

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

Ayes	..	..	..	5
Noes	..	..	..	7

Majority against .. 2

AYES.

Hon. J. Duffell	Hon. H. Stewart
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. J. M. Macfarlane
Hon. A. Lovekin	(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. H. P. Colebatch	Hon. A. J. H. Saw
Hon. J. J. Holmes	Hon. F. E. S. Willmott
Hon. J. Nicholson	Hon. A. Burvill
Hon. E. Rose	(Teller.)

New clause thus negatived.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

Recommittal

Bill recommitted to further consider Clauses 2, 14 and a new clause.

Clause 2—Amendment of Section 3:

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: I urge that the old period of three months be allowed to stand. The principal objection to the extended period is that it is difficult to determine whether a dog is six months old or not. Contention arises between the inspectors and owners, and dogs may escape registration for six months or longer. At three months the difficulty is not so great. The Kennel Club is quite in accord with the three months provision. I hope the clause will be negatived.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The clause as printed will bring our law into uniformity with that of the Eastern States. Everywhere else the provision is six months.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: That is no reason why we should depart from the existing practice.

Hon. H. Stewart: Is the Eastern States legislation of recent date?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: It is the existing legislation.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	4
Noes	..	..	..	9

Majority against .. 5

AYES.

Hon. H. P. Colebatch	Hon. A. Lovekin
Hon. J. Duffell	Hon. H. Stewart
	(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. H. Boan	Hon. E. Rose
Hon. A. Burvill	Hon. A. J. H. Saw
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. F. E. S. Willmott
Hon. J. J. Holmes	Hon. J. M. Macfarlane
Hon. J. Nicholson	(Teller.)

Clause thus negatived.

Clause 14—Amendment of Third Schedule:

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The amendment I have to move in this clause is really consequential upon our having made all registrations start from the 30th June. I move—

That the following be added to the clause: "and the Schedule is further amended by inserting the words '31st day of December' in lieu of the words '30th day of June.'"

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

New clause:

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I move—

That the following be inserted to stand as Clause 14: "The Second Schedule is amended by substituting the words '30th day of June' for the words '31st day of December' in forms (a) and (b)."

New clause put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: There is also a consequential amendment in Clause 12.

The CHAIRMAN: That is so.

Bill again reported, with further amendments.

House adjourned at 10.35 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 13th December, 1922.

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The DEPUTY SPEAKER took the Chair at 2.30 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTION—RAILWAY ADVISORY BOARD.

Visit to Quindanning.

Mr. JOHNSTON asked the Premier: 1, Are the Government aware that a previous arrangement for the Railway Advisory Board to visit the Quindanning district in connection with the provision of railway facilities was postponed owing to war conditions? 2, Is it the intention of the Government to comply with my recent request that the board should be instructed to visit Quindanning and report on the question of a railway to serve that rich and well settled district?

The PREMIER replied: 1, No. 2, The matter will receive consideration.

QUESTION—EASTERN STATES COMPETITION.

Albany and its hinterland.

Capt. CARTER asked the Premier: 1, Is he aware that merchants and manufacturers in Perth are unable to successfully compete with Eastern States firms for business within the State of Western Australia, notably Albany and its hinterland? 2, is he also aware that the reason for this is that railway freights from Perth to Albany are so high and that sufficient space is not available on the sea route? 3, Will the Government increase the facilities for trade or lower railway freights on goods made in Western Australia?

The PREMIER replied: 1, No. 2, No. 3, The matter will receive consideration.

QUESTION—SITTING HOURS.

Mr. PICKERING, without notice, asked the Premier: In view of the fact that there is no prospect of completing the business of Parliament before Christmas, does he intend to continue sitting at 2.30 p.m. instead of 4.30?

Hon. P. COLLIER: It is not worth while making an alteration.

The PREMIER replied: I do not propose to make any alteration. There is some business which must be got through before we adjourn over the holidays.

Mr. Pickering: When shall we prorogue?

The PREMIER: As soon as ever the business is got through.

ASSENT TO BILLS.

Message from the Lieut.-Governor received and read notifying assent to the following Bills:—

1, Western Australian Bank Act Amendment (Private).

2, Company's Act Amendment.

STANDING ORDERS SUSPENSION.

Taxation Bills.

The PREMIER (Hon. Sir James Mitchell—Northam) [2.35]: I move—

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as is necessary to enable the Land and Income Tax Assessment Amendment Bill and the Land Tax and Income Tax Bill to be passed through their remaining stages on this day.

Question put and passed.

BILL—LAND AND INCOME TAX ASSESSMENT AMENDMENT.

Report of Committee adopted.

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

BILL—LAND TAX AND INCOME TAX.

In Committee.

Resumed from the previous day; Mr. Angelo in the Chair, the Premier in charge of the Bill.

Clause 3—Rate of income tax:

The CHAIRMAN: The Premier has moved an amendment in this clause, to strike out, in line 2, the figures "7,766" and insert "6,672" in lieu thereof.

Hon. P. COLLIER: When the exemption clauses were first submitted, the Premier intimated that the total loss of revenue which would be occasioned by the carrying of the first new clause, the one which was defeated, amounted to £73,000. The second new clause, providing an exemption of only £100 for single persons, must have very materially reduced the amount of the prospective loss. The Premier estimates it at £30,000 a year. I suppose the figures quoted by the Premier have been worked out by the departmental officers. In order to make good the loss of £30,000, the Premier proposes to increase the rate of tax; and that is the amendment we are now dealing with. Last night the Premier assured us that the increase proposed would only recoup to him the amount being lost by the exemption clauses, namely £30,000. I have been endeavouring to take out some figures on the subject, and I make the result very much more. During the consideration of the exemption clauses, all members who spoke stated that there was no desire to cause the Premier any loss of revenue, and that they would be quite willing to vote in any direction which would recoup the Premier the amount involved. I take it the Committee are still willing to do that. Personally I am willing to make up the loss, provided I am satisfied the proposal is to make it up in what I consider to be an equitable way. I feel sure that the Committee are not prepared to grant any increase which will give the Premier more than he is losing; that is to say, the Committee are not willing at this juncture to

grant any increased taxation. We want to be satisfied that the Premier is not indulging in a little profiteering over this matter. I am inclined to think that he is getting the better of us, that by his proposed increase he will not only make good the loss to be sustained through the exemption clauses, but that he will benefit to the extent of many thousands of pounds. The last complete figures furnished by the Commissioner of Taxation relate to the year 1920-21. The only method I have of estimating what increased taxation the Premier will receive under his amendment is by taking the average in the groups. The average income in the group between £201 and £300 will be £250. That is a fair basis to take. Under the proposal to increase the rate of tax to .007d., the rate on £250 will be 3d. in the pound, or £3 2s. 6d., which each taxpayer will have to pay on that basis. In that group the tax will be £42,103. Adding to that the 15 per cent. super tax, we have £48,000. In that group alone, the increased taxation which the Premier will receive under his amendment will be £14,836.

The Premier: They do not pay on the first £200.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I know that. Taking the group from £300 to £500, the average salary will be £400 and from that group the Premier will receive increased taxation amounting to £18,214. In the next group which ranges from £500 to £700, giving an average of £600, the increase will be £8,874. In the group from £700 to £1,000, which gives an average salary of £850, the total increase will be £14,095.

The Premier: How much do you put on the present rate of taxation?

Hon. P. COLLIER: The difference between .006d. and .007d.; that is all. I have taken out the figures on the basis of the Premier's own amendment.

The Premier: I think you must have taken the wrong basis.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Not at all; that is the difference.

The Premier: But it cannot be.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes it is.

The Premier: You are not specially dealing with the 15 per cent. super tax.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Not specially, but that is included in the figures I have given.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It is provided for in Clause 6 of the Bill.

Hon. P. COLLIER: In the next group ranging from £1,001 to £1,500, which gives an average income of £1,250, the total increase in taxation will be £19,344. The Commissioner of Taxation shows two additional groups, one from £1,500 to £5,000, and the other from £5,000 upwards. It would be difficult to arrive at an average salary in those groups and any figure selected would not be reliable. In the circumstances, I have not made any calculations regarding those groups. The total increased taxation that would be received by the Premier under his proposals, in the groups I have referred to,

would be £75,000. It will thus be seen that the Premier will receive considerably more than was lost under the amendments recently made. It is most difficult for members to arrive at what the actual amount will be.

Mr. Davies: Do you know the groups from which the greater part of the taxation comes?

The Premier: The Leader of the Opposition has given those figures.

Hon. P. COLLIER: They can be worked out. The rate of taxation increases with the amount of the income, starting at 2d. and increasing to 48d. on £7,766. I would like the Premier to inform the Committee as to whether he has any figures showing the result to be gained from the application of his amendment, either to the groups I have mentioned or to the total. The Committee should be satisfied that they are not being asked to vote any more than is necessary to make up the loss in taxation.

The Premier: I have assured you that you are not doing so.

Hon. P. COLLIER: But I cannot reconcile the figures.

The Premier: How much do you make it?

Hon. P. COLLIER: I make it £75,000 without calculating anything respecting the last two groups. If the Premier can give the Committee any information along those lines, it will assist members in deciding whether the proposed amendment is fair or not. While the Premier has increased the amount of tax on other taxpayers so that the man receiving a salary of £300 will pay 5s., and the man receiving £400, 10s. increasing accordingly until the man who receives £6,672 will pay the maximum rate, which will amount to £194 a year extra compared with the old tax, persons with an income of £7,766 or over will pay precisely the same amount this year as under the old rate, because there will be no increase whatever for them.

Mr. Pickering: The increase will start at an earlier stage in the income.

Mr. Hughes: Yes, the middleman will cop it all.

Hon. P. COLLIER: But there will be no increase for the man receiving £7,766 or over.

The Premier: Ours is the highest rate of taxation in Australia apart from the Federal tax.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Under the Premier's amendment the man receiving £6,672 would reach the maximum tax.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes, the man in receipt of that salary will pay more than he did last year.

Mr. Pickering: What about striking out the provision for 48d. and substituting 54d.?

Hon. P. COLLIER: The man who receives an income of £7,766 will not pay a penny increase in taxation.

The Premier: Yes, he will, and he gets to his maximum payment much quicker.

Hon. P. COLLIER: He does not. He reaches it at £6,672 but he will not pay any more on his income of £7,766.

The Premier: But he does reach his maximum much quicker.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That does not affect the point at all. He will pay the same on the higher salary.

The Premier: Who worked out these figures for you?

Hon. P. COLLIER: That does not matter. The Premier: Well, they are incorrect.

Hon. P. COLLIER: They are by a man who knows as much about it as does the man who works for the Premier. However, it requires no knowledge of figures to understand that the man on the present maximum of £7,766 will not pay one penny increase. If the Premier proposes to make all taxpayers bear this loss, why should those on £7,766 and upwards escape? If we were to apply the increases all round, the man on £7,766 would have to pay £258 additional. Since we are asking those on lower incomes to pay something extra, why is it not fair to ask the man on £7,766 to pay something extra also? The man at the top of the ladder is to go free. We are justified in assuming that the present tax is equitably proportioned. If the graduation is at present equitable, why is it that any increase also should not be equitable right up to the maximum?

The Premier: It has never been suggested that the graduation should continue right up.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I am not suggesting that. What we declare in our Act to-day is that we shall have a graduated tax starting at 2d. and reaching up to a maximum of 48d. in the £1. Now the Premier says that, in order to make good his loss, all taxpayers must pay something additional; and the amount provides for that, except in respect of the man at the top. Why should he not pay in proportion with all others?

The Premier: He pays the maximum now.

Hon. P. COLLIER: But the man on £6,672 will be called upon to pay an additional £194 per annum. If that is fair, why is it not also fair to call on the man with £7,766 to pay his share as well?

The Premier: Why stop there?

Hon. P. COLLIER: Because we shall then have sufficient.

The Premier: Everybody will pay more.

Hon. P. COLLIER: No, the man on top will pay nothing extra. A much simpler method for the Premier to adopt would be to make a percentage increase in the total tax. In the last complete year, 1920-21, the total amount of income tax was £425,000. The Premier says the amendments which we made yesterday will reduce that by £30,000. Thus we get a total of £395,000. If we put $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. increase on that total we shall get the £30,000 which the Premier says he wants to raise. Then everybody will know where he stands. We may be quite willing to grant the Premier his £30,000, but by this proposed increase we may be doubling the amount. Indeed I am satisfied that under the amendment the Pre-

mier will receive much more than he has lost.

Mr. Harrison: He can do with it.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That is not the point. The Committee is willing to do a fair thing by the Government in this respect, but we do not want to do more than that.

The PREMIER: The first mistake of the Leader of the Opposition has been to ignore the 2d. flat rate.

Hon. P. Collier: No.

The PREMIER: Yes, he has calculated on £425,000 as coming from the rate .006d.

Hon. P. Collier: I have allowed for that.

The PREMIER: No, you treat the £425,000 as coming from the rate .006d.

Hon. P. Collier: No. I have treated it as the total income tax for the year 1920-21.

The PREMIER: The hon. member has ignored the flat rate in his calculations.

Hon. P. Collier: No, I have taken the total tax for the year; and I used that total merely for the purpose of working out the $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. super tax to give the amount of £30,000.

The PREMIER: The flat rate last year returned £125,000, and we raised by the super tax and by the .006 rate £300,000. Now we are asking to add a thousandth part of a penny per £1 to the graduation in order to cover the £30,000 lost.

Mr. Hughes: If a man gets 2d. under the graduation, that 2d. is added to his flat rate and becomes 4d. You are losing sight of that.

The PREMIER: I am not. The flat rate amounts to £125,000, leaving £30,000 to be raised by other means, including the graduation .006d. per £1.

Mr. Hughes: Very few pay the flat rate.

The PREMIER: Every man who pays tax starts off at 2d.

Mr. Hughes: At 2d. plus the graduation.

The PREMIER: Added to that flat rate is his graduation.

Mr. Hughes: He pays that on his full income.

The PREMIER: Of course.

Mr. Hughes: There is no 2d. rate.

The PREMIER: There is 2d. to be added to the graduation. It is 2d. to everyone plus the graduation. On top of that I ask that there be added one-thousandth part of 1d. per pound, so that a man with an income of £1,000 would pay 1d. in the pound more because of the graduation.

Mr. Hughes: He pays 3d. on the whole thousand.

The PREMIER: Yes, the flat rate of 2d. plus the graduation, which, in his case, would be 1d. When the tax was .006d. plus the graduation, it worked out at 8d. in the pound. If it is made .007d. plus the graduation, it will be 9d. in the pound. So the graduation carries the rate up until we get to the maximum of 4s. In Queensland it is 3s.; in South Australia, 1s. 2d.; in Victoria, 7d.; and in New South Wales 2s. plus the 7s. 8d.

Federal tax. When a man here pays 4s., he has to pay the maximum Federal tax of 7s. 8d., so that he has a pretty stiff tax of 11s. 8d. to meet.

Mr. Hughes: Another 8d. would make it only 12s. 4d.

The PREMIER: And another 8d. would make it only 13s., and another 8d. only 13s. 8d.

Mr. Hughes: We are asking for the addition of only one 8d.

The PREMIER: I do not do all the hon. member asks. This has been carefully worked out. We do not wish to get a penny more under this scheme than we shall lose, and we do not think we shall get any more. The exemptions for all sorts of things are now very liberal and will diminish the collections to be made. Some people will be exempt altogether, though receiving fairly good incomes. In some cases an income of £400 will be exempt. The Taxation Department estimate that they will get an amount just equal to the loss, and the Committee should permit that to be obtained.

Hon. P. Collier: We are willing that that should be done.

The PREMIER: That is all we are doing.

Hon. P. Collier: No, you will get more.

The PREMIER: No, we shall not. I think the Leader of the Opposition did ignore the flat rate.

Hon. P. Collier: I did not.

The PREMIER: We do not get any increase on the flat rate. The only increase is on what is left after the flat rate is deducted. If we take £425,000 and calculate a percentage increase on that, it looks big; but if we take off the flat rate, it is not so big.

Hon. P. Collier: When I took the £425,000, I was not taking the flat rate, but only the percentage increase which would give you what you want.

The PREMIER: I have told the Commissioner of Taxation that I want to raise this additional amount.

Hon. P. Collier: Why not adopt the simple method of a super tax?

The PREMIER: Because this is a fairer method.

Hon. P. Collier: It is not.

Mr. Hughes: Because it relieves the big man.

Hon. P. Collier: You could work out the percentage increase required by way of a super tax.

The PREMIER: This is a fairer way. The super tax should be a temporary measure. This will have to be a permanent tax.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It is a 12 months' tax only.

Hon. P. Collier: The whole of our taxation is from year to year only.

The PREMIER: But it continues year after year. Would any member argue against the fairness of a graduated tax?

Hon. P. Collier: That is not the point.

The PREMIER: It is.

Hon. P. Collier: I hope you adopt that view in regard to your hospitals tax.

The PREMIER: That is for special services.

Hon. P. Collier: Your amendment would not mean a graduated tax, because there is no increase at all for the top men.

The PREMIER: It has never been suggested that any method of taxation should go beyond 4s. When 4s. is added to the Federal tax, it makes a pretty heavy impost. The proposal is perfectly fair and I hope the Committee will agree to it. Under it we cannot get more than we shall be losing.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You know there is a Federal tax, too.

The PREMIER: But not for anyone drawing less than £200 a year.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: If a man is drawing £1,000, he has to pay both taxes and to pay proportionately higher.

The PREMIER: There are very few men beyond the £6,000 mark for the tax to touch. In the year we were dealing with, there were 113 men who received £7,000, £8,000 or £9,000.

Mr. Hughes: But their average was just below £7,000.

The PREMIER: Yes, near enough to call it £7,000. The Committee should support this proposal as it is a fair and reasonable way of getting the money. Considering the other deductions made this session, I do not think we shall get as much money as before.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I suppose the officials have taken that into consideration.

The PREMIER: I do not know that they have. The proposal will operate fairly against all taxpayers, and will give the Government what they ought to receive.

Mr. HUGHES: The figures quoted by the Leader of the Opposition included the flat rate of 2d. It might be inferred from the Premier's remarks that the flat rate of 2d. applied to the first £100. On an income of £300 it might be thought that a taxpayer would pay the flat rate of 2d. on the first £100 and at the rate of .006d. on the next £200. That is not so. An income of £300 would be charged at the rate of 2d. in the pound plus .006d. for every pound above £100, so that such an income would be charged 3d. in the pound on the lot. It would not be charged at the rate of 2d. on the first £100 and 3d. on the remaining £200.

The Premier: That is so.

Mr. HUGHES: That is what I want to make clear. Consequently, it is not reasonable to say that we raise so much by the flat rate. The flat rate is mixed in every man's income taxation.

