

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: You will want Welsh "rabbit" next.

Hon. H. STEWART: On former occasions when Closer Settlement Bills have been before the House I have dealt with different phases of settlement and the valuation of properties. This year I have pleasure in supporting the Bill, more so than on former occasions, because the fact of the Government having introduced this Bill is a vindication of the attitude adopted by the Council in the past. We are told that there are great areas of unutilised land in this State and that many people are seeking land here. If it had not been for the action of past Governments in laying aside the Closer Settlement Bills after they were amended by this House, there would be many more settlers in Western Australia and less unutilised land.

On motion by Hon. G. A. Kempton, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 9.3 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 11th October, 1927.

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

URGENCY MOTION—WATER SUPPLY, SUBIACO.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have received the following letter from the member for Subiaco:—

I desire to move the adjournment of the House to-day under Standing Order 47, in order to debate a definite matter of urgent

public importance namely, the intolerable condition of the water supply at Subiaco at the present time, especially yesterday and to-day. Yours faithfully, W. Richardson.

It will be necessary for seven members to signify their approval.

Seven members having risen in their places,

MR. RICHARDSON (Subiaco) [4.35]: I rise with some reluctance to move the adjournment of the House, but the question I desire to deal with is of such paramount importance, not only to the people of the Subiaco electorate, but to all those living in the metropolitan area, that I feel justified in drawing attention to the impure water supply that has been distributed in my electorate during the past six or seven months.

The Premier: During the past six or seven years, you may say.

Mr. RICHARDSON: To a certain extent that interjection is correct, for there have been times when the water supply was not too good. However, fortunately for my district, we did not have much trouble until about the beginning of last March. From time to time many complaints have been received. I have entirely lost count of the numbers of people who have complained to me and of the number of letters of complaint I have received, but I am sure they have been in all many hundreds. Apart from that, the Subiaco Municipal Council have received complaints, many other complaints have been directed to the Water Supply Department, and I daresay the Minister for Water Supply has received complaints direct. I am not in a critical mood regarding the Minister for Water Supply, nor yet regarding the Water Supply Department generally, but the position has become intolerable from the point of view of the electors of Subiaco. For months and months almost daily we have had filthy water. Only this morning I drew off a sample from one of my own taps. Here it is. Members may like to see it.

The Premier: Is it sealed, and is it certified that it is the water you drew off?

Mr. RICHARDSON: The Premier will give me credit for being honest. Certainly I would not put up any stunts on members. However, I did take precautions, for the member for Wagin (Mr. Stubbs) was speaking to me while I was drawing off the water, and he can confirm my statement

that this is the bottle of water I drew off. Nobody would dare to say this is potable water. At Subiaco it is impossible for the housewives to wash their clothes with the water; for it damages and discolours everything with which it comes in contact, and our housewives are at their wits' end to know how to manage on washing day, more especially during the coming hot weather. From time to time I have taken samples of water from my own taps. And I have varied the taps, in case there was something wrong with one or another of the lengths of pipe. I have gone to each in turn and drawn off water. I find that on an average a half-pint tumbler of water will show a teaspoonful of sediment when it has been allowed to settle. It is highly dangerous for the children of Subiaco. Most of us here are unmarried men, and we have all noted the children when at play rushing into the house from time to time, securing a cup or a tumbler in order to get a drink, and indeed frequently drinking direct from the tap. In the course of a hot day children drink, perhaps, eight or nine pints of water. So, given a teaspoonful of sediment to each half-pint of water, it will be seen that there is going into those little stomachs something that should not be there. If from that point of view alone, I feel justified in bringing the question before the House. The electors in my district have been particularly patient. At first, when complaints came along I said I had spoken to the department and had been assured that in the course of a week or so we were to have clear water. Accordingly my electors remained quiescent for several weeks. But when they discovered that the water was becoming worse and worse, they again complained. It has been going on from week to week and month to month, and unless something is done in all probability it will go on from year to year. We have officials who, I believe, understand the position. They are experts in their particular line, engineers of water supply. Some of them have been brought from overseas because of their expert knowledge. It appears to me that either they have not had sufficient time in which to remedy the position, or they are not capable, or they have not the means at hand with which to cleanse the water supply. We have been told that it is due to corrosion in the pipes, the flow of water carrying that rust through the taps. We were given

to understand that immediately the rust was cleared away we would have clean water. In view of the quantity of rust that has come through my own pipes and those of my neighbours, I feel that there cannot be very much of those pipes left. I do not know whether the trouble is really due to corrosion and rust: probably the Minister for Works will be able to tell us something about it. In my own home it is found impossible to make tea with the water supplied to us through the pipes. The member for Wagin came to me yesterday morning and showed me samples of water taken from his taps. I have here this sample of water that I drew off myself, and I have also this photograph of a heap of muck taken from a line of pipe at Subiaco. Probably the Minister for Works has seen this photograph: I am assured that it is authentic. Let me read what is written on it:—"From a length of pipe cleaned out at Subiaco on Friday last, this heap of rank, evil smelling mud and silt was removed. This heap stands 18in. high and is about 4ft. across." I am assured that is correct.

Mr. Lutey: How long was the pipe?

Mr. RICHARDSON: It does not say. However, there is sufficient evidence to show that this heap of muck came out of the water pipes. It is not denied. So there is urgency for cleaning all the pipes from which this filthy water is issuing. Prior to the Churchman's Brook water coming to Subiaco, we were in a first-class position. There were times when, perhaps, we had some cause for complaint, but that was only for a few days at a time, and probably rarely occurred more than once a year when the department was flushing the pipes. I am sorry the Minister for Water Supply has left the Chamber. There is another point I wish to stress. From about 25 years ago, during the greater portion of the summer periods we in Subiaco were using bore water from the Subiaco bore. We had no complaint regarding that supply. So far as I know any analysis that was taken showed that it was good potable water. Unless the department can give us better water than we have had during the past six or seven months. I shall feel inclined to appeal to the Minister to let us go back to the bore water. It will be impossible to go through the ensuing summer unless we have a better supply of water than we have been getting recently. It is almost impossible to take a decent bath with this water. I have a

bottle of it here. This kind of thing is of daily occurrence. I am not stretching the point when I say that one does not feel comfortable with water like this pouring down one's back.

Hon. G. Taylor: It will take a long time to get used to.

MR. RICHARDSON: It may cake upon a man's back. It is a dangerous experiment to try. People cannot wash their clothes decently. That has been proved in many places. No member in this House would care to drink this water continuously day after day. Our wives at home have no other water than this, and have to use it day after day for drinking purposes, for making tea, and for cooking. I have brought this matter up because I feel it is one of the utmost importance. I know the Minister has been sympathetic, but I hope he will speed up matters so that before the hot weather is really upon us we shall be provided with an ample supply of good water. I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

MR. STUBBS (Wagin) [4.47]: Some months ago at the house in which I live in Subiaco we were getting a bad supply of water through the taps. Thinking this might have been caused by rust, we lodged a complaint with the Water Supply Department. Men came and cleaned out the main, and the pipes adjoining the house. During the last four months, I can give the House my positive assurance, for the first hour or so in the morning the water has been the colour of that which I have in a bottle here. It comes through the taps in this condition and also into the garden. The point I want to stress is that this is due to some kind of corrosion that is going on in the pipes. This is a matter of serious import to the Government and the State. It seems to me that corrosion is going on throughout the length and breadth of the mains that carry the water in the metropolitan area. It can only be a short time when the Government will be faced with an enormous expenditure in replacing these mains. The Minister should at once make inquiries through his officers. They are capable men, and I am lodging no complaint against them, the Minister, or the Government. It is, however, unfair to charge people rates for water of this kind. I think no court of law, before whom it was proved that this water was being served up day

after day and month after month, would compel the ratepayers to pay rates for such a supply. As the member for Subiaco (Mr. Richardson) pointed out, great danger lies in the fact that children consume a great quantity of this sediment. This must be deleterious to their health, and may give rise to some kind of fever. I have a bottle of water here showing that this was what came through the taps yesterday, after they had been running for two hours. This morning the water is a little better in colour, but there is still any amount of sediment in it. I ask the Minister to take steps to have the coating of lime or cement, that he proposes to put through the mains, brought into use as quickly as possible, that is, if he does not wish to replace all the mains in Subiaco with a fresh set of pipes. I hope the Minister will treat this as an urgent matter, because it is serious and may detrimentally affect the health of the children in the district.

MR. ANGELO (Gascoyne) [4.52]: As a resident of Subiaco I support the protest made by the member for the district. I am doing this on behalf of my neighbours. The matter does not affect me personally, because I have a rainwater tank. In fact, the trouble has been slightly advantageous to me. My gardener has advised that the lawn should be top dressed. By using the water now supplied by the department there is no necessity to go to the cost of buying sand.

HON. SIR JAMES MITCHELL (Northam) [4.53]: I am sorry the member for Murray-Wellington (Hon. W. J. George) is not present this afternoon. It was unkind of the member for Subiaco not to let him know this debate was coming on. We heard a great deal from the Minister for Works and others sitting opposite when there was a little trouble at North Perth in connection with bad water. It now appears to me that the trouble has spread over the entire metropolitan area. The Minister for Works spoke freely of the shortcomings of the ex-Minister for Works and members of the Government of that day. Why is it that the promise of a hills supply has not been fulfilled? This was made within a few days of the time when the present Government hoped to be returned to office. That promise has not yet been fulfilled. I remember well that during the 1924 elections the cry went up that if Labour was returned to power it would give the people pure water. The Minister for

Works said, "You must turn off your sprinklers for an hour or so every day." There was the devil to pay in this House and outside because of that instruction. It seems to me that the member for Swan is the man who has most to complain of, for his electorate is being swept down to Perth. It is being washed into the mouths of the babies in Subiaco and other places. It is true the member for Gascoyne says he is deriving an advantage from the present conditions, because he gets his lawn top dressed without cost. I could also believe that the member for Menzies (Mr. Panton) is deriving some advantage from the position.

Mr. Panton: I hope you won't get it altered.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It ought to be quite a good thing for his flowers, because the sand in which they grow must be mixed with clay for him to get good results. I think the member for Subiaco said that there was about 5 per cent. of clay in the water. The member for Menzies pays 1s. 6d. per thousand gallons and receives 50 gallons of clay with every thousand gallons of water. It is not dear clay, but it is jolly bad water. The matter is a serious one. It is high time that the people of Perth were getting an improved water supply, especially as it was promised over 3½ years ago. It was impossible during the war and just afterwards to buy the pipes and the cement to put into the head works in the hills. The cost of cement and pipes was too great at that time, and it was impossible to go on with the work.

Mr. Kenneally: You had several years of office after the war.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The hon. member's party have had nearly the whole of the time in office since the war. It has been possible within the last few years to do a great deal in the way of improving the water supply, and giving us something better than we have had. People cannot be expected to go on very much longer with this bad water. I do not know why their patience is not already exhausted. A definite promise was made by the Minister for Works nearly four years ago. Why has not something been done? Where a few years ago we had a few grains of clay in the water, to-day we find spoonfuls of it, now that the Minister for Works has charge. Things are going from bad to worse in connection with the Government, particularly with re-

gard to the water supply. I do not wonder at the member for Subiaco raising a protest. He would not be doing his duty to his electors if he did not do this. Are they to continue to have so much of the electorate of the member for Swan washed down into their back yards? Who will cart the rubbish away when they have strained the water? It is a disgraceful thing that in a civilised country like this people should be expected to drink water that looks like beer, but is not beer. It could be mistaken for a temperance drink. It is an astounding thing that this has to go on year after year. I do not know what explanation the Minister has to make.

The Minister for Works: I will make a better one than you did.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Something is expected of him. He can have no excuse for not keeping his promise. He knew what could be done, and what should be done to give the people a pure water supply. We can hear him now railing against the then Minister for Works. I remember all that was said on that occasion. This is a very different debate from that which took place then. What is he going to do about it? The Minister for Works is in office to-day. If he cannot give the people better water he should resign his office at once.

Mr. Angelo: He should go into liquidation.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: He has been working in the hills for 3½ years with schemes, which were well under way when we relinquished office. I am not going to discuss what happened there, although I could do so. We are no better off for water than we were before. As the member for Subiaco said, the trouble is that we are turning on the hills water, and he has asked the Minister to let the people revert to bore water. They must be easily satisfied in Subiaco if they are content to have bore water.

Mr. Heron: It was the bore water that spoilt the pipes.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It is better to spoil the pipes than to kill off the people.

The Premier: We shall have to speed up migration in order to maintain the balance.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Premier said that if we only had child endowment we should not want migration. What would be the use of child endowment if we killed off the children by means of this bad water?

