

existing at the present time might be reconciled.

Hon. G. Potter: I think the Engineer-in-Chief has considered the financial aspect.

Hon. A. BURVILL: The Bill could well be deferred until next session. I would like to know from the Chief Secretary whether he would agree to a clause being inserted to prevent anything being done beyond the resumption of the land. In any case, the conflicting statements that have been made should be cleared up so that the laymen in Parliament might know exactly where they are. I cannot say at this stage whether I shall or shall not support the Bill. There is a good deal involved in it, and the House should consider the measure seriously.

On motion by Hon. H. A. Stephenson, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 11.3 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 7th December, 1927.

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

QUESTION—VERMIN ACT, KANGAROOS.

Mr. LAMOND asked Hon. H. Millington (Honorary Minister): 1. Is he aware (a) that in certain districts plain kangaroos have been declared vermin and bonuses are being

paid for their destruction; (b) that in the same districts royalty is collected on kangaroo skins? 2. In view of this will he favourably consider the removal of this anomaly and provide greater inducement to kangaroo shooters by abolishing the royalty collected by the Government on kangaroo skins in districts where such animals have been declared vermin?

Hon. H. MILLINGTON replied: 1, (a) In only one district, namely West Kimberly, have kangaroos been declared vermin; (b) the majority of kangaroos in this district are the species *M. Agilis* (coast wallaby), or *M. Robusta* (euro), and royalty is not collected on the skins. 2, The royalty on the species *M. Rufus* (red kangaroo) is twopence per skin, and as the skins are worth at least 3s. per lb., it is not considered that this small amount will prove a deterrent to hunters.

QUESTION—HOSPITALS, GROCERY SUPPLIES.

Mr. COVERLEY asked the Minister for Health: 1 How are groceries supplied to hospitals at Broome, Derby, and Wyndham? 2, If by contract, when were the last tenders called? 3, How were tenders advertised?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH replied:—1, At Broome and Derby groceries are purchased locally. For Wyndham Hospital, groceries are purchased by the Government Stores Department and forwarded. 2, At Broome, quotations from various traders are obtained every month. At Derby, only one firm will tender; the other declines to do so. Goods are purchased, as necessary, at best prices offering. 3, forms of quotations are issued.

QUESTION—ROAD CONSTRUCTION.

Cost of Canning Road.

Hon. G. TAYLOR asked the Minister for Works: What is the amount of money spent on the Canning-Fremantle Road, from the 1st January to the 31st October, 1927, under the Federal Aid Roads Act?

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM (Honorary Minister), for the Minister for Works replied: The construction of the Canning-Fremantle road was commenced in June last, and up to the 31st October, 1927, an amount of £38,944 5s. 7d. had been expended thereon. The work is not charge-

able to Federal Aid Roads, but to special provision on the Loan Section of the Works Department's Estimates.

QUESTION—POLICE ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. G. TAYLOR (without notice) asked the Premier: Is it the intention of the Premier to give the House an opportunity to further discuss the Police Act Amendment Bill this session?

The PREMIER replied: It will depend on the progress of business and the number of messages received from another place whether time will permit of further discussing this Order of the Day.

BILL—EMPLOYMENT BROKERS' ACT AMENDMENT.

Council's Amendments.

Message from the Council received and read notifying that it had agreed to the Bill, subject to a schedule of amendments.

BILL—STATE CHILDREN ACT AMENDMENT.

Council's Further Message—Conference granted.

Message received from the Council notifying that it had agreed to the Assembly's request for a conference, and fixed the time at 4.45 p.m. and the place as the President's room.

On motion by the Minister for Health, Mr. North was appointed as substitute for Mr. Davy, one of the Assembly's managers.

BILL—AUDIT ACT AMENDMENT.

Request for Conference.

Message received from the Council requesting the Assembly to grant a conference on the Council's amendment.

The PREMIER: I move—

That the request be granted, that the managers for the Assembly be the Leader of the Opposition, the Minister for Railways, and the mover, and that the conference be held at 7.30 p.m. in the Speaker's room.