The Premier: Of course it is.

Mr. HUGHES: When a man pays 9d. in the pound, he is paying 9d. on everything. The Premier might have some officers in the department who could tell definitely how much of the tax collected belonged to the flat rate of 2d., but after 15 years association with the officers of the department, I do not think there

is a man in the State who could calculate the amount.

The Premier: Knock off the 2d. and what would happen?

Mr. HUGHES: A taxpayer would pay 2d. less on every pound. I am not suggesting that the Premier should knock off the 2d. What I want to demonstrate is that, when we talk about getting so much revenue from the flat rate of 2d., it is impossible under our scheme of taxation for anyone I know in the State to calculate how much the flat rate actually produces.

Hon. P. Collier: It is never worked out on that basis.

Mr. HUGHES: No; it could not be done. Take the figures quoted by the Leader of the Opposition: On an income of £250 the rate, worked out at .007d. plus 2d., would be equal to 3d. in the pound. The increase at the rate of .007d. would provide another penny. To that penny must be added the flat rate of 2d. and the tax is calculated on the basis of 3d. on the whole £250. Who could say, out of the amount of £3 2s. 6d. payable on an income of £250, how much was due to the flat rate and how much was due to the rate of 3d. It is impossible to say.

The Premier: No, it is easy.

Mr. HUGHES: It might be easy for the Premier. Suppose we said that the first £100 paid 2d. in the pound, the first £100 would yield 16s. 8d. Suppose, then, we took the other £150 and said that was going to pay 3d. in the pound, that would yield £1 17s. 6d. But we do not segregate a man's income into one part paying the flat rate and a part paying the increased rate. We take the whole £250 and charge at the increased rate of 3d. I do not blame the officers of the Taxation Department if they have fallen into the trap, as the Premier appears to have done, of assuming that a certain proportion came from the flat rate and making their calculations accordingly. This is a big question needing a great deal of thought and calculation. A man earning £400 and charged at .007d. in the pound would pay 2.1d. plus the flat rate of 2d., giving a rate of 4.1d. chargeable on the whole £400. If this is not so, I have a fairly decent cheque to collect from the Commissioner of Taxation. I could almost hope the Premier's assumption was correct, because with the approach of Christmas, the cheque would be very handy. I do not think the Taxation Commissioner would share the Premier's view. On £600 the increase gives us 3.5d. If we add to that the flat rate of 2d. we get a tax of 5½d. on every £1 of taxable income. How is it possible to say that so much of the total amount of tax paid is gained as the result of a flat rate and so much from the other rate? If we could say there were 20 people in the State paying on £201, 20 on £202, so many on £203, and so on, we could calculate exactly what the increase in taxation would represent. In the absence of such information we have to do the best we can with the material at our disposal. The Leader of the Opposition has assumed that the average income between those earning

£201 and those earning £300 is £250. The average according to the Commissioner is about £243, so that he is not far out. A man earning £249 a year pays one-thousandth part of 1d. less per £1 than the man on £250, and the man on £250 pays that much less than one on £251. The difference between the man earning £249 and £251, is two-thousandths parts of 1d. in the £. If we take an average of £250, we get three lots of people averaging the same tax. We lose the first group below £200, representing £20,000. The Premier estimates he is going to lose £30,000, made up of another £10,000 loss from the group between £201 and £300.

The Premier: No.

Mr. HUGHES: At £300 the exemption totally disappears.

The Premier: That is a rough and ready form of calculation. We do not lose from any single class.

Mr. HUGHES: If a married man gets less than £4 a week and is still going to pay income tax, I have been deceived.

The Premier: Not the married, but single men. The exemption does disappear at £300.

Mr. HUGHES: We are going to lose on the two groups under £200 and under £300.

The Premier: That is so.

Mr. HUGHES: For the moment I will leave out of my calculations two groups one paying £123,000 and the other £131,000, a total of £250,000 out of the £425,000 paid, amounting to roughly 50 per cent. If we take five groups only, and the figures given by the Leader of the Opposition are right to the extent of 25 per cent., the Premier would still make a profit out of his defeat on the exemption question. The Premier is very solicitous for the man receiving £7,766 a year.

The Premier: If you are not satisfied with 11s. 8d., I do not know what you want.

Mr. HUGHES: Why take more from the man on £300?

The Premier: It has been said that the man in Heaven has a harder time than the man in the other place.

Mr. HUGHES: Evidently the Taxation Department has been telling the Premier things.

The Premier: You have not been told anything; that is the trouble.

Mr. HUGHES: The question is a simple one.

The Premier: It is so simple as to be hard to understand.

Mr. HUGHES: We, therefore, suggest a system that members can understand.

Mr. Pickering: That is tough.

Mr. HUGHES: Members have decided to relieve the man earning less than £4 a week. The Premier has told what that will mean to his revenue, but he does not always get accurate information. The Premier said he would lose £73,000 as a result of the exemption on incomes of £200.

The Premier: That is going up to £800.

Mr. HUGHES: When that proposal was defeated the Leader of the Opposition succeeded in getting the exemption for married

men raised to £200. Again the Premier said he would lose approximately £70,000.

The Premier: Oh no.

Hon. P. Collier: That shows that his figures are not reliable.

Mr. HUGHES: I am glad the Premier admits his mistake. He has found it necessary to replace this loss of £30,000. I am sure a man on £300 a year would not object to paying a tax of 5s. annually in order to relieve the man who is getting less than £200. A graduated scale has been laid down whereby the tax increases as the income goes up. On £6,672 a man's tax will increase by £194 plus 15 per cent., equal to roughly a total of £220. Everyone between £200 a year and £6,672 will pay an increased tax ranging from 5s. to £220. The man on £7,766, however, will not pay on a higher rate than the man receiving £6,672. That is not an equitable arrangement. We have given the bottom dog an exemption, and now we are going to give the top dog an exemption. There is no equity in that. If the figures are wrong, they are the figures of the Income Tax Commissioner.

The Premier: They are right.

Mr. HUGHES: Then I misunderstood the Premier. If we want to recoup to the revenue the £30,000 which will be lost through the exemption clause, let us do it by imposing a super tax of $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., as suggested by the Opposition Leader. A member who casts his vote for that proposal will know exactly what he is granting the Premier. If we carry the other proposal, we shall all be speculating as to the ultimate result. The increase in the super tax means making each man bear his proportion of the increased taxation. If the Premier did not think $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. sufficient, why did not he propose 10 per cent.?

The Premier: I thought you were in favour of a graduated tax.

Hon. P. Collier: What is the use of insinuating that anyone is arguing against a graduated tax?

Mr. HUGHES: The Premier's graduated increase comes to a dead stop. He believes in graduation until the top rung of the ladder is reached, and then he suggests a flat rate of 4s. in the pound. Graduation would mean that those on the top rung would have to pay 4s. 8d. in the pound. Compelling them to bear their share would mean producing far more than the £30,000 required.

Mr. Brown: No; because they would not trouble to make the income.

Mr. HUGHES: The incomes of such men make themselves. Some of our wealthy landlords do nothing but employ an agent to collect their rents and an accountant to make up their income tax returns. They can hardly do less than they are doing. Adding another 8d. to our maximum rate would mean a total, with the Federal tax, of 12s. 4d. in the pound. If it is logical to increase the lower man's rate of tax, it is logical to increase the taxation on the man in receipt of, say, £7,000 by £258. The latter would find that extra

tax much easier to bear than the former would find his increase.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I ask the Committee not to carry the amendment, because, apart altogether from the amendments on the Notice Paper providing for increases in the rate of tax, it must be understood that if the Committee strike out the figures as proposed, they will be supporting a proposal that the man on the existing maximum shall not pay any increase. It will mean that while every other taxpayer contributes his proportionate amount to make good the loss, the man on top will not pay one penny. Let us assume that our present graduation is fair. The Premier's amendment does not represent a graduated tax, because the graduation ceases before reaching the maximum amount.

Mr. Davies: What would the hon. member say is a practicable maximum rate?

Hon. P. COLLIER: If 4s. in the pound is a fair maximum when the low man pays on his present rate of 2.006d., then, if we increase his rate as proposed, we should raise the maximum rate from 48d. to 56d.

Mr. Davies: In your opinion can we go to 10s. in the pound maximum?

Hon. P. COLLIER: The maximum is a man's capacity to pay.

Mr. Davies: Will you say that 15s. in the pound is a practicable maximum?

Hon. P. COLLIER: I do not say anything about 15s. Parliament fixed 4s. as the maximum having regard to all the rates below. I want to preserve the balance existing to-day between the low man and the high man.

Mr. Davies: How high can we go?

Hon. P. COLLIER: Let me ask how high we can go on the low man? In the circumstances, by continuing the existing scale of graduation one can go up to 56d. Above £7,766 is a flat rate.

Mr. A. Thomson: You would make the maximum 4s. 8d.?

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes. If the man receiving £6,672 a year can pay £194 extra, the individual receiving £7,766 should be able to pay something more. There should be an increase all round. Clause 6 deals with the re-enactment of the super tax. Instead of agreeing to the amendments dealing with the rates of taxation, the simplest way for the Premier to achieve his purpose would be to amend the super tax by increasing it to 23 per cent., which would be an additional 8 per cent. upon the 15 per cent. which has been levied for some time past. An increase of $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. would give the Premier the £30,000 he wants. I would agree to an increase of 8 per cent. If that were done, each taxpayer would pay something extra in the same proportion as now and we would preserve the present graduated scale. Everyone would know what he was paying, whereas under the Premier's amendments they will not know. We have exempted the man on the lower rung; it is now proposed to exempt the man on the highest

rung. Surely that is not equitable. The Premier should retain the reference to £7,766 and adopt the course I suggest which would give him, roughly, about £20,000 more. The Premier does not seem inclined to adopt that method.

Mr. McCallum: You are pelting money at him.

The Minister for Agriculture: Why don't you make the Premier take it?

Mr. DAVIES: I would like to know what may be regarded as practicable maximum taxation.

Hon. P. Collier: It is all a matter of individual judgment.

Mr. DAVIES: No, it is not. During the war period, taxation in England reached the highest point.

Hon. P. Collier: It went to 13s. 4d. in the £1.

Mr. DAVIES: Why did it stop at that figure?

Hon. P. Collier: I suppose they thought that was sufficient.

Mr. Hughes: They want to stop at 11s. 8d. here.

Mr. DAVIES: If it is equitable to say that the man receiving £200 or £300 must pay additional taxation, it is only right that the man receiving £3,000 or £10,000 should pay an equivalent increased rate of taxation.

Mr. Money: When it takes away the incentive to gain you should stop.

Mr. DAVIES: This question is agitating people throughout the world. In Switzerland, which is regarded as the most democratic country in the world, the commoners rejected a proposal to tax wealth, when it was submitted to them by way of a referendum. The Federal tax is 7s. 8d. in the £1, which, plus the 4s. rate here—these being the maximum rates—make our total maximum taxation upwards of 12s. in the £1. I asked the Premier why he selected 4s. as the maximum rate and why he did not fix 6s. or 7s. All he could say to me in answer was that Queensland formerly had the highest State rate in Australia, namely 3s. in the £1, and that we went a little further than they did.

The Premier: In my opinion 4s. is enough.

Mr. DAVIES: If 4s. be enough on a maximum of £6,600, why not carry it to 5s. on a higher amount?

The Premier: Because I think 4s. should be the maximum.

Mr. DAVIES: Well and good. We did not know that before. If that is the real reason, I can understand it; but I think a man on £7,000 should pay proportionately with the man on £1,000.

Hon. P. Collier: If we do not demand anything from the man on top, we have to levy a heavier tax on the man below, in order to make it up.

Mr. DAVIES: That is so. The man on £6,000 has to pay 4s. State tax and 5s. Federal tax, or a total of 9s. in the pound. So nearly half of his £6,000 is paid away, and his net income becomes approximately £3,000.

The question is, how far we ought to go? That question ought to be settled once for all.

Hon. P. Collier: There can be no finality until we take the lot.

Mr. DAVIES: We ought not to take more than is wanted. Why should we tax a man on £6,000, and not tax the man on £7,000?

Mr. Money: He pays a greater amount than the man on £6,000.

Mr. DAVIES: Yes, but not a greater rate in the pound.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Not even a greater aggregate.

Mr. DAVIES: Of course it has to stop somewhere. I want to know where.

Hon. P. Collier: It must remain a matter of opinion.

Mr. Money: If we demand too much we shall get nothing.

Mr. DAVIES: But instead of saying that it shall cease at 5s. in the pound, why should we not fix it at 7s. in the pound, and relieve the man on the £200 to that extent?

Mr. Lutey: You move an amendment to that effect and I will support it.

Mr. DAVIES: I am not going to move any amendment until I see where we are. The question is, when should the vanishing point be reached? I still want to know where we should stop taxation.

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

Ayes	..	..	21
Noes	..	..	14
Majority for			7

AYES.

Mr. Brown	Mr. Money
Mrs. Cowan	Mr. Pickering
Mr. Durack	Mr. Plesse
Mr. George	Mr. Richardson
Mr. Harrison	Mr. Sampson
Mr. Hickmott	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Johnston	Mr. Teesdale
Mr. Latham	Mr. J. Thomson
Mr. H. K. Maley	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Mann	Mr. Mullaney
Sir James Mitchell	(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Marshall
Mr. Chesson	Mr. McCallum
Mr. Collier	Mr. Munsie
Mr. Davies	Mr. O'Loughlin
Mr. Gibson	Mr. A. Thomson
Mr. Heron	Mr. Wilson
Mr. Lutey	Mr. Corboy
	(Teller.)

PAIR.

Aye: Mr. C. C. Maley. No: Mr. Willcock.

Amendment thus passed.

The PREMIER: I move an amendment—

That in Subclause 1, line 3, the figure "6" be struck out and "7" inserted in lieu.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: If it is not right to increase the rate in the case of a man earning many thousands a year, it is not right to increase the rate upon the man receiving only £200 or £300 a year. This undoubtedly falls more heavily upon the lower paid man.

The PREMIER: That is not right.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Members are particularly considerate towards the man earning a large income. The amendment that has just been moved will bear principally upon those on the lower rung.

Amendment put and passed.

Subclause 1 was consequentially amended by the substitution of the figure "7" for "6" in lines 5 and 11.

The PREMIER: I move an amendment—

That in line 13 the figures "£7,766" be struck out and "£6,672" be inserted in lieu.

Amendment put and passed.

The PREMIER: I move an amendment—

That Subclause 2 be struck out. This is to give effect to the amendment carried on the Land and Income Tax Assessment Amendment Bill.

Amendment put and passed.

The PREMIER: I move an amendment—

That a subclause to stand as Subclause 2 be added, as follows: "(2) Where the 'income chargeable' of any person is less than One hundred and one pounds, the rate of tax shall be twopence in the pound."

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

Clauses 4 and 5—agreed to.

Clause 6—Super tax of 15 per cent:

Mr. PICKERING: Under Clause 5 an exemption is made in the way of dividend duties. A difficulty has been experienced with the Taxation Department. It would appear that when the super tax was put on, a special assessment was made, and no account was taken of the amount previously paid by a company as dividend duty. I would like to have an assurance from the Premier that it is not intended that the people will not be called upon to pay this tax twice. If dividend duty is paid by the company, plus super tax, it would not be fair to ask the individual to pay the super tax on that dividend duty the second time. A case has been before the department. The Taxation Department has adopted the practice of charging the super tax of 15 per cent. upon the gross income before giving credit for the rebate in respect of the tax paid by the company on the dividend.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They do not pay super tax on the dividend.

Mr. PICKERING: I am assured that they do.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The clause in the Bill says distinctly "without regard to the super tax."

Mr. PICKERING: I have interviewed the Commissioner of Taxation and he assures me that super tax is charged on the dividend duty. If that is so, it should not be permitted. A case has been quoted by way of illustration to show how the assessments are made out by the department and the correct way of doing it, respectively. This is as follows:—

ILLUSTRATION.

As assessed by the Department:—

	£	s.	d.
Ordinary Income	£764		
Dividends	£5,196		
	£5,960	at 37.56 =	922 16 2
Plus 15 per cent. super tax			138 8 5
			1,061 4 7
Deduct dividend duty paid by company			373 9 3
Tax payable			687 15 1

CORRECT METHOD.

	£	s.	d.
Ordinary Income	£764		
Dividends	£5,196		
	£5,960	at 37.56 =	922 16 2
Less dividend duty paid by company			373 9 3
Net tax under Section 5			549 6 11
Add super tax (Section 6)			82 8 1
15 per cent.			
Correct tax			631 15 0

The difference between the two methods is £56 0s. 4d., being 15 per cent. on £373 9s. 3d. An opinion has been received from Mr. H. P. Downing, K.C., and he considers that the super tax is something added to a tax which is actually payable, and that if the tax, which is actually payable, is to be arrived at by first deducting some other tax, it would be straining the language of the Act to imply that the Legislature meant that the super tax was to be added before making the deduction. In view of the position as I have outlined it, I would like to know from the Premier whether it is the intention of the Government to collect the tax twice.

The PREMIER: If the people who wanted information on this point had sent the particulars to us, we could have had the matter looked into. When the tax on income, including dividends, comes to more than 1s. 3d., it is charged on the aggregate amount, with an allowance if the man has paid his dividend duty. If a man has an income of £220 and the tax is 1s. 6d., and he has paid 1s. 3d. dividend duty on part of that income,

he gets an allowance accordingly. It is not intended that the super tax shall be applied to the amount of income twice. Such a course would be unfair.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: There is no super tax on a man's dividend duty.

The PREMIER: No; I think the member for Sussex has been wrongly informed.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 7—Section 56 of 1907, No. 15, not to apply:

Mr. MONEY: The clause repeals the right to pay the tax in two instalments. What is the reason for that?

The Premier: It is so late in the year; half of it has practically gone.

Hon. P. COLLIER: While that is true, it does not affect the position of the taxpayer. Surely it is better to provide that the taxpayer may have the right to pay half shortly, and the balance before the end of the financial year. The Premier will only be concerned with getting the tax in before the end of the year. Therefore, he should be able to meet the taxpayers as I suggest. It will not make any difference to the Treasurer so long as the money comes in, but the people should have the right to pay in two instalments.

The Premier: It will take two months to get the notices out now.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They are just sending out last year's notices now.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That is all the more reason why we should allow the people to pay the tax in two instalments, for they will shortly have three lots of income tax to pay—last year's and this year's State tax, and the Federal tax as well. The Premier should give the taxpayers an opportunity to pay in two instalments.

The Minister for Mines: So long as the money is in before the end of the financial year?

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes. Perhaps half could be paid in March and the balance in June.