The Premier: We should have to do something to adjust the balance.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It would be well if the Premier instructed his Minister to put matters right, or got another Minister unless the present one does something. If I were the Premier, I should take that course. The Minister for Works seemed to know all about water supply during the general election of four years ago.

The Premier: You will agree that you had trouble with your Minister for Works on the score of water supply.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: No. My Minister for Works gave the people decent water.

The Minister for Works: He gave them no water at all.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Now we get complaints from Fremantle to the Causeway.

The Minister for Mines: When we first got bore water in North Perth, we had to wear gas masks when taking a bath. There was a fair quantity of CO₂ in the water, and to take a bath without a gas mask was absolutely dangerous.

The Premier: We had better send for the ex-Minister for Works.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Premier might well send for him and ask him to advise what is best to be done. To send for him would be reasonable and right. The ex-Minister for Works has been elected by the people to help in the government of the country, and he would be able to assist in this matter. The present Minister for Works has had his engineers at work in the ranges for 3½ years. When will Perth get a decent water supply? Years ago it was stated that unless some definite forward move was made—and this seemed impossible in view of the condition of the finances—we should find ourselves in the most serious difficulties with regard to water supply. Every city in Australia has experienced the same trouble. We should try to give the people a clean supply of water, even if we do not give them so much. It is no use giving them a great deal of water if it is only fit for trees.

Mr. Chesson: It does for gardens.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes, but there are other purposes for which water is required. Out of the 180,000 people in the metropolitan area, probably 179,000 are getting bad water—altogether too high a percentage. I hope that the Minister for

Works will tell us that he is going to do better than he has been doing.

Mr. Heron: The Minister should resign.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes, and so should the hon. member interjecting. Unless something effective is done, not only will there be a shortage of water but the water will be very bad indeed. It is one of the duties of Government to supply the people with water, and that duty should be discharged. The goldfields water supply is excellent, and comes from the hills, just as the Minister now draws water from the hills for the metropolitan area. I do not see why the Churchman's Brook water should not be as good as Mundaring water.

The Premier: Churchman's Brook was your selection.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: But we did not select the water.

The Premier: Is it the administration that is wrong, then?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes, the way the banks are being built and the drains cut. This matter has something to do with the Government, who undoubtedly are responsible. Perth obtains from an adjoining catchment this impure stuff.

The Premier: When the soil has all been washed off, a rock catchment will be left.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Indisputably. I daresay that if we waited for that, all would be well. Unfortunately it would take a million years, and so there is not much comfort in the Premier's remark. The matter is extremely serious, and I hope that this year we shall be able to do better for the people than we have been doing. Three or four years ago the Minister for Works told the people that by this date they would have a good supply of water. Is this the best he can do after so much expense? If, as the mover says, it is the hills water that causes the trouble, and not the bore water, I do not know that the position can be improved except by filtering, a fairly expensive process. Even if the hills water is the cause of the trouble, it certainly does not cause the rusting of the pipes. If it did, there would soon be no pipes left. I support the member for Subiaco, and I hope he will be supported in this matter by members representing metropolitan electorates, to whose constituents it is a question of paramount importance. If they are to be supplied with water unfit for human consumption, water fit only for use on gardens and lawns, it

can be readily understood that they object to the water tax imposed upon them. The water rate in the metropolitan area represents a considerable tax, and entitles the people who pay it to an excellent supply of water.

MR. NORTH (Claremont) [5.9] : I support the motion. Obviously, all metropolitan members are concerned in this matter. The least the Opposition can do is to ventilate grievances of this kind on such a motion as the present. I should like to have three questions answered. There is no thought of attacking the present Administration over the matter, since the existing situation has no doubt followed inevitably from the past. The people want to know, firstly how long the trouble is likely to last, secondly what is the cause of the trouble, and thirdly whether there will be any relief for them in regard to water rates. For my part I would recommend the selling of all the meters in the metropolitan area and the investing of the proceeds in filters to be supplied to householders. Those who can go to the expense of filters can largely overcome the trouble now. It is hard to ask householders to pay the present heavy water rates, and it will be harder still to ask them to pay the heavier rates which will be imposed when many millions have been spent in the hills, and on top of that to ask them to instal filters in order to make the water supply useable. I got into hot water over this matter some months ago. I then said, "It is no use raising complaints, because those who are responsible are doing the best they can." A very persistent lady was advised by me to spend a few pounds on a rain tank, which I said would solve all her trouble in regard to washing for most of the year. The rain tank was put in, and the next thing I heard, at a public meeting, was that I was in hot water with the lady because I had induced her to spend £10 on a tank for washing water and the next week the department came along and ripped up the pipes, with the result that the water had been crystal clear ever since. So the lady was enraged at what she considered the unnecessary expenditure, at my instance, on a tank. However, the water supply may be red this week, yellow next week, and white the following week. I would like the Minister for Works to answer these questions—firstly, what is the cause of the trouble; secondly, how long is the trouble likely to

last; thirdly, is there any chance of relief for householders who are paying rates and not getting the proper article?

HON. G. TAYLOR (Mt. Margaret) [5.11] : I shall not have much to say on this question, seeing that I get quite enough at home about the discoloured water, especially on laundry days. As I live in Leederville, the trouble evidently is not confined to Subiaco. Four or five years ago, when there was much disturbance about the bad water supply, the trouble was attributed to bore water from Leederville. If the Minister for Works casts his mind back, he will recollect that his engineers were then at their wit's end to remedy the trouble caused by the Leederville bore water. At that time we were told that when the Churchman's Brook supply was available we would be furnished with splendid water. Now, however, in spite of the Churchman's Brook water, the complaints are becoming stronger and stronger. Different reasons are now set up to explain the trouble. The Minister for Works gave his reason last year, and it was "rust." The cause was at first said to be some chemical action of the bore water. I do not know whether Leederville is still supplied from Leederville, or whether it draws its water from the Mt. Hawthorn reservoir. I admit that the Leederville supply is not as bad as that in the bottles produced, but still it is not by any means the best of water. Nevertheless, it is not as bad as it was three or four years ago, when the supply was derived from bores.

The Premier: Another consolation is that it is not half so bad as it might be.

HON. G. TAYLOR: The matter is not one to be treated lightly, affecting as it does all the women in the homes of Perth. I know that the Minister is doing his best, and that his officers are at their wit's end to solve the problem. If it is insoluble, we may as well know it. I can suggest no remedy for the trouble. If the Works Department experts cannot cope with the difficulty, the position is indeed most serious. Certainly we do not want to make a party cry of a matter which concerns the health and the well-being of the people who are served by the metropolitan water supply. While water rates have increased, the quality of the water has been depreciated, though of course not designedly. I hope the Minister will state some reasons for the

trouble, and hold out to housewives and families of the metropolitan area some hope of a decent water supply.

MR. SAMPSON (Swan) [5.14]: It would require an expert—and I dare say experts have been at work for a good while—to ascertain the reason of the discolouration of the water. To a layman it would seem that the matter is one for inquiry by a bacteriologist. Apparently the position is that the unfriendly bacteria are winning a victory over the friendly ones. The battle of the microbes is being fought, and the people are suffering severely. Whether the discolouration is set up by the two qualities of water coming together and mixing, I am unable to say; but certainly the question is serious. The colour ranges from lemon to orange; and as has been stated, the trouble is by no means confined to Subiaco. In North Perth there is the same difficulty. I listened to the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition with some dismay, particularly when he suggested that the Swan electorate was pouring down the water pipes to Perth. This is a serious matter to the State, because I assume the experts have looked into it and they have failed to prevent the continuance of the existing unfortunate position. Probably the only people who can find any satisfaction in that position are the brewers.

Mr. Mann: Is not good water required to make good beer?

Mr. SAMPSON: The brewers can filter the water, but it is not possible to have a filter on every domestic tap. If the brewers are satisfied, I am afraid the liquor reformers must be reduced to a state of despair. I hope something will be done to prevent the continuance of the existing serious conditions, although I recognise that the disabilities involved regarding the expenditure of funds to overcome the difficulty, will probably be enormous. I am inclined to support the suggestion that it would be better to revert to the use of bore water than to persist in the utilisation of the present supply. Not only is the water discoloured, but often it has a peculiar odour.

The Minister for Works: That is not so.

The Premier: Now you have gone too far.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. A. McCallum—South Fremantle) [5.18]: There was no necessity for hon. members to impress upon me the importance, nor yet

the urgency of the subject, by moving such a motion. I have no complaint to make regarding the manner in which the member for Subiaco (Mr. Richardson) introduced the matter. I agree with the bulk of his statements, although I shall show that one or two of them were incorrect. The speech of the Leader of the Opposition exhibited him in an entirely new rôle. I do not think there are many members of the House who would accuse that hon. gentleman of being a humourist, but he most decidedly appeared in that rôle to-day. He told the House that when the Government took over the reins of office, new works to provide an adequate water supply were well in hand. Then he proceeded to say that the Government were responsible for the water supply Perth is now receiving. As a matter of fact, the Leader of the Opposition knows full well that we have simply carried on the scheme that was initiated by his Government. Of course we all realise that that scheme was embarked upon with particular haste on the eve of an election. At that time the complaint was not only that the water was discoloured, but, what was more serious, that it was mal-odorous. Further than that, there were serious complaints that householders could not obtain any water at all. I raised the question myself in this House more than once, and told the then Minister that I could not get a drop of water at my house for hours on end.

Hon. G. Taylor: The supply was not available.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The same condition of affairs obtained in North Perth, Nedlands, and portions of Fremantle. At many places the children had to take bottles of water to school because none was obtainable there.

The Minister for Mines: No water was obtainable for the school children at North Perth.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Nor was it obtainable in many homes at all. That was the position when we took over from the Mitchell Government. The scheme that has been carried on since we have been in office is the scheme that was initiated by that Government. There is no doubt that there has been a fairly plentiful supply. During the last four years we have not found it necessary to place any restrictions upon the use of water. Sprinklers have been in use at any time householders desired. We ran pretty close to the wind on a few occasions, but still the necessity did not arise to apply

restrictions. So far we have materially improved the supply. When the discolouration took place, shortly after the water from Churchman's Brook was first used, I looked into the matter. I wish to emphasise the fact that there has been no water conveyed into the metropolitan area from Churchman's Brook since the end of March or April last.

Mr. Richardson: The trouble started prior to that supply being cut off.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There is no truth whatever in the suggestion that the discolouration is the fault of the water at Churchman's Brook.

Hon. G. Taylor: From whence are you drawing the supply?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The water is being drawn from the Victoria reservoir, supplemented by supplies from Wongong Brook. Some time ago I took a party to inspect that reservoir and it included members of Parliament and representatives of the Perth and Fremantle municipal councils. Anyone who is desirous can inspect the reservoir. I will make arrangements for any members who desire to carry out an inspection. As a matter of fact, the water that flows into the pipes at Wongong is beautifully crystal pure. There is no question at all about it; the water when it enters the pipes there is all that could be desired.

Hon. G. Taylor: Do you think the trouble is in the pipes?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Undoubtedly the trouble is in the pipes.

Mr. Mann: You have a mechanical device installed at Wongong Brook.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That is for liming the water, the object being to prevent rust and corrosion.

Mr. Richardson: Does all the Subiaco water go through the reservoir at Mt. Eliza?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes.

Mr. Richardson: Is it all filtered there?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No. Filtering will not get over the trouble unless filters are attached to the taps used by consumers. The trouble is in the pipes between the reservoir and the point of consumption.

Mr. Davy: That must be so, otherwise everyone drawing water from Mt. Eliza would have the same experience, but we do not have the trouble at West Perth.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That is so. It is useless for laymen to dogmatise regarding the trouble. I can get clear water at home one day and the next day get dis-

coloured water. The Engineer-in-chief can bring me a bottle of water from his house, water worse than that exhibited to members by the member for Subiaco—

Mr. Richardson: God help him!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: —and the next morning he can exhibit a bottle of beautifully clear water.

Mr. Stubbs: Every morning for the last four months the water has been discoloured at my house.

The Premier: You have been very unlucky.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I considered that the only way of overcoming the difficulty was to get the best experts in the employ of the Government to apply themselves to the task. Accordingly, over 12 months ago I appointed a committee consisting of the Commissioner of Public Health, Dr. Atkinson, the Government Analyst, Dr. Simpson, and the Engineer for Water Supply, Mr. Parr, to consult with the Engineer-in-chief and examine the whole position with a view to advising me as to the reason for the discolouration of the water and the possibility of overcoming the difficulty. That committee sat for a long time and carried out extensive investigations. They advised me that undoubtedly the trouble was in the pipes and that it would never be overcome so long as the pipes were left in their present condition.