Question put and passed.

BILL—STATE CHILDREN ACT AMENDMENT.

Conference Managers' Report.

THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH (Hon. S. W. Munsie—Flannans) [5.45]: I have to report that the managers have met, and agreed that the amendment made by the Legislative Council be amended by the insertion after the word "may," in line 5 of the proposed new Section 147a, of the words "with the consent of the secretary of the department," and that the proposed new section, as amended, be agreed to. [I move—

That the report be adopted.

Question put and passed, the report adopted, and a message accordingly transmitted to the Council.

BILL—HOSPITALS.

Council's Amendments.

Message from the Council, notifying that it had agreed to the Bill, subject to a schedule of eight amendments, now considered:

In Committee.

Mr. Lutey in the Chair; the Minister for Health in charge of the Bill.

No. 1.—Clause 27: Delete this clause and insert a new clause in lieu thereof as follows:—"Power of local authorities to expend revenues on, and borrow money for, public hospitals. 27. (1) A local authority shall have power to expend and apply or, with the approval of the Minister, to give a binding undertaking to expend and apply for any number of years any portion of its general rate in subsidising any hospital scheme, and in or towards the construction or acquisition, establishment, and maintenance of any public hospital, and in subsidising any district nursing scheme, and in contributing towards a subsidy or providing a subsidy to secure the services of a medical practitioner, and the powers of its local government Act shall be deemed to be extended accordingly: Provided that no such undertaking as aforesaid shall be valid in so far as it purports to bind the local authority to expend or apply in any year a sum exceeding ten per centum of the average annual amount received by it from

Sitting suspended from 4.45 to 5.45 p.m.

general rates during the last two financial years preceding the year in which the undertaking was given, but so that no such sum shall exceed in any year the sum of five hundred pounds. Provided also, that no such agreement shall have effect for more than five years, but any such agreement may be renewed during the last year thereof (with or without modification) from time to time for any period not exceeding five years. (2) It shall be lawful for any local authority to borrow money for all or any of the following objects, that is to say—the construction, enlargement, improvement, and equipment of any hospital within the area of such local authority, and such objects shall be deemed to be works and undertakings within the meaning of Part XXIV. of the Municipal Corporations Act, 1906, and Part VII. of the Road Districts Act, 1919, as though the same had been included therein respectively, and the powers and provisions contained in the said respective Acts relating to the borrowing of money shall apply to the objects above-mentioned. (3) It shall not be lawful for any local authority to make any contribution under this section, whether out of revenue or loan moneys, towards the capital cost of the construction, enlargement, improvement or equipment of a hospital unless the Minister shall have previously given a valid undertaking to provide at least one-half of such capital cost. (4) The provisions of this section are without prejudice to any power vested in a local authority by or under its local government Act."

THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH : 1 move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

There is very little difference between this and the clause as agreed to in this Chamber. The Council have merely stipulated that the Government must contribute their 50 per cent., and were not prepared to accept the word of the Government that this was their policy. The department has been consulted and so have the Crown Law authorities. Other than this there is practically no alteration in the principle embodied in the clause.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Members should have an opportunity of comparing this amendment with the clause as it passed through our hands. The local

authorities have already more than they can do to maintain their roads, and the Government should do all that is necessary in connection with hospitals.

The Minister for Health: There is no compulsion about this.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I object to the local authorities being saddled with a responsibility that belongs to the Government.

The Minister for Health: This only gives local authorities the right to contribute if they so desire. Some are doing so already.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Minister should encourage the local authorities to obey the law of the land.

The Minister for Health: When they are doing a good thing I encourage them to go on doing it.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: They are doing an illegal thing. They might soon be asked to maintain the schools or the police in their district. If the amount is to be limited to £500, the local authority with a large revenue will get off more lightly than the one with a small revenue.

The Minister for Health: Do you think every local authority will contribute £500? It is optional whether anything is contributed.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It is not optional in the case of the ratepayers, who will not be asked whether or not they are willing that this money should be contributed. Ten per cent. of the revenue is a considerable portion of the income of any local authority.

