; conferred upon you.

Mr. PICKERING: Perhaps I used the wrong word. Considerable responsibilities are thrust upon us which we are not able to meet.

The Minister for Agriculture: It is a sign of progress.

Mr. PICKERING: We have, therefore, to beg the Colonial Secretary for additional money. It should not be a matter of supplication. We must have hospitals in the country.

Mr. Underwood: Why not ask for a High School?

Mr. PICKERING: I am greatly concerned about adequate provision being made for the proper attention of the sick. I trust we shall be able to place all those hospitals, which are to-day in distressing circumstances, on such a footing that they can conduct their business in the best interests of the community, and those in their care.

On motion by Mr. Mullany, debate adjourned.

# BILL—PENSIONERS (RATES EX-EMPTION.)

Returned from the Council with an amendment.

## ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1922-23.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from the 16th November; Mr. Stubbs in the Chair.

Department of Public Works (Hon. W. J. George, Minister.)

Vote—Public Works and Buildings, £72,893.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. J. George—Murray-Wellington) [7.58]: The Estimates of the Public Works Department are very modest, and I am sure this phase of their character will commend itself to hon. members. It is almost unnecessary to mention the various utilities carried out by the Department. We are now engaged in dredging the Bunbury harbour, a work that is necessary to provide for the accommodation of the numerous ships that visit that port. At Albany we are also dredging, and are being assisted by a big dredge we have been able to hire from the Commonwealth Government. The work will, when completed, enable vessels of the White Star Line class to come into the harbour, take their loading and leave in perfect safety and security. The Fremantle Harbour Works are being continued, on the plan laid down some years ago and approved by Parliament. We are still taking away the stone that has been blasted and broken up. With regard to roads and bridges, no doubt those members whose wants have been satisfied are now content. If the funds available to the Treasurer permitted, nothing would give the Department or me greater pleasure than to put up bridges wherever they are needed. During the six years I have been Minister for Works, I do not think a request for a bridge or other public utility that I considered reasonable has been refused when the money was available. Here is a point for the consideration of hon. members: when the Government build a bridge or other work of public utility, I consider it is the duty of the people in the district to care for the maintenance. If the State stands the capital expenditure, it is not unreasonable to expect those benefiting thereby to do their part, especially when the country is experiencing considerable trouble in the matter of finance. There has been and there is, in my opinion, too much of local bodies thinking that everything should be done by the Government; and I am perfectly satisfied that the local people should take upon themselves some of this work. During the last year we have had a road boards' conference, which, like all conferences of the kind I have seen, was not only interesting and instructive, but also productive of considerable good. Confer-

ences to which the people come without fee or reward, taking upon themselves their share of the burden of local government, should be encouraged by every means. Representatives meet, and discover that they have difficulties in common, difficulties which some of them have overcome while others have not been so fortunate; and therefore such gatherings cannot fail to be most helpful. The Traffic Act comes under the control of the Public Works Department, and I believe it is giving general satisfaction throughout the State. The only people I know of who are not satisfied with it are people who perhaps have not received so large a proportion of the fees collected as they think their deserts entitle them to expect. As hon. members know, the distribution of traffic fees in the metropolitan area is at the discretion of the Minister for Works. Old members will recollect that the matter was so arranged by the desire of a former Assembly.

Mr. Mann: It does not give too much satisfaction in the city of Perth.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The city of Perth can never have any satisfaction, not even with the hon. member representing the city. That hon. member, as he gets a little more experienced in Parliamentary life, will find that he can spend the last drop of his blood and the last effort of his massive frame without satisfying some of his constituents, who will continue to growl. I regret to say that in my opinion the city of Perth does not carry out the agreement as to doing certain work in return for the traffic fees. With regard to railways, we have at last got on with the construction of some lines long authorised. Hon. members will know that the cost of rails has for years been prohibitive. We have been quoted £22 per ton, and it is only within the last few months that we have been able to get an order for rails placed at a price which cannot be considered too burdensome on the State. Out of 100 miles we have ordered from Britain, we have received about 500 tons, equal to eight miles; and another 14 or 15 miles are due at the port of Fremantle in a few days. The Nyabing-Pingrup railway is one that has suffered any number of disappointments, and therefore it gives me great pleasure to say that there is an opportunity of going on with the line, in respect of which matter I received a deputation at Woodanilling some months ago, a deputation including men who had ridden 50 and 60 miles to see if there was a ray of sunshine with regard to their promised railway. Fourteen miles of rails have been sent to the scene of operations, and I hope the people concerned will soon see the realisation of their hopes. With regard to the Busselton-Margaret River railway, the hon. member chiefly interested knows that the bridges are being built, that a proportion of the earthworks has been constructed, and that the sleepers are being delivered along the line. The rails are expected in January, and that as soon as they arrive platelaying will commence. With regard to the Bencub-

bin extension, which the House was good enough to authorise recently, work is going on very comfortably. There are only eight miles to be done, and we shall not be long before we finish the extension. In this connection, representations were made by the member for Toodyay a few weeks ago as to the freight rates charged. The hon. member put it that as the line had been completed for about 24 miles, and the Public Works Department were holding that length of line for their own convenience, with a view to finishing the remaining eight miles, it would be only a fair thing if through rates were charged for the entire distance, instead of one rate being charged by the Public Works Department and then another by the Railway Department. Arrangements have now been made by the Government so that the people despatching wheat over the line will be charged one through rate from the point of loading to the point of destination. I think I am not too sanguine in saying that 30 miles of the Esperance line will be laid by the first week in March. The Esperance line has experienced endless vicissitudes and difficulties, and various Governments have been pilloried in that connection. I hope the people of Esperance will speedily be convinced that the Government are quite honest and sincere in regard to what they have promised. I may make a slight reference to the Narrogin-Dwarda railway, since there has been a great deal of controversy regarding that line. Every means had been taken to avoid loss of time and money in connection with the construction of that line. Sleepers were to be delivered at Dwarda, and it had been arranged that the rails would be despatched so as to save freight all the way round from Spencer's Brook. However, owing to deputations which waited on the Premier, and owing to a motion tabled in this House by the member for Pingelly, there was no other course open to the Government but to suspend the work of construction. To build the line while there was a hostile motion pending in this House, a motion as to the outcome of which no forecast was possible, would have been against all economic principles and Parliamentary etiquette. Although it has been the fate of the Government in general and myself in particular to be fairly well abused by the member for the district and others interested, I maintain that the only course to be taken was that which the Government took. With regard to the purchase of rails generally, I may mention that by waiting, instead of ordering rails a year or two ago, the State has saved close on £100,000, which amount would have been loaded on to these railways for all time and would have made it more difficult for those controlling the working railways to make both ends meet. If hon. members will refer to the Estimates, they will find there has been an increase in the total of salaries. That increase is due to advances which were granted to the officers by the Appeal Board. In the circumstances the only course for the Govern-

ment was to pay those increases. The item of rents has increased a little, mainly owing to quarters being required for teachers in the Education Department, and in some instances for additional schools. Another item on the Estimates which hon. members may note, refers to the Perth Causeway. In my opinion, the time is rapidly approaching when the House will have to consider that matter very seriously. To-day the structure is not in as good condition as the engineers would like, or as I would like, to see. The structure has done very useful work during the years of its existence, but with the enormous increase of traffic into and out of Perth, and especially with the tramway upon it, the Causeway is inadequate to meet the demands. The Government, and eventually Parliament, will have to consider seriously how a thoroughfare of main importance to the city should be dealt with—whether it should continue to be looked after, as it has been since its inception, by the Government, or whether it should be considered as one of those things which fall within the scope of duties of the municipality of which the Causeway forms a part. Years ago, when Perth was confined entirely to this side of the river, there was, no doubt, great reason for considering that the Causeway was too big an item to be at the expense of the city itself. But now Perth has spread on both sides of the river and we have the Greater Perth Scheme, I consider it is a matter for Parliament to decide whether or not the responsibility for the Causeway should now rest upon the city itself.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I do not see the member for Perth here to look after it.

Mr. Davies: He is not far away.

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS:** I regret that the financial conditions of the State have not been such as to allow the Treasurer to provide the money which the Public Works Department require, and which I know they need, for the purpose of maintaining public buildings throughout the State. We have a large sum of money laid out in schools and buildings of all sorts, and maintenance, which in this climate is a serious question, has not been as closely attended to as it ought to have been. Unless painting and necessary renovations are kept up, it is only a question of time when serious conditions set in; then when eventually the work has to be done, the amount required is far in excess of what would have been needed had the maintenance been attended to in the ordinary course. I know of buildings erected over 25 years ago which have never had a paint brush on them, whilst others requiring proper attention have been merely patched up. We cannot grumble at this sort of thing having occurred during the last seven or eight years, because while the war was on all energy and money had to be conserved for the one purpose; but now that we have peace, as against war, it is time we endeavoured to catch up with the belated repairs. It hurts me to see a fine building going to ruin for want of attention.



However, the financial position has dictated that only a very small amount should be spent upon such work. There are the Estimates. I commend them to hon. members.

Capt. Carter: Can you tell us how the Herdsman's Lake project is going on?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That does not come into these Estimates. The hon. member will have an opportunity later.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [8.18]: The money provided for works in these Estimates is £20,000 less than it was last year, while that provided for buildings is £10,000 less, making a total reduction of £30,000. Apparently the Works Department is not going to be very active on works from revenue during the current financial year, but will confine its attention principally to loan works. It might be argued that to some extent at least this has been brought about by the creation of the North-West Department. But I notice that the only sum provided for the North-West is £12,088, leaving a balance of £18,000 as a reduction on the Public Works Estimates. It is a great mistake to take works away from expert officers and put them under the control of men who are not expert. That has been done through the division of the departments, merely to please, as a child with a toy, some of the North-West people. The Minister ought to find out whether this transferred work is now being carried out as economically as it was before. The Engineer for the North-West, Mr. Tindale, had a thorough knowledge of all works in progress up North and knew what was wanted. Now this responsibility has passed from him to another department in which there is no expert knowledge whatever. It is a great mistake to hand technical works to inexperienced men.

Mr. Teesdale: Taken from men who have been years acquiring knowledge and experience.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I notice also that the grant for roads and bridges has been reduced by £2,000. It is not altogether a reduction, because it has been added to the North-West Department. Having regard to the system which has been in vogue, in all probability this amount will have to be increased. It appears to be the intention of the department to induce municipalities to become road boards. If a district under a road board is entitled to a grant, surely it should be entitled to a grant when under a municipality. The Parliament that passed the Roads Act had no intention whatever of converting municipalities into road boards. I myself have seriously thought of advising the local authorities in my electorate to form themselves into a road board and so get a claim on this vote for assistance. While they remain municipalities they have no claim.