Mr. Stubbs: That is serious.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That is the position the Government have to face. The advice we have received is that all new mains or pipes that are put down, should be lined with bitumen or concrete, together with a policy of gradual replacement of the other mains, or taking up the pipes and lining them.

Hon. G. Taylor: That will be a costly business.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It will involve the expenditure of an enormous amount of money. The report submitted to me indicates that we are not singular in this respect. Nearly every country throughout the world is faced with the same problem. It exists in the Eastern States. Wherever cast-iron pipes are left in the ground in an unprotected condition, the discolouration difficulty occurs.

Mr. Davy: Then it is rust?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes. I will deal with that point in a moment.

Hon. G. Taylor: Why have not the Coolgardie mains been attacked?

The Premier: Are they not of wrought iron?

Hon. G. Taylor: I thought they were steel pipes.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I will explain the position. The Government decided that all new mains and pipes are to be lined with concrete, and that policy is being carried out. It is expensive work, but all pipes that are being installed are lined. All new water supplies are to be lined as well. That work is being carried out at East Perth and when that is done no difficulty will be experienced, so I am assured by the experts. However, the Government have to face the situation. I do not know whether we can find the necessary money to tear up all the existing mains and have them lined.

Mr. Richardson: That would be an enormous job.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It would cost £1,000,000 or more. The newly installed large main from the Victoria reservoir was lined. That was put in to tap the Wongong supply. All new connections will be lined and we are not putting in any new pipes that are not lined. That is what the Government are doing in that regard, and I am assured that that is the only way that the difficulty can be overcome. As to the discolouration that was pronounced after the metropolitan supply was linked up with the hills reservoir, the experts inform me that until such time as the reservoirs are finished, the trouble will continue. The explanation is that the water is diverted from the watercourse by a small concrete wall that conveys the water to the pipehead dam. The water tumbles over a series of rapids, and as it enters the pipes it takes with it a lot of oxygen. Bore water, hon. members will realise, contains very little oxygen as it is drawn up from the bowels of the earth. On the other hand, the water from Wongong becomes permeated with oxygen and that is what takes the rust off the inside of the pipe and results in the discolouration. If bore water were used, it would not remove the rust as the oxygenised hills water does. One would naturally think that water such as I have had numerous samples of, was not conducive to health. I have had such water examined by the Health Department and Dr. Atkinson has assured me that it is not injurious to health at all. I do not suggest that I would encourage anyone to drink it.

Mr. Richardson: Certainly I would not drink it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Both Dr. Atkinson and Dr. Dale reported to me that undoubtedly the discoloured water was not injurious to health, nor was any detrimental effect to be expected as a result of its consumption.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It is quite pleasant to drink!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: At the same time I do not think the people of the metropolitan area would agree to revert to bore water.

Mr. Richardson: We don't want it, but bore water is better than our present supply.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Bore water has a most objectionable odour. During the winter months more rust accumulates in the pipes owing to the slow movement of the water, and when the big pull comes the rust is brought away and greater discolouration results. During the last summer there was less discolouration than in the winter.

Mr. Stubbs: How do you account for that?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Because during the summer the flow of water through the pipes is more even, and the oxygen has not time to act on the pipes. Some of the 3in. and 4in. pipes taken up have been so corroded that the passage for water was no greater than the thickness of a finger. To remedy the trouble, we have adopted a scheme of sluicing and scraping the pipes. During one period we had no fewer than three gangs of men employed wholly on sluicing and scraping pipes. Subiaco has received special attention, and while that work is in progress, the water will be much discoloured. Let me explain the photograph of the heap of muck that was alleged to have come out of one of the pipes. The men made an excavation, put the scraper into the pipe and cleared out a lot of rust, which was deposited on the sand from the excavation. Then someone took a photograph of it and said the whole heap of muck had come out of the pipe.

Mr. Richardson: You tell it very well.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I know the men who were doing the job, and they told me of it before the photograph was reproduced. Does it not occur to the hon. member that if the department had not done

that work the muck would have been carried to the consumers? The work of the men prevented the muck from going to the consumers.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: After many days.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member was in charge of a Government that could not give the people water at all.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: We gave them good water.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Why, school children could not get a drink of water in the height of summer!

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: They did not get the rubbish you are supplying, anyhow.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member's Government started the hills scheme and we have carried on the work. Let me explain the difference between the attitude I adopt and that adopted by the previous Minister for Works. Every complaint brought to the House about shortage or discolouration of water he denied. He told me that he had had tests made at my home and that there was no shortage of water. That was his reply when I told him I could not get a bath. To contrast my attitude, I say the member for Subiaco has not exaggerated the facts. I do not deny the statements he has made. On the contrary, I have tried to meet the difficulty with the experts we have at our disposal. I wish to assure the member for Subiaco and every metropolitan member that I shall not be lacking in effort to find a solution. It must be realised that a layman cannot tell the experts they are wrong and that something else ought to be done. I have invited the public to forward complaints of discoloured water so that men could be sent to the spot to sluice the pipes and scrape them if necessary.

Mr. Griffiths: That was done and an improvement followed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have found money for sluicing and scraping, and told the department to put men on to that work. There is no doubt that if the water is allowed to run for a while, it clears. It is chiefly in the morning that the discolouration is so bad.

Mr. Stubbs: What about excess water?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have met consumers even there; I have tried to be reasonable. I have told people that if they lodged complaints and then had to run

off water in order to get a clean supply, a rebate would be made. Is not that fair?

Mr. Stubbs: Yes.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not know that I can do anything else. I am anxious that a good potable supply should be made available, and I think we have done everything possible in the circumstances.

Mr. Richardson: You are of opinion that the discolouration will still be experienced for some little time?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes. The experts have advised me that during the winter months there will be discolouration for some time. When the hills reservoirs are completed and the water is drawn from stationary supplies in the reservoirs, as at present it is drawn from Victoria and Mundaring reservoirs, the position will be materially improved, but improvement cannot be looked for until the new reservoirs are completed. I have been advised that Churchman's Brook will be finished probably in March of next year, and that will give some relief. To-day no water is being brought from Churchman's Brook. It has not yet been decided when the Wongong or the big Canning reservoir will be begun. It will take four years to build Wongong and eight years to build Canning reservoir. Both are gigantic schemes; Wongong will hold twice and the Canning $4\frac{1}{2}$ times as much as Mundaring holds, so it will take a long time to complete those schemes. I asked the Subiaco Council and the department to keep a record of the number of complaints received so that men could be sent out to sluice the pipes. During the week ended the 24th September there were six complaints; during the weeks ended the 1st October, four complaints, and during the week ended the 8th October five complaints. No complaint has been received since the 5th October.

Mr. Richardson: That is quite possible.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There have not been so many complaints as I expected to receive, but I do not say that every householder who finds the water discoloured sends in a complaint. I wish all householders would do so in order that the department might know where to undertake the sluicing and scraping of pipes, which are the only immediate remedies we can apply. We are passing through a stage that all other cities have experienced. If we had been able to allow the water to become stationary in a reservoir instead of

using it direct from the stream, the difficulty would not have occurred. However, the city was allowed to grow year after year and no action was taken to increase the water supply, and it was impossible for Perth to wait until the Churchman's Brook, Wongong and Canning reservoirs were built before drawing upon the new supplies. There would have been a tremendous shortage, due to the fact that for so many years no additional works were put in hand. I am aware it was inadvisable to embark upon big schemes during the war and while costs were so high, but the fact remains that time was lost and we have to endeavour to make up for the loss. I assure the House that the experts are fully alive to the position. Only a couple of days ago I discussed the matter with the committee. For the committee I have chosen the best experts in the service, the Commissioner of Health, the Government Analyst, the Engineer-in-Chief and the Engineer for Water Supply, and if they cannot find a solution, it is of no use laymen trying to dogmatise about it. My efforts to improve the supply will not be relaxed, and I am satisfied that the officers of the department are equally anxious to overcome the difficulty. I hope that people who are getting discoloured water will not fail to notify the department so that steps may be taken to improve it. Very often a local fault in the house itself is responsible, and such a fault is quickly discovered by the departmental employees and remedied. To take up all the mains, have them lined and relaid would involve enormous expense, especially at a time when heavy outlays are required for the construction of the hills schemes. All this expenditure has to be met out of the pockets of the people, and if we were to ask them to carry the additional taxation that would be involved in treating the existing mains, the outcry would be greater than that on the score of discoloured water. It will be some time before there is much improvement during the winter, but I am assured that during the summer while the big off-take is in progress, there will be very little, if any, discolouration. I have no fault to find regarding the manner in which the hon. member introduced the motion, because the complaints are warranted. I hope he will accept my explanation in a reasonable spirit

and realise that the best that can be done is being done.

MR. RICHARDSON (Subiaco—in reply) [5.43]: I feel that there is no necessity to reply to the discussion, but I thank the Minister for the explicit statement he has made to the House. Seeing that my object has been attained, I ask leave to withdraw the motion.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

QUESTION—FRUIT AND VEGETABLE MARKETING.

Mr. SAMPSON asked the Minister for Lands: 1, Has he noted the affirmative result that attended the Western Australian poll in respect to the proposed proclamation of the Federal Fresh Fruit Export Act 2, In view of the endorsement of the principle of compulsory organisation, and the need that exists locally for orderly marketing, will he give consideration to the bringing down of a Bill to provide for organisation in respect to local marketing of fruit, vegetables, and other small farm products?

The PREMIER (for the Minister for Lands) replied: 1, Yes. 2, The matter will be considered.

QUESTION—TROTTING, CHARITIES MEETING.

Mr. SAMPSON asked the Premier: 1, Were the whole of the gross proceeds of the meeting of the W.A. Trotting Association held on the 23rd April, 1927, for the benefit of certain benevolent institutions paid over without taxation? 2, What was the amount of taxation payable on the gross proceeds?

The PREMIER replied: 1, No. 2, This is not ascertainable, as no trotting meeting was held on the date mentioned.

BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

1, Stamp Act Amendment.

Introduced by the Premier.

2, Industries Assistance Act Continuance.

Introduced by the Premier (for the Minister for Lands).

BILL—LOAN AND INSCRIBED STOCK (SINKING FUND).

Second Reading.

THE PREMIER (Hon. P. Collier—Boulder) [5.50] in moving the second reading said: This is a small Bill that has been rendered necessary by the progress of time. Prior to responsible Government, loans by the State were raised by the Crown agents. These loans carry a sinking fund of 10s. per annum. They are different from our ordinary loans in the following ways:—Firstly, instalments are paid to and invested by the Crown agents themselves; secondly, our ordinary sinking fund trustees do not come into the investment at all; thirdly, unlike our ordinary sinking fund, the funds are invested in securities other than State stock. At the present time all our sinking funds are invested in our stock, but as the Leader of the Opposition knows, these Crown agents' loans were invested in other than State stock and were entirely controlled by the Crown agents themselves. Our sinking fund trustees have nothing to do with them. These particular funds will not be subject to the Financial Agreement, because of their present satisfactory position. They are only small amounts. The loans in question mature in 1934 and amount to £998,353—slightly less than a million. The sinking fund at June last amounted to £821,473, and the only contribution from revenue to the sinking fund was £11,580. The investments were made by the Crown agents, and, as I have stated, will not be affected by the Financial Agreement. It is estimated that by 1934, from interest alone, there will be more than sufficient capital in the fund to redeem the loans fully at the maturity date. The object of the Bill is to suspend further payment to the sinking fund for these loans, the reason being that there is already sufficient in the sinking fund. In other words, we propose to do exactly what was done in connection with the Coolgardie water scheme loan. The Leader of the Opposition will remember that payment to the Coolgardie water scheme loan sinking fund was suspended by administrative act. In this case the trustees desire to have the authority of Parliament.

Hon. G. Taylor: It is a totally different thing.

The PREMIER: It was not necessary to have Parliamentary authority to suspend

the payment of the sinking fund in connection with the Coolgardie water scheme loan.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You had £58,000 over.

The PREMIER: I believe there will be a small amount over when the Crown agents' loans mature in 1934. But there is sufficient already contributed to meet the loans at maturity, and the object of the Bill is to give the trustees Parliamentary authority to suspend further payment of the sinking fund.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: What about the other sinking funds in the hands of our trustees in London?

The PREMIER: Does the hon. member refer to the suspension of payments arising out of the Financial Agreement? That of course is an entirely different matter. At the present time I am dealing with the Crown agents' loans.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Loans that were raised before the days of responsible Government?

The PREMIER: Yes, raised by the Imperial Government for the State. The other matter the hon. member has asked about by way of interjection will have to be dealt with when the Financial Agreement is being considered.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It says virtually that we must continue unless we get out of it, and we cannot get out of it by the mere signing of the agreement.