The Minister for Health: Any way, it is up to Northam to do something for its own hospital.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I believe Geraldton has had about £2,000 of Government money.

The Minister for Health: And Northam has had about £13,000 altogether.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Northam, in fact, contributed very largely to the erection of the town's hospital. The Government exact high taxation from the people, and yet the Minister for Mines considers that a great deal may be demanded from them in such respects as, for example, this Bill proposes. I hold that the Council passes too much legislation: I wish the other place would reject more Bills. If the paper now placed before us had been distributed earlier, we could have given it closer study.

The CHAIRMAN: The copies have only just been typed.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes, Sir. I am only censuring the Minister, who might have waited until after tea to bring on this discussion.

The Minister for Mines: I am quite willing to postpone the discussion.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Suppose we report progress.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I move—

That progress be reported, and leave given to sit again at a later stage of the sitting.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I do not know that we should—

The CHAIRMAN: Please let me put the motion for progress.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I can object to the postponement of the discussion. The Bill has been freely discussed. I wish to inform the Opposition Leader—

The CHAIRMAN: I cannot allow discussion on a motion to report progress.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: But I can state reasons why there is no need to report progress. The Bill has been the subject of a conference in another place.

Hon. G. Taylor: That makes no difference.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Mr. Lovekin, a recognised leader of political thought—

Hon. G. Taylor: You have got hold of the wrong Bill.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: No. Mr. Lovekin has had a conference with departmental officers, and as a result of that conference he has made certain recommendations, as the result of which the Chief Secretary has moved an amendment. When we realise that Mr. Lovekin—

The CHAIRMAN: I cannot allow this discussion.

Motion (progress) agreed to.

BILL—STATE CHILDREN ACT AMENDMENT.

Council's Further Message.

Message from the Council received and read notifying that it had agreed to the recommendations of the Conference managers.

BILL—PARLIAMENTARY ALLOWANCES ACT AMENDMENT.

All Stages.

Introduced by the Premier, and read first time.

Message.

Message from the Governor received and read recommending appropriation for the purpose of the Bill.

Second Reading.

THE PREMIER (Hon. P. Collier-Boulder) [6.7] in moving the second reading said: This Bill is really to correct what I may describe as an anomaly that arose in 1919. For many years prior to that period there had been a certain marginal difference between the allowances to private members and those to the Speaker, the President of the Council, and the two respective Chairmen of Committees. In the days when the annual allowance to private members was £200, the allowance to the Speaker was £600. The marginal difference between the allowance to members and that to the Speaker was £400. And similarly as regards the President. At that time there was also a difference of £200 between the allowance to the Chairmen of Committees and that to private members. But upon the allowance to private members being increased by £100 a year in 1919, that increase was not applied to the other four positions, and thus the margin between private members and the Speaker, the President, and the Chairmen of Committees was diminished, in the former two cases by £300 and in the latter two by £100. The Bill proposes to restore the margin which existed prior to 1919. It will do so by increasing the allowances to the four positions by £100 annually. It was not, I believe, intended at the time that the margin should be reduced; probably the reduction came about through an oversight. I am of opinion that the former relation should be restored, and the measure seeks to do that. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. SIR JAMES MITCHELL (Northam) [6.9] I support the Bill with great satisfaction. It is due to an act of mine that the marginal difference was reduced. The Premier is quite right in asking the House to agree to the measure and thus restore the original difference, which should

always have existed and should still obtain. It is with a great deal of pleasure I support the Bill, and I hope it will be carried.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

Remaining Stages.

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

Read a third time, and transmitted to the Council.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 8.15 p.m.

BILL—AUDIT ACT AMENDMENT.

Conference Managers' Report.

The PREMIER: I desire to report that the conference of managers agreed to adjourn and to report to the House to-morrow.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Will that enable the House to continue transacting business? It is a moot point. The managers have to report.

Mr. Corboy: Well, don't raise the point.

The Premier: We have reported.

Hon. G. Taylor: But you have adjourned.