The PREMIER: So much of the year has already gone that it will take some time to get out the notices and it will be well towards the end of the financial year before we can get the taxation in. We generally get most of the tax in during the last five months of the financial year. I do not think we should be obliged to accept two payments, but I can instruct the Taxation Department that when requested they should agree to the tax being paid in two instalments.

Mr. Hughes: You will give your assurance that the department will do that when requested.

The PREMIER: I will instruct the department to give that consideration when requested to do so.

Clause put and passed.

New clause:

Hon. P. COLLIER: I move—

That a new clause to stand as a proviso to Clause 3 be added as follows:—"Pro-

vided that when the income chargeable does not exceed £400 the rate of tax per pound sterling shall be 2.006d., where income chargeable is £101 sterling and shall increase uniformly with each increase of £1 sterling of income chargeable by .006d.

The object of the amendment is to exempt the application of the increased rate of .007d. from applying to incomes under £400. We have decided to exempt those in receipt of £7,776 a year from the payment of any portion of the increased taxation and we should show the same consideration to those receiving £400.

The PREMIER: Have you worked it out to show what this will mean?

Hon. P. COLLIER: No, but I do not think it will mean much.

The PREMIER: How am I to get this back?

Hon. P. COLLIER: Instead of the man who receives £300, paying 5s. increase and the man receiving £400 a 10s. increase, my amendment will mean that they will pay nothing extra.

The PREMIER: Will this be the last thing you want to do with the Bill?

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes.

The PREMIER: I cannot agree to this amendment. It is obvious that we have gone a good way towards helping people on the lower rung, and what we have done ought to be sufficient. The exemptions in the cases of married men are considerable, and they have been increased this session. A man in receipt of £400 would be allowed substantial exemption, and he does not need to have many children to be free of taxation altogether.

Hon. P. COLLIER: He will want a lot of children.

The PREMIER: A man receiving £400, with three children, gets down to £280 and then is within range of total exemption; he pays practically nothing. In fact, if he had a decent family he would get a bonus.

Mr. Hughes: A man with three children earning £400 is brought down to £280. He loses £160 of his exemption by being £80 above the £200.

The PREMIER: I cannot agree to go any further. Year after year we have granted some advantages.

Hon. P. COLLIER: We pay more every year.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: More than 120 per cent.

The PREMIER: Yes, because the people are getting more money.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They are getting lower wages in comparison with the wages of previous years.

The PREMIER: We have done well and I hope the Committee will not agree to any further alteration.

Mr. HUGHES: I hope the amendment will be agreed to.

The Premier: If it is, I will have to drop the Bill.

Mr. HUGHES: The Committee has just demonstrated its preparedness to relieve from further taxation the man receiving

£7,000, and it is only fair that it should be willing to extend the same consideration to those on the second lowest rung of the ladder. I am surprised at the Premier opposing this amendment because there is only a trivial sum involved. The total reduction in the revenue will be £5,000. The Premier has already a handsome margin to work on. A man with three children earning £400 would get an exemption of £120, but by virtue of earning £80 above the £200 he will really only get an exemption of £40. The maximum Federal tax on property is 5s. in the pound. When you get an income of £6,500 you pay 5s. 11d. in the pound and for every pound of income above that you pay 5s. in the pound.

The Premier: They gave me 92d.

Mr. HUGHES: I was outside making inquiries about this when the last division bells rang, and I was unfortunately locked out.

The Premier: They may have included the super tax in the figures they gave me.

Mr. HUGHES: As the man with three children earning £400 will get an exemption of only £40, it is a fair proposition to give him what the new clause proposes.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	..	13
Noes	..	..	..	..	21
Majority against					8

AYES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Lutey
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Marshall
Mr. Collier	Mr. McCallum
Mr. Heron	Mr. O'Loughlin
Mr. Hughes	Mr. Wilson
Mr. Johnston	Mr. Corboy
Mr. Lambert	

(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Brown	Mr. Mann
Mrs. Cowan	Sir James Mitchell
Mr. Davies	Mr. Money
Mr. Denton	Mr. Piesse
Mr. Durack	Mr. Richardson
Mr. George	Mr. Sampson
Mr. Gibson	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Harrison	Mr. Teesdale
Mr. Hickmott	Mr. J. Thomson
Mr. Latham	Mr. Mullany
Mr. H. K. Maley	

(Teller.)

PAIR.

Aye: Mr. Willecock. No: Mr. C. C. Maley.

New clause thus negatived.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments, and the report adopted.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—LICENSING ACT AMENDMENT.

Council's amendments.

Report of Committee on Council's amendments adopted.

Reasons for disagreeing to 12 of the Council's amendments drawn up by a committee, consisting of the Premier, Mr. McCallum and Mr. Money, and adopted; and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES 1922-23.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from the previous day; Mr. Angelo in the Chair.

Department of the Minister for Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage (Hon. W. J. George, Minister).

Vote—Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage, and Drainage Department, £113,091:

Mr. CORBOY (Yilgarn) [5.27]: There are two points I wish to emphasise. The first of them was referred to by the member for Collie (Mr. Wilson) and the member for Moore (Col. Denton) last night. A protest should be entered at this stage against the attitude which the Water Supply Department attempted to adopt some little time ago, and over which some dissatisfaction still exists. A couple of maimed soldiers who were working for the department were in receipt of pensions and the department seized on the fact that they were receiving pensions—

The Minister for Works: Are you sure of that?

Mr. CORBOY: If the Minister will allow me to complete my statement, I shall be prepared to answer him. The Department seized on the fact that these men were receiving pensions as an excuse to effect a reduction in wages. That this was the case was borne out by the circumstances in which the reduction was made. The men were asked to put in statements showing the amount of pension they were receiving, together with other details, and following on their supplying that information, their wages were reduced by an amount which brought them—

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I call attention to the state of the Committee. Only seven out of 34 members are present on the Government side.

Mr. Marshall: And that is the speed-up side, too.

[Quorum formed.]

Mr. CORBOY: One would almost be justified in suggesting that the doors should be locked. The wages of these men were reduced by an amount which with their pensions would leave their total income, were they still employed, at the amount they previously received in wages alone. Thus the

amount of pension was used as a basis for reduction of wages. The Government should be absolutely the last people to adopt such a course. The fact that the men were employed for 12 or 18 months was proof that they did their work satisfactorily. There was no excuse for reducing their wages.

The Minister for Works: There might be no excuse, but there might be justification.

Mr. CORBOY: There are suitable positions for maimed men, and I believe these two returned soldiers were occupying such positions. The ruling rates should be paid to maimed men in such positions. The men should not be deprived of the advantage of their pensions. Subsequently to the dismissal of these two men the Premier gave us an assurance that in future maimed men would be employed at the full rate; if they could not earn that rate, they were not to be employed. In these two instances I believe an injustice has been done. If the positions are still available, the men should have them. The Minister states that the expenditure in connection with this undertaking exceeded the revenue. In connection with the Goldfields Water Scheme the estimated revenue exceeds the estimated expenditure for the current year; and yet goldfields residents are still burdened with meter rents, of which metropolitan residents were relieved long ago.

The Minister for Works: A great mistake.

Mr. CORBOY: Goldfields residents are suffering an injustice as regards meter rents. The figures, if they mean anything, prove that the metropolitan area is being favoured in that regard. I contend that the abolition of meter rents here was not a mistake. It would be ridiculous for a grocer to charge a customer buying a pound of butter with portion of the cost of his scales. A charge for the scales is, of course, included, but it is not a specific charge as in the case of the meters. The matter is one on which the goldfields feel keenly, and the amount involved to the Government is not great. If the Minister investigated the matter, he would find that the amount paid in meter rents on the goldfields has paid the capital cost and the upkeep of the meters.

Mr. Angwin: We have to pay meter rents here just the same as on the goldfields. We pay for them in our rates.

Mr. CORBOY: The goldfields people are paying in rates, and are also paying meter rents. On the figures there is a disparity operating against goldfields residents.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [5.37]: I am sorry that the last speaker raised the question of meter rents. It matters not whether meters are paid for at so much per annum or in the rates; they have to be paid for. The only difference in this respect between the goldfields and the metropolitan area is that the former pay a definite charge in the way of meter rent. I claim that the metropolitan area pays all charges involved in its water supply, including interest, sinking fund, and depreciation.

This is not so on the goldfields. The member for Moore made reference to the complaints of metropolitan members about their water supply; and then the hon. member spoke of what the residents of his district suffer. But the hon. member should endeavour to get his people up to the standard of metropolitan residents in the matter of water supply.

Lieut.-Colonel Denton: We are not so favoured.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Having regard to the respective populations, the hon. member's constituents are equally well off. For some years metropolitan residents have been crying out about their water supply, and the justice of their complaints has been recognised by visitors from the country. The metropolitan people are desirous of obtaining an improved supply, and have no objection to paying for it. The country people do not pay for the metropolitan water supply. The total revenue in that connection shows a surplus of £80,365 over the total expenditure. Out of that surplus £21,140 has been paid in partial redemption of debentures, leaving a surplus of £59,225 in the Treasury.

The Minister for Works: That has to make up deficiencies.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No. It is true that the whole of the scheme, including also sewerage and storm water, shows a deficiency of £29,000; but that is accounted for by the fact that we have a considerable length of main drains running through streets where reticulation has not been carried out, and where, consequently, the tenements cannot avail themselves of those main drains. I do not blame the Government in this connection; the war caused the work to be stopped. But had the reticulation been carried out, there would be no such loss. As against the deficiency of £29,000 on the operation of the whole scheme, there is no less a sum than £23,225 outstanding for rates. We metropolitan people pay for our water supply, and that fact should be made known throughout the country.

Mr. Piesse: We did not say you did not pay.

Hon. P. Collier: But you will not pay yourselves.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: There have been complaints throughout this Parliament from hon. members opposite, both by way of speech and of interjection, that the metropolitan area gets all the money. Everybody knows that the metropolitan area must make a start towards obtaining an improved water supply and the present Loan Estimates of over four millions provide a sum of only £75,000 for that purpose. Indeed, for all the requirements of the metropolitan area—water supply, harbours, sewerage, tramways—the Loan Estimates provide a total of only a little over £300,000.

Mr. Latham: How much do they pay to the farmers?

The CHAIRMAN: We are not discussing the Loan Estimates.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Harbour dues are paid on all imported commodities which we consume, whereas the wheat which the hon. member sends away overseas does not pay one penny.

Mr. Latham: Wheat is not the only thing which does not pay harbour dues.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: This £40,000 shown in the return is a surplus after paying interest and sinking fund. The time has arrived when the water supply of the metropolitan area should be improved.

The Minister for Works: During the last four years £21,000 has been expended on it.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: That may be. But for the war we should have had a better supply ere this. At the request of leading men of the Empire certain public works were closed down for the time being. Inquiries which were being made with a view to providing a better water supply had to cease. The war has been over since 1918, yet nothing further has been done. Our indebtedness has increased considerably of late years. Still, notwithstanding all the money expended, approximately 11 millions, very little indeed has been found for the provision of an improved water supply in the metropolitan area. I do not blame the departmental officers for this. If they had the money they would do the work.

The Minister for Works: That is correct.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: They have not been allotted the money, and so they cannot provide a better water supply.

The Minister for Works: Then you do not agree with the member for North Perth that they are incompetent?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No, if the officers had the money they could carry out the work. However, we are fully justified in complaining that of the four millions on the Loan Estimates, only £75,000 is for water supply. During the past 18 months we have had many complaints from North Perth and from Leederville in respect of the colour of the water supplied. We in Fremantle have had that for years, and have even got used to it.

Capt. Carter: We cannot get used to it.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Years ago I brought up samples of the Fremantle water in order to show the colouring in it. If anybody has cause for complaint, it is the Fremantle people, for their water supply is much the same as it was many years ago, notwithstanding which, since 1914, their rates have been increased by 100 per cent.

Mr. J. Thomson: You were Minister for Water Supply about that time.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I was not.

Hon. P. Collier: I was. What is your complaint?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: In 1914 the water rate at Fremantle was 6d.; to-day it is 1s. In water and sewerage and storm water rates the Fremantle people pay 2s. 6d. in the pound. When ratepayers cry out for a better water supply and are willing to pay an additional rate for it, their wishes ought to be given effect to. The Fremantle district is suffering from the fact that the water supply provi-

sions made in the early days did not contemplate a largely increased population. As a result, many of the pipes are too small, and will not carry the water required to-day. Moreover, some of the pipes are so corroded that they will not accommodate more than about half the water they were intended to carry. At a deputation to the Minister for Works, the superintendent of the fire brigade produced a 3in. pipe from Fremantle which by corrosion was reduced to about 1 inch.

The Minister for Works: You could not get a pencil through some of the domestic service pipes.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: While a few of the domestic service pipes may be corroded, the pipes belonging to the department are so heavily corroded that they will not supply sufficient water to people who have domestic pipes in good condition. Last night the member for South Fremantle (Mr. McCallum) referred to the necessity for providing water for fire fighting purposes at Fremantle. The Minister for Works interjected that Perth had paid for its own fire main. As a matter of fact, Perth paid about £1,100, the cost of running a pipe a short distance in one street. That was all Perth paid for.

The Minister for Works: It was all that was needed.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: In all other business streets in Perth the supply was put down by the Government. In Fremantle there is no water for fire fighting. The pipes are not capable of carrying what is required. There are at Fremantle very large warehouses in which thousands and thousands of pounds worth of goods are stored. If any of those warehouses were to catch fire, it would be burnt clean out. That is borne out by the experience of the last few years. The owners of those warehouses are entitled to ask the Government to put down water mains for fire fighting purposes, for those people, while using very little water indeed, are paying exceedingly high rates. The Government have put up the excuse that the quantity of water supplied is sufficient for domestic purposes. But in that part of the town, where there are nothing but warehouses and offices, very little water is required for domestic purposes, and so those warehousemen are entitled to water for fire fighting purposes. The cost of laying the pipe now would be something like £9,000. As against that we had Messrs. Wood Sons & Co. burnt out with a loss of £60,000 or £70,000, and Messrs. Harper & Co. burnt out with a loss of a similarly large amount. Because of the lack of water for fire fighting, every person, not merely in Fremantle but throughout the Fremantle area, has to pay fire insurance premiums 10 or 20 per cent. higher than are paid elsewhere. The insurance companies are charging specially high rates.

The Minister for Works: Would they reduce those rates if a new main were put in?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Yes. They have definitely said so. The municipal council has been at in writing. Indubitably it is time we began to materially improve the water supply

of the metropolitan area. However, I hope the Minister will not hand over the service to a trust, for if a trust were to get control of the water supply the suburban areas would not receive the same consideration as they get from the Government. Moreover, the trust would at once borrow large sums of money in order to show their activity, and this would result in an increase in rates, without any corresponding benefit.

The Minister for Works: Then you are altogether opposed to the member for North Perth?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Some of the people of Fremantle complain that the water rate has been increased because the Government have found it necessary to spend larger sums in the suburban areas. They do not realise that the populating of the suburban areas is increasing the volume of business in Fremantle, and so appreciating the value of property there. I hope the Government will not hand the supply over to a board, but will continue the services under their own offices. I trust the Government will find the money for carrying out this necessary work.

Mr. HUGHES (East Perth) [6.0]: The question of water supply is more acute in East Perth than in any other electorate. The section of Perth that is getting the worst deal is the Mt. Lawley portion of my electorate.

Capt. Carter: Or rather the North Perth part of the Leederville electorate.

The Minister for Mines: You have the best water in the State in Mt. Lawley.

Mr. HUGHES: The people do not get much of it.

Capt. Carter: Those who have wells get water.

Mr. HUGHES: The Minister may be well supplied.

The Minister for Works: They get more Mundaring water there than is the case in any other part of Perth.

Mr. HUGHES: There are continual complaints from that part of my electorate.

The Minister for Works: The same thing is occurring all the world over.

Capt. Carter: People do not get shandies all over the world.

Mr. HUGHES: I am not concerned with the rest of the world. There was a big outcry last year over this question, and the complaints occurred immediately the hot weather returned this summer.

Capt. Carter: On one occasion we did not get any water after half past three in the afternoon.

Mr. HUGHES: When we do get two or three hot days my electors will have to adopt the suggestion of the Minister for Works, and let their gardens die. It is a great hardship upon those who have cared for their gardens throughout the year to have to watch them die off during a few hot days because of the lack of water. The officers of the department can do nothing; it is the Minister who is responsible. If he would provide the necessary funds, the officers would soon find the means of giving the people a decent water

supply. It is the duty of the Minister to ask for funds.

The Minister for Works: It is the duty of the Treasurer to ask for funds; not mine.

Mr. HUGHES: It is not a hard thing to ask for money.

The Minister for Mines: You have not considered what it would cost the consumers to add to the scheme.

Mr. HUGHES: The work has to be done, and the sooner it is done the better. Surely the Government do not propose to allow things to go on like this year after year. People in the lower parts of Perth have to take a bottle of water now and then to their friends in Inglewood, for instance, in order that they may get a decent drink of water once a week.

The Minister for Works: I have a dozen bottles of good water in my office that you can have.

Mr. HUGHES: Were they samples of water supplied by the residents?

The Minister for Works: They are all there.

Mr. HUGHES: Has the sediment settled yet?

The Minister for Works: Yes.

Mr. HUGHES: How much clear water was left?

The Minister for Mines: Take away the first number you thought of.

Mr. HUGHES: I am sure there would not be a decent drink of clear water in all of them.

The Minister for Works: There you are wrong.

Mr. HUGHES: For years we have been complaining about the water, and no improvement has been effected. There is no chance of any change this year, and I see very little prospect of one for next year. When the hot weather comes the people will have to put up with a restricted supply. It is bad enough to contemplate a repetition of last year's shortage, but no one is looking forward to a similar position this summer. If we had any hope that there would be an improvement in the following year, we might have cause to be patient. The position must be remedied sooner or later, and the Government should make a start at once in the direction of supplying Perth with decent water. I do not agree with the suggestion that the water supply should be handed over to the municipality, but if the Minister cannot effect an improvement it would be better to hand the whole business over to municipal control. If the Minister cannot deal with the situation, he should inform members accordingly. As a last resource let him hand over the water supply to the municipality.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It was a failure before.

The Minister for Works: Are you speaking from your own experience?

Mr. HUGHES: I have lived for 11 years in East Perth.

Hon. P. Collier: The present system is a failure too.

Mr. HUGHES: The people feel so desperate that they would welcome any change rather than have a continuance of the present position. We are willing to gamble, because we feel that under municipal control the position could not be worse than it is, and there is always the sporting chance of some improvement taking place.

The Minister for Works: There is no cleaner or better washed people in Australia than those in Perth. They must have had water.

Capt. Carter: That has occurred despite the water supply.

Mr. HUGHES: In North Perth and Mt. Lawley there is no difficulty about getting glasses large enough to hold water, but the difficulty is to get enough water to fill the glasses people in these suburbs already have.