The PREMIER: That is a matter we can deal with when we are considering the Financial Agreement; it has nothing to do with this at the moment.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You will refer to it on the Budget.

The PREMIER: I do not wish to enter into a discussion on another subject altogether, because the hon. gentleman will realise that the question of sinking funds generally is an entirely different subject and it can be dealt with at the proper time. Neither do I think it will enter into the Budget because all we are doing with the Agreement is in a way tentative. If the Agreement should not become law, we shall revert to the position as it existed prior to the 30th June last. However, I have no desire to enter into a discussion on a subject that can be more appropriately dealt with on another occasion. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. Sir James Mitchell debate adjourned

BILL—STATE INSURANCE.*Second Reading.*

THE PREMIER (Hon. P. Collier—Boulder) [5.57] in moving the second reading said: This is another small Bill which is self-explanatory, but I am not going to say that it is not an important Bill. Sometimes important things are contained in small packages or occupy small spaces. The Bill provides for the establishment of a State Government insurance office to be controlled by an officer appointed by the Governor for a term not exceeding seven years. Of course that officer will be eligible for re-appointment. It is proposed that a fund shall be created to be called the State Government Insurance Fund and that all moneys appropriated by Parliament for the purposes of the measure, and all premiums and moneys received by the Commissioner of Insurance shall be paid into the fund, and that all payments in respect of policies and all expenses of the office shall be payable out of the fund. It also provides that all insurances have been effected, and policies that have been issued by the Government during the past 12 months are to be ratified. Provision is also made for general insurance. It is not limited as was the case with the Bill of last year, to employers' liability and workers' compensation. It provides for general insurance, as set out in the interpretation clause under the paragraph "insurance business." There will be found the scope it is intended to give to the Bill. I suppose it is not of much use regretting the events of last year, but I do regret the fate that overtook that Bill, and I can only hope that this one will be more favourably received.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You did not close down your insurance office last year.

THE PREMIER: No, we had to provide a means for certain employers to comply with the Workers' Compensation Act, as all other avenues or openings for compliance with the Act were denied to them. So in the circumstances we considered we were justified in continuing to carry on that work. I think the Government can claim that we have justification for bringing down the Bill. I do not claim, as is sometimes claimed, that every question placed before the electors at a general election gives a mandate to the party returned. There are numerous questions, of course, and I do not claim that because the party submitting those questions is returned, necessarily that party has a mandate to do all those things. In other

words, it would not necessarily be that every one of those questions separately and collectively was endorsed by a majority of the electors. It is difficult to get a clearcut expression of opinion from the electors on any one question when so many questions are before them and so many cross-issues as we have during an election campaign.

Mr. Davy: One of the issues was wrapped up in the slogan "Keep Collier Premier."

Hon. G. Taylor: It was a good war cry, too.

THE PREMIER: It was not a bad one. But of the many questions before the people during the elections, it cannot be denied that State insurance was given an outstanding place by members of the Government party. In my policy speech I said I desired to make State insurance an issue, and that I wanted the electors to give a clear and emphatic expression of opinion regarding it. It was featured by me and every other Minister and candidate of our party, from every platform in the State and during the whole progress of the campaign. Modest as I hope I am, I venture to say it was not the cry "Keep Collier Premier" that brought back the Government, but that State insurance was more fully responsible for the return of the Government than was any other of the issues placed before the electors.

Hon. G. Taylor: It was scarcely mentioned in my electorate.

Mr. Thomson: It did not have any effect on the fate of the candidates in my electorate.

THE PREMIER: That was one of the electorates where it did not have any effect; but it did have an effect in most of the electorates.

Mr. Thomson: I do not think so.

THE PREMIER: It is a matter of opinion.

Hon. G. Taylor: "Keep Collier Premier" went throughout the State.

Mr. Davy: State insurance did not result in the defeat of any candidate who was against the proposal.

THE PREMIER: It was principally responsible for the fact that no member of this party was defeated.

Mr. Davy: Which one, if any, do you think would have been defeated?

THE PREMIER: I myself, for instance. But I do not wish to make any distinctions.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You only just scraped in.

THE PREMIER: We scraped in, but we had a majority, and that is sufficient to decide most issues. I honestly believe a ma-

jority of the people of the State, a greater majority than is represented by those who voted for Labour, approves of State insurance. I venture to say that a considerable number of electors who, because of other considerations, voted for members opposite, nevertheless approved and still do approve of the principle of State insurance.

Mr. Davy: That is a very difficult statement to either refute or to prove.

The PREMIER: It is. I only put it forward as my own opinion. It would be impossible either to prove it or refute it, except by other members giving their opinions, which might not coincide with mine. But I make that statement because when travelling through the country, and in country electorates represented by members opposite, in conversation with hundreds of electors I heard the opinion freely offered that whilst they were not voting for the Labour candidates, they did support our attitude towards State insurance. It frequently happens on both sides that electors, while not supporting a given candidate, will support some particular plank in his party's platform.

Mr. Davy: Will you aver that all your supports were in favour of State insurance?

The PREMIER: I believe so.

Mr. Davy: One could make the same statement about that as you have made about certain electors.

The PREMIER: I think not, for there is no reason why those who voted for Labour should be opposed to the principles of State insurance.

Hon. G. Taylor: State insurance is believed in by others than those of the Labour Party.

The PREMIER: Of course it is. I hope to be able to show that.

Mr. Davy: Do you think that nobody, save wage-earners, votes for your people?

The PREMIER: No, I am pleased to say that a considerable number of influential commercial and professional people, especially in the city, have come over to our side.

Mr. Thomson: It was not very evident from the city voting.

The PREMIER: I think it was quite evident. An analysis of the voting in the city clearly shows it. I should not hesitate for a moment to submit this question of State insurance to a referendum of the electors; nor would I hesitate to submit to them any other question; but I would allow this one to go to a referendum with the utmost confidence as to the result, more

particularly after what has transpired during the past few months respecting some of the phases of insurance. So I say the Government have an instruction to proceed with the Bill. The result of the elections showed that the electors emphatically disapproved of the attitude adopted by another place towards the Bill of last session.

Mr. Thomson: That is a matter of opinion.

The PREMIER: Of course it is. The hon. member had a substantial majority, but I believe that his electors, apart from voting for a party, would vote for State insurance.

Mr. Thomson: I do not think so.

The PREMIER: I believe they would.

Hon. G. Taylor: Put it to a referendum, and you would get a majority, anyhow.

The PREMIER: There is no doubt about that. At any rate, I hope this House and another place will have regard to the history of this question of State insurance. The Government brought down a Bill last session, but it was lost in another place. We went to the country, making this an issue as prominent as it was possible for us to make it.

Mr. Thomson: If the people were overwhelmingly in your favour on this question, you should have come back with an increased majority.

The PREMIER: Not necessarily. As I have been trying to point out, a number of electors who would vote for the Bill would not vote for a Labour candidate.

Mr. Davy. But it cuts both ways.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: This question was not the only issue.

The PREMIER: No, but it was one of the outstanding issues, as far as this party could make it so. But it was significant that whilst we talked State insurance night after night from one end of the State to the other, the subject was scarcely ever referred to by Opposition candidates; because they felt it was not a good thing for them to make a feature of at the elections.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Whatever you talked about, we talked about.

The PREMIER: No, one could search the hon. member's speeches in vain for references to State insurance. All Opposition members kept off that patch of grass. They did not say, "We will make this an issue of the elections for we are opposed to State insurance."

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

The PREMIER: I was remarking at the tea adjournment that this question of State insurance was one of the main issues before the people at the elections. I do not assert that it was the only question of importance, but certainly it was the outstanding feature of the campaign. I do assert that, so far as it is possible for one to judge, it received the support of the majority of the people of the country. The operations of the State insurance office, since it has been in existence, that is since it has been doing workers' compensation insurance, have resulted in a small profit amounting to about £1,400. That is interesting when one has regard for the fact that the operations of the whole of the companies for the year resulted in a loss of £25,000, in a similar class of insurance.

Mr. Davy: How much tax did they pay? The department does not pay any tax.

The PREMIER: I know that is an argument, but it is easily balanced by other conditions, I contend, so far as State insurance is concerned. The taxes that the companies pay have, long before they are paid, been extracted by way of premiums from the people who do business with them. That may be an argument as to why the companies' percentages of expenditure are higher than in the case of Government insurance. The fact remains that the companies have shown a loss for the year of £25,000, although they have had the field practically to themselves, and the State has had to operate within a restricted area.

Mr. Davy: That is not including life insurance.

The PREMIER: I am dealing only with workers' compensation and employers' liability. As a result of this the companies have recently made heavy increases in their premiums. It will be within the knowledge of the House that after the passing of the Workers' Compensation Act the premiums were increased by 25 per cent. The companies gave an undertaking that before any further increases were made the Minister would be consulted, and that the Government Actuary would have an opportunity of examining the figures and results. I do not know whether perhaps something in the nature of a breach has occurred between the Minister and the companies since that undertaking was given.

Mr. Thomson: I am sure it would not be on the part of the Minister.

The PREMIER: No. The fact is that increases have been made since the 1st August, and very large increases at that. I wish to give the House some figures with regard to the increases that have been effected. In the case of aerated cordial factories the rate has increased from £3 15s. to £6 5s., an increase of 67 per cent.; agents (commission) from 9s. 4½d. to 19s., an increase of 103 per cent.; agents (land and estate) 52 per cent.; agents (Customs with carrying), from £1 17s. 6d. to £2 16s. 6d., an increase of 50 per cent.; architects, 50 per cent.; asbestos factories, 67 per cent.; bark mills, 67 per cent.; bark and sandalwood getters, 67 per cent.; biscuit factories, 67 per cent.; blacksmiths and wheelwrights, 52 per cent.; boat, ship and yacht builders, 68 per cent.; boot and shoe dealers (wholesale), 52 per cent.; breweries, 52 per cent.; builders (demolishing and removing), 67 per cent.; butter factories, 66 per cent.; carters and carriers, 67 per cent.; cement bath manufacturers, 67 per cent. The increases have ranged from 50 per cent. up to 100 per cent., but mainly between 60 per cent. and 70 per cent. These are the increases in the rates of premiums. Then there are these other increases: dairymen have increased 70 per cent.; engineers (dismantling), 50 per cent.; essential oil factories, 56 per cent.; farm and station owners, 70 per cent. I hope members opposite will take notice of that.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: What is the rate now?

The PREMIER: It has been increased from £1 8s. 1d. to £2 7s. 6d. per cent., or an increase of 70 per cent.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That is due to medical and hospital finance.

The PREMIER: Further increases are: ferry and boat proprietors, £1 17s. 6d. to £3 2s. 6d., an increase of 67 per cent.; flour millers, 50 per cent.; gasworks, 56 per cent.; ironmongers, 70 per cent.; boilermakers, 68 per cent.; brass and copper foundries, 50 per cent.; laundries (with power), 67 per cent.; kerosene importers, 68 per cent.; manure factories, 50 per cent.; masons, 50 per cent.; metal ceiling manufacturers, 67 per cent.; oil, colour and glass merchants, 50 per cent.; plating works, 67 per cent.; preserving works, fruit, meat, cold storage, 50 per cent. in each case. Right along the line we have these increases and others such as quarries 67 per cent.; road makers with explosives, 67 per cent.; rope and twine works, 68 per cent.; ships (sailers), 67 per

cent.; timber trades, sawmills, including falling, 67 per cent.; well sinkers, 67 per cent.; white lead factories, 67 per cent. All along the line there have been these increases. In the case of the mines, the increase has been from the old rate of £2 17s. per cent. to £4 5s. 11d. per cent, an increase of 51 per cent.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Do you refer to gold mines?

The PREMIER: Yes.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: What do you charge in the case of gold mines?

The PREMIER: We are charging the old rate, £2 17s. We are charging the rate that the companies used to charge, but the companies have increased the rate to £4 5s. 11d. We are charging £4 10s. in the case of diseases, when the companies would not accept the risk at all. They talked of something in the region of nearly £20, but finally they refused absolutely to accept the risk, considering that no figure could be named. Whilst we have been doing that, we have been taking the risks in the case of diseases at the rate of £4 10s., and we are doing other forms of insurance at £2 17s. The companies have now gone up nearly to our diseases rate by going to £4 5s. 11d.

Hon. G. Taylor: It is £2 10s. for accidents.

The Minister for Mines: The £4 5s. 11d. is for accidents.