Mr. SPEAKER: I think that the House should be asked to adopt the report, and then they would agree to the adjournment.

The PREMIER: Is it necessary for me to move for the adoption of the report I have made?

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes.

The PREMIER: Then I move—

That the report be adopted.

Question put and passed

Second Reading.

THE PREMIER (Hon. P. Collier—Boulder) [8.20] in moving the second reading said: This is another Bill to increase a salary. Its purpose is to increase the salary of the Public Service Commissioner from £1,000 to £1,250 a year. That will bring the Commissioner's salary into line with that paid for similar positions in the Eastern States. In fact in some of the States the salaries paid are much higher. In New South Wales there is a board of three public service commissioners, and their total salaries amount to £5,500.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That makes it relatively lighter than our own.

The PREMIER: In Queensland the salary paid to the Public Service Commissioner is £1,500 and in Victoria the salary is £1,250. The last increase granted to the Public Service Commissioner was in July, 1920, so that he has received no increase for the past seven years. There was a reclassification of the whole of the Public Service last year and in most instances the salaries of officers were increased, particularly those of the higher paid officials. Some of them are now in receipt of a salary of £1,040. The increase proposed in the Bill really preserves the margin of difference between the salaries paid to other important officers of State and that of the Public Service Commissioner. During the last two years permanent heads of departments have received an increase of £60 each year. That has brought their salaries up to £960 and so, in order to preserve the margin between such officers and the Public Service Commissioner, the salary of the latter official is now to be increased.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The margin has to be maintained.

The PREMIER: Yes, especially when it is remembered that he has received no increase during the past seven years whereas the reclassification of the Public Service has resulted in most officers receiving augmented salaries.

Mr. Corboy: Is it retrospective?

The PREMIER: Not altogether, because the officers who benefited as the result of the reclassification have enjoyed their increased salary for a longer period. As a

BILL—PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSIONER'S SALARY.

All Stages.

Introduced by the Premier and read a first time.

Message.

Message from the Governor received and read recommending appropriation for the purpose of the Bill.

matter of fact under the Bill, the Public Service Commissioner loses by six months.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Is the Public Service Commissioner here, or is he away?

The PREMIER: He is absent on long service leave.

Mr. Marshall: You are not secretly thrusting this increase upon him!

The PREMIER: I have not actually got the Public Service Commissioner's consent, but I do not anticipate that there will be any trouble in that direction. The salaries of other important officers such as the Director of Education and others were increased two years ago. The increase proposed for the Public Service Commissioner does not go back to that date. It could be contended that the increase should have been made last year, and should have applied from the same date as the increases throughout the service. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. SIR JAMES MITCHELL (Northam) [8.25]: Certain officials, of whom the Public Service Commissioner is one, have their salaries fixed by statute. The majority of the public servants have their salaries fixed for them on the recommendation of the Public Service Commissioner. It is only right, therefore, that we should increase his salary because those serving under him have had their salaries increased, until some of the officials are actually in receipt of a greater salary than that paid to the Public Service Commissioner himself. It does not mean that we are increasing his salary as he has not had an increase for seven years, because a time must come when the salary paid must stop at a certain figure. We must do our duty by our officials and I think we have now dealt with all the officials whose salaries are fixed by statute. I hope the House will agree to the Bill because it will merely preserve the margin that should exist between the salaries paid to the Public Service Commissioner and other highly paid officials.

MR. E. B. JOHNSTON (Williams-Narrogin) [8.27]: If the increased salary is to be paid, it is not right to date it back to another financial year. Other officials have had to accept their increases from the time the Bill was passed.

The Premier: That is not so.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: At any rate, their increases were not dated back to the previous financial year. Now we are dealing with an official who is away on a year's leave of absence.