Mr. A. Thomson: Road boards have a very much larger area to administer than have municipalities.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: To some extent, yes, but the areas of South Perth and of Guildford are not very large.

Mr. Davies: Guildford is not a road board.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I saw in the paper that the Guildford municipality had been converted into a road board and that, too, without a referendum of the people. At all events, we know that South Perth has become a road board. This sort of thing has a tendency to build up the central office because, in respect of road boards the department has a power which it has not under the Municipal Corporations Act; therefore the more road boards the more can the department centralise things.

The Minister for Works: It is not done for that purpose.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No. It is to get increased value from the Government. It was stated in a newspaper that the Minister himself pointed out to some municipality that they would get a grant if they became a road board. The department has not been able to make much headway during the past few years. All that was spent last year, including Loan and Revenue, was £784,000. The department has had neither money nor opportunity to make necessary development. The time has arrived when the State Implement Works should be taken from the Works Department—I do not say away from the Minister.

The Minister for Works: I hope it will be.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I mean from the control of the officers of the Works Department.

Capt. Carter: From all Government control.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No, I am not in favour of that, nor would the hon. member be if he knew the position. It is time the State Implement Works controlled not only the manufacture, but also the sale of its products. The accounts should be kept at the works.

The Minister for Works: Could you not better discuss that on the Trading Concerns Estimates?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No. I am going to discuss it on the officer concerned, when we reach that item. Some years ago I, as Minister, called a conference at the Public Works Department of the accountant, the Under Secretary, the Under Treasurer, and the works manager. That conference decided that the best place for conducting the business of the State Implement Works was at the works. Consequently I ordered the expenditure of £300 or £400 on the provision of office accommodation down there. That work was only just finished when, unfortunately for the State, the Labour Government went out of office. Immediately, the very officers who had recommended me to that course recommended my successor to the opposite course.

The Minister for Works: You must have had a great influence over them.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No, I had not. They held a conference among themselves—four high officers of the Government—and

they advised me one way; and the moment I left office they changed round and advised my successor to do the very opposite thing. If I were of a suspicious nature, I would say it was done for political purposes.

The Minister for Works: Do not say that.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I sometimes think it was. The building was put up on the advice of those four officers, and they changed around with the change of Government.

The Minister for Works: I think I had more to do with it than had the officers.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I do not think so. The Minister had not time in which to get a grasp of the position. If he had been aware of the position he would not have agreed to the change, at all events without good reasons being given for it. As I say, there is a big reduction in the Public Works expenditure, and there will not be much doing in the department this year.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN (Forrest) [8.30]: The member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin) just now referred to the expert officers of the department and deplored the existing tendency to take work out of their hands and put it in the hands of less competent people. Reference has also been made to the Implement Works, but leakages are occurring not only in the Works Department but in most of the departments, though it is more pronounced in the Works Department, which is the biggest of the spending departments. The Minister, with his many duties, is not able to keep a check on the expenditure and cannot always scrutinise closely the recommendations which are put up by his expert officers. I know the Minister is an engineer and thinks he is competent to look into every proposal. It is not possible for him, however capable he may be, to adequately check every proposal submitted to him. A couple of matters occur to me just now and I believe they could be multiplied twentyfold. The policy of sending officers into the country to effect repairs is wrong and expensive. A request came from Greenbushes for attention to a school adjacent to that town which was in danger of being demolished by white ants, and there was also a complaint about a glass having been broken in the window of a school three miles further away. A carpenter in that town would have done the whole job for about 30s. Yet we have an officer of the Public Works Department going down there—and probably he was the second one to go down—to report and prepare an estimate of the cost. In regard to this particular instance the officer in question was on the same train as a party of members of Parliament—I was amongst the number—and I have no doubt that the cost of his going down there would be from £6 15s. to £7 10s. If that kind of thing is happening in regard to repairs to schools and public buildings in every part of the State, it is easy to conceive why we have a deficit.

Mr. Davies: That will be altered under the new Education Act.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: If we are going to stick religiously to the opinions of experts and heads of departments, it will of course always be necessary to send officers out in this manner. The Minister requires to be firm if he wishes to alter this policy, because we know that the tendency is for the head of a department to surround himself with a big staff, so as to increase the importance of his office and, at the same time, secure an increase in salary. It is bad enough to have Parliamentarians referred to as "deadheads," without having officers of the department going around the country piling up expenses in order merely to put up an estimate or to make recommendations which sometimes are not even taken notice of. Another matter which came under notice the other day was the extravagance in connection with the sending of two boxes of tomatoes to Cave House at Yallingup, and on which two cases 8s. 6d. freight had to be paid.

The Minister for Works: I do not grow tomatoes.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: No, but it is proper to draw attention to the methods of departments and that of the Minister for Works is amongst them.

The Minister for Works: But I do not grow tomatoes.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Possibly the Minister would show results if he did. The fact remains that these two boxes of tomatoes were sent to the Yallingup Cave House and 8s. 6d. freight was paid on them. If there is any place on God's earth where tomatoes can be grown, surely it is Yallingup.

Mr. Corboy: The purchase of 6d. worth of seed would have given them all the tomatoes they wanted.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: It is time something was done to stop the extravagance and waste which is going on daily, and if there were vigilant officers appointed, this could be done. Another matter which may be quoted is in connection with the Agricultural Water Supply Department. A dam was constructed at Minnievale many years ago, and it proved to be a failure because it was not built in holding ground. Later on the department built another dam half a mile away. That was a good one but it was not sufficient for requirements. Then it was proposed to construct another dam close to it which could be put down at a cost of £450 and the residents of the district approached the Minister and asked him to have this new dam built in that holding ground. An engineer, however, was sent up to report on the proposal and he declared that as so much money had been wasted on the first dam, it would be as well to waste more on it by lining it with concrete at a cost of £875.

The Minister for Works: It has not been done yet.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: But the Minister has given a favourable reply.

The Minister for Works: I did not.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Of course we know it is pretty difficult for the Minister to turn down the recommendation of one of his ex-

perts. He is not on the spot; he looks at the file and the natural corollary is that his approval follows. Instead of the engineers being allowed to try to cover up the mistakes that are made, it would be better to cut the first loss and thus conserve the funds of the State. I suppose the Minister will tell us that his department is well conducted and that he cannot detect any leakages. That may be so because he has too much work to do. All the same, all day and every day expenditure which can be cut out is mounting up, because the system of departmental control which exists now permits officers to be continually travelling about the country. They seem pleased to be able to go out of town. They hop away to Busselton one day, come back again and go to York at the end of the week, and a few days later discover they are wanted once more at Busselton or at Capel. The State cow is a wonderful old beast to be able to stand it all.

Mr. WILLCOCK (Geraldton) [8.38]: With reference to the grant made by the Federal Government to relieve unemployment in the various States, I thought, and probably every member thought, that the money would come within the purview of the Minister for Works. When the announcement was made in the Press that municipalities and road board districts were to participate in the distribution of this money, local bodies in the district I represent asked me to see that they got their fair share. I asked the Minister for Works a question as to the conditions governing the expenditure of this money, and received a reply that the matter was under consideration. On the 12th September I asked another question, and was informed that the matter was still under consideration. Again, on the 26th October, I endeavoured to find out what was being done, and the Minister replied that the papers would be laid on the Table of the House, and that I would then be able to get all the information I wanted. Up to date, however, the papers have not been laid on the Table of the House, and I have not been able to get any information.

The Minister for Works: I can assure you I gave instructions for the papers to be laid on the Table of the House. I will find out why they have not been sent up.

Mr. WILLCOCK: I am still in the dark about the whole business. I read in the Press that a certain sum from this grant had been given to the Northampton Road Board, and that an amount had also been given to Pithara and Mingenew, as well as to other parts of the State, and when I approach the Minister for Works he knows nothing at all about it. He informs me that I should have approached the Premier, who, with Mr. McLarty, had the matter of the distribution of the money in hand. But it was no use being told after the money had been expended, that I should have gone to the Premier in order to secure a portion of the grant for my district. This is a deliberate affront to

the northern districts, because application was made in ample time for assistance for the unemployed soldiers who are there. The Federal department did gather together the unemployed returned soldiers in Geraldton, and put them on the work of laying the telephone wires underground, but when that job was completed the men were again stranded. All this time there were unemployed in Perth, and deputations were told by the Premier that it was no use men coming into town from the country, because they would receive no consideration. They were told to stay where they were, and when application was made for a portion of the £16,000 Federal grant, nothing was given.

Mr. Teesdale: Not a shilling went up north.

Mr. WILLCOCK: We were hoodwinked; I cannot use any other word. Now I understand that practically the whole of that grant has been expended in the South-West on developmental projects, the expenditure in connection with which should have come out of Loan Funds. I would like some information about this matter.

Capt. CARTER (Leederville) [8.43]: I thought that the Minister, in discussing the general administration of his department, would have referred to that very important subject, Herdsman's Lake drainage.

The Minister for Works: The salaries for the men engaged on that work are not provided on these Estimates.

Capt. CARTER: It is unnecessary for me to impress upon the Minister the fact that the eyes of the State are on this work, and that the stupendous cost of it is causing the gravest concern, not only to soldiers, but those who are to be settled there, and to the people generally. I hope the Minister will give us some idea as to how the work is progressing, and when it is likely to be finished, as well as disclose when the soldiers are likely to be able to have access to it.

The Minister for Works: I have not the information with me now. It is not dealt with on these Estimates, and so I did not bring it along. I will, however, supply it later on.

Capt. CARTER: I had also intended to sneak on the matter referred to by the member for Geraldton regarding the returned soldiers' grant for road construction and so forth. I have already mentioned the subject to the Minister in his office and also in this Chamber. I agree with the member for Geraldton that this special grant should have been devoted, as nearly as possible, to the smaller works which would have meant so much to the soldiers and other farmers who are developing the State.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The amount was so small that it would not have made much difference.

Capt. CARTER: I am aware that the amount was small but it was such that it should not have been swallowed up in big jobs. If £100 had been distributed here and

£100 there to the road boards in the small outlying districts, it would have meant much to them. Osborne Park is referred to as being part of the city, but it is not. We have the country at our back door as it were, and the settlers there are in much the same position as those who are 100 miles from Geraldton. As returned soldiers these men have as great a claim on the department as men who are settling in the South-West. I hope the Minister will remember what I have said to him, for he well knows that the men who are asking for this consideration have been battling along under adverse circumstances, often with no roads at all. In many cases, they have to plough through the sand to get to their swamp land. With the member for Geraldton, I hope assistance will be given to these people who are in dire need of it. I accept the Minister's assurance that the drainage work in connection with Herdsman's lake will be discussed at a later stage.

The Minister for Works: Of course it will be discussed. There is nothing to be hidden.