The PREMIER: The companies have increased the rate up to the cost of the ordinary compensation business, apart from diseases, from £2 17s. to £4 5s. 11d. That is the position with regard to the miners. We intend to continue charging the £4 10s. in the case of diseases. It is not the intention of the department to raise that rate. We have been able for more than 12 months to carry on at the old rate, and we have shown a small profit within the limited scope of business that has come our way. It is considered we shall be able to continue the workers' compensation business, so far as we are able to say, at the old rate.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Accidents will swamp you.

The PREMIER: No doubt accidents will come along. This increase means a very heavy additional burden upon the people of the State who have to effect insurances. Since the increase has been made, a substantial amount of business has come to the State insurance office.

Mr. Mann: Is it not correct that the medical charges have been heavier than was anticipated?

The PREMIER: I do not know what the result may be. I suppose the companies will be able to give good reasons from their point of view for the increase. On the face of it, I suppose the fact that they made a loss of £25,000 last year is the reason for the increase I have quoted.

Mr. Angelo: I am told that these increases are based on the actual losses made since the introduction of the last workers' compensation.

The Minister for Works: We have done all the mining business. They have not done a pennyworth of it.

The PREMIER: I do not know upon what they base their increases.

Mr. Angelo: It has all been carefully worked out against the losses.

The PREMIER: Against the losses, or in a manner that will give them substantial profits? Which does the hon. member mean? Even assuming that it has been worked out against the losses, that is the whole case for Government insurance. That aspect I will deal with presently. It demonstrates that the history of Government insurance the world over, wherever it has been tried, proves that it can be done at a cheaper rate by the Government than by private companies, for reasons which I shall deal with presently. That is the position, and it represents a substantially increased burden upon industry generally. For many years in Western Australia private companies have enjoyed a monopoly of general insurance, of all kinds of insurance; but certainly whilst there have been many companies operating—nearly 60 are operating at present—we all know that competition between them in rates has never existed. Competition for business, of course, there was, but not competition in rates. One got the same quotation for any kind of insurance from the whole 60.

Hon. W. J. George: That was not so years ago.

The PREMIER: I know the position was different a few years ago, but for many years there has been no such thing as competition between the companies with regard to rates.

Hon. W. J. George: The only competition now left in Western Australia is when we go up for election. Everything else is squared up in combines.

The PREMIER: We shall have to see whether we cannot make the elections a close preserve, too. The fact remains that

the private insurance companies have had a monopoly of the business. When Lloyd's came into the business here and some of the Government insurance was given to them, the companies here made a large reduction in their rates to the Government, by way of undercutting Lloyd's, in order to prevent Lloyd's from getting the Government business.

Mr. Mann: Lloyd's was not fair competition.

The PREMIER: It was reasonably fair compared with—

Mr. Mann: Lloyd's did not keep an office and a staff of clerks here.

The PREMIER: I know that. Our trouble is that we have 60 offices and 60 managers and, I suppose, 600 canvassers. Because of this needless multiplication of overhead expenditure, expenditure of which a large proportion is entirely unnecessary, rates are unduly high. There is the case for Government insurance once more. Will the member for Perth (Mr. Mann) assert that the insurance business offering in this State needs to be catered for by 60 companies with all their staffs and offices and all these huge expenses?

Mr. Mann: It is better to have an office here than to have it in London.

The PREMIER: Possibly; I do not know. It is better still, however, to have an office here, and that office a State office, thereby eliminating all the unnecessary duplication of services, and because of that elimination being able to do insurance business at much lower rates, and giving the insuring public the benefit of those lower rates. When the private companies made a heavy reduction to the Government, they made no reduction to the outside public. Why was that? If the reduction for Government insurance was legitimate and such as left a profit to the companies, why were they not able to make a reduction to the general public?

Mr. Mann: It costs nothing to get Government business.

The PREMIER: Government risks correspond to other kinds of risks.

Mr. Mann: While it costs nothing to get Government work, it requires many canvassers to get the outside work.

The PREMIER: And that is where unnecessary expenditure comes in. One cannot travel anywhere in the country, one cannot board a train or stop for a night at

an hotel, without meeting an insurance canvasser. One canvasser is at this farmer's place and another at another farmer's place, with a resultant unnecessary duplication of expenditure.

Mr. Mann: You will have to do that also.

The PREMIER: That is why the costs of the companies are so high. The Government will certainly not have to do that.

Mr. Davy: Why will you not have to do it?

The PREMIER: The people will attend to their insurances themselves if the business is a State monopoly, as it should be. There is no need for two men to be worrying the same farmer in order to obtain his insurance business for a particular company.

Mr. Davy: Only a small number of people would insure at all were it not for the canvassers.

The PREMIER: The people are not so neglectful of their own interests. Would any considerable number of people refrain from insuring simply because an importunate person was not at their doors begging for their business?

Mr. Davy: Yes.

The PREMIER: I refuse to believe that our people are so neglectful of their interests.

Mr. Mann: A good agent will get a bigger policy and get greater business than otherwise would be the case.

The PREMIER: Is the farmer a fool that he will not protect his own interests by insurance? Is the business man, the manufacturer, the trader, going to take the risk of losing by fire all he possesses unless some canvasser comes to his door and begs him to protect his own property. The contention is too ridiculous.

Mr. Thomson: What you suggest happens very often.

The PREMIER: We know there are a few persons of that kind, but the proportion they represent is so small that it does not count.

Mr. Sampson: Why are travellers sent out?

The PREMIER. Canvassers are sent out for the same reason as travellers, to secure the business as between one company or firm and another.

Mr. Sampson: The same thing applies to all classes of business—selling houses or selling land.

The PREMIER: The most hopelessly absurd views to be encountered anywhere are held in this State with regard to insurance. It is universally recognised now that insurance is a legitimate function of Government.

Mr. Davy: Do you mean by that remark that every community in the world except Western Australia recognises it?

The PREMIER: Most of the advanced communities of the world recognise it.

Mr. Davy: How many?

The PREMIER: A great many.

Mr. Davy: "Universal" means everybody.

The PREMIER: I will say, then, that it is recognised in various parts of the world. All the Australian States have Government insurance.

Mr. Davy: Has South Australia?

The PREMIER: Yes. Insurance is being done there by the Government.

Mr. Mann: For Government property only.

The Minister for Works: No. The South Australian Government have an insurance office in King William Street.

The PREMIER: New Zealand has had State insurance for many years. It has had accident insurance for 26 years, and State life insurance was introduced 58 years ago, in 1869. New Zealand is a country that has never been ruled by a Labour Government, or by those who believe in State enterprise. Of all the Australian States, Western Australia is the last to introduce Government insurance; and there is such opposition here to State insurance that one might imagine it was something new and unheard-of in the way of State effort, something entirely experimental.

Mr. Davy: Do you think the inhabitants of Queensland are any happier than the inhabitants of Western Australia?

The PREMIER: I am quite sure they are richer—I do not know about happier. I know the hon. member will have figures available; but he will not be able with the aid of anybody having a knowledge of insurance to controvert the tables I shall be able to produce as to the results of State insurance in Queensland. If a saving of money, or an increase of income as the result of saving money, brings happiness to people, then certainly the inhabitants of Queensland are happier as the result of Government insurance.

Mr. Davy: Queensland seems to have more trouble than Western Australia.

The PREMIER: Not with regard to insurance. Even apart from that, I do not know that the statement is correct. The newspapers of this State, of course, make a feature of troubles experienced in Queensland. There has been a slackening off as regards the featuring of Queensland's troubles latterly, but now that the newspapers have lost Mr. Lang we may expect them to revert to specially featuring troubles in Queensland. Queensland will be prominent in our Press as to disabilities arising from Labour Government. Queensland is not the only State in which there have been strikes. There was in this country a railway strike which lasted longer than the one in Queensland. There have been railway strikes in Victoria, a State which has never been ruled by Labour. It is bootless to talk about strikes in a State with a Labour Government.

The Minister for Mines: There was a railway strike in Victoria when that State had no Labour Government.

The PREMIER: Of course. Some of the biggest industrial evils Australia has known occurred when there was no Labour Government either in the State or in the Commonwealth.

Hon. G. Taylor: Or even a Labour member in any Colonial Parliament.

The PREMIER: The hon. member will recollect that before ever there was a Labour member in Australia, Australia had industrial upheavals. Therefore it is no use talking about Queensland's troubles.

Mr. Davy: But has not Queensland had its troubles?

The PREMIER: It has had its measure of troubles, as every State has had. I am merely attempting to refute the suggestion that there has been a special extra dose of trouble in Queensland because of its Labour Government.

Mr. Sampson: States have had labour troubles in spite of having Labour Governments.

The PREMIER: Why pick Queensland? There have been labour troubles in this State and in Victoria. Again, I ask, why pick Queensland? The motive for picking Queensland is that that State has had a Labour Government for twelve years. Why not pick Victoria, which has never had a Labour Government? The sole object is to make people think that Labour Governments are peculiar to industrial troubles.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: What about this jolly Bill?

The PREMIER: The hon. member will not accuse me of getting away from the Bill, and neither will he expect me to allow interjections which reflect upon another country to go unanswered. I have merely been replying to hon. members who made interjections designed to show that Labour rule is not beneficial to a State, and who therefore alluded to Queensland. I think we might as well stop at home when discussing these matters.

Mr. Mann: I think the Premier started it by referring to Mr. Lang.

The PREMIER: No. I made no reference whatever to Mr. Lang until after Queensland had been mentioned. I was about to show the effect of Government insurance in Queensland when some hon. member interjected that Queensland was rather an unhappy country from that point of view.

Mr. Davy: I asked if they were happier than we are in Western Australia.

The PREMIER: And my answer was that they were wealthier as a result of State insurance and if increased wealth brought happiness, then the Queensland people should be happier.

Mr. Davy: Now prove your statement!

The PREMIER: I shall. It is interesting to note the result of the operations of insurance companies in Western Australia during the past year. If we take fire insurance for a start we find that the total revenue from premiums, etc.—I am leaving out the odd hundred pounds—amounted to £416,000. The losses paid amounted to £127,000, while the administrative expenses of the insurance companies totalled £188,000, or more than the total losses.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: My heavens! Government insurance!

The PREMIER: No. That refers to the private companies dealing with fire insurances.

The Minister for Mines: That applies where there is no State insurance.

The PREMIER: These figures relate to the whole of the companies operating in this State. The total expenses of the companies amounted to £315,000, thus showing a profit of £100,000.

Mr. Mann: A lot of that money was invested in the development of the State.

The Minister for Mines: What has that to do with this?

Mr. Mann: Of course it has something to do with it.

Hon. W. J. George: Ministers should keep cool!

The Minister for Works: An ice chest would be required to enable us to keep cool in the face of such interjections.

The PREMIER: There was a profit of £100,000. This is where I contend private insurance companies impose higher charges, because their percentage of expenses to revenue received was 45. Regarding insurance done in connection with employers' liability and workers' compensation, the revenue of the companies totalled £160,000, the losses £132,000, the administrative expenses £53,000, or total expenses of £185,000 as against a revenue amounting to £160,000, leaving a loss on the year's operations of £25,000. The percentage of expenses to revenue under that heading was 33. In respect of marine insurance business, the revenue derived by the companies totalled £67,000, the losses were £7,000 and the administrative expenses £21,000, showing a profit of £38,000. The percentage of expenses to revenue was 31. Dealing with motor car insurance business, the revenue derived by all the companies was £128,000, the losses amounted to £74,000 and the expenses to £44,000. Thus the difference between the revenue and the expenses was £10,000.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Does that cover re-insurances as well?

The PREMIER: It covers all expenses. In that instance the percentage of expenses to revenue was 34. Under the heading of hailstone insurance, there was a loss of £26,000, while in respect of accident (personal) insurance, the profit was £4,000. Thus for the year the companies in respect of all kinds of insurance derived a total revenue of £928,000, incurred losses amounting to £450,000, or considerably less than half the revenue, while the administrative expenses totalled £371,000. Thus the total losses and expenses were £822,000, leaving a profit from all forms of insurances of £106,000, with a percentage of expenses against all revenue of 39. That is the result of the year's operations. I claim that the expenses of the private insurance companies are unnecessarily high, and as a consequence people have to pay high premiums. I have already pointed out that State insurance has operated in all the States of Australia, in New Zealand, and in

many of the American States. In fact in 17 of the American States, State insurance is in operation and in eight of the States the Governments have a complete monopoly. No other kind of insurance is done within the borders of those States.

Mr. Davy: Including life insurance.

The PREMIER: I would not say that, but according to the wording of the information I have, it would lead me to believe that the complete monopoly includes life insurance as well.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: And are they making it pay?

The PREMIER: Evidently they find it is a paying proposition.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I am against monopolies; are you not as well?

The PREMIER: It all depends. Monopolies can render a service to the community.

The Minister for Works: It all depends on who is controlling the monopoly.