Capt. CARTER (Leederville) [6.7]: Every year when this vote comes before us I have the same story to tell.

Hon. P. Collier: It is becoming monotonous to listen to.

Capt. CARTER: And I am growing weary in the telling.

The Minister for Works: Let us take it as read.

Capt. CARTER: In North Perth, at the extreme end of my electorate, the water difficulty arises every year, although the district is within a mile or two of the new bore recently put down by the Government. Last Monday week, which was the first hot day of the summer, people living in Fitzgerald street, North Perth (which is by no means the highest point of the district), could not get any water after half-past three in the afternoon until late at night.

The Minister for Works: Do you mean the whole of Fitzgerald-street?

Capt. CARTER: I did not say so.

The Minister for Works: You can pick out one particular place in any street in Perth where there is a shortage of water.

Capt. CARTER: That does not say much for the system.

The Minister for Works: It is all a question of elevation.

Capt. CARTER: But the contour of the country has been there all the time.

Hon. P. Collier: The hills may be growing up there.

Capt. CARTER: Does the Minister insinuate that the elevated parts of North Perth are growing higher, and that the reservoirs are sinking? The engineers knew the contour of the country when they originally planned the scheme. During the past few years our population has grown immensely, and the drain upon the water supply has greatly increased. The position has now become serious. Not only does it affect the comfort of people, but in many cases affects their health. I and others made that statement last year. It was also made at a big

demonstration of citizens held at the Rosemount picture gardens at North Perth. An officer of the Health Department subsequently came out with the statement that the water was absolutely harmless, and that the foreign bodies contained in it were rather an advantage than otherwise to the people. He considered the citizens lucky to get a water supply at all. This was, in effect, the answer given to the demonstration of the people who were protesting against the supply. Not only is the water unsightly and unsavoury, but is both unsafe and inadequate.

The Minister for Works: It is safe enough.

Capt. CARTER: It is not.

The Minister for Works: Oh, very well.

Capt. CARTER: As a father of a young child I would think my wife was doing a grievous wrong if she gave that kiddie some of the stuff that comes out of our water taps. Only this morning it was practically impossible to put a clean collar into the water that was in the William-street pipes, where the elevation is not high, without running the risk of having it badly stained.

The Minister for Works: So it was dirty this morning?

Capt. CARTER: Yes. This was at 558 William-street. A little while ago a man complained to one of the officers of the department about the water in William-street, and he replied that if the mains were sluiced out the residents would get clean water for a week or two.

The Minister for Works: If we did much sluicing now, you would have to take on bore water.

Capt. CARTER: I do not say the Minister has not done his best with the means at his disposal, but if he blames the topography of the country for the present position, I shall have something to say about the planning of the original scheme. I do not say that the engineers or the departmental officers are at fault. One of the first duties of the Minister should be to put the matter right. I firmly believe that the water we are now getting is dangerous to health. It also causes the users of the water to suffer a good deal of damage, and it is deleterious from the domestic point of view as well. A man I know who is living under a mile from me is prepared to swear that the dirty water ruined about £30 worth of linen in one week. His wife did not realise the danger she was running when she washed a quantity of fine linen cloth in the water, and afterwards found it was so badly stained that it could never be worn again. I have taken part in influential deputations representing the local authorities and the citizens of my district, which have waited upon the Minister. I have also been over the ground personally with him. I do think it is his duty to make it exceptionally plain to the Government, and to keep on making it plain that they must do something to improve our water

supply. The Minister for Mines interjected just now that the cost had to be taken into consideration. Surely he will admit that the cost of money will not be any less 12 months hence than it is now.

The Minister for Mines: My word, it will.

Capt. CARTER: We have been told that the markets have stabilised themselves, and that money was cheaper again.

The Minister for Mines: I do not think any Minister told you that.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Capt. CARTER: Before the tea adjournment I was referring to the water supply—

Hon. P. Collier: And other things in the water.

Capt. CARTER: That is so. I had dealt chiefly with the inadequate supply of water which was being provided in the northern suburbs. I had referred to it not only as unsightly but as unsavoury and unsafe. I relieve the officers concerned of any personal responsibility for the lack of adequate supplies and for the supplies such as we have.

The Minister for Works: Then you absolve the officers?

Capt. CARTER: I believe that the Minister, so far as he is able, has done the best he can with the funds at his disposal. I am glad the Premier is in the House because I wish to refer to what I consider to be an obligation on the Cabinet, and on the Premier in particular, as Leader of the House, regarding the policy to be pursued. It is the bounden duty of the Government, irrespective of the party from which Ministers may be drawn, to conserve the public health of the people. One of the fundamentals of the modern city is a supply of good, potable water. One has only to read the history of the growth of any modern city to realise that the question of water supply has been one of the first considerations. During the speech of one hon. member, the Minister for Mines interjected to the effect that he objected to a proposal for the immediate extension of the hills water supply scheme, on the ground of expense. As I said then, so I repeat now, that the present is surely the most opportune time for the Government to take this great work in hand. We realise what the cost will be but, as the member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin) has pointed out, that cost will be borne by the people who receive the benefit.

The Minister for Works: At the same time, the cash has to be found.

Capt. CARTER: That is correct, but we can find the cash for other public works which do not immediately affect the public health of the people to the degree that the water supply does. If the Government seriously considered the raising of money for this purpose, they would not experience any difficulty. The attitude of the Country Party members has been referred to by the member

for North-East Fremantle, and I wish to back him up. The member for York (Mr. Latham) referred to £79,000 that had been spent in connection with this department. He did not refer, however, to the revenue gained by the department or to the fact that the people who received the benefit of the expenditure of that £79,000 had, in turn, to provide the sinking fund and interest. Thus there was no charge on the country taxpayers or upon any other taxpayers than those who received the benefit from that expenditure. If country members would realise that position, they would adopt a more favourable attitude towards works of this description in the city areas. About twelve months ago, I led a representative deputation to the Minister for Works on the question of the water supply. When dealing with the condition of the water supplied, it was pointed out to the Minister that, because of its condition, it was necessary to run off many hundreds of gallons of water before a supply of clear water could be obtained. The fact that large quantities of water had to be wasted, naturally augmented the taxpayers' quarterly bills.

The Minister for Works: Every case that has been brought before us has been considered and dealt with.

Capt. CARTER: But there are thousands of cases where people have not taken the trouble to fight the department.

The Minister for Works: Because the charge has been so little that it was not worth while.

Capt. CARTER: That is not the point. In some cases the overcharge of £2 or £3 would not be much, but to others that might be a great deal. There are people who are inexperienced in these matters, or, perhaps, frightened at officialdom, with the result that they will not take the matter up with the department.

The Minister for Works: There is nothing to be frightened of in connection with my department!

Capt. CARTER: I do not know that; as I mentioned a little while ago, I have led deputations to the Minister! Some of these people have paid their water charges immediately. Others, however, have fought the department. Recently a man showed me a letter which, he said, represented the outcome of a lengthy correspondence between himself and the department. I give that man the credit—and the department can take whatever credit they like from it, too—that in the end he received his rebate. How many people are prepared to fight the department in that way? Why cannot the department acknowledge the fact that they have overcharged people, or charged people with large sums, in the aggregate, for excess water which has not been used for consumption, for domestic purposes or for aesthetic purposes, in order to build up and beautify their homes? Whatever the opinion of the Minister may be, the man who puts in his Saturday afternoons and his Sundays beautifying his home is a worthy citizen of the best type. The man who takes

an interest in his property should be encouraged. The water which has had to be run off as I have indicated, has been run off for no other purpose than to get a clean, decent supply. Apart from the state of the water, however, the supply is inadequate. That refers both to the old settled parts and to the new areas which are being opened up. Within a very short distance of the reservoir at Mt. Hawthorn is Cape-street, and although it is so close to the reservoir, the holders of blocks there cannot get the water service supplied. Recently a letter was sent to the department signed by five owners of blocks in that street, asking that the water main should be extended for about 200 yards. Their application was refused and practically no reason was given by the department.

The Minister for Works: A full reason would be given.

Capt. CARTER: The department has also been approached by the Perth Road Board. These people are desirous of improving their blocks by building houses on them but they cannot do that without a water supply. We are in a pretty parlous condition if, within a quarter of a mile of a reservoir, we cannot give people an ordinary water supply. The Government can deal with this question in only one way. We have heard much about the necessity for a bold and comprehensive policy but this is the only way to tackle this question. We should make our first loss our last loss. Whatever sum may be required, if the people are told what they had to face, they will stand the charges levied against them. On the subject of departmental activities, I asked some questions recently regarding the Herdsman's Lake proposition. The Minister said there would be an opportunity of discussing that matter on this Vote.

The Minister for Works: Not on this Vote. It is not a metropolitan matter.

Capt. CARTER: I understand that is the position, but the last time I referred to the matter the Minister said that I could raise the question on the Estimates.

The Premier: That will be dealt with on the Loan Estimates.

Capt. CARTER: Then I will leave the matter till then. It is a question of extreme urgency and I want to ventilate it. Other returned soldier members in this House have made reference to the Maimed and Limbless Returned Soldiers' Association, in connection with which two cases have been mentioned. I have referred both of them to the Minister and to the Premier. Both men are now working but I will not let this opportunity pass without saying what I think is true. I believe that the department in these instances, deliberately or otherwise, made an attempt to impose upon the returned soldiers unfair conditions.

The Minister for Works: I have the particulars here.

Mr. CARTER: I am prepared to say what is in my mind, because I believe that what I have to say is in accordance with the facts.

I understand that Sheppard is working now, but what about the three months he lost while the squabble—it was practically nothing else between him and his superior officer—was in progress? The department, deliberately or otherwise, sought to impose upon these soldiers disabilities arising out of their pension rights. Whether right or wrong, the fact remains these particular men were penalised in that they lost their positions. They were told that after a certain date there would be a reduction in their wages, and the argument used was that the amount they would receive, coupled with the pension from the Commonwealth Government, which had been granted in recognition of their war services, would make up the amount previously paid to them as wages. I am opposed to any such action. The Maimed and Limbless Soldiers' Association resent it too. These men had been in their positions for twelve months, and there seems to be something unreasonable in the action taken regarding them. I congratulate the Minister inasmuch as he has found jobs for both these men. Some consideration, however, should be given to them for the months during which they were out of work. In Sheppard's case he lost three months. He is a fine type of man. I know the whole history of his case, and he had a valid objection to the suggestion of the department to decrease his wages. As he objected to it, he was put off, and he and his wife and children were put in a very invidious, not to say dangerous, position in these days when work is so scarce. I hope the Minister will take into consideration the position these men have been in for the past three months or more. I know the Government policy has been to give preference to returned soldiers, and they have given them every consideration. The Returned Soldier's League realises that, and we appreciate that Ministers themselves are personally sympathetic with returned soldiers. Why these men should have been put off is beyond my comprehension, inasmuch as it is the bounden duty of the Government to give them every possible consideration. I hope what I have said, although it has been said before by members representing the northern suburbs, will bear some fruit, and that the Minister will do his best to persuade Cabinet in the direction desired, and that the Premier will make a pronouncement on the subject. Costs are down to such an extent that the present would be an appropriate time in which to commence the building of a great work of the nature necessary to instal a hills water supply. I do not say that there is much likelihood of a decided decline in the cost of a work of this description in the immediate future. Conditions generally in the city and suburbs are becoming worse with every house that is being built and every development that is taking place, and, as things are now, the position in Perth as well as that of Fremantle, is that we are suffering under disabilities which should not be permitted to exist. I assure the Minister that I am not kite-flying, but that I do urge upon him and

the Government the necessity for taking in hand this work immediately.

Mrs. COWAN (West Perth) [7.48]: With regard to the constituency which I represent, the chief complaint is the absolutely inadequate supply of water. I must admit that there have been some reasonable explanations made by the department, and if it is impossible to remedy the position, it becomes particularly hard on the residents that they should be left almost entirely without water in the hot weather.

The Minister for Works: In the higher parts?

Mrs. COWAN: Yes; in the lower parts, though the residents may have as much water as they need, the quality is not satisfactory. It looks as if in the future when the hills supply comes we shall not be better off on the higher levels, unless the engineers associated with the department are able to conceive a scheme by which we shall benefit. The sooner we have the hills supply, the better it will be for the community—the hygienic side is certainly very important. We all have to admit that the water is frequently not potable, and consequently hardly fit to be used. We are told that we should not use the water for our gardens. In this respect the complaint is made by users that the water destroys the flowers and trees because of the mineral substances it contains. There is a good deal in that, and the defect would be remedied by the introduction of a hills supply.

Hon. P. Collier: It is generally admitted that whilst it is known to kill plant life, it is good for the human brain; at least, so the Minister says.

Mrs. COWAN: As the member for Claremont (Mr. J. Thomson) has said, it is good for anyone who cares for a drink of anything approaching soda water. On the subject of the country water supply, we have heard a good deal in this House of the hardship being inflicted in certain directions. I have just lately been staying in the city of York where it was possible to get good clean water which was pleasant to drink. I feel sure that if we had water of that description in the metropolitan area there would be smaller attendances at public house bars. In York no trouble is experienced in the matter of growing trees and plants. The supply comes from Mundaring and the quality of the water is first class. How different it is from that which we get in Perth. I suppose when we get a good water supply, the conditions will be similar to those now being experienced at York.

The Minister for Works: You have had practically nothing but hills water for the past six months.

Mrs. COWAN: There is a good deal in the argument that it would be better if we had a board to control this particular department. It is unfair that the Minister for Works should be asked to carry out these heavy duties in addition to the many others that he has to perform. Everyone complains and throws the responsibility on the Minister, but

do we always remember that Ministers are doing far more than their share. Therefore it might be a good reason if the Government were to consider the advisability of placing this department under the control of a board—I do not necessarily mean the municipality. I am not prepared, however, to express any special opinion on that subject at the present time, though I think the control should be given over to a board or trust. If the establishment of a trust or some such body were proposed, I would be prepared to support it. As the Minister is aware I have for some time past requested him to help us with a small concession over a playground. Perhaps the matter of allowing us to have a little extra water may be militating against it. I trust, however that he will be able to see his way to accede to the request. It is believed by many that the absence of an adequate water supply is preventing the carrying out of the deep drainage in West Perth. In answer to questions asked by me, the Minister stated that this had something to do with the matter, but that Subiaco, owing to the levels, had first to be sewered, and that an expensive pumping station would need to be erected in West Perth. I cannot help thinking, however, that the shortage of water has had the greatest effect in delaying this work.

The Minister for Works: Not at all.

Mrs. COWAN: I hope that the matter will ultimately be remedied and that it will not be long before we shall get a better water supply than that which exists to-day. I am not blaming the Minister or his department, because as others have said, the department can only do what money will allow them to do. I consider that there should be two additional Ministers in this House to attend to the work of different departments if we expect it to be satisfactorily done.

Mr. MONEY (Bunbury) [7.55]: I was much interested in what was said by the members of North-East Fremantle, South Fremantle, Leederville and West Perth on the subject of the metropolitan water supply. I represent a district 100 miles from the metropolis and I asked why I and many others should be concerned year after year with a subject that really does not affect us except of course financially and as a State matter. We know that our State indebtedness is extremely heavy, and one reason for that is the fact that several public services, the metropolitan water supply, the tramways and others are treated as Government matters, and are dealt with by the whole of the representatives of Western Australia. Too much time is taken up in discussing these subjects.

Mr. Lutey: And you are adding to the offence.

Mr. MONEY: I am adding to the offence with the idea of ending it. It is impossible for any Parliament in the world to successfully get out of its indebtedness by paying attention to matters such as these, matters which are capable of being dealt with by others more qualified than the members of the Legislature. We are told that this service is

not paid for by the country, that it is a good paying concern. That being so, it is all the more reason why it should be taken over by either a metropolitan board of works or a trust, and thus Parliament relieved of the time that it devotes to it year after year in discussing it. No business in the world is successfully run unless it is delegated successfully. I am satisfied that Parliament could delegate the management of this concern satisfactorily and successfully. I am satisfied that Perth, Fremantle and the suburbs are quite capable of looking after and managing their own affairs, and if there should be any complaint whatever to make with reference to the water supply, then the authority would be in a position to remedy it without Parliament having to be occupied year after year debating it at such length. I speak in this strain for a particular purpose. Our very constitution is not framed with the idea that Parliament should be occupied in discussing matters of this description. Departments such as these should be dealt with by a specially selected board or trust. I am satisfied that out of the 50 members of this House, not more than 5 per cent. possess a knowledge of engineering works and would be capable of dealing with a department like this as it should be dealt with. Members of Parliament are simply selected on the hustings, some because they can speak well—

Mr. O'Loughlen: Some because they lie well.

Mr. MONEY: But they have no qualification whatever to handle matters of this description. To enter the railway service, a man is required to pass an examination, but a member of Parliament who is asked to deal with subjects like the one we are now discussing, needs no qualification. Is it surprising then that we find ourselves in the position we occupy to-day?

Mr. O'Loughlen: Is the examination for the legal profession a stiff one?

Mr. MONEY: Very stiff indeed.

Hon. P. Collier: However did you get through?

Mr. MONEY: We are going on year after year drifting in this financial morass, and unless we make a change, we shall never get out of it. This is one of the changes to which Parliament should agree. We should delegate those matters which can be more successfully managed by other bodies than by Parliament.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The water supply did not put the State into the financial morass.

Mr. MONEY: That is all the more reason why a change should be made. We are told it is a good financial proposition. If it were not, I could understand there being some objection to a board taking it over. There is every reason why it should be taken over by a board. The member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin) has told us several times that the country is not paying for the metropolitan water supply; the city is paying for it. Those who are paying for these works should take over the management of them.

Mr. Latham: Hear, hear!

Mr. MONEY: The people served by this undertaking, the people who use the water, the people who pay for the water, have the best right to manage this concern. If we get a local administration, responsibility will bring ability. In the metropolis we have not only the responsibility but the ability. If Parliament gave the country districts the responsibility to which they are entitled, they would find the ability to manage their affairs better than they are managed at present. The system I am advocating could be extended further than the metropolitan area. The Constitution of Parliament is totally inadequate and was never intended to deal with public works. If we are going in for public works, let us have a different Constitution.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The Constitution is all right.

Mr. MONEY: How can we carry on a business undertaking like this with 50 directors?

Mr. Lambert: We have one dictator, not 50 directors.

Mr. MONEY: Then I have never seen a dictator take things more quietly than the Minister for Works is taking them on this occasion. He is leaving the matter entirely to his directors, the remaining members of this House. It is absurd to think that 50 members of Parliament can deal with a matter of this kind. Our time should be occupied in considering the bigger affairs affecting the whole of the State and the whole of the people. We are spending too much time on sectional work instead of devoting it to the work of the whole of the State. If I shall prove to be the means of bringing about an investigation or a consideration of the question of delegating this work, I shall not have spoken in vain.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You ought to remember that some of us attend here three days a week to consider the business of the country, while some members attend on only two days.