Capt. CARTER: I accept that assurance. I merely mention it because I am determined that the matter shall be discussed and I wish to make my position clear.

Mr. LUTEY (Brown Hill-[vanhoe] [8.47]: I would like to have some information regarding the allocation of the Federal grant of £16,000 for road making. The Kalgoorlie Road Board made a special request for portion of that grant at the time when the unemployment trouble was in evidence there. It was left out of the allocation, however. The road board is an important body and the work was required to meet the crying needs of the time. I would like the Minister to inform the Committee as to the distribution of the £16,000 and in what particular constituencies the allocations were made. I would also like some particulars regarding the dam to be constructed at Ives' Find. Summer is coming on and I hope the same state of affairs that existed some time ago when the water shortage was so pressing, will not occur this year.

The Minister for Works: We are calling tenders for the dam at Ives.

Mr. HICKMOTT (Pingelly) [8.49]: I agree with the remarks of previous speakers regarding the allocation of the Federal grant, and the necessity for doing more than in the past in the interests of the agricultural areas, particularly in the direction of providing roads. I know the Minister is short of funds and is willing to do what he can. The tone of the Committee, however, seems to be in favour of increasing rather than reducing expenditure. Previously we talked about economising, but now members seem inclined to demand increases. The provision of adequate water supplies and good roads is essential. The Minister for Agriculture has been asking people to produce more and more, and it is necessary that adequate water supplies

and good roads should be provided to enable them to bring about that increased production. If they have to cart their water from the railway to their holdings, it takes up time that should be devoted to the farms. It is particularly important that good roads should be provided leading to the railways because good roads are as essential as the railways themselves. If people have not good roads, it takes twice as long to cart produce to the railways. Something should be done to improve the roads I have referred to and more particularly the one to Bendering Siding. I brought this matter under the notice of the Minister some time ago, but I have not heard anything more about it. I trust the Minister, should funds be available, will attend to these matters and give the farmers in the various agricultural districts adequate water supplies and road facilities to get their produce to market.

Mr. J. H. SMITH (Nelson) [8.51]: I wish to say something regarding roads and bridges. I have approached the Minister for Works on several occasions and I have been received with courtesy. I regret to say, however, that his courtesy has not extended into the realm of practical assistance. It is very important that roads and bridges should be provided in the South-West, but when applications are made to the Minister for assistance, he continually puts off members by saying that he has no money and that he cannot get the necessary funds from the Treasury. He always assures members that if he could get the money from the Treasury he would do what he was requested.

The Minister for Works: That was straightforward, was it not?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Straightforward, but still a quibble. It is always a quibble between the Minister for Works and the Treasurer. The Minister complains that he has not the money to spend, but if he does not make provision for the farmers to get their produce to market by the construction of roads and bridges, he will never get the money necessary nor will our railways ever pay. I went over the head of the Minister recently and interviewed the Premier. I told him that the Minister for Works was complaining that he could not get any money for necessary works in the South-West. The Premier said, "Look at the money we are spending in your electorate." That money, however, is of no assistance to people who are isolated in other settled portions of the district. People have been settled on both sides of the Blackwood River, which is a large stream, and yet for months in the year they are isolated because they cannot get their produce to market. When a member goes to the Minister for Works and asks for a paltry £100 or £1,000 he informs them that he cannot secure the money. At the same time, the Government can squander thousands of pounds in Perth every day.

The Minister for Mines: Not at all.

**Mr. J. H. SMITH:** That money is being squandered every day in the Government departments and in the Public Service, where men are not earning their money. Men are falling over each other in the Government departments.

**The Minister for Mines:** That is an irresponsible statement.

**Mr. J. H. SMITH:** It is not. It applies to the Mines Department as well. Ministers are continually putting men into the Public Service and the Ministers have no control. Ministers do not control one department. It is the heads of departments who are in control. If Ministers want to do some good, they should do away with the Public Service Commissioner and themselves accept the responsibility of their positions. As it is at present, Ministers are just nonentities. I want to impress upon the Minister for Works—

**The Minister for Agriculture:** What is the use of impressing anything on nonentities?

**Mr. J. H. SMITH:** If every member would do the same as I am doing, possibly the Minister would do something to the Public Service and to the Public Service Commissioner as well.

**The Minister for Mines:** Why not wait as a deputation on the Public Service?

**Mr. J. H. SMITH:** I do not want to be abusive. I desire to mention one or two matters to the Minister for Works to show how essential it is that we should have good roads and bridges provided in the South-West. The Minister should approach the Treasurer and get the money for it.

**The Colonial Secretary:** He should keep a stiff upper lip.

**Mr. J. H. SMITH:** In the rural districts we want roads and bridges, and if we could only have the revenue produced in our district, we would be able to carry out our own works without the necessity for going to the Minister for Works and his engineers. I believe that the local authorities could do work at half the cost the Public Works Department incurs to-day. Where a bridge costs £1,200 under the Public Works Department, I believe the local authorities could construct it for £500 or £600.

**The Minister for Agriculture:** And it would probably be washed down the same year.

**Mr. J. H. SMITH:** I can show members bridges which have stood for 50 or 60 years—and they are standing to-day—which bridges were built without the help of the public works engineers.

**The Minister for Works:** There is no necessity to sneer at the engineers. If they sneered at you, you would take it as an insult.

**Mr. J. H. SMITH:** The trouble is there are too many engineers.

**The Minister for Works:** No, there are not.

**Mr. J. H. SMITH:** If there is a 10s. job to be done, it cannot be carried out unless it is inspected by an engineer. It may cost £20 for the engineer to inspect a work, where the local authorities could do it for £5 or £6.

**The Minister for Works:** Many of the road boards cannot control their own secre-

taries. See how many they have tried to put in gaol.

**Mr. J. H. SMITH:** That does not apply to the secretary of the local authority in my district. In any case, the Minister's remark is an insult to a big body of honourable men.

**The Minister for Works:** Some of them are good men, but some are bad, and you know it.

**Mr. J. H. SMITH:** If that is so, the department insists on a fidelity bond and, therefore, the department does not lose anything from that standpoint. It is all-important that more money should be made available for local authorities so that they can construct crossings over railways or bridges over creeks, particularly in the wet areas, thus enabling people who are producing commodities to convey them to the markets. We have been endeavouring to get a bridge erected at Southampton for a long time. There are 10 or 12 settlers there and the Minister agreed that the work should be carried out. I do not blame the Minister for the attitude he adopted in the later stages and I think the work will be carried out now. This instance, however, shows how an erroneous statement can make all the difference and prevent work being carried out after it has been approved. On the occasion of the Parliamentary visit to Balingup, the secretary of the road board came before the Acting Premier and spoke to him about the bridge. The Minister had approved of the work being done at a cost of about £1,000. The secretary came along without the assistance of any members of the board and, becoming confused at the cross questioning, said he thought the work could be done for £450. A shorthand note was taken of his statement and the Minister said he was not going to grant £800 or £900 for a job which the secretary said could be done for £450. I explained the matter to the Minister and he knows the full facts of the case.

**The Minister for Works:** Why do not you say I asked you to do the work for that money?

**Mr. J. H. SMITH:** It was impossible to do it for the money. That statement was made by the secretary. Everyone knew that it was a slip of the tongue. Eight miles east of Bridgetown two or three men have been settled across the river, which is in flood for five months out of the 12. These men were settled there at a cost of £1,500, besides the cost of implements and horses which the Repatriation Department had to pay for them, and they are isolated; they have no chance to get their produce to market. It is no wonder that men settled on the land fail in their efforts when the Government will not assist them to get their produce to market. The Repatriation Department promised to grant £100 towards the erection of a bridge and the settlers are prepared to provide the whole of the timber. All we ask for is a bridge costing £400, £500, or £600 which will withstand the floods. We do not want a lot of fancy or architectural work.

The Minister for Works: They do not build that sort of bridge. Why talk silly?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: We want something substantial. If the Minister will grant us £500, the bridge can be built with the assistance of the settlers.

The Minister for Works: How long since that request was made?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I understand the suggestion was made to the Works Department a considerable time ago by the progress association.

The Minister for Works: I shall ask you to get them to prove their words.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: They told me they had made the application.

The Minister for Works: You take every bit of tittle-tattle for gospel.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: My information came from the progress association, and the information should be reliable. If it proves to be incorrect I shall be prepared to make the amende honorable to the Minister.

The Minister for Works: You say they will provide the timber and £100? I say it is not true and you can tell them that.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I say distinctly it is true. The Repatriation Department promised £100. I have the correspondence.

The Minister for Works: That may be so, but they have not made the application to me. The statement is incorrect.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: It is not incorrect.

The Minister for Mines: If you can prove it you get your bridge; if not, you won't.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: That will satisfy me. I must impress upon the Government the necessity for assisting the people in the country.

Mr. O'Loughlen: How many settlers are there across the stream?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: There are about nine who cannot get their produce to market.

Mr. O'Loughlen: What are they growing?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: About 7,000 cases of fruit are grown in that vicinity and in addition they produce oats, pigs and cream.

The Minister for Agriculture: How wide is the river?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: About 70 yards.

The Minister for Works: What do you call the river?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The Blackwood, one of the finest rivers in the State. It is impossible to get around the hills, and bridges are essential. This river runs for about 200 miles as the crow flies.

The Colonial Secretary: Not as the crow flies; it wriggles about.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I know something in addition to rivers that wriggles about. I wish to stress the importance of this part of the State. It is unfair for the Premier to try to put a member off by referring to the fact that a lot of money is being expended in the South-West. I represent 4,000 electors, and all I can get out of the Premier is "You are getting your share. Look what we are spending south of Manjimup."

Mr. Lambert: Do you think you will get a bridge since you have twisted across to that side of the House?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Everybody on the Opposition side seemed to disown me, and I thought I would do better by joining the party representing the people who are creating the wealth of the country.

Mr. O'Loughlen: A little baby left on the doorstep; no one would pick you up.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I wish to stress the importance of giving more assistance through the Works Department to the people in the country. These are the people who are creating the wealth, and if they cannot get grants for roads and bridges, it will be impossible for them to make good.

Mr. PICKERING (Sussex) [9.9]: A matter of great urgency to group settlements, regarding which I was unable to obtain a definite reply from the Minister to a question I put recently, is that of the Margaret River-Flinders Bay railway. I would like an assurance from the Minister that he views this matter as one of urgency. The line that the Government purchased from Millar's was a bush line for timber haulage, and no particular attention was paid to grades and similar matters. I want an assurance that the Minister views this as an urgent matter. I would also like an assurance regarding the proposed abolition and amalgamation of road boards. Recently the Minister has given consideration to the advisableness of amalgamating certain road boards. There was an article in the "West Australian" yesterday morning pointing out how harshly the proposed amalgamation would hit the Guildford and Swan road boards. I think the action contemplated in my district will be equally harsh. According to a deputation in Perth recently, only one member of the board favoured abolition and amalgamation with another board. In view of that, the Minister should hesitate before he causes the amalgamation to take place. I refer to the Capel road board, which has been very efficient, and has carried out its work satisfactorily.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Can you tell us the revenue and expenditure, and the work it has done?