The PREMIER: I am not opposed to each and every kind of monopoly, but that is a question I do not wish to go into now. I want to show that it is a fact that State insurance has been accepted by all phases of political thought in Australia for many years past. It has been recognised that insurance represents a fair function of Government. State insurance has been established in countries where no Labour Governments have been in power. I want hon. members to bear that in mind and not to rush to a conclusion that this is a mere fad of the Labour Party in furtherance of their platform of State enterprises.

Mr. Davy: State socialisation!

The PREMIER: It is not State socialisation. In Victoria the State Insurance Office was established in 1914 and two of the provisions contained in the Victorian Workers' Compensation Act set out that insurance by employers should be compulsory and that a State office should be established to conduct the business.

Mr. Mann: That was because there was no pension fund there.

The PREMIER: It was the natural and proper thing to do. Should any Parliament pass a law whereby a section of the citizens are compelled to do a certain thing, as we compel them under the Workers' Compensation Act which requires employers to insure their employees, it is the duty of Parliament to make such provision as will enable the employers to comply with the

law. Parliament should not leave the employers at the mercy of private companies who might refuse to do business. That is the position that arose in Western Australia. We provided under the Workers' Compensation Act that all employers must insure their employees and when the mining companies approached the insurance companies and desired to effect insurances, the companies informed the mining representatives that they would not do any business. Where were the employers then? On the one hand they were compelled by one law to insure, and yet on the other hand there were no means whereby the mining companies could give effect to the law. So I say State insurance is the natural corollary to compulsory workers' compensation insurance. So it is that in every country provision is made to enable employers to insure where compulsory insurance is a subject of legislation.

Mr. Davy: That argument, for what it is worth, applies only to certain forms of insurance.

The PREMIER: I know that. I was dealing with workers' insurance.

The Minister for Works: It applies to traffic insurance too.

Mr. Marshall: Too right! A hundred per cent. too.

The PREMIER: I believe so.

Mr. Marshall: The rates were increased from £8 4s. to £14 in one hit. They are sharks and robbers.

The PREMIER: In Victoria the State Insurance Office is in competition with private insurance companies. One of the first results following upon the establishment of the State office there was a reduction of rates by the private companies. In spite of the reduction in rates, the State office in Victoria was able to distribute bonuses to employers up to the end of June, 1926, to the extent of £40,000, in addition to which it was able to accumulate substantial reserves. There is no theory about that; that represents actual results that have followed the establishment of State insurance in Victoria! Whereas the expenses ratio of the private companies there was between 30 and 35 per cent. of the premium income, the expenses rate of the State insurance Office last year represented 12 per cent. of the premium income. That discloses the difference between the expenses rates of State office and private companies. It is that difference that enables the State to do business profitably at a

lower premium than is possible with the private companies. That has been the experience wherever State insurance has been inaugurated.

Many members interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

The PREMIER: I think there should be one interjection at a time.

Mr. Mann: Will income taxation have any bearing on that position?

Mr. Sampson: Will the State offices pay rent?

The PREMIER: That is a wonderful idea! I wonder if some insurance companies rent offices from the hon. member! It was said in this Chamber last session that the Victorian State Insurance Office had a monopoly over all Government insurance business. That is not so, because the details of last year's operations show that less than one-third of the business done by the State Insurance Office was Government insurance business. So the argument that was advanced last year goes by the board.

Mr. Davy: What proportion of the whole of the work was done by the Governments office? Was it not under 10 per cent.?

The PREMIER: I do not know. The point made last session that the Victorian office handled all the Government business and did not enter into competition with outside companies in that respect.

Hon. G. Taylor: It was said that they did most of the Government work.

The PREMIER: Now I have shown that the activities of the State office in Victoria included only a third in respect of the Government insurance work, two-thirds being done with other types of business such as general policies. That is to say, two-thirds of the work done by the State office was not Government insurance. That answers the argument that hon. members advanced last year. In New Zealand the State Insurance Office has not a monopoly, but enters into competition with 35 private insurance companies. It is rather important to observe at this stage that the people of New Zealand, where there is a population of about 1,500,000, are served by 35 private insurance companies, as against 60 companies in Western Australia for 380,000 people. Can we wonder that with 60 companies competing for the business offering for a small population such as we have in this State and with all the overhead charges and duplication of expenses, the expenses are high?

Mr. Marshall: One motor car chasing another around the country for business.

Mr. Davy: Do you know how many private companies there are in New Zealand?

The PREMIER: No; but I should say there are as many as here, if not more, the reason being that nearly every company operating in Australia has an office in all the States.

Mr. Davy: New Zealand is not much of an example. There must be some reason for there being fewer companies there.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: It is a question, not of the number of companies, but of the premiums charged.

The PREMIER: It is probably accounted for by the fact that while we have a population of about six millions in the Commonwealth, every company operates in all the States. It may be said that the 60 companies are catering for all the people of Australia.

Mr. Davy: It has nothing to do with the fact that there is a State office.

The PREMIER: No. If a company operates in Melbourne or Sydney, it probably has an office here as well. For the year ended December, 1926, the fire insurance section of the New Zealand State Office had a premium income of £197,471. It paid in claims £79,062 and returned to policy holders by way of rebates the sum of £24,496. This system of paying rebates to policy holders was established in 1923 and, during the four years of its operation, the policy holders of the State office have benefited to the extent of £74,902. The total assets of the fire insurance section of the office, as at the 31st December, 1926, amounted to £661,519. The only State capital put into the office to start it was £2,000, and in the 26 years it has operated, it has built up assets to the value of over £661,000. The companies operating in New Zealand during the last few years have given rebates amounting to £231,000. Would they have disgorged one shilling of that £231,000 if they had not been forced to do it by the action of the Government Insurance Office?

Hon. W. D. Johnson: That is the chief value of State insurance.

The PREMIER: The companies did that because they were forced to; otherwise the business would naturally have gone where it could be done more cheaply, namely, to the State office. As a consequence of the competition of the State office, several reductions in the rates charged by the private companies have been made, and it is estimated that those reductions, plus the saving

arising from the rebate system instituted by the State office, have saved the insuring public in the 26 years a sum of more than £1,000,000. Those figures are not mine; they are the official figures of the result of insurance in New Zealand.

Mr. Davy: Can you refer us to the source of those figures?

The PREMIER: They appear in the official publication of the New Zealand Insurance Office.

Mr. Davy: Is it a recent publication?

The PREMIER: Yes; I think I can supply the hon. member with a copy. The published accounts for the year ended December, 1926, of the accident branch of the State Insurance Office of New Zealand show that the premium income amounted to £58,348, and that the claims totalled £33,854. I again remark that the principle of Government insurance has never been questioned by any party in the Parliament of New Zealand. There is no section that would attempt to go to the country on a policy to repeal the insurance laws of the Dominion; nor is there such a section in any State of the Commonwealth where State insurance has been operating. Consequently I am entirely unable to understand the hostility in this State to a principle so well established in other States and in other countries of the world.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Have you actually located the hostility in this State?

The PREMIER: Outside of Parliament and the insurance companies, I have not.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: And no one else has, either.

The PREMIER: The opposition in this State is confined entirely to the insurance companies, people directly interested in insurance and to members of Parliament. Outside of those people, no opposition has been offered anywhere in the State?

Mr. Mann: Have you found any demand for State insurance?

Mr. Withers: Yes.

Mr. Marshall: Well you know it, too.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Had you been at the farmers' conference in the last fortnight you would have heard about it.

Mr. Mann: They have their own insurance.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Yes, and they say it is not effective against exploitation.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The farmer or the company?

Hon. W. D. Johnson: The farmer.

The PREMIER: Now let us go to Queensland, that benighted State that has been under Labour rule for 12 years.

Mr. Marshall: It must be in an awful state now!

The PREMIER: The Queensland Government Insurance Office was established in 1916 by an amendment of the Workers' Compensation Act. For that form of insurance the State office in Queensland has a monopoly, but notwithstanding an increase in the benefits, no increase in the rates was made. On the 1st May, 1918 the rates of premium charged by the department were again reduced—they had been reduced prior to that—making a total net reduction to underwrite fire insurance business of 33½ per cent. on dwellings and their contents and 20 per cent. on business risks. It is estimated that those reductions represent a saving of not less than £140,000 per annum to the insuring public of Queensland. That, I submit, is ample justification for carrying any fire insurance measure through the Parliament of this State. There is no speculation about the matter. We are not proposing to embark upon uncharted seas or enter into something that may land us in financial loss. We are merely proceeding to travel a well-beaten road, and we have numerous instances to show us the benefits to be derived by the people from State insurance. Let me read for the information of members an extract from the official journal of the Queensland Government Insurance Office dated December, 1926—

The session of Parliament just concluded passed certain amendments to the Workers' Compensation Acts 1916-25, which cannot but be a great boon to workers injured in industry. The new Act increases the amount of compensation payable to a worker injured by accident in that he will receive 66½ per cent. of his average weekly wages up to £2 15s. per week (instead of £2 as formerly), and further, that a worker having dependants shall receive not less than £2 15s. per week (instead of £2 as formerly), and in the case of a married worker with children up to, but not exceeding £4 5s. per week (instead of £3 10s. as formerly). The amendments were received very favourably in the House, particularly as the increased benefits have been made available without any increase in the premiums.

Yet immediately we in this State granted increased benefits under our Workers' Compensation Act, the premiums were increased by 50 to 100 per cent. The increased benefits in Queensland, which I think are equal to those paid under our Act, have been made available without any increased premium charges. When the Queensland office was

established, the sum of £20,000 was appropriated by the Queensland Government for the purposes of the State office, but of that amount only £3,570 was expended, and that sum was repaid to the Treasury within the first 12 months of the operation of the office. Up to the year ended the 30th June, 1926, the Workers' Compensation Department of the State office has made profits totalling £465,504. The claims paid have totalled £2,298,960, and the cost of administration has been £485,321. That is the result of 10 years of Government insurance in Queensland. The total profits made to June, 1925, were £440,000, and adding the profit of £83,000 for last year, the total is £523,000. In the Fire Department the premium income for the year 1926 amounted to £188,626, while the claims paid totalled £133,552. The department concluded the year with a surplus of £31,962. The Miscellaneous Accident Department had a premium income of £17,924 and paid claims totalling £5,512, and showed a surplus at the end of the year of £8,208. At the end of June, 1926, the total amount of profits standing to the credit of the Workers' Compensation, Fire, and Miscellaneous Accident Departments was £104,146. I could quote from official publications of America to show that similar results have attended the operation of Government insurance in that country. In the bulletin of the Bureau of Statistics, which is published regularly in America, figures are given showing that Government insurance there has produced advantages similar to those which followed its adoption in Queensland and New Zealand. The percentage of expenses to premium revenue shows the same discrepancy, that is a low percentage of expenses to premium revenue under State insurance as against a relatively high percentage, namely, 30 to 40 per cent. of expenses to premium revenue under private companies. When we have the example of all those countries to guide us, surely Western Australia would do well to fall into line! Surely this State is going to do what has been considered a fair and reasonable function of government in other parts of the world. Before I conclude I merely wish to repeat what I said earlier in my remarks, that the people of this country, regardless of their political views, are overwhelmingly in favour of Government insurance. There can be no question about that, and as the member for Guildford remarked, outside the circle of those who are directly interested

in insurance companies, and some members of Parliament, the opposition in this State does not exist amongst any section of our citizens. So I repeat, the Government, in bringing down the Bill, are fulfilling a definite pledge that was made to the electors and are carrying out what I believe is the wish and desire of three-fourths of the people of the State. I submit the Bill with every confidence, feeling sure that it will pass another place, which frequently asserts that it has never stood in the way of legislation when it can be shown that it is the wish of the people that that legislation should be enacted. I do not know what other means we have, except by direct referendum, of ascertaining the views of the electors. When a Government are returned at two succeeding elections, pledged to a certain policy, and promising the electors that they will endeavour to give effect to that policy if returned, remembering also that the matter was made a prominent feature during the election campaign—not a side issue, not a bye-question during the campaign, but a question that was kept in the forefront by the party with which I am associated—then we have every warrant for submitting a measure for the approval of Parliament, and Parliament has no warrant for preventing its enactment. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. Sir James Mitchell, debate adjourned.

BILL—EMPLOYMENT BROKERS ACT AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

Resumed from the 4th October. Mr. Lutey in the Chair; the Minister for Works in charge of the Bill.

Postponed Clause 12—Repeal of Section 15 and substitution of new section:

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: When the consideration of this clause was postponed I gave an undertaking that I would alter it, and that in the re-draft, provision would be made for the fixing of fees by regulation. The draft of the new clause is before members and if we negative the clause as it appears in the Bill I will then move to substitute the new clause.