Mr. LATHAM (York) [8.5]: I have been criticised by some members regarding my attitude to the metropolitan water supply. I have never been opposed to the metropolitan people having a decent water supply, but I do object to them having it at the expense of the country, and I will continue to object on those grounds so long as I am in this House.

Mr. Richardson: It is not at the expense of the country.

Mr. LATHAM: I have not said that it is.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Then why build up an Aunt Sally.

Mr. LATHAM: The metropolitan people may have as many water supplies as they like, so long as they do not ask the country to find the money for them.

Hon. P. Collier: What about the country districts and their water supplies?

Mr. LATHAM: The country needs water a hundred thousand times more than the city needs it to-day, and the Leader of the Opposition knows it. He knows what had

to be done when the Labour Government were in power in 1913.

Mr. O'Loughlen: And the metropolitan people paid for it.

Mr. LATHAM: They pay for very little.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Then what about the I.A.B.?

Mr. LATHAM: The hon. member knows where the taxation comes from; it comes from the primary production of the State.

Mr. O'Loughlen: It comes from the whole of the people.

Mr. LATHAM: Proportionately, perhaps, but the bulk of it comes from the people outside the metropolitan area.

Mr. Lambert: That sort of stuff might be good enough at Bruce Rock.

Mr. LATHAM: It would be impossible to satisfy the hon. gentleman. I protest against members saying that the Country Party are opposed to the people of the metropolitan area having a water supply. No such opposition has ever occurred, and is not likely to occur. We know that water supplies are necessary. I am surprised that the supply in the metropolitan area is as good as it is. The growth of the metropolitan area has been so rapid—practically one-half of the people in the State are in the metropolitan area—and the times through which we have passed recently have been so difficult that I think members should commend the Minister and the Department for the fine work they have done rather than call them over the coals for neglect. I was grieved to hear that the Water Supply Department should inflict an injury on returned soldiers.

The Minister for Works: You should be sure of your facts before you say that.

Mr. LATHAM: It is open to the Minister to contradict my statement. I hope he will enlighten the House on this matter. I have heard one side of the question and I am waiting now to hear the Minister's explanation. The Commonwealth Government realised their responsibility to the men who were maimed while serving their country by giving them some compensation in the shape of a pension, and it ill befits the Government of the State to use that money for the purpose of exploiting the labour of these men. I hope the Minister will put up the case for the department and let us know the facts. It is a very serious matter. If the Government do this sort of thing, what a license it will be for outside employers to exploit these unfortunate men. I hope we shall never again hear of a similar occurrence. It is most unfortunate that we have out of work in this State 80 maimed men who are drawing a very small pension. It does not redound to the credit of the State that they should be unemployed. The Government should do all in their power to provide work for these men, so that they shall have sufficient to maintain themselves, their wives and families decently. The Government should not take into consideration the pension they receive from the Federal Government. The pension

was not given for the purpose of providing relief to the employer.

The Minister for Works: The Government did not take that attitude and never have done so.

Mr. LATHAM: I am glad to hear that, and I hope the Minister will give us a clearer explanation than we have had so far. I do not think the Minister is other than sympathetic. I remember a speech he made on the Esplanade.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Surely you are making a mistake!

Mr. LATHAM: It has always been said of the Minister that anything he said he meant, and I am satisfied he meant what he said on the Esplanade.

Mr. Wilson: Are you sure of it?

Mr. O'Loughlen: Was it on a Sunday afternoon?

Mr. LATHAM: No, it was on Anzac Day, and I believe the Minister will stand to the statement he made in public there. If the case is investigated I believe he will do justice to these men.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Hear, hear!

Mr. LATHAM: I regret that this trouble should have occurred in a department controlled by the Minister, in whose sense of justice for returned men I had so much faith.

Mr. O'Loughlen: He will not fail you.

Mr. LATHAM: We do not need to show these men sympathy; we should show them common justice. I hope this will be the last occasion when we shall hear of any grievance of this description.

Mr. J. THOMSON (Claremont) [8.11]: I support the remarks made by the member for Collie (Mr. Wilson) last night. Unfortunately I did not hear the speech of the other soldier member (Lieut.-Colonel Denton), but with everything the member for Collie said I am thoroughly in sympathy. We had a deputation of maimed and limbless soldiers to the Minister for Works, and he said he was in sympathy with them, and would do everything he could for them. Yet he allows two men from his own department to be out of work for three months and does nothing.

Hon. P. Collier: By jove, he has slipped a lot, has not he?

Mr. J. THOMSON: Other soldier members have said that the Minister is in sympathy with the returned men. I do not believe them when they say that. They are only trying to pull his leg.

Mr. Lambert: You could not pull his leg.

Hon. P. Collier: Or his ear.

Mr. J. THOMSON: The Minister, in speaking about me a few months ago, said I had a dispute with another returned soldier, and that was my reason for speaking in a certain strain on that occasion. I did not know Mr. Lawson until he entered the camp on the Sydney cricket ground for training when I was in charge of the engineers there, and I never had any dispute with him. A few officers in the Pioneer Corps asked me to go back to the Miners' Corps, but that was no

dispute. I had no dispute whatever with Mr. Lawson. I have never met him professionally. I do not want ever to meet him socially. On the water question, I think it is about time metropolitan members took the whole thing into their own hands. We have had quite enough of the Minister for Works and his men. I told the deputation which waited on the Premier some months ago that even in Claremont, which is not high up like North Perth, the water was not fit to drink. I mentioned that I had filled a kerosene tin with water, and that in a few days the water ate through the tin. When I was elected to Parliament I thought I might be able to do something with regard to the sewage trouble. There was a meeting of members and I was appointed to go into that matter. I spent a lot of time and money in getting out plans, which I believe are now in Mr. Grant's office. The Minister for Works led us to believe that something would be done during recess. We have been here all this time, and nothing has been done. The Minister for Works was going to call a meeting of the local bodies, but he has done nothing. According to the Minister, a great American sewerage engineer has reported favourably on our system. I have here a copy of the "Scientific American" reporting a meeting of sewerage engineers from every State of the American Union, and that meeting condemned every septic tank system in the United States. I shall not oppose my knowledge to that of the great American engineers, but surely there must be something wrong with the septic tank system. I may say that my plans were drawn up in consultation with a number of engineers. I am not like the Minister for Works, who thinks that he knows everything and that nobody else knows anything. The idea of these engineers was that the only proper system for Perth was to take its sewage out to sea. Seafaring men tell me that to take it out on the Cottesloe side is impossible, that it must be taken out on the other side, I have plans now showing the proper system, which is to make a big tunnel alongside the river nearly to the Fremantle smelting works, and then carry it under the river, and pump up the sewage and take it to where the first freshwater well was made in Western Australia. At that point there is a current going out to sea. The plan cannot be carried out for some years, but eventually it must be adopted. I daresay there are very few people in Western Australia who know that the level at the Causeway is only 4 feet above the level of the sea. How, then, can we sewer a growing town like Perth without the adoption of some such plan as I have suggested? Certain engineers say we should have a sewage farm. On my last visit to the East, I was travelling in the train to Adelaide and a local man who was in the compartment with me presently closed his window, saying, "We are now getting close to the sewage farm." Sewage farms have been found to be failures not only in South Australia but throughout the world.

The only thing for us to do is to take the sewage out to sea.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: But not via Cottesloe.

Mr. J. THOMSON: No. It must taken to a point where there is a strong current going out. I do not wish to condemn people. There have been so many members condemning the Minister for Works that I am loth to do it. I look upon the Minister as a great engineer, but I also look upon him as a man of the past, as a man who should retire and give someone younger a chance to do something. The Minister for Works has been five or six years in his present position. He was going to do this, that, and the other for water supply; but this summer we are just as badly off as ever.

Hon. P. Collier: Worse.

Mr. J. THOMSON: Yes, worse. I will not say anything about one or two of the Minister's officers. I am not a member of Parliament who will come to this Chamber to condemn an engineer or a civil servant who cannot reply. The Minister knows, however, that in his department he has engineers and men who are not qualified to carry out their duties.

Mr. LAMBERT (Coolgardie) [8.25]: I was struck with the remarks of the member for Bunbury as to the apparent incapacity of members of Parliament. I do not know that it falls within the province of a member of Parliament to specialise in all the various departments and ramifications of State. If one went to Bunbury one might hear the hon. member, as I have heard him, speak about the Bunbury breakwater as if it were the great national question, overshadowing everything else. But members of Parliament are not called upon to control departments. They are called upon to bring before responsible Ministers matters which are purely local. That is within the province and within the rights of a member of Parliament. In season and out of season, a good deal has been said about the metropolitan water supply. I feel justified in saying a word for the Minister for Works in that connection.

The Minister for Works: You need not do that. I am not in senile decay yet. I would not like you to be misled by the words of those who are.

Mr. LAMBERT: I am not misled by them, nor am I likely to be misled by the words of the Minister. The metropolitan water supply, though unsatisfactory, has perhaps been as good as could reasonably be expected. In contradistinction to many members, I hold the view that we shall never have a satisfactory water supply here until we place the system under separate control, though in saying that I do not wish in any way to indicate a view that lay members of Parliament should not control departments. It is not necessary for a member of Parliament to run the gauntlet of an examination in law, or philosophy, or political economy, or astronomy, or meteorology, or any other branch of art or science, in order to qualify for the work of legislating. But it is essential, sometimes at

least, to exercise a little common sense. If that is done, and if the local view is expressed to Ministers through Parliament, a member is carrying out his functions. There is no need to depreciate members of Parliament on the ground that they have not passed examinations. I believe the Government to be guilty of neglecting the metropolitan water supply to the same extent as they are guilty of neglecting many other matters. They should have put that water supply on a good footing, and are blameable for not having done so. It must have occurred to the Treasurer and the Minister for Works and Water Supply that this matter can never be adequately dealt with until the control is different. While the control is centred, as it is to-day, nominally in a Ministerial head, the service cannot be satisfactory. As the member for York has stated, the metropolitan area should pay for its water supply. I believe the metropolitan area to be quite prepared and willing to pay for a proper water supply controlled by an adequate board. It is time Parliament insisted that the present slipshod drift, which is manifest in almost every political activity, should cease. This House should contain a sufficient number of members possessing common sense to say to the Government that they are not prepared to allow the present hopeless, helpless drift to continue, notwithstanding the multiplicity of promises to individual members by which Ministers seek to cover up their shortcomings. It is nearly time they were told. I do not so much blame the Government. It is those who are prepared to sit behind the Government and bark in a sort of half-hearted way to their constituents that the Government are doing nothing.

Hon. P. Collier: Just whimper a little.

Mr. LAMBERT: Yes, a sort of poodle dog's whimper that the Government are not doing anything.

The Minister for Works: That will stop when the Dog Act goes through.

Mr. LAMBERT: The member for North Perth (Mr. MacCallum Smith) has recorded his protest in the House, possibly half a dozen times. Other hon. members also have offered their protests. But they could come down to the Government behind whom they sit and say that the water supply in the metropolitan area is unsatisfactory and must be improved.

Hon. P. Collier: In other words they could put the acid on them, as do the members on the cross benches.

Mr. LAMBERT: Exactly. Anything which the members of the cross benches want is forthcoming within 24 hours.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They have put the acid on the lot of them now.

Mr. LAMBERT: It is astounding to me that the president of the Primary Producers' Association has not asked the Government to shift the rainfall into the agricultural areas.

Mr. Pickering: He recognises the limitations of the Government.

Hon. P. Collier: He does not recognise any limitations in the Treasurer.

Mr. LAMBERT: It is admitted that notwithstanding any effort that may have been put forward by the engineers or the Minister, the metropolitan water supply is inadequate and totally unsatisfactory. Its whole financial basis is unsatisfactory, and so too is its relationship to Parliament and to the rest of the State.

The Premier: Do you refer to Coolgardie?

Mr. LAMBERT: No.

The Premier: Coolgardie is very well supplied with water.

Mr. LAMBERT: If you were to supply water to the goldfields at the price at which it ought to be supplied now that the goldfields people have paid for the scheme—

The Premier: They did not pay for it. The agriculturists paid for it.

Mr. LAMBERT: And so I suppose the agriculturists are to have the benefit of it. The time will come when we shall not allow that sort of thing. I regret having to bring up the question of the discharge of a couple of returned soldiers from the Water Supply Department. I do not know that I have ever lauded the non-combatants who sometimes take a profound interest in soldiers' affairs and push themselves right into the firing ranks, both here and on public platforms, in defence of the soldier; but there is a worthy set of returned soldiers who ought to have received greater consideration from the State Government. Two men were discharged from the Water Supply Department because they would not accept a deduction from their weekly wages equivalent to their war pensions. Mr. Lawson, who dealt with this matter, might have felt that he was right. To the extent of his desire to run his department on sound commercial lines, his action might find justification, but if we are going to show an indecent disregard for our duty to these maimed men—

The Minister for Works: Are you sure that is so? Why say that, unless you know?

Mr. LAMBERT: I have been through the correspondence and have attended meetings of the maimed soldiers. I heard the explanations of both Sheppard and Whittleston, and the history of the events which led up to their dismissal because they would not agree to the deduction of their war pensions from their wages. I applauded them for it. There is no member of the House mean or paltry or petty enough to sanction that sort of thing. If there be on God's earth one set of men more deserving than another of consideration, it is those who unfortunately were partially or totally incapacitated at the war. The action of the State Government in attempting to deduct the pensions of those partially incapacitated men is almost too awful for us to contemplate. I hope the Minister will have some explanation to proffer. If the department are capable of acts of this sort, it is due to the country to know of the way our maimed men are being

treated by the Government. It is a crying shame that there should be amongst us 80 or 100 partially incapacitated men who cannot find positions in Western Australia.

Mr. Teesdale: Does it not reflect on the private employers also?

Mr. LAMBERT: Admittedly, but if the employers are lacking in their duty towards those men, it is for the Government to come to the rescue. The employers who are employing cheap boy labour in lifts and jobs of that sort instead of employing maimed men, ought to be held up to odium throughout the State. If they will not have greater regard for their obligations to the maimed men, the maimed men will find means of showing up some of the great patriots who are still capable of waving flags and singing "God Save the King" and "Rule Britannia," while our maimed men starve in the streets.

Mr. MacCallum Smith: How many maimed men have you employed?

Mr. LAMBERT: As many as I could.

Mr. Underwood: It is just as well to sing "Rule Britannia" as to sing "The Watch on the Rhine."

Mr. LAMBERT: I know which would the better suit my friend's voice. If I had opportunity to-morrow I would employ maimed men. As a matter of fact I partly support one or two to-day, although saying nothing about it. There are in Western Australia big firms who for the sake of saving a few paltry shillings are employing lads in lifts, while our maimed men go workless, homeless and foodless. The member for Bunbury (Mr. Money) may smile, but the secretary of the maimed men's organisation, who is not very far away, can give the hon. member proof that employers have been lacking in decency to the maimed men.

The Minister for Works: Apart from the two men mentioned, what are the specific complaints against the Government?

Mr. LAMBERT: It is that they sought to deduct the men's war pensions.

The Minister for Works: But apart from those two men, what other instances are there?

Mr. O'Loughlen: Are those two not enough?

Mr. LAMBERT: If the private employer is not prepared to shoulder his responsibility in the absorption of those men, it is for the Government to do it.

The Minister for Works: Where have the Government failed?

Mr. LAMBERT: They have failed in this, that there are in the departments dozens of positions suitable for those men. I could go through the departments and find there positions for 50 or 60 maimed men.

The Minister for Works: Come down to my department and I will take you at your word.

Mr. LAMBERT: It might not apply to any great extent in the Minister's department.

The Minister for Works: Nor in the departments of other Ministers either.

Mr. LAMBERT: The Minister must know that there are in the departments dozens of light positions suitable for partially disabled men. Those men should have first preference and should be the common care of Parliament and of the Government. There are plenty of positions for those men in the Water Supply Department as at Mundaring, where men on £600 or £700 a year drive up weekly and take samples of water. A maimed soldier could do that just as well as can Mr. O'Brien. If the Minister taunts me to give him instances I can give him 10 or 20. I do not wish to make this a personal matter, but an appeal to members. Parliament should be given an opportunity of expressing an opinion as to whether the good name of this country should be stultified by the incapacity or inactivity of the Government to meet their obligations to returned men.

The Premier: I do not think the returned men will thank you for saying that. We have done as much as any Government could do.

Mr. LAMBERT: If the Premier, after listening to the opinions of the executive of the Maimed and Limbless Soldiers' Association—

The Premier: I am always in touch with them.

Mr. LAMBERT: Will still continue to take up that attitude, I will withdraw every word I have said and never speak on the subject again.

The Premier: It is easy for you to stand there and talk like that. We have done the work and I have devoted a great deal of time to it. We have fixed up dozens of men.

Mr. LAMBERT: The Premier's work is not finished while there is one returned man who requires a position.

The Premier: It is easier to talk about doing things than it is to do them.

Mr. LAMBERT: When the Government can bring thousands of people into this country surely the one-time robust and strong men of Australia are deserving of a place in the scheme of affairs in this State after their sufferings at the war.

The Minister for Works: The Government have done everything that any set of men could do.

Mr. LAMBERT: Let the Minister ask his engineer about Sheppard. Here is a man to whom justice has not yet been done. He was good enough to be employed in the department for a time—indeed was kept there for several months. He was then notified that unless he was willing to have his miserable pension deducted from his wages he could not be further employed. Is that true or is it a lie?

The Minister for Works: Where is the notification? I have the papers here.

Mr. LAMBERT: It does not matter about the notification.

The Minister for Works: It does matter. You say he was notified. Where is the notification?

Mr. Wilson: Was he reduced in wages?

Mr. LAMBERT: The officer desired to deduct this man's pension from his wages. There are two or three returned soldier members who have been through the correspondence, namely the member for Collie (Mr. Wilson), the member for York (Mr. Latham), and the member for Moore (Colonel Denton). We have been through all the letters and have listened to the case of these men and have questioned them. One said he was a little impudent. I know of engineers, members of Parliament, and of Ministers of the Crown who have been impudent.

The Minister for Works: So do I.

Mr. LAMBERT: I know them too. I do not think any engineer, because some individual said something to him he did not like, should debar that individual from employment in the department.

The Minister for Works: You would not keep a man in your employment if he was impudent to you.

Mr. LAMBERT: Men have been impudent to me. Possibly after a reasonable explanation and an ample apology no great sacrifice would be made by an employer if he allowed a man to return. This is a principle that has been sought to be imposed upon maimed men. I hope they will fight against it.