The Premier: No, he is on long service leave, extending over six months.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: His salary is to be increased during his absence and part of the increase has to be added to the expenditure of the previous financial year. The accounts for that year closed on the 30th June last. I do not think we should break any of the regulations under the Public Service Act by agreeing to an increase of salary that will extend into the previous financial year, particularly when dealing with the Public Service Commissioner himself. When we consider that the Commissioner is away on long service leave—I believe he is a very good official, too—I think he is being generously treated particularly when this increase is foisted upon him in his absence. I hope the Government will not alter the accounts of the previous financial year in order to provide the increase.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Lutey in the Chair; the Premier in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Amendment of Act No. 22 of 1920, Sec. 2.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I have already said that it is wrong to grant an increase that will have to date back to the previous financial year. I move an amendment—

That in line 7 the word "January" be struck out, and "July" be inserted in lieu.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

Third Reading.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—HOSPITALS.*Council's Amendments.*

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It is of little use objecting to this method of raising money for hospitals, although if I could successfully oppose the amendment I would do so. We are imposing altogether too many burdens on the people. I do not know why they should be called upon to contribute to the Treasury whenever Ministers like to ask for a special tax to meet this or that expenditure. The aggregate amount of taxation is very high and is becoming burdensome and irritating. People pay land tax possibly to the Federal Government and to the State Government, rates to the local authority, a vermin rate, a special vermin rate, and a water rate, and now they are to be called upon to pay for the upkeep of hospitals. No board should be permitted to agree to the charge of 10 per cent, for the upkeep of hospitals unless the system applies throughout the State.

The Minister for Health: If I had included that in the Bill you would have objected to it most strenuously.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Of course I would.

The Minister for Health: I want to give the boards the right if they desire to exercise it.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: If the Minister had sought to compel every board to contribute, his proposal would not have been passed by either House. Already the people are paying taxation for the upkeep of 90 per cent. of the hospitals, and some of them will now be taxed additionally for the same purpose. It will be a serious matter for the road boards because already their funds are overtaxed for the maintenance of roads, which, of course, is their special responsibility. Is there to be no end to taxation? Is not there sufficient unemployment throughout the State without causing further unemployment, trouble and annoyance to the people? The Bill will merely relieve the Government of a responsibility for which they are collecting taxation.

The Minister for Health: It is remarkable that you should have been Premier for 5½ years and failed to stop it.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I did not propose it.

The Minister for Health: But you knew that some of the boards were contributing.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I did not know?

The Minister for Health: Then you did not know your business.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: You are kicking against a stone wall. You cannot do anything now.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Why not? We can refuse to accept the amendment. Is the member for Guildford prepared to accede to the dictates of another place after having so recently objected to doing so?

Hon. W. D. Johnson: There are special circumstances in this instance.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes. The hon. member wishes to give the Minister what he wants, no matter how it is done.

The Minister for Health: A big majority of the members of this House gave it to me.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Then I hope those members will suffer for it.

Mr. Chesson: It is optional, and it will be the fault of the people if they are taxed.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: They will not get much opportunity to object. If the hon. member's constituents are taxed while people in an adjoining constituency are not taxed, he will be in a nice fix when it becomes known that the injustice was done through his vote in this Chamber.

Mr. Chesson: The people themselves will have the say.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: No, the responsibility rests upon the hon. member, and he must face it. I hope the Committee will not agree to the amendment. Only a few days ago, in similar circumstances, we resented a similar suggestion that came from another place. We will be stultifying ourselves by changing our face in a few days.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: The member for West Perth, who has perused the amendment carefully, informs me that if a choice had to be made he would accept the amendment now before us.

Mr. Davy: It is better than the old one.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I think the hon. member was largely influenced by the remarks of the member for Guildford who told us that these amendments were the outcome of a conference between the head of the Medical Department, hospital representatives and Mr. Lovekin, and that Mr. Lovekin had

assured another place that the amendment was now perfectly in order and of great value.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I did not say all that.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: The hon. member said he was satisfied that Mr. Lovekin was capable of deciding the hospital policy of the Government. Will the hon. member deny that? At any rate, that was the inference. I am not so sure that Mr. Lovekin is capable of deciding any part of the policy of the Government. In any case, I am not prepared at any time to accept Mr. Lovekin as an authority on political questions. He once imposed on my credulity for a session or two, but I soon found out that he was not too reliable and that he was capable of leading anyone astray.