Clause put and negatived.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS : 1
move—

That the following new clause, to stand as Clause 2 be added to the Bill:—

Section fifteen of the principal Act (as reprinted in the Appendix to the Volume of Statutes for 1912) is hereby amended as follows:—

- (1) by the excision of the words "and the maximum amount chargeable to the employee," in the second paragraph;
- (2) by the excision of the paragraph added thereto by section two of the Employment Brokers Act Amendment Act, 1918;
- (3) by inserting, as paragraph three thereof, a paragraph, as follows:—

No payment or remuneration of any kind for or in respect of any hiring or attempted hiring shall be directly or indirectly charged by any employment broker to or against any servant, and it shall not be lawful for any employment broker to accept any reward or gratuity whatsoever for or in respect of the services rendered by him as such broker to any person who has obtained or sought to obtain any position as employee through his intervention or with his assistance.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The new clause is better than the clause we have just negatived, by reason of the fact that from time to time this House will have an opportunity to improve or reject the regulations. But I do not know why we need amend the Act at all in this regard. The employer will have to pay all the same. I think the object is not that which was set out by the Minister; there is another object and whatever it is I hope it will not be attained.

Mr. DAVY: I think I have fathomed the Minister's extraordinary antipathy to employment brokers. He puts all human beings into one of two categories, namely, persons looking for jobs on the one hand, and others about to employ them on the other. In the Minister's view, if an employer wants an employee and applies to an employment broker, the employment broker puts an advertisement in the newspaper, and when the crowd of applicants come along, he proceeds to select one of them. As the law stood at one time, the employment broker followed the line of least resistance and made his selection among the applicants pay his fee. That is what the Minister imagines to be the case in every instance. I agree with him that to charge the employee in such circumstances is neither logical nor legal. For in such a case the broker is the agent of the employer, who has set in motion the machinery to

secure an employee. According to the law of contract, unless there is some expressed arrangement to the contrary, the only person who could be charged is the employer. If that were the only class of case existing, I should feel inclined to agree with the Minister in his proposal to prevent the employment broker from charging anybody but the employer. But it is not so. If we get away from the section of the community whom the Minister has ever in his mind, we find that a large number of people go to the employment broker, requesting him to find them jobs. Surely in such a case it would be right and proper that the person who requests that the service shall be rendered should pay for the service!

Mr. Kenneally: Pay for the right to work!

Mr. DAVY: No, pay for the service rendered.

Mr. Kenneally: It is buying work.

Mr. DAVY: It is not. If my friend asked me to use whatever influence I may have in securing for him some particular job, if I succeeded it would be only right that he should pay me for the service.

Mr. Kenneally: It is paying for the right to work.

Mr. DAVY: It is not, but I agree with the hon. member that it might be so if the employee had to pay when, actually, the application to the employment broker came from the employer. Merely to make it illegal under any circumstances for an employee to pay for a service rendered to him by an employment broker is absurd, and will prevent any such services being rendered to the employee. It will mean that there will be no person charged with the task of finding work for another. In the majority of cases, perhaps, the Minister is right, for the service is really rendered to the employer and should be paid for by him; but in a substantial minority of cases the reverse obtains. This is a crude method of dealing with the position, and will cause considerable hardship. Assuming the amendment is carried, I could not agree that the Minister, through His Excellency the Governor, should have power to prescribe the minimum fee to be charged by employment brokers. Such hostility to the employment brokers has been exhibited by the Minister, that I should be fearful if this power rested in him.

The Minister for Works: Finality will not rest with me.

Mr. DAVY: But initiation will. Why should the thing be done by the Minister at all? If the fixing of a maximum fee were necessary, it should be done by some authority outside of political control. I could never agree that the Government are the proper authority to fix the fees.

Mr. BROWN: I am opposed to the amendment. The object the Minister has is the total abolition of employment brokers. That is what will happen if the amendment be carried, for no employment broker will send a man out to the country unless he can collect a fee from him. Many incompetent persons go out to positions in country districts. The employer finds them quite unsuited to the job, and in consequence they stay only a day or two, notwithstanding which the employer must pay the full fee. That is altogether wrong. The Minister would drive everybody to the State Labour Bureau, where no charges are made. But at that institution, an applicant for work, unless he belongs to a union, will not get a job.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! There is nothing in the amendment about a union.

Mr. BROWN: The applicant who has a union ticket gets the preference. But when a man wanting a job goes to a private registry office, he is not asked whether he has a union ticket.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! There is nothing here about a union ticket.

Mr. BROWN: The question is whether it is desirable to wipe out all employment brokers.

Mr. Marshall: That is not in the amendment, either.

Mr. BROWN: But that is what the Minister has in mind. We know what the Minister has in view. Many people who are looking for work go to a private registry office which makes a specialty of a certain class of employment. The large offices have only one object in view and that is to find work for anybody who goes to them. We know there are unscrupulous people who bring about engagements for the sake of the fees they get, irrespective of the capability of the person employed, but these brokers will not last long. Some restriction should be imposed upon dishonest employment brokers.

Mr. THOMSON: On a previous occasion I moved that certain portions of this clause should be struck out. The Minister has now seen fit to amend the Bill, more

especially with respect to the 1912 and the 1918 Acts. I stated previously I was in favour of the fees being paid by the employer. The member for West Perth has, however, raised a very pertinent question. When men go to an employment broker for a job, that broker is entitled to be paid something for his services. We know it is hoped to abolish all private registry offices, and to bring everything as far as possible under Government control. Brokers could soon be put out of business by its being made unprofitable. I should like to know what the State Labour Bureau costs.

The Premier: You will find that in the Estimates.

Mr. THOMSON: If the bureau is made a close preserve it will do all the business. That is not in the interests of the State or of those who want to obtain employment. One hesitates, judging from their previous actions, to support any measure that will give the Government full control in this matter. Of course, I recognise that our protests can only be futile in the present circumstances. The actions of the Government should give us some concern as to what will happen when they are given full control. No one can get a job now unless he has a union ticket. I should like some provision inserted in the clause to prevent the Government from using the State Labour Bureau as a means of preventing men without union tickets from getting work. I know that would be ruled out of order.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I had not seen this amendment until to-day. The Minister may be doing an injustice when he says that the employment broker must not act as an agent for a person seeking employment. It may happen that a station manager or school teacher may ask an employment broker to find some better position for him than he has at the time. If this new clause is inserted that will be impossible. As a result of this, great hardship may ensue. However, there are other people in the world, and we must have some consideration for them. A station manager might want to transfer from one station to another, and an employment broker should have the right to find him a new position.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: The member for West Perth drew a distinction between an employer sending to a broker to obtain an employee—in which case under the Bill the employer would pay—and, on the other hand, the small section of the community other than ordinary unskilled workers who apply

to employment brokers to find situations for them. It would be easy to include in the clause something enabling a broker to handle those cases.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: There are in this State 16 or 17 employment agencies, and from the discussion one might infer that they are simply harpies. However, personal experience gained in days of adversity enables me to state that the service of these agencies is effective and that they are reasonable in their charges. There is a danger of the Labour Bureau being made simply a recruiting ground for the unions.

The **CHAIRMAN:** I ask the hon. member to stick to the clause.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: If this clause is passed, it will make the Government Bureau the sole agency for finding employment. I hope the Minister will give consideration to what has been urged from this side.

New clause put, and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	19
Noes	12

Majority for	7
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AYES.

Mr. Cheeson
Mr. Clydesdale
Mr. Collier
Mr. Coverley
Mr. Cunningham
Mr. Heron
Miss Holman
Mr. Kenneally
Mr. Kennedy
Mr. Lamond

Mr. Marshall
Mr. McCallum
Mr. Munde
Mr. Rowe
Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Thomson
Mr. Troy
Mr. Withers
Mr. Panton

(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Angelo
Mr. Barnard
Mr. Brown
Mr. Davy
Mr. George
Mr. Griffiths
Mr. Mason

Sir James Mitchell
Mr. Richardson
Mr. Sampson
Mr. Taylor
Mr. North

(Teller.)

PAIR.

AYE.
Mr. Wilson

NO.
Mr. E. B. Johnston

New clause thus passed.

New clause—Amendment of Section 28:

The **MINISTER FOR WORKS:** I move—

That the following be inserted, to stand as Clause 18:—"Section 28 of the principal Act is hereby amended by adding to Subsection 1 the following words:—'By such regulations the maximum fees to be charged by employment brokers may be prescribed.'"

Mr. DAVY: We have put up all the arguments we could to induce the Minister to relent on this. If the new clause is carried, the fate of employment brokers is extinction as surely as if the Bill of last session or a previous session had been carried. I must vote against the new clause.

Mr. THOMSON: Why should the Minister ask for this power? The condition is not one that should be imposed upon any section of the community. It represents price-fixing with a vengeance. Prior to the passing of the last new clause, the broker was able to charge the employee up to half the first week's wages. I am not at all worried about the fees to be imposed on the employer, who is a free agent and may either employ a broker or advertise in the "West Australian." The country employer, however, should be able to continue to avail himself of the services of employment brokers. Recently I have not used the Government Labour Bureau, but my experience of it in past years has been most unsatisfactory. The present arrangement as to fees has proved satisfactory for many years. Why should the Minister want power to prescribe a broker's fees? Country employers, under the Bill, would have to write to the union secretary and would have to accept anyone he might send. If the employer is willing to pay the broker's scale of fees, that is his business. Now the Government are anxious that the employers shall not be exploited!

The Premier: There is too much of that sort of thing going on.

Mr. THOMSON: If we can judge by the actions of some of the supporters of the Government, I doubt very much their sincerity.

The Premier: You have no ground upon which to doubt us.

Mr. THOMSON: God help the employer if we are to judge what the position is likely to be if, for instance, the member for East Perth were to have his way.

Mr. Sampson: The new clause will mean the extinction of private employment brokers.

Mr. THOMSON: The Government want to make the business unprofitable. If the Minister had indicated his desire to fix the fees that the employees would have to pay, I would have agreed with him, but when he seeks to deal with the fees the employers are to pay, I "hae ma doots."

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: To-night the Premier introduced a Bill, the object of which, he said, was to keep the private in-

insurance companies on something like reasonable lines. Now his Minister, who already has a labour bureau, admits that it is not efficient enough to deal with opposition and so he wants to have this power.

The Minister for Works: You had charge of the labour bureau. Why did you not make it efficient?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It was efficient in those days. What the Minister is contending is that the worker will pay the private employment brokers any fees they like to charge in order to get a job rather than go to the State Labour Bureau and secure employment without any charge being levied upon him. If the Premier is right, then the Minister for Works must be wrong.

New clause put, and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	18
Noes	13

Majority for 5

AYES.

Mr. Chesson	Mr. Marshall
Mr. Clydesdale	Mr. McCallum
Mr. Collier	Mr. Munzie
Mr. Coverley	Mr. Rowe
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Heron	Mr. Troy
Mr. Kenneally	Mr. Withers
Mr. Kennedy	Mr. Fanton
Mr. Lambert	
Mr. Lamond	

(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Angelo	Sir James Mitchell
Mr. Barnard	Mr. Richardson
Mr. Brown	Mr. Sampson
Mr. Davy	Mr. Taylor
Mr. George	Mr. Thomson
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. North
Mr. Mann	

(Teller.)

PAIR.

AYE.	No.
Mr. Wilson	Mr. E. B. Johnston

New clause thus passed.

New clause:

Mr. MANN: I move—

That the following new clause, to stand as Clause 10, be inserted:—"Section 12 of the principal Act is hereby amended by inserting after the word 'same,' in the sixth line, the words 'and the deposit of a fidelity bond for fifty pounds in the form prescribed in the Sixth Schedule, from an insurance office or other approved sureties,' and by inserting after the word 'aforesaid,' in the ninth line thereof, 'and the said bond is deposited.'"

The amendment that I originally desired to move, Mr. Sayer advises me, will not be effective, as it will apply only to new applicants for licenses and will not affect those who hold them now. Mr. Sayer drafted the amendment in the form I have now moved it. As it stands, the amendment is on all fours with the section to be found in the Land Agents Act under which a fidelity bond is necessary up to £200. The amendment will mean that "blow-ins" and persons of doubtful repute will not be able to secure employment brokers' licenses. The present holders of those licenses are in accordance with my objects. My inquiries show that it is only a few who have been guilty of breaches of the Act as indicated by the Minister during his second reading speech. The majority of those holding licenses are married women, many being widows. They do not wish undesirables to be associated with their business, and the amendment will tend to improve matters.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The member for Perth has consistently opposed each clause by which I sought to tighten up the control of these businesses, but now he proposes to go further than I have suggested by requiring any person desirous of participating in this business to put up a fidelity bond of £50. If I sum up his argument aright, it is that the person who can furnish that bond is more honourable and reputable than one who cannot do so. That is to say that every poor man is dishonest. The hon. member proposes to put a tax upon anybody who wants to start in this business.