The Premier: You must not talk in a general way like that.

Mr. LAMBERT: How would the Premier desire me to talk?

The Premier: In these two cases what you say may have happened, but it has not occurred in many cases.

The Minister for Works: It has not happened anywhere as you have stated the position.

Mr. Teesdale: Why not do the thing departmentally instead of making this fearful exposure? It will be printed all over the country to-morrow. There are only two cases in question, and yet you make it apply to all the soldiers in W.A.

Mr. LAMBERT: There are 80 maimed men out of employment to-day.

Mr. Teesdale: This State has treated these men better than any other State in Australia. Do not multiply the facts in the general way you are doing.

Mr. LAMBERT: The hon. member can show his somewhat slavish devotion to the Government by apologising for them after I have sat down.

Mr. Teesdale: Make it more general and not so direct against the Government.

Mr. Marshall: Hush it up.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. LAMBERT: Let the hon. member continue to stand as an apologist for the Government. We want these men placed in employment.

Mr. Teesdale: We all want that.

Mr. Wilson: For four months we have been trying to get redress.

Mr. LAMBERT: The member for Claremont can tell the Government, as can the member for Moore and the member for York, how long we have been trying to get these men employment.

Mr. J. Thomson: Here is the date.

Mr. LAMBERT: This did not happen only yesterday. It is a principle we are fighting for on behalf of the maimed men. Do the Government intend to show a bad example to the country by deducting the pensions from the wages of these men? We assured them that if it were possible to focus attention upon the case it would be done. I could not think that the Minister for Works or the Premier were fully acquainted with the facts of the case. It is very clear to me. We have read the letters from Mr. Lawson and have been through the file. The position should be remedied. No Government should deduct pensions from maimed men who are in their employ.

Mr. Teesdale: When were you put on the Commission?

Mr. LAMBERT: The hon. member ought to get his friend from Guildford to ask his own question.

Mr. Teesdale: I am not indebted to the member for Guildford for any question that I ask.

Mr. Davies: That was what I wanted to know.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Hon. members must not keep on interjecting.

Mr. Davies: Why do you say "we" when you are referring to other members?

Mr. Wilson: He was on the deputation.

Mr. Davies: That is what I wanted to know. One would have thought the hon. member was a returned soldier.

Mr. LAMBERT: I was there by invitation.

Mr. Davies: We did not understand the position.

Mr. LAMBERT: It is a serious matter and we are all very much concerned about it.

The Premier: The soldiers get a lot of lip service but no real service.

Mr. Lutey: They get a lot of that.

Mr. LAMBERT: It is all they have got from the Government.

The Premier: That is what you have said before but it is not true.

Mr. LAMBERT: I would be wrong in saying that. I will give the Premier credit for having done a great amount of good. I would be unjust and ungrateful if I said he had not done so. These remarks also apply to the Minister for Works.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The Federal Government have been neglecting their duties.

Mr. LAMBERT: I hope the Premier and the Minister for Works will realise that we should all have some feeling of gratitude, and be prepared to extend our services to these men.

The Minister for Works: We realise that more than you do.

Mr. LAMBERT: I do not think so.

Mr. Lutey: He has not shown it.

Mr. LAMBERT: The Minister may realise it as much as I do, but if so why was Mr.

Lawson allowed to put this man off merely because he would not accept the deduction of his pension from his wages?

The Minister for Works: I will give you the explanation.

Mr. LAMBERT: I shall be pleased to get it. Much has been said about the necessity for supplying water from the hills for the metropolitan area. I hope nothing will be done in that respect to endanger the gold-fields water supply.

The Minister for Works: You need not be afraid of that.

Mr. LAMBERT: The people there have a prior claim upon the Mundaring supply. No scheme that is considered by the Government should endanger the position.

Mr. UNDERWOOD (Pilbara) [8.55]: I dissent from the remarks of the member for Coolgardie (Mr. Lambert) respecting the treatment of returned soldiers by the Minister for Works. I have had occasion to ask the Minister to place many returned soldiers in employment, and he has always done the best he could for them. I do not think I can be accused of partiality towards the Minister for Works in particular. If anyone sends a returned soldier to him he does his best for them.

Mr. RICHARDSON (Subiaco) [8.56]: I feel constrained to make some remarks because, with other metropolitan members, I consider I have a grievance. I am not going to build up my case by condemning another man. It is ridiculous for members to have to listen to Ministers being more than severely criticised and vilified without any reason being shown for such action. Something may be done in regard to securing an adequate water supply in the metropolitan area. I also feel the Minister for Works has done all he can with the money at his disposal.

Mr. Lutey: Do you blame the Government?

The Premier: Of course.

Mr. RICHARDSON: I blame the abnormal circumstances in which the Government have found themselves. That applies not only to Western Australia but to Australia and the world in general. I could, with some members who have been criticising the Government, frame just as good a case as they have done against the Government. I have to ask myself what I would do if I were placed in similar circumstances. I would then begin to think I could not have done better than the Ministers have done. It is very unfair tactics to make out a case without presenting the other side. We have good water in Subiaco and there are no complaints about its quality.

Mr. MacCallum Smith: Come to North Perth.

Mr. RICHARDSON: On the other hand the water supply is likely to be insufficient during the forthcoming summer.

The Minister for Works: I do not think so.

Mr. RICHARDSON: I hope the Minister's words will be borne out. During the few hot days we have had the supply has not been sufficient. We shall certainly not have more than we need. If the Government are going on with the sewerage works, as they have promised to do in the near future, I am afraid the supply of water will be inadequate. I hope that if the Government are not prepared to propound a scheme to be put into operation so that the whole of the metropolitan area may be served, they will consider handing the business over to a board or trust. Each year brings us closer to one thing or the other. If they are not prepared to carry out the scheme it is only fair to the people in the metropolitan area that they should turn the whole thing over to a board or trust.

Mr. Money: Hear, hear!

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Yes, and we should turn over all the other schemes as well, the Bunbury Harbour Works and so on.

Mr. Money: Quite so.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You would not bark so much then.

Hon. P. Collier: Turn over the agricultural water supplies to the local people too.

Mr. Pickering: That would be a good scheme.

Mr. RICHARDSON: The majority of the metropolitan local authorities would be very pleased if this concern was handed over to a trust.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They have never asked for the opinion of the ratepayers.

Mr. RICHARDSON: I will not argue the point with the member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin) as the taxpayers in his electorate may be opposed to it. I believe the majority of the local authorities in the metropolitan area, however, would be pleased indeed to take over these responsibilities. I believe they would carry out the work more efficiently and effectively than the Government, because the Government have so many different and important matters to attend to that they cannot carry on the lot entirely satisfactorily. There is another question arising under the Estimates and that refers to the drainage problem, which is becoming a serious one in the metropolitan area. In Subiaco this difficulty has become so pronounced that in the very near future the local authority is likely to be proceeded against in court.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You have power under the Act to attend to drainage works. Why do you not do it?

Mr. RICHARDSON: We have, but it must be remembered that while we have that power we can carry out only a subsidiary scheme. The Government propose to give effect to a scheme for the whole of the metropolitan area and consequently ours would only be a subsidiary affair, to be connected up with the main scheme. Thus our hands are tied to a certain extent. It is

necessary, therefore, that the Government should take this matter into serious consideration so as to assist the local authorities. The member for York (Mr. Latham), on each occasion when he has dealt with the water supply for the city, has spoken adversely. Seeing that he is the Deputy Leader of the Country Party, his remarks come with perhaps greater significance than from other private members in this Chamber. Each time he has stated that if the people are willing to take over the scheme for themselves, he is prepared to support us.

Mr. Latham: Hear, hear! That is so.

Mr. RICHARDSON: The member for York should remember that the metropolitan water supply scheme is a paying proposition, and we have not called upon the country people to pay any part of it. Should there be any loss, it is borne by the people in the metropolitan area. Let me remind the hon. member that if we were as parochial as he is, then the country people would not get much consideration. If we said that the people in the country were to accept the whole of the responsibility, the member for York would find himself in a different position.

Mr. Latham: You are not right in saying I am parochial. I spoke from the State point of view.

Mr. RICHARDSON: I am speaking from the State point of view too. Notwithstanding that, we are all agreed in this House that we must see that the country goes ahead first. I must remind the Country Party members, however, that there must be a metropolitan area as well as a country area.

Mr. Latham: We agree with that.

Mr. RICHARDSON: Country Party members do not always say so. If the member for York takes such a parochial view of the matter and every time we want anything in the metropolis contends we must give personal security, we will turn round and apply that principle to the country people.

Mr. Underwood: But they get what they like from the Government. They put on the acid or else they chuck out the Government.

Mr. RICHARDSON: That is the position. I wish to impress upon the Government, however, that if they are not prepared to give us a scheme which will provide us with an adequate water supply, a proper system of drainage, and connect up the whole metropolitan area with the sewerage scheme, then they should consider the advisability of handing over these responsibilities to a board or trust.

Mr. PICKERING (Sussex) [9.5]: During the discussion I have been struck by the general condemnation of the operations of the Government regarding various works which have been covered by the Estimates.

Mr. MacCallum Smith: Where there is smoke, there is fire.

Mr. PICKERING: When one considers the amount of developmental work accomplished in this State in so limited a time with our very small population, one must realise that

the results are really astounding. We hear complaints about the water supply for Perth. When we think of the small population we have and the enormous amount of wealth we are able to produce, it is a matter for congratulation that we have gone so far. As to roads and other matters, when I hear people protesting about the condition of our roads, and I realise the mileage of railways we possess and the network of roads and tracks throughout the State, I feel that it is not so much a matter for wonder that we have had roads as that we have these facilities on such an extensive scale. I had an opportunity recently of inspecting the sewerage system in operation in the metropolitan area. I was struck by its efficiency. I was escorted over the works by Mr. Lawson, who informed me that at the present time only five grains of solids per gallon were flowing into the river. When we consider the state of the sewage on entering and the time it takes to pass through the septic tanks and filter beds, it is apparent that a great deal has been accomplished. I believe we have an effective a system of septic tanks as there is in any part of the world. We pass through that sewerage system 1,600,000 gallons a day.

Mr. Mann: It will become an enormous matter to be dealt with.

Mr. PICKERING: It requires serious consideration, but that aspect is not lost sight of by the departmental officers. The department are alive to the necessity for improving the system. The idea at present entertained is to deepen a channel from the sewerage works down to the deep water in the river bed. In that way, it is anticipated the flow from the septic tanks will be much more rapid. It may be necessary to discharge at a point as suggested by the member for Claremont. The present Government are not responsible for the inception of this scheme, and it is not fair to attack them as some members have done. It is not generally my role to protect the Government, but we should realise that we have accomplished a lot in a very short time. Regarding the water supply and sewerage operations in this State—

Mr. Underwood interjected.

Mr. PICKERING: I really think I would like to make my own speech if I may.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Hon. members must keep order.

Mr. PICKERING: We have been told by the member for North Perth and others about the anxiety that is manifested among the local authorities to take over these operations. I have been in this Chamber for six years and I have not heard of much agitation from the metropolitan bodies in their desire to take over these works.

Mr. MacCallum Smith: They have agitated from time to time.

Mr. PICKERING: Then they have not made much noise about it.

Mr. Underwood interjected.

Mr. PICKERING: How long have you been a representative of the metropolitan area? Have you adopted the metropolitan area as you say the Government have adopted the North-West? If the people in the metropolitan area are so much in earnest, why the dickens do they not make much more noise about their desires? Why do they not put forward some tangible proposition?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: There is no anxiety at all.

Mr. PICKERING: Why do they not say they will buy these concerns at a fair price?

The Minister for Mines: Of course, they would fix the price!

Mr. PICKERING: Of course they would. Any old price would do for them. So far as the outside water supply schemes are concerned, we have to pay what the Government demand. If the metropolitan people wish to take over this supply, let them take it over at a fair price.

Mr. MacCallum Smith: That is what we want.

Mr. PICKERING: That is what you say! I was astounded at the attitude adopted by the member for Bunbury (Mr. Money) and his criticism of members of Parliament. I am astonished at what he considered members of Parliament should be. I do not know of any part of the British Empire where members of Parliament are required to pass an examination before they can enter upon their duties. If such were the case, it would be a poor old Parliament.

Mr. Underwood: The member for Bunbury would not pass an examination.

Mr. PICKERING: I do not wish to be personal, but what Western Australia wants is members of Parliament who have had practical experience.

Hon. P. Collier: Men like our noble selves.

Mr. PICKERING: We do not want members who can pass examinations, but rather men who have had practical experience, and they are the men who will help to lead Western Australia back to prosperity.

The Minister for Mines: Let us not talk of ourselves.

Mr. PICKERING: There is no need to do so, because I believe the Parliament of Western Australia compares more than favourably with that of any other part of Australia.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. J. George—Murray-Wellington—in reply) [9.12]: In replying to the debate, I think the best thing would be to start with the complaints regarding the treatment of returned soldiers. I challenge any contradiction of my statement that the Government of Western Australia have never attempted in any shape or form to evade their responsibilities regarding returned soldiers. Every Government with whom I have been associated has had but one idea, and that was that the country owed its best to the soldiers who went away to fight for it. Those who benefited by their action had their part to do when the men came back. Neither the

Government nor any member of the Government has had a single idea but to do a fair thing by the soldiers and the country. Reference has been made to the cases of Whittleston and Sheppard. Some remarks have been passed regarding Mr. Lawson. In justice to that gentleman, I wish to explain that Whittleston made application for a certain period of leave. The officer who received it sent it to Mr. Munt who was then Under Secretary, and by him it was sent to the Secretary to the Premier with the request for information as to whether Mr. Whittleston's application came within the Cabinet decision governing this matter. The answer that came back from the Premier's secretary, Mr. Shapcott, was that the application did not come within the scope of the Government's decision. The matter did not quite rest there. Whatever may be said about Mr. Lawson by some hon. members, he is an engineer whose reputation is respected by those who are qualified to judge. As to his services in the field they can better be judged by those who were there than by myself, but I understand he served with honour and came back with honour. Mr. Lawson has been spoken of as a man who has shown no feeling towards these soldiers. When he heard that the man's application for leave had been turned down, he made inquiries and sent forward the following minute—

The ruling of the secretary to the Premier is noted, but I am quite sure that although it may be the letter of the law it is not the spirit of the Cabinet minute to deny payment of the leave in a case where the man was medically unfit to take up the heavy work he did before. In other words, the decision penalises the wounded man against the man who returned in good bodily health and spirits. In this connection, I would draw attention to the fact that the relatives of deceased soldiers have been paid the equivalent of the leave that accrued before the death of the soldier.

Here is this man spoken of as being unfeeling and unjust pleading for a second consideration of the decision which had been given under a Cabinet minute. On the 9th March, 1920—I do not know whether the hon. member has seen all the correspondence—a letter was sent by Mr. Butler, secretary of the Returned Soldiers' and Sailors' Imperial League of Australia to Mr. Haywood, secretary of the Department—

I have just received a complaint from a returned soldier named J. H. Whittleston who lost a leg whilst on active service, and it was impossible for him to return to his pre-war occupation. As he worked in your department for some time prior to enlistment, according to the Premier's ruling he should receive his accrued holiday pay whilst on service, and I trust you will attend to this matter at your earliest convenience.

What was the result? The matter was referred for consideration again, and on the

19th March Mr. Haywood wrote as follows to Mr. Butler—

In reply to your letter of the 9th inst., requesting that payment be made to Mr. Whittleston in lieu of leave during his absence with the A.I.F., I have the honour to advise that the matter has been reconsidered, and although the case is not one which would come under the decision of Cabinet, it has been decided in view of the special circumstances mentioned by you to comply with your request. Payment of the amount involved will be paid to Mr. Whittleston in due course.

That is not an unsympathetic way in which the officer of the department dealt with the matter. Coming to the particular case which has been brought forward, I wish to say that on the 2nd August, 1922, the secretary of the Maimed and Limbless Soldiers' Association waited on me accompanied by two members of this House, Mr. Wilson and Mr. J. Thomson. On the 7th August I wrote to the secretary of the Association and this was the attitude I adopted—

I quite agree with you that if a man is able to give 100 per cent. efficiency, he should have the full rate of pay for any job he may occupy, and I do not regard the pension as being an item which should be used by an employer to reduce the wages of the particular man in question. The pension, of course, is given by the Government so that those who have suffered disability may, at any rate, have sustenance if they fail to find remunerative work, so on that point your Association and myself are in accord. It is a pity this trouble has arisen because I can quite understand the attitude taken up by your Chairman when he saw me at Parliament House, but for the future when the Department is employing any disabled man, I have asked Mr. Lawson to see that the wage is fixed before he puts him on, and to communicate with your Association so that you may have official cognisance of it, and so avoid a repetition of the present complaints. Of course it must always be taken as a first point that the man in charge of the work is responsible through me to the State for his expenditure, and he must have freedom of action in choosing his men, and also in fixing any particular wage which the Arbitration award does not provide.

That is the attitude which I understand was laid down and has not been departed from one iota, and so much of what we heard last evening and to-night can be judged by hon. members from the terms of that letter. This letter of mine also stated—

With regard to Mr. Whittleston, he unfortunately has lost one leg. He is employed as is stated in connection with a boat passing between Burswood Island and the depot at East Perth. It is really a job for a boy between 17 and 18—

Mr. O'Loughlin: A boy of 18 is a man.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is so long ago since I was that age that anyone

of 18 may still seem to me to be a boy. My letter goes on—

—as Whittleston can only deal with very light articles, being unable to give the full service which is required at times in connection with heavy weights, and on such occasions, of course, recourse has to be made to other men, which should not be if the man in charge of the boat were fully able to carry on.

Had Whittleston not been placed in charge of that job the work would have been given to a man who, at the same time, would have performed other work which Whittleston was not capable of doing.

Mr. Wilson: He was paid full wages up to this.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I will deal with that point. You have had your say, so let me go on.

Mr. Wilson: You chipped in a bit yourself, you know.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Mr. Lawson wrote a note in which he stated that Messrs. Wilson and Thomson, M.L.A., waited on him in regard to the case of Whittleston, and that he pointed out to them that although Whittleston could do the work on the boat this would not be the only work an able-bodied man would be asked to do, and that if an ordinary labourer was employed he would be part of his time on the boat and the remainder on ordinary labouring work. Mr. Lawson continues—

I also pointed out that it was very hard to maintain efficiency on the works when the men saw another employee drawing more money than they were getting in the aggregate and doing much less work, and that if it was a case of Whittleston having to be paid the full amount of £3 18s. a week I would have to see whether another position could not be found for him. This I think impressed Messrs. Wilson and Thomson and when I pointed out that there was a possibility of continuity of employment if Whittleston could do the work they pleaded that something might be done to show that the interests of the returned soldiers were being considered, and it was suggested that if he were paid the sum of £3 per week the matter might be adjusted. It was left at this on the understanding that Mr. Wilson would bring it up at the meeting of the Maimed and Limbless Soldiers.