Mr. PICKERING: No, but it has done good work, and it has raised money, which with the assistance received from the Government, has resulted in the roads of the district being greatly improved.

Mr. O'Loughlen: So long as it is not dependent on Government grants.

Mr. PICKERING: Every board is more or less dependent on Government grants, but the amalgamation suggested would not lead to any more economical administration. I was glad to hear that the Minister realised the urgency of maintenance and repair work to public buildings. Wherever one goes, one is impressed with the necessity for expenditure in this direction. It does not need an architect to discern that nearly every building is in urgent need of repair, and it is false

economy to defer these repairs longer than necessary. The Minister should give immediate attention to the question of repairing the Ludlow bridge, which was destroyed by fire two or three years ago.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Has not that been rebuilt yet?

Mr. PICKERING: No, although repeated representations have been made to the Minister. Several bays of that bridge were destroyed, and the structure is impassable. Summer is approaching, and the need for that road will be great. Quite recently the member for Leederville (Capt. Carter) took a wrong turning, and found himself at this bridge, and unable to cross it.

Mr. O'Loughlen: The member for East Perth also took the wrong turning.

The Minister for Mines: He might be able to double back on his track, as the member for Leederville did.

Mr. PICKERING: To repair this bridge would not cost much, and the structure would be of great service to that part of the country.

Mr. O'Loughlen: And £25 would put the bridge right.

Mr. PICKERING: Is the Minister prepared to make an announcement as to the introduction of a main roads Bill this session?

The Minister for Works: Not this session. I had hoped it would be possible, but it is not. There is so much criticism by irresponsible people, that we cannot take these matters in hand.

Mr. PICKERING: I do not know to whom the Minister is referring, but it is time we had some system to deal with our main roads.

The Minister for Mines: He would not refer to you as irresponsible.

Mr. PICKERING: If it were the Minister for Mines, he might.

The Minister for Works: I was not referring to you.

Mr. PICKERING: A measure dealing with our main roads system is urgently needed. It is impossible for our main roads to be adequately dealt with at present.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I am afraid we have not the population to justify bringing in the Bill.

Mr. PICKERING: The sooner the Bill is introduced, the better it will be for the State. If we cannot deal with the whole of the State, we might deal with certain parts of it.

The Minister for Works: It could be done all right, but for the interference of some people.

Mr. PICKERING: The Victorian Act seems to work very satisfactorily.

The Minister for Works: There is a bigger population there.

Mr. PICKERING: That is so.

Mr. O'Loughlen: None of our country areas are so densely populated as they are in Victoria.

Mr. PICKERING: Parts of my electorate are well on the way towards being densely

populated. I congratulate the Minister for Works upon the good road work he is putting into the district.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Sweeten him up a little.

Mr. PICKERING: There are certain facilities that are essential to the successful development of the South-West, and I hope the Minister for Works will make this Bill one of the foremost for next session.

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS** (Hon. W. J. George—Murray-Wellington—in reply) [9.16]: I thank members for the way they have received these Estimates. The member for North-East Fremantle referred to the North-West Department, and paid a well-deserved compliment to the engineer, Mr. Tindale, who was connected with that part of the State for many years. He certainly knew his work very well. We now have a Minister for the North-West, and a Commissioner.

Mr. O'Loughlen: I am told that the Commissioner has a fleet of six motor cars and a large number of officers.

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS:** No doubt the Minister in charge of the department will know whether that statement is correct or not. Engineers are not as a rule given to swank of that sort. The hon. member also referred to the roads and bridges grant. I should like to see that grant increased. If I could get a larger vote for this purpose, I might be able to satisfy the requests of hon. members. There may be some requests that are not quite reasonable, but as a rule there is a good deal of foundation for them. It is a matter of regret to me that the financial position of the State will not permit of my giving roads and bridges to the extent I would like. When the vote connected with the State Implement Works comes before the Committee I shall be prepared to go further into that question. The member for Forrest referred to the delinquencies of the department generally, but remarked that the Minister could not have his eyes upon everything. It is certainly difficult to look after every detail. It is for members to say whether my services during the past six years have been of any value or not. The hon. member referred to school teachers employing local labour. It is true that a school teacher has the right to employ local labour and get certain work done.

Mr. O'Loughlen: It was not done in this case.

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS:** That has been the case for some time. I am opposed to men travelling about seeking for work. There was a supervisor in the department about four years ago who travelled from Albany to Merredin to look at two sheets of iron that had blown off a small building. After reporting on the damage he sent a man to have the job done. I sent for him and asked him why he did not put the iron on himself. I told him if I had been

there I would not have thought it degrading to have put it on myself.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Is he in the department now?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have no time for a man who thinks so much of his position that he will see the money of the State wasted rather than carry out a small job like that himself. I will make inquiries with regard to the Minnievale water supply matter. The member for Geraldton spoke about the Federal grant.

Mr. O'Loughlen: No member of the Opposition can get a penny of it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I will read out the list showing how the money was spent.

Mr. Lambert: Did Mr. Hughes say, "Give it to your supporters; it has worked well with me"??

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have no idea what Mr. Hughes said. The list is as follows—

Abba River roads, £4,000; Yandanooka, £1,200; Nungarin Crossing, Lake Brown, not started, £200; West Bending, not started, £500; Bending-Kondinin, £1,500; Pallinup, not started, £500; Cundinup-Jarrahood-Nannup, £1,400; Ninghan Board, construction of various roads, £500; Wyalcatchem-Koorda and Dukin roads construction, £500; Denmark, not started, £500; Kondinin-Kalgardin, £600; Northampton Board, grant to various roads, £300; Winchester-Carnamah, grant to Mingenew Road Board, various boards, £1,700; roads in Winchester area, £300; total £2,000; Moore River, £8,000; Glen Lynn bridge and road, £1,400; Peel Estate, road from Byford to Peel Estate, £5,000; Bateman Estate, road from Bateman's estate to Byford, £3,000; Maida Vale, £1,750; and Northam-Perth, £1,000.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Another supporter!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The people at Maida Vale are honest and hard-working citizens.

Mr. O'Loughlen: We do not say they are not.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: They are travelling from four to six miles further than they need do in order to get their products to market. This road will greatly reduce the distance they will have to cart their goods. If the men are there in order to make a living, they are entitled to a road. Why all this dog in the manger business?

Mr. O'Loughlen: You do not think it fair that the Opposition should get £100.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am not ashamed of the Maida Vale road.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Byford is in the Murray-Wellington electorate. The Opposition received £100 out of the Federal grant. I do not know who made the distribution.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Peel estate was purchased by the Government for the settlement of returned soldiers. There must be roads leading to it. The money was

given on the understanding that it would be used for purposes connected with returned soldiers.

Mr. Willecock: We can make out good cases for our districts, but get no money.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The question of Herdsman's Lake can be dealt with on the Loan Estimates.

Mr. O'Loughlen: It is not much good debating it. The money is spent. It seems most unfair.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The member for Brownhill-Ivanhoe mentioned the dam at St. Ives. Tenders have been called for nearly a fortnight for a price for the dam. Wherever we can get work done by tender, we do so. We do not want day labour, but there are times when we cannot get the work done by any other means. The hon. member belongs to the party whose main plank is that of day labour, but he does not mind if this work is done by contract.

Mr. Lutey: Your officers have been trotting all over the place, and have had plenty of opportunities to do the work.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The member for Nelson referred to a bridge in his electorate. This was to cost £800. The settlers undertook to find and cart to the ground all the timber required, and every arrangement was made for going on with the work. The Acting Premier, Mr. Colebatch, visited the district, and, while there, was waited on by the people and the secretary of the road board. That gentleman, who appeared to Mr. Colebatch to be the leader of the district, told him it was ridiculous to expend that amount of money on the bridge, as the road board could build a better bridge for £400. When the notes of the interview reached me, I invited the road board to build the bridge. The controversy has continued ever since, and the bridge has not been built. Were it not for the irresponsible interference by people who do not know anything about the work my department have to do, a great many of our undertakings would be finished before people had time to make complaints. No thing is done, and nothing is attempted to be done, without disgruntled people trying to attack it either with me or with some other Minister. If I flouted the opinions expressed and went on with the work, I would be called to account in this Chamber for wasting the State's money. The hon. member referred to a bridge to be built eight miles out of Bridgetown, and said that the Repatriation Department had offered a contribution of £100 towards the work, the settlers to provide the timber. Such a proposal has not reached my department in the form stated, and I know nothing about it. As to the survey of a line continuing right out to Margaret River and Augusta, the Engineer-in-Chief, who has been visiting the locality, returned to Perth last Monday, and is preparing his report. There is no question whatever that the survey will be done. We shall not blindly follow the line put down to suit the convenience of timber people. If we put a railway



down, it will be one which shall be economical for working. The hon. member referred to amalgamation of road boards. In one of our most influential papers there recently appeared an article which gave me the hardest pat on the back I have had for some time. That was in connection with the amalgamation of road boards. Such amalgamations have not been made out of pique or in a hurry. They have been well considered, and not a step has been taken without the people concerned being consulted. When my officers have come back with what appeared to be quite justifiable recommendations, it subsequently turned out that some of the people affected did not want amalgamation, and so they started an agitation about it.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Perhaps they did not know about it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Guildford people knew all about it for months. As regards Capel, there are three small boards each maintaining a secretary and doing bits of work more or less expensively.

Mr. O'Loughlen: The secretaries have not got full time salaries. One of them sells milk in addition, and catches a few opossums.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No doubt he gets the value of his work. The rates in one instance are just about enough to pay the secretary's salary and the office expenses. I felt that it was desirable to get a body of sufficient size to deal with, and one that could raise sufficient rates for the work to be done. I am sure that the amalgamation of the Capel, Bunbury, and Dardanup road boards would be better for the whole district. To say that the representation of the people is gone amounts to a simple absurdity. In this connection a deputation was introduced by the member for the district the other day. The deputation referred to the administration of the boards. I quietly got the departmental files and read out to the members of the deputation various things which had taken place in their districts and which the members of the road boards ought to have known about and prevented. That branch of the P.W.D. is doing good work throughout the State. My department is receiving the thanks of the great bulk of the road boards for the work that is being done. If we had more money available we would have more auditors and more frequent audits. There is an instance of a road board with a secretary and an assistant secretary losing the whole of its books. There have been defalcations of the funds of road boards. There is a case sub judice in which a member of a road board is called upon to answer certain things. In all classes and all walks of life there are people who make mistakes.