Mr. Davy: A man of decent character will get a bond very cheaply, whereas a man of bad character will not be able to get one at all.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Who is to be the judge of his character? The insurance companies. My friend is greatly concerned about them. And what is to happen to this bond? In what circumstances is it to be forfeited?

Mr. Mann: For any breach of the Act.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: But the Act provides penalties for breaches. No case at all has been established for the amendment. Its principle is wrong and should not be supported. It means a special tax, a monetary impost.

Mr. Mann: It is not a matter of money.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Of course it is. You propose to hand these people over to the insurance companies.

Mr. Mann: Nothing of the sort.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If I suggested such a thing, there would be strong objection to it.

Mr. Mann: Who could object to it?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Can a bond be secured without paying for it? There must be some backing to the bond.

Mr. Kenneally: Where is the necessity for it, anyhow?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The object of the amendment is to hamper the man who cannot pay for such a bond. The hon. member's whole argument is that honesty goes with money, that because a man can produce a backing for £50 his honesty is assured, whereas if he has not the money he must be deemed to be dishonest. That is the only case for the amendment.

Mr. Mann: Yours is a bad interpretation.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: You have not offered any other argument. The principle underlying the amendment is unsound. Fancy judging a man's honesty by the monetary backing he can get! I have been accused of seeking to give too much power to the court, but the hon. member now comes along with something more than ever I wished to set up. I have no desire to block anybody from starting in this business merely because he or she cannot stand up to a monetary test. I know plenty of men in this State who could get a lot of financial backing, despite which I would not call them reputable citizens. The whole principle of the amendment is wrong. I will oppose it.

Mr. DAVY: I am amazed at the Minister's unfair criticism. All that the amendment proposes is that a person wishing to engage in this business shall enter into a bond not to break the Act with two sureties, or with an approved insurance company. I have yet to learn that a man's financial position is the only guide as to whether he can get two people to back him, to guarantee that he will be a decent person and abide by the provisions of the Act. That is all the amendment proposes. It does not propose that he shall be worth so much assets, but only that he shall get two citizens to guarantee that he will be of decent behaviour. The Minister says it is a ridiculous proposal. Yet he himself has introduced in another

measure a provision preventing a man from carrying on as the driver of a motor bus or taxi cab unless he has sufficient cash to pay a premium to an insurance company. He is not to be let off by getting two guarantors for his character: he has, in effect, to produce the cash.

The Minister for Works: It was merely a guarantee that the money would be there in case of a claim being made.

Mr. DAVY: The Minister would prevent a man from driving a taxi cab unless he has a definite sum of money. Under the amendment all that the would-be employment broker has to do is to enter into a bond and get two reputable citizens to join as his sureties. I am not enamoured of the amendment, for I think the Minister has already made it difficult enough for these people to carry on their business. Still the amendment is perfectly harmless, and is not to be compared with the legislation brought down and put through by the Minister, which offends the very principles the Minister is now defending.

Mr. SAMPSON: I am surprised at the opposition of the Minister, for there is throughout the Bill evidence of the need of care in respect of those carrying on this business. A fidelity bond is by no means peculiar. Sometimes it is necessary in order to obtain a situation, as prescribed in the Road Districts Act. And the Public Works Department refuses to accept a personal guarantee in substitution for a fidelity bond for the good behaviour of the secretary of a road board. Since a fidelity bond is essential in that instance, surely the suggested amendment is a mild one.

Mr. ANGELO: The object of the amendment is to ensure that only honest and trustworthy persons engage in this class of business. Surely the Minister, who is out to clean up the business, should not object to that.

Mr. Kenneally: Will not the provision for a license be sufficient protection?

Mr. ANGELO: I should prefer to have the surety of two friends.

Mr. MANN: If the measure, as the Minister informed us, is to deal with human lives, let us exercise all possible care. Under the Land Agents Act provision is made for a fidelity bond. We should ensure that only reputable people engage in the business. Those who are at present following this calling

favour the amendment because they wish to raise its status.

New clause put and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	12
Noes	18

Majority against	..	6
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AYES.

Mr. Angelo	Mr. Mann
Mr. Barnard	Sir James Mitchell
Mr. Brown	Mr. Richardson
Mr. Davy	Mr. Sampson
Mr. George	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. North

(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Chesson	Mr. Lamond
Mr. Clydesdale	Mr. Marshall
Mr. Collier	Mr. McCallum
Mr. Coverley	Mr. Munsie
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. Rowe
Miss Holman	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Kenneally	Mr. Troy
Mr. Kennedy	Mr. Withers
Mr. Lambert	Mr. Panton

(Teller.)

PAIR.

AYE.	No.
Mr. E. B. Johnston	Mr. Wilson

New clause thus negatived.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

BILL—STATE CHILDREN ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH (Hon. S. W. Munsie—Hannans) [10.10] in moving the second reading said: I do not think there is much necessity for an explanation of this Bill. Its principal object is to change the title of the State Children and Charities Department to that of Child Welfare Department. Since 1913 in three of the Eastern States the name of the State Children Department has been altered to some more appropriate title. I do not know of any name that could be used better in the interests of the department, and those with whom it deals than that of Child Welfare Department. During last year the department dealt with 832 widows and 2,523 children. There is not the slightest doubt that at present at all events a slight stigma

attaches to the children who have been looked upon by their fellows as State children. The object of the Bill is to alter the name of the department so that instead of the children being referred to as State children they will become known as wards.

Mr. Thomson: Wards of the State?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: They will be wards of the State, but that will not be mentioned.

Hon. G. Taylor: There will be no State children?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Not in name.

Mr. Griffiths: That is a good thing.

Mr. Sampson: The ward suffers in time from its associations.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: It is a very desirable move to alter the name in this direction. In 1917 there were two departments, one known as the State Children Department and the other as the Public Charities Department.

Hon. G. Taylor: Will this Bill affect the Public Charities Department?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Yes, for it will be known as the Child Welfare Department. From that department relief is given to the aged and infirm, and a great number of children who are at present being cared for by their own parents. This is only another step forward. I well remember a few years ago when, if the breadwinner was taken and the mother was left with a family, irrespective of its numbers, and she was desirous of obtaining aid from the State, she had to take her children to the court and have them committed to the State. I think that was altered in 1912 or 1913, when it was not made compulsory for the mother to hand the children over to the State before she could receive assistance. This Bill is going a step further and is altering the title of those departments to that of Child Welfare Department. In New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia the Acts have already been altered and brought more up to date. There are only 10 clauses in the Bill, and practically only six principal items are dealt with. The second principle is that which repeals Subsection 1 of Section 15 of the original Act. That subsection has now become useless. It applies to the old industrial school at Subiaco, which is now the magnificent institution called the King Edward Memorial Hospital. There is now no longer any necessity to have a section dealing with this

industrial school. Most members know the receiving depot at Mt. Lawley. That also is mentioned in the Act as it stands.

Hon. G. Taylor: It is a very tony place.

The Premier: It is a very fine place.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: The third principle in the Bill is that giving power to the department to legally release on probation any child or ward of the State who may be sentenced by the Children's Court. That is repeatedly done now, but is not provided for in the Act. With the consent of the court and the Minister controlling the department, boys and girls of 14 or 15 years of age are committed to an institution until they are 18 years old. In many cases the reports from the institutions lead the officers of the department to believe that the child has sufficiently reformed, and that it is in its own interests that it should be found employment and allowed to go to work. Under these conditions the child is released on probation, employment found for it, and a certain percentage of the earnings are banked every week.

Hon. G. Taylor: I suppose very few of them return to the institution.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Very few who are let out on parole ever return. There are some who abscond from the institution and are away for 12 months, but that seldom happens. Not one who has been let out has re-entered the institution later.

Hon. G. Taylor: That speaks well for it.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: It is wise that the department should have the legal right to do what is proposed. I know of no department better suited to have control in this direction than that which does the work now. The fourth principle of the Bill is an amendment to Section 76, which amendment reads—

Section 76 of the principal Act is hereby amended by inserting after the words "sixty-nine," in the first line thereof, the words "one hundred and twenty-eight or one hundred and twenty-nine."

Under the Act as it stands, the department can take action, but only under Section 69, for the attachment of moneys, property, etc., in connection with maintenance defaulters. If a complaint is made to the department that children are being neglected, and the department know that the person responsible for the care of those children has property or money, an attachment order can be obtained against such money or property, so as to prevent the disposal

of it before the case is heard by the court. The power is not exercised often, but it has been used in some cases. However, after the case has been heard by the court and a decision given, the department cannot take action against the person responsible if he continues to default. I believe the proposed amendment to be a step in the right direction. The department know, and I as Minister know, of defaulters who have had money which it has been impossible for the department to attach with a view to compelling those persons to contribute towards the maintenance of their legitimate children. The object of the amendment is to empower the department to make attachment under Sections 128 and 129 as well as under Section 69. There was a form for this purpose, but it was not law, not being contained in the Act. In certain cases money was recovered from people who had signed the form; but there was great objection to its use and I cut it out altogether, my reason being that many people perfectly honest in every respect would sooner decline assistance than sign the form in question, which therefore did not achieve its object. If the Bill passes, the department will have power to do what in my opinion ought to be done. The fifth amendment relates to Section 78. It deals with the numerous instances in which a man has been a defaulter and, having been discovered by the police, has again been brought before the Children's Court, possibly for the second or third time. The court has then refused to accept his promise to pay and has required him to find a guarantee or bond. In such cases bonds of £10 or £20 have been put up, the latter being the amount usually asked for. Then the defaulter has continued to default, with the result that the bond has been forfeited. This amendment refers not only to the department, but also to the foster mother, who in my opinion should be considered even more than the department. Many cases have occurred in which the foster mother of a child has not received the weekly payment ordered by the court. It is not the duty of the State to pay foster mothers, but the duty of the parents. At present, upon a bond being forfeited, the money goes to the Crown Law Department. The amendment declares that where the State itself has paid money, it shall have first claim on the bond. Where the foster mother has not been paid, she is to have first claim on the bond. It is left to the court to decide how the amount of the bond

shall be distributed. The amendment is reasonable and necessary. People frequently change their names and their residences in order to evade their responsibilities to the State Children Department. When eventually caught, they may owe up to £250 or £300.

Mr. Mann: I sometimes wonder why the courts are so lenient with such defaulters.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: The reason is that there is no possible hope of getting the money from the man if he is sent to gaol. However, in some recent cases men have been sentenced to imprisonment, not too severe a penalty for a man who has money but will not pay for the support of his children. The object of the sixth amendment is merely to make the Act as a whole apply to the State Children Department. I do not know why the limiting words were inserted in the original Act. The seventh amendment is not very important either, but there have been cases in which the department have met with trouble in resuming possession of a child entrusted to other people. This does not refer so much to foster mothers as to persons who get hold of a ward of the State, or "State child" as the present term is, and refuse to deliver the child to the departmental officers when it has been discovered that the home is unsuitable, or that the person is unsuitable for having control of a child. In such circumstances the department has met with refusals, and obstacles have been placed in the way of the return of the child. The seventh and last amendment proposed by the Bill adds a new paragraph to Section 123, making it an offence if a person—

having a ward in his or her care neglects or refuses, on demand, to hand such child over to an authorised officer of the department or a police officer authorised to receive the child.

Mr. Thomson: What objections do they raise?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: There are many objections raised.

Mr. Mann: Although the people may not be bringing up the children in accordance with the desires of the department, those concerned become attached to the children.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: That is so in many instances. In more instances, however, particularly with children who have been released on probation, and for whom positions have been found, the departmental officers have discovered that the children have been given employment that was

not suitable. Sometimes they have been worked for too long a period each day, and in many instances they have been employed at work that was too hard for them. The departmental officers have demanded their return.

Hon. G. Taylor: It was no fault of the child.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: No, the places were unsuitable for them. In such circumstances great difficulty is experienced in getting children back. The clause will bring the Act in this respect into conformity with other provisions regarding offences relating to State children and the penalties will also apply. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Sampson, debate adjourned.

BILL—BILLS OF SALE ACT AMENDMENT.

Returned from the Council without amendment.

House adjourned at 10.33 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 12th October, 1927.

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

QUESTION—ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES.

Hon. E. ROSE (for Hon. A. Burvill) asked the Chief Secretary: Will he lay on the Table of the House a map showing the electoral boundaries of the Federal divisions and the existing electoral boundaries of the Legislative Assembly districts?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: Yes.