Mr. J. Thomson: I wish to say that is not true. We never agreed to such a thing at all. Mr. Wilson: It is not true.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: With regard to Sheppard, he has had to do not only with Mr. Lawson but with the Public Service Commissioner. Only to-day I had Mr. Lawson in my office before me. Mr. Lawson wrote on the 7th August last with reference to this man—

I find that Sheppard has lost one arm, which of course is to be regretted, and entitles him to fair consideration apart from his ability as a workman. He was em-

played as a storeman on the Mt. Hawthorn reservoir after the completion of this work. Mr. Lawson explained this morning that on the job being finished, Sheppard was kept on and paid £4 a week when he should have been put off, unless another job was found for him. It appears that he was kept on owing to some misapprehension. It is stated that the duties he had to perform were very light and that the officer who put him on the wages sheet rated him at full pay. Mr. Lawson, as engineer responsible for the expenditure on the job, came across the item on the pay sheets and made inquiries. He informed me that Sheppard was not able to give the full 100 per cent. efficiency, and in carrying out his responsibilities in connection with the expenditure of funds, he rated Sheppard's value to the department as £2 18s. 6d. per week. The ordinary labourer in the department makes about £3 17s. 6d. per week and Mr. Lawson was and is of the opinion that Sheppard's shortage in efficiency is represented by £1 per week less, which he paid him. Sheppard has left the department, and it is to be regretted that he appeared to forget that in pleading his case it was necessary to be at any rate decently respectful, both for his own sake, and his due to the officer. Apparently he was not, and what passed between him and Mr. Lawson rendered it impossible for Sheppard to again be employed in the department. I do not expect that there should be any undue smoozing, or anything of that sort, shown by men to the officers, and as Minister for Works I insist that decent respect shall be shown by employees to those in authority. Similarly it is required that respect be shown by the officers to those under them.

Mr. Corboy: That is what we want.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: If it is shown to me that this man used language to Mr. Lawson which should not have been used, it would have been foolish to have allowed him again to be employed under the same officer, because the sting and the sore of the pain would remain and would probably create further trouble. The question came before the Public Service Commissioner, who searched round to see if he could find work for Sheppard. The Public Service Commissioner did offer him a job in the Lands Department on lithographic work. The Commissioner told me this morning that Sheppard turned down this job because he placed a higher value on his services. The work Sheppard was put on was as follows: He was offered a job on the Mt. Hawthorn to Mt. Lawley main at 58s. a week, which was the worth of the job. All he had to do was to keep his eye on the tools and to take notice of what was going on. He turned down that job. Some reference has been made—I am sorry for that—to remarks of mine made on the Esplanade on Anzac Day when the Governor, the Mayor of Perth, and others were present. Every word that I uttered on that occasion I am prepared to live up to so long as I have breath in my body, and not one undertaking, financial or

otherwise, I have had anything to do with since or before but has been carried out in its entirety even if it meant privation to myself and my family. It is wrong that a Minister should be challenged in the way that I have been challenged. I circularised every road board in Western Australia, not once but twice or three times, pointing out that it was their duty to try to help these men who had fought for us. I received one reply only and that was from the fair town of York. Yet some hon. members talk glibly about these matters and declare that nothing has been done. There has been quite a lot of criticism of the metropolitan water scheme. Anyone who occupies the position of Minister for Water Supply is bound to come in for any amount of criticism, perhaps not so kindly as it might be. Anything which deals with the whole of the public must necessarily be criticised, and I can quite understand metropolitan members, when consulting their constituents, must naturally receive hundreds of complaints, many of which, if investigated, would be found to be groundless, but many of which no doubt have good foundation and require attention. But I do not want it to go out from this House that either I as Minister, or the officers of the department, are so callous and so neglectful of the duties we have undertaken as to allow these things to go unnoted. There is not a single complaint made in this House or in the Press but is investigated and, so far as lies within the power of the departmental officers, it is put right. The member for South Fremantle (Mr. McCallum) spoke last evening about excuses and explanations. If a man has that trend of mind, and I think the member for North Perth (Mr. MacCallum Smith) was somewhat like it, anything a Minister may say with the most bona fide intention of placing before the House such information as he may have to show what is being done, is regarded as an excuse. I do not excuse anything. If members do not understand, I explain, but to call it an excuse because we cannot satisfy everyone of the 130,000 or 140,000 people in Perth would be silliness, and members would be the first to speak about it. The hon. member spoke of the Fremantle area being without a water supply. The area was not without a water supply, but portion of the area had to have a restricted supply, and that must occur anywhere in similar circumstances. There was a 6-inch main in the area which had its supply somewhat curtailed, and it unfortunately elected to burst. As we were trying to force more water through the mains, to meet the demands, perhaps we exerted a bigger pressure than this main could stand. What was done? Immediately the engineers found this, they set out to divert water from another source and send it there. On the two days North Fremantle was taken entirely off the main which previously supplied it, and the water which would have gone through was thrown into South Fremantle to give the people there a bigger supply.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They should have said at the time that the main had burst. They said it was due to the draw on the reservoir.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: To show that the water supply at Fremantle has not been neglected, as I stated last evening, down the Canning-road an 8-inch main has been laid as far as Alfred Cove to get more water from Bickley Brook and the Victoria reservoir. The pumps at Alfred Cove were speeded up and we were getting 400,000 gallons more water through that main than ever before. Since then we have had no complaint. The hon. member spoke about a private hospital being short of water. The explanation of that will reach me to-morrow morning. I was not able to get it to-day.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: He said it was short for one day. It was short for four days.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member said 1½ days. That is being inquired into. The Federal Hotel was said to have been without water.

Mr. O'Loughlin: They should have had beer.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: This is one of the greatest surprises I have received, because the elevation of that place should have ensured its having water if there was any water at all in Fremantle. The burst of main to which I have referred took four or five hours to put right, and after that the service was maintained. A complaint was made about Palmyra. Let me explain the position. The reservoir in Fremantle is 205 feet high. Palmyra is 180 feet high, and the difference between the elevation of the two places is largely nullified by what is known as friction. Consequently, it is impossible in Perth or Fremantle to deliver water by a gravitation scheme at anywhere near the same level as the service reservoir.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: No complaint was made here about Palmyra.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have a note of it, anyhow. Some members are very good at throwing dirt at their own towns and country, but what do they know about the other States? What are the people in New South Wales, South Australia, and Victoria getting in the way of water supply?

Hon. P. Collier: In Melbourne they are getting a very good supply.

Mr. Corboy: Except for the eels.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Melbourne is giving about 50 gallons per head per day; Sydney is giving 36 gallons, Adelaide is giving 53. Yet we have been supplying 80 gallons per day for every man, woman, and child. Anyone who has had anything to do with water supplies knows that the standard adopted by an engineer designing a scheme is 50 gallons per head per day. When I was building the Perth scheme in 1890, it was laid down on that basis.

Mr. Harrison: The reason for that is that the population is not so scattered in Western Australia as in the other States.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Reference was made by the member for South Fremantle to shortages in certain private houses. I cannot read the whole file but two or three complaints were made, and when we investigated them we found that the inside service supplying those houses contained a deposit of lime and corrosion to such an extent that the pipes were almost blocked up, and no one knows that better than the hon. member himself. The member for North Perth (Mr. MacCallum Smith) who I regret is not present, made a great song about the Minister not coming to the House and asking for money. If he knew anything at all about the conduct of the Ministry and the duties of the different members of the Ministry, he would know that no Minister can come to the House and ask for money unless the Treasurer has assented to the adoption of that course. Every Minister submits his proposals to the Treasurer, and if the Treasurer can see his way to provide the money, well and good.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The Treasurer does not always give it to him.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: No.

The Minister for Mines: He has not always got it.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: If the Treasurer cannot give it to us, how foolish it is to suppose that a Minister could come to the House and ask for money which the Treasurer cannot find. Moreover, there are times in the Treasury, just as in our private lives, when we may have any amount of credit but not the funds. The Treasurer keeps a tight hand on the purse and will not allow me, or any other Minister, to spend money unless he is satisfied the expenditure is justified. That is the only way we can deal with the finances of the State.

Hon. P. Collier: That explains why you are showing such improved results in the finances!

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: If that control were not exercised, the position would be worse.

Hon. P. Collier: We can see the improved results already!

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is idle to rail about Ministers not doing something when that something is not within their province to do. The hon. member referred to the mayor of Perth in rather an ungenerous way. The mayor of Perth and I crossed swords. I know I was right and he thinks he was right, but we have both agreed to be very good friends. We buried the hatchet and, although we do not sleep in the same bed, we shake hands and are very friendly. I do not think the mayor would take to himself the credit which the member for North Perth wishes us to understand he would. Regarding the discolouration of water, there can be no denial of that, and there never has been. It would be foolish to go against an established fact. There are times when the water comes through the main so discoloured as to be absolutely obnoxious. That is not always

so. The only way to deal with it is to establish some filters and keep them going. A scheme is being prepared, the drawings are being made and when the scheme is through, it will be laid before the Treasurer with the idea of erecting filters at Mount Hawthorn, Claremont, Mount Eliza, and Fremantle. If the Treasurer can find the money, the work will be carried out.

Hon. P. Collier: The discolouration has been very bad once or twice this year.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No one denies it. The member for Leederville (Capt. Carter) spoke about wasting water and the charge for excess water. Every application made for an abatement in connection with the excess water charge in that district has received the fullest consideration, and if it was found that the application contained the elements of fairness, a rebate was made. I thank the member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin) for the very fair way in which he spoke. He, like myself, has reached a period of life when he can cast aside all bias, and bring to bear on facts matured judgment instead of flights of fancy, which some less elderly people indulge in.

Hon. P. Collier: You are putting down his attitude to old age.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: To mature judgment.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, that and nothing more. His hair, like mine, with the passage of time has become silvered. Some men get silvered hair without their judgment maturing.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: And some of them lose their hair.

The Minister for Mines: Well, I have never seen a bald-headed man in a lunatic asylum, anyhow.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The member for Leederville said some lady had had £30 worth of linen ruined in the wash. I do not know the lady, but if it is true, it simply shows that her husband must have drawn a surprise packet, and not a good packet, when he drew her. She could not have been well trained in domestic duties, because she should have known when she drew the water whether it was a fair thing to put the linen into it or not. I do not believe the story. Ladies, so far as I know, are pretty careful, and £30 worth of linen is rather a big order. I cannot enumerate what the linen consisted of.

Hon. P. Collier: You should ask for an inventory.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: In these days of high prices, £30 worth of linen would be a valuable adjunct to the good lady and her husband's comfort, too valuable to risk in discoloured water.

Hon. P. Collier: A very foolish woman, anyhow.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I think so too. All the complaints regarding water not having reached this place and that place will be inquired into and dealt with.

Hon. P. Collier: You will have a busy time next week.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The member for West Perth (Mrs. Cowan) spoke about the York supply being good. I have no doubt the member for that district felt highly elated. The York supply ought to be good; it is Mundaring water. For over six months, prior to a fortnight or three weeks ago, nothing but Mundaring water plus water from the Victoria and Bickley Brook reservoirs has been supplied to Perth. It follows, therefore, that the complaints made until a few weeks ago were complaints about hills water, and not water from the bores. The West Perth sewerage referred to by the hon. member cannot be carried out until the Subiaco sewerage has been undertaken, which will be, I hope, during the next year, there being an item for it on the Loan Estimates. The West Perth sewerage cannot be done till then, because, the fall being towards Subiaco, we cannot bring the sewerage in this direction. The member for Bunbury and other members seem to think that a board would be a better means of controlling the metropolitan water supply. As Minister I shall be very happy when the day comes for me to relinquish that portion of my functions.

The Minister for Mines: The water supply was under a board once.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It was under boards twice, and the boards did not give satisfaction. The people kicked up a row, and the Government took the water supply over. The same thing will probably happen again if the Government now hand the water supply over to a board. The Minister for Mines and myself have for some time had instructions, which it has not yet been possible to carry out, for the calling of a meeting of the various bodies in the metropolitan area, so that the question of the best system of control may be discussed.

Hon. P. Collier: You are holding that over for a slack week.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We hope to get it done some time; but how on earth can members expect Ministers to do their administrative work when they have to sit here from half past two until midnight or possibly two or three o'clock in the morning? Reverting to the discoloration of water, that trouble is not confined to Western Australia. Last year the most eminent experts who could be gathered together from the United Kingdom and Ireland and the United States of America, met in London to discuss various municipal problems, such as maintenance and construction of roads; and they devoted three whole days to this very same question of discoloration of water. They pointed out that there was no system known by which water pipes could be made absolutely impervious to the action of certain acids and minerals that make their appearance in water. Those countries have had the same trouble as Western Australia has had, with regard to the forma-

tion of nodules in the pipes, and with regard to the mingling of different supplies of water. When such a mixing of waters occurs as between our Mundaring water and our bore water, a chemical reaction sets up and causes trouble. The same thing has occurred in England, Scotland, Ireland, and the United States. When these men, who do know their work, and whose people do appreciate them, make such admissions, surely we here are entitled to a little consideration. A certain suggestion has been made for the driving of a tunnel along the river as far as the Fremantle Smelting Works for the purpose of carrying the sewage out to sea. I shall bring that suggestion under the notice of Mr. Lawson and the Engineer-in-Chief, and ask them to consider the seriousness of such a useful suggestion. Should they find that there is something in it—I cannot be so sceptical as to suppose otherwise—I shall inform the House as to the result. The member for Coolgardie was unfair when he referred to Mr. O'Brien as going up to Mundaring every week to take samples—a suggestion that an officer drawing £900 a year does no other work than that. The very extravagance of the language used by the member for Coolgardie would destroy his case in the mind of any reasonable man. It does not speak well for this Chamber or for Western Australia that never a good word should be said about the State employees, that hardly any member finds occasion to mention that a State employee has done something decent. The member for Coolgardie expressed the hope that the water supply from the hills would not in any way endanger the supply to the goldfields. He can go home and sleep in comfort on that idea. The source which will supply Perth with hills water does not in any way affect Mundaring Weir. There is any amount of water in the scheme known as the Canning. I have to thank several members who have been good enough to express their views. Perhaps there may be some little balm in Gilead so far as I am concerned. As regards members who have given me scathing criticism, I hope that they have charity in their hearts, and that on reflection they will call to mind that all men are mortal, that no man is perfect, and that even in their armour there might be found flaws capable of being penetrated if occasion arose.

Item, Acting Controller, £326:

Mr. TEESDALE: I was indeed pleased to hear the reply of the Minister for Works. I protest against exaggerated statements made by one or two members here, members who appear to think they have a monopoly of sympathy for unfortunate men who have returned in a maimed condition. Perhaps every other member of this House has as much sympathy for those men as have the members who made such a parade of their sympathy to-night. The remarks made in this connection about the Government are simply scandalous. Outsiders, reading those remarks, might imagine that there were great grievances here in connection with the treatment of soldiers—which I absolutely deny. The

problem is one that cannot be satisfactorily solved immediately. In some instances it is impossible to find positions for the unfortunate maimed men. What I do object to is the direct statement that the Government have been remiss in the matter. I would not mind if members had distributed their attacks over private individuals as well, but the allegations have all been against the occupants of the Treasury bench. Sir James Mitchell has done everything in his power for these unfortunate men. He has 50 members of Parliament setting him from morning to night. He is asked to receive a dozen deputations a day. On top of that he is baited by half a dozen women's associations. And then, when he comes here, he is set upon by a member who ought to know better. No State has acted more fairly than Western Australia by its soldiers. I admit that our solution of the problem is not yet perfect. The position is so extraordinary; there never has been a similar position in the world before. There must be grievances, and there will continue to be grievances. However, I ask hon. members to recognise that those grievances are being remedied as speedily as possible. The charges of the member for Coolgardie are simply scandalous. The hon. member every now and then makes extravagant charges for reasons known only to himself. Other members come here and parade their patriotism for the benefit of "Hansard" and the "West Australian." Their efforts would be much more effective if made quietly between those members and Ministers. I admit that what has been brought forward by members who have so suddenly taken up the case of these men is part and parcel of the Commonwealth's duty, but I do not see why any reflection should be cast upon the Commissioners, who understand the position. I do not see that there is need for any outsider to galvanise the Commissioners into activity. The member for Colliie is quite capable of looking after his brother soldiers, and I am certain he loses no opportunity of doing so. I would, however, ask him to be a little less exaggerated in his statements than some of the previous speakers have been.

Mr. WILSON: I do not exaggerate in statements that I make to the House. I am going to prove to the House what I have asserted. The very correspondence read by the Minister demonstrates that these men have been unfairly treated. I do not think that in my speech I said anything detrimental to Mr. Lawson, whom I hold in the highest esteem. But it is possible for a mistake to be made, and a mistake has been made here, as I shall prove. Surely it is peculiar that we should be asked to go back years in order to get some camouflage for the reduction of wages imposed upon these two men. What has Whittleston's leave of absence two years previously to do with the reduction of his wages from £3 18s. per week to £2 18s. 6d? The fact of the matter is that Sheppard was employed as foreman on some works for 12 months.

The Minister for Works: He was never employed as a foreman.

Mr. WILSON: I should have said, as a storeman. He had done that work to the satisfaction of the Government, and had attained the rate of £3 18s. per week. Then we have the extraordinary statement that because some men, who were in the best of health and strength, complained when they saw a stumple drawing such pay—

The Minister for Works: That is not so.

Mr. WILSON: The Minister for Works said so.

The Minister for Works: I have never said so.

Mr. WILSON: The Minister said the men complained about this man drawing more money than they.

The Minister for Works: I did not.

Mr. WILSON: I took it for that.

The Minister for Works: You must have misunderstood me.

Hon. P. Collier: The Minister for Works said the other men would complain.

The Minister for Works: That is a different matter altogether.

Mr. WILSON: I should be sorry to think that any man would complain. Those men, after being 12 months employed, were interviewed by two officers in respect of their pensions. Shortly afterwards one of those men was reduced to £2 18s. 6d. weekly.

The Minister for Works: He was not then doing the same work.

Mr. WILSON: He was employed as storeman.

The Minister for Works: Then the statement given to me is untrue.

Mr. WILSON: I am giving you the facts.

The Minister for Works: I have the facts, and I would rather take them as supplied to me by my officers. I say that Sheppard was getting £4. I am told that the work he was on ceased, and the only work they could find for him was worth not more than £2 18s. 6d. He would not take it.