Mr. Heron: There are some road boards that have not seen an auditor for three years.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We had not the necessary auditors..

Mr. Heron: It is time you got some.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We lost one auditor by death, and we have experi-

enced great difficulty in obtaining qualified men.

Mr. Heron: There are plenty of unemployed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Special work can be done effectively only by men specially qualified to do it. There might be 100 auditors absolutely good as such, but of no use for this particular business. The member for Sussex also spoke about the Main Roads Bill. It is a disappointment to me that circumstances have been such as to prevent me from bringing that measure before Parliament. It is a modest measure, and one which would, I am quite satisfied, have done some good. However, there are in Western Australia a lot of people who, because a thing is small, object to tackling it or dealing with it. They are people who fail to see that a child has to be born before it can grow to be a man. If the Main Roads Bill were passed we should, before a couple of years were gone, hear people declaring that the foundations were there for a bigger measure. However, we cannot afford to borrow a million of money; and that is the amount which one of the associations has put down as a *sine qua non*.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: But the associations are not here: you should have brought the Bill here.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I will search for the river 200 miles long that goes rippling around Western Australia, as mentioned by the member for Nelson. On the whole I have to thank hon. members for the manner in which they have received my estimates. I know their anxiety is to assist a Minister in carrying out the work of his department. I do not take any of the criticisms as personal. I accept it as designed to bring to the attention of the Minister matters which he may not have observed and which others have observed.

Item, Roads and bridges throughout the State, including subsidies to road boards for maintenance of roads, bridges, dams, wells, and general public conveniences which have been provided by the State, £26,000:

Mr. WILLCOCK: A serious protest should be made against the allocation of this item, which represents a downright scandal. The manner in which the Minister hoodwinked several members as to the grant will not, I hope, be seen here again. In this connection I asked questions extending over three months, and received replies that the matter was under consideration and that when the money was available the grant would be made. In my opinion, the Minister for Works deliberately hoodwinked members.

The Minister for Works: That is not correct.

Mr. WILLCOCK: That is my opinion, and I express it. If a member asks questions here, and receives answers intimating that a certain grant will be made when the money is available, and then finds a month later that all the money has been allocated by another Minister, it is an intolerable position. We were never

informed that the Minister for Works was not dealing with this matter at all. Apparently the whole thing was settled in a hole-and-corner manner between the Premier and Mr. McLarty of the Soldier Settlement Scheme. After asking questions extending over a period of 11 weeks, and being continually put off, we eventually learn that the Premier did the whole thing off his own bat.

The Minister for Works: That is not correct.

The Minister for Mines: The money has not been spent.

Mr. WILLCOCK: But it has been allocated.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Can we get some of it?

The Minister for Mines: Well, make a case.

Mr. WILLCOCK: It is a case of those getting in first receiving grants. Members on this side of the Chamber did not know the Premier was dealing with the matter, and there was nothing to indicate that the Premier was dealing with it. The Minister for Works did not say that the Premier would deal with the matter.

The Minister for Works: Nobody asked me the question.

Mr. WILLCOCK: The whole thing has been hidden away. The first I knew about it was a paragraph in a local paper stating that a certain road board had been granted a subsidy. I want to be treated straightforwardly. This business has been done entirely under the lap. The Minister for Works has been used by the Premier as a catspaw to hoodwink members on this side..

Mr. Teesdale: He gets a nice wad himself.

Mr. WILLCOCK: Of course he does. It is an absolute scandal. Although we have been making representations to the Minister for Works, he has taken no notice of us.

The Premier: I have taken particular notice of you.

Mr. WILLCOCK: Yes, and seen to it that we on this side get no more than £100 out of the £32,000. I hope we shall not be treated in this way again.

The Premier: The Peel estate swallowed the lot.

Mr. McCallum: The Peel estate did not get any.

Mr. WILLCOCK: The amount was furnished for the relief of unemployed soldiers, but the Premier took it all and put it down in the South-West.

Mr. Money: None of it in my electorate.

Mr. WILLCOCK: I want to know whether this policy of spoils to the victors is to be perpetuated. A gross injustice was done to electorates represented by members on this side.

Mr. Harrison: Members on these benches were treated in the same way.

The PREMIER: I am surprised at the remarks of the hon member, who represents a large town. He knows that the money had to be spent on roads, and could not be allocated to a municipality. It would be utterly ridiculous to take this money and split it up into 50 lots so that every member, including

the member for Perth, should have a share, whether it was wanted or not.

Mr. Lutey: We had unemployed soldiers up our way, and they wanted the money for roads.

The PREMIER: We have made all the roads in the hon. member's district.. This money was not sent over here to be divided up amongst members, but was intended to be spent in the best possible way.

Mr. O'Loughlen: To relieve unemployment amongst returned soldiers.

The PREMIER: Of the total amount, £3,000 is to be spent on Moore River roads, £2,000 on the Midland Company's land, some at Northampton, some on the eastern wheat belt, and some on the keel estate. The money has been allocated in the best possible way.

Mr. McCallum: Have the Government carried out the work, or have they allotted the money to the road boards?

The PREMIER: For the most part we have carried out the work. More money from this grant has been spent in the hon. member's electorate than anywhere else.

Mr. McCallum: According to the Minister for Works, none of it was spent in my electorate.

The PREMIER: There was a sum of £5,000 for the Peel estate, which is in the hon. member's electorate.

Mr. McCallum: That road was to Bate-man's estate.

The PREMIER: If the member for Geraldton has an urgent work, he should let us know where the road is.

Mr. Willcock: The Minister for Works knows. He was inundated with correspondence about it.

The PREMIER: We will still consider the matter if the hon. member can show that the road is urgently needed, but we are not going to do road board work.

Mr. O'Loughlen: I have three roads in my electorate, all in new country, yet I cannot get a shilling for them.

The PREMIER: The hon. member gets all he wants. Nobody gets any more. We have to spend the money where it will do the most good. Nothing better could be done than we have done.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Have you any of the money left?

The PREMIER: The hon. member will give notice of that question. No advantage can be given to members on this side.

Mr. Heron: They get it, just the same.

The PREMIER: The hon. member has perfect roads in his electorate, and a very rich road board also. If any hon. member can put up a good case he may still be accommodated, but it will have to be a very good case. No one can say the money has not been thoroughly well allocated.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I cannot see that the member for Geraldton has much to complain about. He should remember that the Government have had a very troublesome time, and that it was necessary to placate some of their supporters.

The Premier: That is a miserable insinuation to make.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: We know from the list read out to-night that none had better consideration than members of the cross-benches. Of course, the member for Bunbury did not get any of this money, because his vote is sure. So, too, with the member for Roebourne. But it was necessary for the Government to keep outside supporters quiet.

The Premier: The member for Sussex did not ask for this vote in his electorate; it was part of the settlement scheme.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Possibly had I been in the Premier's position I would have done as he did. Many members on this side represent country districts, embracing thousands of miles of road, yet amongst us all we get a paltry £100. I could have done very well with a share of the money.

The Premier: Next time you come to me for money I will refuse you.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Some of the local boards in my district expected something. The grant to Maida Vale, adjoining the metropolitan area, gave rise to requests from other semi-metropolitan districts. I told my electors that this grant was made by the Commonwealth for the express purpose of being spent in country districts. Therefore, the grant which was made to Maida Vale should not have been given to that district. I hope when the £26,000 comes to be distributed those members on this side of the House, who will be able to put up a good case, will receive their fair share from the vote.

Item, Hospitals and charitable institutions, £1,761:

Mr. LUTEY: I draw attention to the fact that the Kalgoorlie hospital is in a bad state of repair and needs renovating and painting. There is no money on the Estimates for this work.

The Minister for Works: A sum has been set apart for hospital repairs generally.

Vote put and passed.

Department of Mines, Forests and Police (Hon. J. Scaddan, Minister.)

Vote—Mines Department, £62,910:

The MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. J. Scaddan—Albany) [10.5]: The Mines Department activities have not changed materially during the last few years, and for the coming year the vote is to all intents and purposes exactly the same as that of last year, except perhaps that we propose to spend £2,774 less. Hon. members can accept the assurance from me that the estimated reduction is an honest estimate in view of the fact that last year we showed a slight reduction on the expenditure of the previous year, and succeeded in getting through the year with less than the amount we asked for. I could detain hon. members at length by referring to the activities of the department, but I did that fairly extensively on the Address-in-reply and there is now very little for me to add except to say that during the last

few months there has been evidence of a slight revival in some of the districts which had given the appearance of being on the wane. I hope it will be something approaching permanency in the way of a revival. At the same time one must recollect we are at the moment, as indeed is the case in all mining parts of the world, suffering from difficulties over which we have no control, difficulties which are due to war conditions and the aftermath of the war. We know that it has not been possible to secure capital which is so essential in connection with an industry of this kind.

Mr. Munsie: Is there anything in the articles which have been published recently about the gold steal by the Commonwealth?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: We had better leave that to be thrashed out on the public platform between those who have been writing about it and the Federal authorities. For a great period after the declaration of war, while every other commodity was going up, gold was not receiving anything in the nature of its export parity, but was being taken by the Federal authorities, under their undoubted rights under the Constitution, and the gold was being retained in the vaults of the Treasury to a considerable extent. Some was exported where it was absolutely necessary to do so, and the money required for our own purposes was circulated on the basis of two or three pound notes to each sovereign collected. It is known that during the period of the war we were actually coining in the Perth Mint 320,000 sovereigns each month. I did not see many of them except when I paid a visit to the Mint. The sovereigns were removed to Melbourne and controlled there, and many of the financial institutions were lent money through the Federal Treasury, the advances being based on the gold we were producing in Western Australia and depositing with them. That may have led the people to declare that the Federal authorities were responsible for what is called the gold steal.

Mr. Munsie: As a matter of fact they did make a big profit out of it.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Unquestionably, and in my capacity as Minister I express the opinion that the Federal authorities should show their gratitude to the industry that stood to them, by rendering some assistance to it in the hope of reviving it and putting it on its pre-war basis. The time has arrived when the Federal Government should show their appreciation by doing something for the industry which did so much for them. The vote on the ordinary revenue Estimates is merely for administration. The actual expenditure in the way of assistance to the industry will be provided for on the Loan Estimates. When those Estimates are before hon. members I shall have an opportunity of saying something about them.

Mr. Pickering: Can you tell us anything about the report of the new gold find which was published to-day.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That report was supplied to us by the leader of the prospecting party and it can be taken as reliable. I have not yet the complete report, but I can say that the prospecting party did magnificent work. This was brought about by the introduction of a different method of prospecting. It is all very well for an individual to believe he knows where he can find certain minerals. We have rendered such persons assistance in the way of sustenance and equipment to carry out their work, but the fact remains that it is easy for these men to pass over a country that should be prospected, in order to reach those parts where they desire to go. In many cases, these men work upon their own ideas and go to a country where, if they knew something of rock formations and occurrences, they would know that operations would merely result in the wastage of our money. In the case of the prospecting party, however, they were sent out with definite information as to where they should go and what they could expect to find. They were successful because of the information that was available to them and because they were men with practical, as well as theoretical knowledge.

Mr. Pickering: Did they rely upon geological examination?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes. We frequently hear complaints about geologists knowing something about theory but being without practical knowledge, in which case, it is asserted, they cannot be relied upon. Geologists, however, know that rock formations are brought about owing to certain conditions, and that under certain conditions, certain rocks are found side by side. On one occasion, a striking illustration of this came under my notice during my term of office. It was represented to me that a certain rock was found in the core of a boring at the south end of Boulder. When the Government Mineralogist examined the core, he declared that it was absolutely impossible for the rock to have come from that part of the field, because this particular rock could not be found side by side with the other rock formations found in the core. We further examined the matter and put down a bore alongside the one from which the core had been taken in order to satisfy ourselves on the point. This showed that the core submitted to the department was evidently a fake. That demonstrates that the geologist can determine with certainty, when given the conditions, that specified rocks can be or cannot be found in various localities. It enables them to say what may be expected in those localities. The prospecting party went out with knowledge that was available to them, and, as a result of their prospecting along modern lines, I hope, equally with members generally, that the results of the expedition will be found in a discovery of some value to the State and the districts traversed in particular. The prospecting party had to return owing to lack of water supplies. When it is time to go out again, I hope the prospecting board will agree to the party being adequately

equipped to follow up previous discoveries. These may not be quite so valuable as anticipated, but, on the other hand, they can quite easily be more valuable than indicated at present. Owing to the history of gold discovery in Western Australia, it will readily be understood that we cannot accept surface indications as reliable one way or another.

Mr. Pickering: Can you give us any later information regarding oil?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I have no further information than has been published. As I receive reports from companies carrying out boring operations, they are made available immediately for publication. I have no additional information to what has already appeared in the Press. During the year we made slight efforts to amalgamate some of our sub-departments in order to bring about economy in administration. Had it been possible to carry out the amalgamation to a greater extent, I would have liked to do so, but the housing accommodation is not available to enable those alterations. The Mines Department occupies a building in Murray-street; the Government Geologist is in a building in Beaufort-street; the Government Analyst is in Wellington-street, and the Machinery Department is housed in the Public Works buildings in George-street. The separation of the sub-departments which are under one Ministerial head, make it expensive from the point of view of staffing. They are difficult to control from one head office. I hope that we shall be able to find accommodation for the sub-departments under one roof for, as they are at present, separate clerical staffs have to be provided and in some cases work has to be duplicated in order to have information readily at hand in the several sub-departments. It is difficult as things are now to consult with the technical officers and to have a grasp of the workings of all sub-departments. Certain records have to be duplicated in order that they may be readily at hand for use in the various departments. We will not be able to get over our difficulties until the new post office is completed and occupied. It may then be possible to house the sub-departments in one central building and thus help to secure economy by way of further amalgamation. We have amalgamated the offices of the Government Mineralogist and the Government Analyst. More economy and better administration should be obtained as the result of the amalgamation, and further improvements can be secured when the departments are concentrated under one roof and under one immediate control. The amalgamation of these two sub-departments alone should mean more effective administration and will obviate a certain amount of duplicated work. As to the inspection of machinery branch, I endeavoured after the passing of the recent Inspection of Machinery Act to introduce fees by way of regulations which, while not pressing harshly on those receiving the services, would at least pay the cost of the administration of the department.

Mr. Heron: It costs £7 7s. to go to Gwalia to inspect machinery.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: In that case, it cost £7 7s. to send an inspector to Gwalia to make a special inspection in a specified time.

Mr. Heron: It was not a special inspection.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It was. Frequently the inspection is carried out for the convenience of the owners who ask for a special inspection of plant, boilers, and so on. Very often the inspection has to be carried out quite apart from the ordinary routine operations of the inspectors and, as a result, they have to go back over their tracks at considerable expense. Particularly would this be so in the case of an outlying district like Gwalia and it is certainly fair that those who require the services should recoup us for the outlay. If we make the inspection in the ordinary round of the inspector's duty, we charge only the fees specified in the regulations.

Mr. Heron: In the Gwalia case there was no request for a special inspection.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I think the hon. member is wrong. The inspection was requested for a specific purpose and it was quite out of the ordinary routine inspection of the district. It was asked to be done within a certain period and we had to go to considerable expense to carry it out. The department should be recouped for that expense, and those who receive the services should pay for them rather than that the cost should be a tax on the general community. All that the department asked was that the people receiving services should pay for them. On two occasions now, another place has disallowed the regulations framed under the Act and they have gone so far as to carry a resolution that the fees, before the regulations will be approved by that Chamber, must be reduced by 30 per cent. That is an absurdity, but the fact remains that another place has gone far beyond what was intended regarding Parliamentary control over the finances. In effect, the second Chamber has gone to the extent of framing regulations because members there have provided that we must not charge fees beyond a certain amount. While, on the one hand, they complain against the Government and the finances of the State, when an attempt is made to make people pay for services rendered, the matter is taken out of the hands of the Government and the regulations are disallowed on behalf of a few owners of big plants, particularly on the goldfields. Some members drew attention to things that were absolutely ridiculous. Certain forms of machinery were brought into the Chamber and it was stated that they would come under the regulations and certain fees would have to be charged for inspections. As a matter of fact, those things did not come under the Act at all and the regulations could not possibly have been applied to them. This was done for the purpose of hiding the real issue which affected the

large plants on which the lives of men were dependent. It is absolutely necessary that such machinery should be inspected, and that those owning the machinery requiring the inspections should recoup the department so as to relieve the general taxpayer of that burden. The Government have taken on greater responsibilities and more work, in consequence of the passage of the Act. All we asked was that the fees should pay for the cost of service rendered, and the running of the department. We proposed to increase the revenue to the extent of £2,000 per annum. That was made up by the additional fees to be collected on account of the inspection of machinery. Last year we lost about £2,000, and we merely set out to balance the financial aspect of the department's work. Now another place is taking a stand, indicating what the fees must be before that House will pass the regulations. We will have to reduce the Estimates in consequence of the action of another place. We are forced, therefore, into one of two positions. Either we must knuckle down and allow the department to go on doing work at a loss, which will have to be borne by the general community, or we must refuse to render services which, it is recognised in every civilised community, are essential in the interests of the public. I am not certain what will happen, but I raise my protest against the action of another place under this heading. That branch of the Legislature will not allow a day to pass without making an attack on the Government because of the financial position to-day. Yet when it comes to a matter of charging fees for work carried out for these individuals, the Legislative Council say they will refuse to pass the regulations unless the fees are reduced by 30 per cent. As it is to-day, we cannot charge a fee for the inspection of plant in any part of the State. It is contrary to the Constitution which sets out that this Chamber shall control matters of finance. That is all I propose to say on these Estimates. The reduction indicated is merely in connection with administrative costs, and has nothing to do with the development of the mining industry. While the Estimates show a decrease of £2,744, that is done without in any way retarding the efficiency of the department. It is largely a question of reorganising the different departments, and in reducing the staffs in some cases. The reduction is brought about by that means without in any way impairing efficiency. In some cases we have, if anything, improved the efficiency of control and administration by the amalgamation of the two sub-departments.

Mr. Lutey: How is the new copper process getting on?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: We have made check tests, one recently at the School of Mines, and it was extremely satisfactory from the point of view of the reduction of oxidised copper ore. The question of sulphide ore, such as would probably be found to a large extent in the Phillips River district, is

one for further test. I had an opportunity at Kalgoorlie last week of seeing a test on a small scale at the Kalgoorlie School of Mines. I arrived there at 2.15 p.m., when the test commenced, and left at 3 o'clock. I returned at 5 o'clock, and had placed in my hands a small ingot of copper ready for putting on the market. The whole process had been completed in that short period, which is evidence of its value. If the mechanical side is satisfactory and economical—it is accepted by all chemists who have inquired into it—we can expect to receive a good deal of advantage from its operation in Western Australia, and probably throughout Australia in the near future, but certain tests have yet to be made to complete the mechanical side, and these are at present being undertaken. I hope they will prove equally successful as the chemical side.

Mr. LAMBERT (Coolgardie) [10.32]: I hope the importance and value of the mining industry will not be overlooked. No doubt mining has played and will play a very important part in the commercial life of the State, and for this reason it should, side by side with the other industries which are receiving attention from the Government, be given its measure of support. One often hears that the Mines Department are not doing this or that, but I must say that, speaking for my district, every reasonable proposition put up to the department has invariably received favourable consideration. It is true that all the propositions put up have not been favourably received, but we have very little to complain of. In justification of the assistance given I would like to mention two or three significant instances. The Carbine mine at Kununalling in 1903 received assistance to the extent of £800 which was repaid in October of 1906. Since that date over 33,000 ozs. of gold has been produced, worth approximately £140,000. The Lady Evelyn at Ora Banda commenced operations in 1920 and was granted £300. Only £216 was drawn and in a comparatively short time that mine produced about £1,000 worth of gold. The Star of Fremantle at Kununalling received a loan of £300 in July, 1912, and that loan was repaid in 1922. That mine has produced about £1,200 worth of gold. In many other instances the Mines Department have been active in my district. It is due to the sympathetic treatment of the industry that we have witnessed many favourable developments recently. There are signs of revival. Some little time ago the Lloyd George Mine at Bulla Bulling was granted a sum of money, and a pipe line was put in, and the results to date have fully justified the decision of the department to render that assistance. There is every possibility of this mine developing into a very important gold producer. We should have some revision of the charges levied for water, especially now that the sinking fund has practically extinguished the loan. The scheme has, to a large extent, been paid for by the goldfields, and now that the loan is about repaid the scheme should be