Mr. WILSON: He was reduced on the job. Hot words ensued between him and Mr. Lawson. Finally the man was forced to leave his work, and for two months he could not get any employment. Last night I said that Sheppard was not working, but I now understand that he is working now, though not for the department. Mr. Thomson and I went and saw Mr. Lawson and talked with him of Whittleston. The very stuff the Minister has read out to-night is the stuff Mr. Lawson gave us that day. I believe that in 99 cases out of 100 the Government have done a fair thing by the wingies and stumpies. However, a mistake has been made on this occasion. Mr. Lawson told us it was a boy's job. Yet afterwards he went on to say that Whittleston could not carry sufficiently well. Where is the logic in that? Is there to be no sympathy with the wingies and stumpies? Mr. Lawson told Mr. Thomson and me that he was prepared to give this man £3 weekly, and he asked us to advise Whittleston to take it. We asked would it not be better for Mr.

Lawson to have a conference with the executive of the R.S.L. and come to some understanding. He agreed. So that case was settled. Then it came to the case of Sheppard. Mr. Lawson was very angry, and said he would not employ him. We asked him whether, if Sheppard apologised, he would reconsider the matter, and he said he would do so. We then left. That evening Lieut.-Col. Denton, Capt. Carter, Mr. Lambert, Mr. Thomson, Mr. Corboy and I went to the meeting of the committee of the wingies and stumpies. Sheppard was there. When we gave him the result of our interview he said he would not apologise. However, we told him that if he did not apologise, in all likelihood it would affect the interests of the wingies and stumpies, and so he consented to apologise.

The Minister for Works: I should have thought more of him if he had continued to refuse.

Mr. WILSON: But think of a man accepting an apology from a wingy and stumpy and then giving him a kick subsequently!

Mr. J. Thomson: The Minister for Works does not believe in apologies.

The Minister for Works: I do not believe in a man being forced to apologise.

Mr. WILSON: I do not think the Minister for Works is himself speaking to-night; I rather think the devil has entered into him. We have been on this job since the 14th August, yet we have not been able to achieve anything. I believe the Government tried to find a job for Sheppard, but without avail. Here is a letter dated the 14th August from the secretary of the Wingies and Stumpies to Mr. Lawson—

Dear Sir—At a meeting of the executive committee of the association held last Friday, during the discussion on the principle, as laid down by the association, that where our members are employed they shall receive the full wage for the job they are holding, irrespective of any pension they may be receiving, I am directed to write you as follows:—The case of Sheppard was under review, and as correspondence indicated that some words of a heated nature had passed between you and Sheppard, he now desires my executive to acquaint you with the fact that should you have felt that anything he said was in the nature of a personal insult, he desires to tender his sincere regret.

Here is Mr. Lawson's reply, five days later—

Dear Sir—I am in receipt of your letter of the 14th inst. In reference to the first paragraph thereof, I have to state it has never been the custom of this department to take the amount of pension received into consideration when assessing the pay offered to members of your association. Payment is based on efficiency, and when men are 100 per cent. efficient—

Men who have left 20 per cent. of their flesh in Flanders! The letter continues—they receive pay accordingly, and pro rata where full efficiency cannot be given. In reference to Sheppard, I desire to thank

your executive for their action in the matter, and consider the incident between Sheppard and myself closed. However, as a returned soldier and one with the interests of returned men at heart, I think it is a pity, when it is known that the best possible is being done for returned soldiers, and the fairest possible deal being given them, that certain men do not seem to realise this. This tends to alienate sympathy, which is to be regretted, as I yield to nobody in my anxiety to do what is fair and right to the returned soldier.

Mr. LAMBERT: If he tried to get 100 per cent. efficiency from some of his other employees, it would suit him much better.

The Premier: It is a lot to live up to.

Mr. WILSON: It is perhaps a storm in a teacup, but it is a pretty big storm to those people who at present are buffeted from one place to another. Jobs for those men are not too frequent, and when they get in and get a fair wage they resent the idea that, after a year's employment, they should be found to be deficient. Either the department did not do their duty in keeping him for a year, or they forgot themselves when they sent round to see what his pension was worth.

The Minister for Works: Suppose I had come and put him out because he was a wingy and stumpy, what would you have said?

Mr. WILSON: He has been put out. I stated the plain unvarnished fact last night. If any mistakes have been made, they have not been made by me. There is, I feel, full justification for everything I said last night.

The Minister for Works: I did not quite understand what you said last night but, knowing you so well, I knew where your heart was.

Mr. WILSON: I do speak a bit Scotch at times, I admit. This man has been penalised to the extent of two months' pay. An injustice has been done, and it is up to the Government to see that this man gets redress. I do not think I need labour the point in urging the Government to show sympathy with him.

Mr. LAMBERT: I regret that the Minister should take these impersonal matters personally.

The Minister for Works: Well, be a little fair to other men who are not here to reply.

Mr. LAMBERT: I think every consideration has been shown to those other men. I do not know that I have ever met Mr. Lawson.

Mr. O'Loghlen: He is a good officer.

Mr. LAMBERT: He may be, but on the 27th July, 1922, Tchan, the timekeeper, rang up at Loftus-street and asked the amount of the man's pension. He stated that the man was going to be reduced accordingly. On the same day Atkinson at Burswood said a similar thing to the other man.

Mr. O'Loghlen: It looks like a departmental instruction.

Mr. LAMBERT: Yes, an instruction that for the future these pensions were to be

taken into account. We will always stand up in defence of these men if there are only one or two concerned.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I wish you would fight for the widows and orphans who are suffering the most. The Commonwealth Government have not been doing their duty.

Mr. LAMBERT: The hon. member can bring that forward. We do not wish to belittle the good work done by the Premier or the Minister for Works, or even by Mr. Lawson.

The Premier: We do not even want our deeds acknowledged.

Mr. LAMBERT: As Australians we claim the right to speak for Australians.

The Premier: Keep on doing it.

Mr. LAMBERT: We say it is a callous act for the Government to expect to get 100 per cent. efficiency from these maimed soldiers.

The Premier: The hon. member knows that we have never sought to take away their pensions.

Mr. LAMBERT: On the 27th July last two different men were notified that the amount of their pensions would be taken into consideration in relation to their wages. There is no need for the Minister for Works to feel aggrieved because we bring these matters forward.

The Minister for Works: I am not aggrieved for myself, but I do not want my officers to be blackguarded when they cannot reply.

Mr. LAMBERT: Who has blackguarded them?

The Minister for Works: Apparently you are not aware of it.

Mr. LAMBERT: I have not mentioned the engineer's name. An error was committed in this case and it should have been rectified long ago. If it is possible to recompense these men they should be recompensed. The Government should do everything possible for them and show themselves in bright contrast to the flag-waving employers in the city who are at present shirking their responsibilities.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Justice should be done to an officer who has done everything he could for returned soldiers. I once appealed to Mr. Lawson on behalf of a man who was out of employment. I was asked if the man was a returned soldier and told that otherwise he could not get a job. The man was a returned soldier and when a vacancy occurred he received the position. I do not think Mr. Lawson would be hard in his dealings with returned soldiers.

Mr. J. Thomson: No one has said anything against him.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I wish to reply to the remarks made by the Minister for Works regarding the shortage of water at Fremantle. He said it was due to the bursting of one of the mains. If that had been said at the time the people would have known to what it was due. I have here a statement published in the "West Austra-

lian" of the 11th November, headed Fremantle Water Supply. It is as follows:—

Arising out of the serious shortage of water in the Fremantle district during the hot spell the chief engineer of the Metropolitan Water Supply, Mr. F. W. Lawson, made a visit to the port yesterday. He inspected the main source of the town and district's supply, the reservoir on Monument Hill. It was learned that there had been an unprecedented draw on the reservoir during Wednesday and the level had been reduced considerably. During the past few days a number of complaints have been received about the shortage of water on the higher levels of the town. Yesterday morning it was stated that one section of Beaconsfield was entirely without water, but a small flow was obtained during the afternoon. Last night the Mayor of Fremantle (Mr. F. E. Gibson, M.L.A.) at whose request Mr. Lawson made his visit to Fremantle, said that an improved service had been promised.

I make this statement to show that the remarks of the member for South Fremantle agreed with the reports that appeared in the Press, and were quite correct from that point of view.

Capt. CARTER: So far as I know no direct charge has been made against Mr. Lawson, nor any indirect charge. He is a returned soldier and has always given preference to returned men when the opportunity occurred.

The Premier: That has been the case in every department.

Capt. CARTER: I believe so. It is only fair to Mr. Lawson to say there is no feeling that he has done anything he should not have done in the case in point. The matter has passed beyond his province.

Item—Assistant Engineers, £9,193:

Hon. P. COLLIER: This item embraces a large number of engineers, clerks, and cadets. The salaries paid to some of these professional officers are low. If the Public Service Commissioner or the Appeal Board has failed to award a salary commensurate with the responsibilities of these officers, the State must suffer. It is not good that professional men should be called upon to perform duties at a salary insufficient for the position. It must lead to dissatisfaction and discontent. There are under this item second-class assistant engineers, some of whom have been in the service for 26 years. One officer started in 1896, and notwithstanding the responsibility of his work he is now only receiving £384. Under these engineers are gangers and inspectors, men without great qualifications, but they are actually receiving more salary than or equal to the engineer in charge of the work.

Mr. Teesdale: So much for brains.

Hon. P. COLLIER: And for professional skill. I am sure the Minister for Works appreciates the position, and that if he had his way no professional men would be expected to devote a life time to the service and finish

up on a salary of £384. There is no encouragement for young men to study engineering at the University if they can see at the end of a quarter of a century's service a salary of only £384.

Mr. Teesdale: And yet hundreds are qualifying to-day.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes, that is the trouble. The Estimates provide for four assistant engineers at £384, one of whom will relieve Mr. Lawson and will have to take charge of the whole of this important public service during his absence. I do not say that even Mr. Lawson's salary is sufficient. In addition, there is one assistant engineer at £312 and one at £249. In various occupations throughout Western Australia labourers are earning more than £6 a week and at Collie a man can earn £6 a week for four days' work! Then we find that two inspectors are provided for at £384 each—as much as the assistant engineers get!

The Minister for Works: They have fairly large districts to cover.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I know that, but there is no comparison whatever between the work and responsibility of an engineer and an inspector. I have done this work myself and can carry out the work of an inspector, but I would not be worth "two bob" as an engineer. I do not reflect upon the capacity of the inspectors for one moment; they are capable men with years of experience in construction work and worth the money they receive, but the position disclosed in the Estimates is highly ridiculous. It is absurd to ask a professional man such as an engineer to be content with a salary as small as that paid to a ganger in charge of 30 men, who has practically no responsibility to shoulder.

Mr. Pickering: This is why we lose so many of our local engineers.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Of course; we expect men to be satisfied with such small salaries and it is only natural that they will go to the Eastern States and other places where better salaries are paid. If the present system of fixing salaries by the Public Service Commissioner or by the Appeal Board is to be perpetuated, the effect will be that Western Australia will lose the services of her capable professional men, particularly the younger men. Such capable men as we will retain will be elderly men who do not care about going elsewhere to start afresh. Recently a man was retired from the Public Works Department, where he had received a salary of £384 as a second-class engineer. He went to the Eastern States and secured a position on the Mildura irrigation works at a salary of £1,200.

The Minister for Works: I thought it was £1,000.

Hon. P. COLLIER: In any case, that man was retired here. That shows how the salaries in the East compare with those paid here. In a small country town, a Government architect resides. He has no responsibility as there are no works going on there and yet he receives £384 a year as well. I refer to

these matters to show the effect of our present method of assessing the value of the services of professional men. I am at a loss to understand upon what basis the Public Service Commissioner and the Appeal Board work in fixing the salaries of professional men. A perusal of the Estimates will disclose numerous instances of men in clerical positions requiring no special training or high degree of skill, drawing salaries of from £600 to £800 a year. Their work cannot compare in any respect with that of engineers on £384. I can only conclude that this is due to the fact that the Public Service Commissioner and the men appointed to the Appeal Board are non-professional men. With all due respect to the chairman of the Appeal Board, what does he, as a judge of the Supreme Court, know about the qualifications required by engineers or the salaries they should receive? On the board with him are two laymen who know no more about engineering than they do about astronomy. They seem to have an exaggerated idea of the value of the services rendered by other non-professional men.

Mr. Mann: The assistant rabbit inspector gets £400.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I venture to say there is not printed anywhere else in the British Empire a document which contains so many anomalies in salaries as are to be found in these Estimates. The assistant rabbit inspector gets £400 and the assistant engineer, entrusted with important works, gets £304, while somewhere else will be found a clerk in receipt of £700 or £800. Take the Assistant Public Service Commissioner: His work is important, no doubt, but after all he fills an assistant position, the real responsibility resting with the Public Service Commissioner himself. Yet the salary of the assistant is £804. Will anybody say this position is worth £804, while that of an assistant engineer is worth only £304?

The Minister for Works: You ought not to reflect on that officer. His work is of a very worrying nature.

Hon. P. COLLIER: But the Public Service Commissioner is paid to carry the responsibility. I am not trying to under-rate either the importance of the work of the office of Assistant Public Service Commissioner or the capacity of the man who fills it. I am dealing, not with the officer himself, but with the office. The assistant rabbit inspector gets £400, while a capable engineer is paid £304! Year after year have our Estimates shown that the professional men in the service are underpaid. It is only within the last year or two that we have made an attempt to recognise the services rendered by some of the professional heads and granted them increases.

The Minister for Works: No doubt the Government have professional men at very low salaries.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Until two years ago we were paying them £600 per annum. It is an absurd salary as compared with the salaries attached to corresponding positions in the Eastern States where such men get £1,200, £1,500 and even £2,000. It is not as

it was 20 or 30 years ago, when a salary of £700 or £800 in this State was considered very high. To-day it is a mere nothing, as salaries go. If we expect to get the efficient services of highly qualified specialists, we must pay them decent salaries. If we fail to do this, we shall be left with the duds and the drones. The fact that the Public Service Commissioner and the Public Service Appeal Board fail to realise this, is my justification for bringing up the question to-night. They fail entirely to take into consideration the well-being of the State when they fix salaries like this and expect to get efficient service. The Public Service Commissioner and the appeal board declare that they classify, not the officer, but the office. They have done a dis-service to the State by the salaries they have fixed. In nearly every case of appeal the professional men failed to obtain a reclassification and increase, whereas quite a number of other than professional men were successful in obtaining increases up to £100 a year. An engineer who started at £180 has reached £384 in 26 years. That is wholly insufficient. I do not suppose the Minister can do anything; the matter is not in his hands.

Mr. Money: Your argument is that if the office is given a higher classification it will attract better men?

Hon. P. COLLIER: These are qualified men, but how can we expect them to be satisfied if, after a quarter of a century's excellent service, they reach only £384?

The Minister for Works: I wish the newspapers and the public held the same opinion of the officers as you do.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I have always felt that we were sweating our highly qualified professional men. The Public Service Commissioners for the past 10 or 12 years have never awarded the salaries which such offices should carry. If members expressed their views on this question, it might lead to an alteration in the point of view of those responsible for fixing the salaries. This engineer, after 26 years, is getting a salary equal to that paid to an inspector or a ganger. We have had a man in charge of important railway construction work receiving £250 a year, while gangers, timekeepers and others under him have been getting higher pay. How can we expect efficiency under such conditions? This is a reflection on the knowledge of the tribunals responsible for fixing such salaries. There seems to be an idea that a man trained in the law is qualified to assess the value of all manner of service. That is ridiculous. A man obtains a position on the bench because of his qualifications in law, but because he has attained that eminence in his profession we accept him as a competent judge of all kinds of occupations.

Mr. Mann: He is supposed to have a trained mind.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes, in the law.

Mr. Mann: In the Supreme Court a judge has to adjudicate on matters affecting different vocations.

Hon. P. COLLIER: On the evidence presented, he has to decide whether a man is guilty or not guilty.

Mr. Money: You agree that a man should be qualified for the work he is doing?

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes. A judge is qualified for the work of the law. It would be better to have on the appeal board professional men. Neither the Public Service Commissioner nor his assistant is a professional man. Not one of the three members of the appeal board was a professional man. I must enter my protest against asking these professional engineers to give the service we demand of them for such a paltry salary as £384 per annum.

Vote put and passed.

Progress reported.

BILL—ESPERANCE-NORTHWARDS RAILWAY EXTENSION.

Returned from the Council without amendment.

House adjourned at 11 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 14th December, 1922.

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

BILLS (2)—REPORTS OF COMMITTEE ADOPTED.

- 1, Agricultural Seeds.
- 2, Dog Act Amendment.

BILL—LAND AND INCOME TAX ASSESSMENT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [4.35]: In moving the second reading of this Bill I should like to take the opportunity of inti-

imating to hon. members that it is now clearly impossible to finish the business of the session before Christmas. It will be necessary for Parliament to reassemble early in the new year. That being the case, I take it that hon. members will desire to adjourn for the Christmas holidays at all events a day or two before Christmas Eve. The business that it is important should be completed before we adjourn is that business which will seriously affect the revenue of the State if it is not completed before the new year; that is, the Land and Income Tax Assessment Bill, the Land Tax and Income Tax Bill, and the Licensing Act Amendment Bill. Hon. members will recognise that if these taxation Bills are not completed before the Christmas adjournment, the Taxation Department will be given very little opportunity of getting out their assessments in time for the revenue to come in during the financial year. Last year's revenue suffered very severely for that reason. In view of the unfortunate mistakes which were made in the Land and Income Assessment Act of last session, I do not propose to ask the Council to suspend its Standing Orders unless we find at the close that the suspension may enable us to do in a day what would otherwise take two days, and, further, unless we are satisfied with what has been done. In such circumstances I should regard a suspension of the Standing Orders as a favour, and also a step which would promote the convenience of hon. members. At all events, we have to-day, and Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday of next week. After the second reading of the Bill has been moved, and, if hon. members so desire, debated, there will be time during the week-end for the consideration of the measure, and on Tuesday we can go into Committee. This Land and Income Tax Assessment Amendment Bill in the first instance embodies a provision which was included in the tax Bill itself last session. That is the provision regarding the incomes chargeable of persons who receive incomes in the shape of dividends. Hon. members will be familiar with that provision. Its purpose is to ensure that where the income of a person derived from dividends puts him on a scale which would entitle him to pay a higher rate of taxation than the 1s. 3d. dividend duty, he shall pay that higher rate. I do not think there is any need to debate the clause. It is in the same terms as the clause in the taxation Act of last year. When that taxation measure was before the House, a proviso to Section 16 was inserted, I think at the instance of Mr. Holmes, in the following terms:—

Provided that, in any assessment made under this section, a deduction shall be allowed for interest incurred by the person in the production of the income derived from dividends.

It will be noticed that that proviso does not appear in the present Bill. The reason is that last year we also made an amendment of the Land and Income Tax Assessment Act, alter-