used to its fullest extent to supply cheap water to the mines which have a chance to develop into payable producers. The last few years have hit the gold mining industry badly. Western Australia did not receive the corresponding advantage of the parity price of gold during the war, and the industry was hit by the ever-increasing charges for stores and other essentials. It is only right that some adjustment should be made so that the industry may reap a corresponding advantage. Western Australia is not receiving the slightest advantage from the high protection afforded manufacturers in the Eastern States, and the gold mining industry is being severely handicapped by the indirect taxation extorted to keep Eastern States industries going. If we as a State were receiving some corresponding benefit, we might recompense the industry, but it is impossible for the State to recompense the industry for the big impost levied on all the requirements for the production of gold. All possible courtesy and consideration have been extended to me by the Mines Department, particularly by the Under Secretary, and the expert staff of the Geological Department, and I think this has been the experience of other members. I hope the Minister will not hesitate in his duty to the goldfields and the industry, but will ask the Treasurer for as great an amount as he can possibly provide. Now that we have surmounted the difficulties of the war period, when inflated costs so retarded the industry, together with the period of unrest and of depletion of mine workers, I hope we shall witness a revival. Evidence of solid development work is not wanting, and if the Government do their duty to the industry in and around Kalgoorlie, Boulder, and Coolgardie and the districts adjacent to the water scheme, some of the lower grade mines will be encouraged. The move to amalgamate some of the offices is a good one. We have some very capable officers in the Geological section, particularly the head chemist and some of his assistants, and the amalgamation of the offices and the co-ordination of the work should lead to considerable economy and efficiency. The Mines Department should undertake a tabulation of all information in connection with milling, reduction and manufacturing machinery necessary to market many of our minerals. There are big magnesite deposits on the Eastern Goldfields and it is a great pity that they have been neglected. This mineral in its calcine state is commanding £16 to £18 per ton on the English market, and it should be possible to place it on board at Fremantle at remunerative rates. Almost every day I have people coming to me inquiring regarding the different methods and machinery used to manufacture these minerals into marketable products, and it would surprise members to know how many things we are importing could be manufactured here and exported to the Eastern States. There are in the State deposits of barytes, plumbago, asbestos, etc., all of which could be developed. The best possible information should be obtained for the holders of some of

our mineral leases, and it would not cost the Government a great deal to get it. To any man who is embarking upon an industry of this nature, tabulated information with respect to it would be of considerable value. In securing the information inquiries might be extended to England and America. Everything possible should be done to lessen the possibility of failure, which so often occurs in the initial stages of developing some of our minerals.

Mr. McCallum: Members of the Country Party are not paying much attention to mining. I call attention to the state of the Committee.

Quorum formed.

Mr. LAMBERT: I hope some vigorous policy of boring for coal will be pursued. From reports I have read I should say there was every possibility of big developments in our coal mining in the near future. The question is one which should receive the attention of the department. It must be gratifying to people in this State that they have been able to read from time to time authentic reports by experts as to the possibility of striking payable oil. There is, however, a large number of pessimists in the community, chiefly the know-alls of St. George's-terrace. Although I deprecate anything in the nature of a boom, I do think the Government should take into consideration the important scientific opinions that have been expressed upon this question. It is not an easy matter to induce capital to take up ventures of this kind; indeed, it is not easy to get capital for any of our industries.

Hon. P. Collier: There is a new company floating off blocks for oil in a wholesale manner.

Mr. LAMBERT: So long as that sort of thing is confined within reasonable limits and the money raised is used for developmental and boring purposes, I do not think any difficulties should be placed in the way of it. If we miss the opportunity afforded by the interest at present taken in this question, it may be difficult to get that money which is so essential to the development of our possible oil resources. It is important that everything should be done to prove or disprove the existence of oil. I admit that unusually large prospecting areas have been granted to people, but with the safeguard surrounding these licenses it should be possible to ensure that the requisite amount of work is done upon those areas. If necessary, the money that is being spent by the speculating public in this direction should be supplemented by the Government with a view to determining whether oil exists or not. Some of the departmental officers, Mr. Blatchford and others, who have a general knowledge of the conditions under which oil occurs, have gone up north, and seem to be impressed by the prospects there. I should like to see a really good oil geologist brought to the State by the Government.

Hon. P. Collier: A field expert, I have heard him called.

Mr. LAMBERT: The indications of oil are so clear and definite, and have been so favourably mentioned by other experts, that it behoves the Government to do everything possible in a legitimate way to assist in proving whether oil exists or not. If the Government spent £100,000 in this direction it would be money well spent. It would not cost a great deal to bring out an oil expert, and if he came the general public would have the benefit of his advice and knowledge.

The Minister for Mines: Where would you suggest we should get such a man?

Mr. LAMBERT: We could get a good man from America.

The Minister for Mines: It would be a risky business to get an oil geologist from America. He might be interested in the Standard Oil Co., for instance. It has been suggested before that we had men in Australia who have come here for the purpose of declaring that we cannot find oil.

Mr. LAMBERT: I know that. In four instances in Southern Peru ample supplies of oil were struck in the bores, but these are closed down to-day. The same thing might happen in Australia if the opportunity presented itself. Opposition people are able to hold up big oil concessions in Peru. It is not likely that large sums of money will be spent in developing the oil resources there when these people are already controlling the large deposits in North America. It is therefore necessary that the Minister should act with caution. It is possible that an expert might be obtained through the Anglo-Persian Oil Company, in which the Imperial and Federal Governments are interested.

The Minister for Mines: If oil were found in the Kimberleys, might not the discovery come into competition with the Anglo-Persian Company?

Mr. LAMBERT: That is possible.

The Minister for Mines: Do you think it likely that company would supply a man to assist in bringing that about?

Mr. LAMBERT: That is for the Minister to consider. We recently had a visit from a Russian oil man named De Hautpick. He seemed to have good credentials, and to speak with a certain amount of authority. We might be able to get a man who could throw considerable light upon the possibilities of successful oil operations in the Kimberleys. I am sure that the Minister would receive the support of all members if he took the step I have suggested and brought out a really competent expert to go into this question. I hope the Minister for Mines will never cease to impress upon the Treasurer—who has shown some little interest in recent developments of gold mining here—the necessity for granting the mining industry monetary assistance in directions where chances of payable development have been proved to exist. I trust that hon. members who are seized of the importance of gold mining to Western Australia will impress upon the Government the need for developing the low grade deposits which undoubtedly exist on the Eastern Goldfields, and which could be developed with cheaper

water. The time has long gone by when there should have been an equitable revision of water rates on the Eastern Goldfields. Unless the Government are prepared to extend to gold mining, and the utilisation of water by that industry, the same favourable consideration as has been granted to agricultural they can only expect the present backward tendency in gold mining to continue.

Mr. MUNSIE (Hannans) [11.4]: I am glad the Minister for Mines recognises that there really is something in the alleged "gold steal" from Western Australia. I agree with him that probably the details of the question would be better fought out on the public platform. I do not believe that anybody, even Senator Pearce himself, denies that a substantial advantage resulted to the Federal Government from their compliance with the request—to put it mildly—of the Imperial Government to prohibit the export of gold. No one, I think, denies that that prohibition resulted in a profit of hundreds of thousands of pounds to the Commonwealth Government. The Minister for Mines says that the Federal Government, if they desire to see things get back to normal, should give some assistance to this State's mining industry. I would ask the Minister, has he ever approached the Federal Government for assistance?

The Minister for Mines: One never asks a favour when one is certain that it will be refused.

Mr. MUNSIE: If one does not ask, one will never receive. Other Governments and other industries have appealed to the Federal Government for assistance. While many requests have been refused, some have been conceded. It is up to the Federal Government to assist our mining industry, seeing what that industry has meant to the Federal Government.

Mr. Marshall: If they would only let the industry alone, we would be satisfied.

Mr. MUNSIE: After the big profits have cut out, the Federal Government naturally are getting out. Some people argue that the Commonwealth made nothing out of the prohibition of export of gold. For two or three years, however, the experts in the East argued with representatives of this State specially sent to Melbourne for the purpose of making representations to the Federal Government as to export of gold, that profitable export was impossible, that gold was at a standard price, and that we could not obtain a better price for our gold even if we were permitted to export it. That argument was maintained for two years. Eventually the Commonwealth agreed to let us export gold, and the price of gold went up from about £4 10s. to £6 per oz. I do not know what the Government of this State are doing, or whether they are doing anything, regarding a supply of explosives for Western Australia. The tariff just enacted by the Federal Parliament puts an extra duty of 5 per cent. on South African fracteur as against British fracteur. In this

connection I read with great interest the evidence given by Mr. Ede before the Tariff Commission at Kalgoorlie. The figures adduced by that gentleman were astounding. They show what the combine in explosives has meant to Western Australian gold mining. Had it not been for the three years' contract made with South Africa for supplies of explosives after the outbreak of war, it would have been utterly impossible for our mines to continue working during the war, notwithstanding the fact that gold was so very valuable and was so much needed by the British Government. Immediately upon the termination of the war the whole of the explosives manufacturers of Europe and England were formed into one joint concern. There is now no other concern manufacturing explosives. It is said that the combine in question have started a branch establishment in Melbourne, and that is the reason given for the imposition of a duty on explosives. Either the Great Boulder or the Ivanhoe mine would use more than the annual output of the branch in question. The position would not be so bad if the Commonwealth Parliament had not put the extra 5 per cent. on the explosives of the South African company which supplied us in our time of need. I do not know whether the State Government can do anything in this connection, but if they can they should. Apparently the only aspect of mining in which anybody takes an interest is that of wages. Wages, we are told, are too high, and must come down before mining can again be successful. If people would only read the evidence given before the Tariff Commission by that Kalgoorlie gentleman, they would cease talking in that strain. The evidence proved conclusively that import duties and the increased cost of mining requisites total more than double the increase in wages cost. If the Government of this State can do anything in the matter—and I have always held the opinion that they can—they should go even to the extent of constituting themselves the sole importers of fracteur into Western Australia. It is the duty of the Government to approach the Commonwealth Government to see if they will assist in any direction. The Commonwealth Government in turn should approach the Imperial Government to do something in the interests of mining in Australia. If we take the statistics of the world to-day in connection with gold mining, it will be seen that the industry is on the decline everywhere. If the output of gold decreases during the next decade to the extent it decreased during the past decade, it will mean that the British Empire will have to alter its method of finance altogether. It cannot possibly continue on the basis of gold currency. Instead of costing from £6 to £8 per ounce to produce the gold as it does now, should the industry decline to a still further extent during the next decade, it will cost £20 per ounce to produce. That cannot possibly be done unless assistance is given to the industry so that the gold currency may be maintained. Serious representations should be made to the au-



thorities on that point. The chief inspector at Kalgoorlie has gone to considerable trouble in getting out the details regarding the working and output of the different mines which are now closed down. I believe sufficient evidence could be provided from his reports regarding the amount of gold produced, the value of the money involved in the mines which are now closed down and the amount necessary to permit operations to be continued in those mines, to enable a good case to be made out. Many of these mines are payable gold-bearing properties, but have had to be closed down pending the raising of additional capital to continue operations. If it were represented to the British Government that the request for assistance was in the interests of the Empire as a whole, I believe some consideration would be given to the request. Money spent in connection with many gold-mining propositions in Western Australia would be productive of much good. I will mention one of at least 50 mines which the chief inspector has dealt with. The Queen Margaret Mine at Bulong is at present closed down, and the water in the shaft is within 30 feet of the surface. It would be impossible to open up the mine by means of the old shaft, even if the water were pumped out. I know the main shaft, and worked on it when it was being sunk. The mine can be worked again, in my opinion, only by sinking a new shaft at least a thousand feet in depth. In that mine the one shoot of gold was followed from the surface to 750 feet in depth, and on the underlay it was followed for a distance of 1,300 feet. The shoot of gold was still showing at the end of the shaft when operations had to be suspended. In fact, the best patch of gold they struck in that mine was secured at the bottom when the mine was closed. It is a matter of impossibility for a small company to operate the mine. It requires a large amount of capital. The Commonwealth Government, in view of the benefits they have derived from the gold mining industry of Australia, should assist us in the direction I have indicated, and give us back something of what they have taken away from us in taxation, for years past. I congratulate the Minister on the result of the working of the prospecting board. I hope the results achieved by the prospecting party recently returned to Perth will be as advantageous as is anticipated. It will mean a good thing for Western Australia if the gold bearing country which is reported upon, is opened up and more mines established. I hope the anticipations of the party prove to be true. In any case, I trust that when water supplies are again available, the Minister will not hesitate to give the assistance necessary to enable the party to go out and further prospect the fields. The one reported upon by the prospecting party is not the only one that can properly be prospected. There is one other matter to which I desire to draw attention, and it can be dealt with in the

regulations. It is customary that after a man has pegged out a prospecting area and it has been granted to him, he may work the claim for three months, or perhaps for only two or three weeks. Then the man abandons it, and in the course of time the area may be taken over by someone else. Not knowing it is a prospecting area, the newcomer as a result of his work, may find payable ore. The original prospector then comes along and lodges an injunction to prevent the second party from continuing operations. In many cases the second party has had to leave the claim because he has not applied for the forfeiture of the prospecting area. Regulations should be framed so that, in the event of a prospector abandoning his area, he forfeits the area, and he should have no further claim to it. I trust the Minister will look into that matter. There was an instance south of Bulong. A second party came along and found that it was a payable proposition. They worked the proposition and sunk several pot holes, from which they took 19 tons of material which went 200 ounces over the plates. When that result was made known, the original holder of the prospecting area lodged an injunction against the prospectors to prevent them from working the lease any further. It has held up operations for three months, and it was only last week that the decision was given that enabled the men to go back and resume work. In this instance, the men who took up the lease subsequently were able to establish themselves on the claim, but in other cases, men who originally had the claim have been able to secure the leases again, because those who worked them subsequently did not apply for forfeiture.

Progress reported.

## BILL—LAND TAX AND INCOME TAX.

### Second Reading.

The PREMIER (Hon. Sir James Mitchell—Northam) [11.22]: in moving the second reading said: The Bill merely imposes the tax which already exists.

Mr. Munsie: It should not do so, for the income tax is quite unfair.

The PREMIER: The Bill re-enacts existing legislation, with an additional clause providing that the tax must be paid in one instalment. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

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

## BILL—LAND AND INCOME TAX ASSESSMENT AMENDMENT.

### Second Reading.

The PREMIER (Hon. Sir James Mitchell—Northam) [11.23] in moving the second reading said: The Bill contains several pro-

posed amendments. There is the usual provision relating to income from dividends. It is necessary now that this should be a permanent enactment, and, consequently, it finds a place in the Bill. There is nothing new in that, except that it is now in the assessment measure for the first time. We have introduced it here because, if the taxing Bill were to fail to pass, we should be in difficulties about it. Clause 3 contains a consequential amendment. There is another amendment: Last year, it will be remembered, an amendment was made extending from two years to three years the time during which a refund could be claimed. That amendment was made in only one place, whereas it should have been made in two. Hence Clause 4 of the Bill. If a man has a reasonable claim for a refund, there is in equity no reason why it should not be made at any time. Then there is another consequential amendment: Last year's Bill contained a provision defining the due date for the payment of tax as 30 days after service of notice. That was added to Section 53 of the Act. The words appear also in Section 54, where they are not required. Clause 5 provides that Section 54 shall be amended accordingly.

Mr. Munsie: What about amending that section to provide for deducting expenses incurred in earning the income?

The PREMIER: It is very difficult to meet the wishes of hon. members in respect of that section. It is already provided that if, for instance, a doctor travels from his home to his surgery he cannot deduct any expenses, whereas if he goes into the country to see a patient his expenses are deductible. Similarly, a workman living in Subiaco, whose work is in Fremantle this month and somewhere else next month, can deduct the cost of travelling. However, that does not mean exemption for a man who, living in Cottesloe and working in Perth, travels to and fro each day by train or by motor car.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: A man travelling by motor car gets a deduction.

The PREMIER: No.

Mr. Munsie: A man living in Claremont and employed at the Midland Junction Workshops ought to get exemption.

The PREMIER: I do not think so. The man who elects to live permanently in one centre and work permanently in another can scarcely claim the deduction of his travelling expenses between those centres.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: How is a man working in Perth to live near his work?

The PREMIER: I do not think the House would agree that a business man living in Kalamunda should be allowed to travel down to the city by motor car day in and day out and deduct the expenses of such travelling. It is very difficult to define clearly what we mean by deduction for travelling expenses.

Mr. Munsie: I have asked for a deduction in respect of travelling to earn my salary and I am told I am not going to get it: but I am not going to pay on that amount.

The PREMIER: Then the hon. member will be taking a risk.

Mr. Munsie: I shall take the risk. The Federal authorities allow it and our Act is word for word with theirs.

The PREMIER: If a man is called from his home in a centre like Kalgoorlie to be in Perth for three or four days each week, I think he would be entitled to deduct his travelling expenses. If a man in business sent some of his officials from Perth to Kalgoorlie to conduct business, he would certainly be allowed to deduct travelling expenses. That, however, is not quite the same thing as I have been endeavouring to describe. If a man comes from the country to transact business in Perth he would be allowed to deduct his travelling expenses. The business in Perth would be in connection with the business at which he earned his living.

Mr. Chesson: The same applies to a man living at Fremantle and working at Midland Junction.

The PREMIER: A great many men working at the Midland Junction workshops live at Midland. Men working at Midland are not called upon to live at Fremantle.

Mr. Chesson: If a man has his home there, he has to travel to his work. He cannot burst up his home.

The PREMIER: But such men elect to live at Fremantle. If a man elects to live at Kalamunda, he cannot claim travelling expenses as a fair and reasonable deduction from his net income.

Mr. Chesson: But a man cannot get a home in the city.

The PREMIER: Not in St. George's-terrace, but he can get a home at a reasonable distance from the city. There is hardly a workman in the city who does not walk a mile or travel a mile by tram to his work.

The Minister for Mines: Take a business man who elected to live at Kalamunda, to motor to Perth would cost 32s. a day. If you allowed that, where would you be?

The PREMIER: I do not see how the deduction could be made. We want to treat all people alike.

Mr. Chesson: A doctor is allowed the deduction and everyone else should be allowed it.

The PREMIER: It is right to allow unavoidable expense, but avoidable expense should not be allowed. Miners have to travel by tram to their work at the mines, but the cost per day would be very small.

Mr. Lutey: But it mounts up when you take the 52 weeks of the year.

The PREMIER: That is the interpretation placed upon the law as passed by Parliament.

Mr. Munsie: I say the law gives me the right to deduct expenses and the Commissioner of Taxation says it does not. The Federal authorities allow it and if the State want it, they will have to get it in the court. I will not pay it.

The PREMIER: If it is the law, I am afraid the hon. member will have to pay.

Mr. Lutey: It was the intention of the House that a deduction should be allowed in respect of expenses for travelling to work.

The PREMIER: The member for Hannaus would be in just the same position as a man travelling to transact business; but if a man whose constituency was in Perth elected to live at Northam, I do not think he would be permitted to deduct travelling expenses.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: He might have to go up there for his health.

The PREMIER: That would be his misfortune. I shall ask the Solicitor General to put up a written interpretation of the section as it stands.

Mr. Chesson: He will put it up to suit you.

Mr. Munsie: The Solicitor General says I am entitled to deduct travelling expenses and every legal man in the State says so too, but the Commissioner says I am not.

The PREMIER: The Solicitor General's opinion is always followed.

Mr. Corboy: The Commissioner will not follow it.

The PREMIER: The legal advice must prevail.

Mr. Munsie: Who is to interpret the Act? The Commissioner and no one else.

The PREMIER: The interpretation rests with the Crown law authorities.

Mr. Corboy: The Commissioner is administering it precisely opposite to the interpretation of the Solicitor General.

The PREMIER: If members desire it I shall obtain a written interpretation from the Solicitor General. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Munsie, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 11.37 p.m.*

## Legislative Council,

*Wednesday, 22nd November, 1922.*

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

## QUESTION—CANCER, X-RAY APPARATUS.

Hon. A. J. H. SAW asked the Minister for Education: 1, Have the Government received memorials from the council of the British Medical Association and from the honorary senior surgical staff of the Perth Hospital, urging them to provide a deep therapy X-ray apparatus for the treatment of cancer at the hospital? 2, Are the Government aware that an American surgeon, Dr. Storn, reports ("American Journal of Roentgenology," December 21, 1921):—"In most of the German clinics I visited they have practically discontinued operating on all cases of cancer of the breast and uterus. They claim that the results with radiation alone are far superior (85 per cent. of cures in this class of cases)"? 3, In view of the foregoing report, and other favourable reports from British experts who are using this treatment, will the Government favourably consider the question of making this method of treatment available in Western Australia?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: 1, Yes. 2, No. The journal mentioned has not been available, but it is known that the German claim of success in 85 per cent. of cases has not been corroborated by British operators. 3, Yes. The Government do not intend to allow the matter to drop, but propose to make further inquiries from both British and American authorities in regard to this method of treatment, which they consider has not yet passed the experimental stage. It is considered that until the value of the treatment is established beyond question and many points such as dosage and method of application have been definitely standardised, the great expenditure involved is not justified whilst equally important equipment in other directions is not available.

## QUESTION—TENNIS COURTS.

Hon. H. STEWART asked the Minister for Education: 1, Have the Government, as stated in the "West Australian" of the 21st inst., assisted to the extent of £105 in providing tennis courts for Perth Girls' School? 2, Under what vote has such assistance been granted?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: 1, Perth Girls' School contains some 500 girls from 13 to 16 years of age. The school has no playground. It is impossible to purchase a playground for these girls except at very heavy expense. Some playing facilities must be afforded for girls at this age if their physical welfare is to be catered for. The Parents and Teachers' Association desired to utilise a vacant block of land belonging to the Government at the corner of Hay and Colin Streets for the erection of some tennis courts, and asked for assistance. The cost of putting the ground in order is considerably over £300. Towards this the Minister promised a contribution of £105—which is approximately one-third of the cost. 2, Government Property Trust Account.