The Premier: He has improved quite a lot since then.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: The amendment is bad, no matter where it came from. Road boards should not be associated with the maintenance of hospitals. Their duty is in connection with roads.

The Minister for Health: This is the only State that has not such a law.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: The duty of a road board is not to look after hospitals. It is absurd to think of it. The Government are shirking their responsibility by imposing this tax upon the ratepayers. It is the function of the Government to maintain hospitals and the money should come from general revenue.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I am opposed to the amendment because it is simply another means of piling up burdens on the people of the country. Country hospitals should be erected and maintained on exactly similar lines as the hospitals in the metropolitan area. Instead of that we have the position that if people want a hospital to-day they are obliged to find half the cost of its erection, half the cost of its improvement and now they are to be saddled, without the ratepayers being consulted, with a big proportion of the cost of maintenance. To-day the country people pay their fair share towards the upkeep of every hospital and charitable institution in the metropolitan area.

The Minister for Health: The metropolitan hospitals cater for thousands of people from the country.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Considering that the country people are the principal rate-

payers, they have an absolute right to enter the metropolitan hospitals.

The Minister for Health: They do not contribute very much from Williams-Narogin, not a bob.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: The people of the country districts have contributed a greater percentage than the people of the metropolitan area.

The Minister for Health: They do not contribute anything.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Figures show that they contribute very considerably. The country people have to pay their fair share to every metropolitan institution and now they are to be taxed for the upkeep of the local hospitals. It is time we had a more comprehensive hospital measure, so that all the hospitals in the State may be put on the same footing. Now the ratepayers are not to be consulted, and any road board can tax the ratepayers for a period of five years. It is a burden that should not be imposed.

Mr. LINDSAY: I intend to support the amendment. I am rather surprised to hear some of the speeches that have been made. I am one of those who asked the Minister to give us this power. Moreover, the power sought is already in the Road Districts Act and I know that that power has been exercised in my own electorate for a number of years. It is remarkable that the opposition to the proposal has come from members representing those districts where Government hospitals are established. I consider that all hospitals should be put on an equal footing. The amendment we are considering is really an improvement on what is in the Road Districts Act. In my district we have collected thousands of pounds in the last few years to erect our hospitals. The road boards will not tax the people if they do not consider it right. If road boards do something that is not right, the ratepayer will have the opportunity at the subsequent election of dealing with the members of those boards.

The Minister for Health: It has always been done.

Mr. LINDSAY: I hope it will be continued. Every year in country districts we have to raise funds for the hospitals, and it is always the same people who do the work and the same who pay the money.

Mr. THOMSON: I cannot understand the opposition to this clause. The member for Toodyay read a section of the Road Boards Act giving the boards power to sub-

sidise hospitals. And they have been doing it.

The Minister for Health: But the municipal authorities have not.

Mr. THOMSON: Under the Health Act every local authority may subsidise any hospital, but any expenditure under that section shall not exceed 10 per cent. of the ordinary income of the local authority. The Council's amendment is a decided improvement on what was previously in the Bill. I do not think it goes far enough. It is all right for those who have Government hospitals in their districts, but in my electorate we have local committees who administer the local hospitals.

The Minister for Health: They get a subsidy from the Government.

Mr. THOMSON: Yes, but they have no tenure in that respect. I should like to see in the Bill a provision that before any local authority can accept responsibility for the equipment of a hospital, the Government must provide their quota.

Hon. G. Taylor: We are going further than that.

The Minister for Health: No, there is a limitation to it.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: Perth City Council could not pay more than £500 per annum, and Wagin, I suppose, would have to pay the same.

Mr. THOMSON: I have more confidence in the local authorities. I should be sorry if any country local authority were ready to accept responsibility for £500 for hospitals.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I regret that we have not the final records of what occurred in another place in the framing of this amendment. The amendment was drafted at a conference. Mr. Lovekin explained that they felt it was necessary to consult departmental officers in order to arrive at an understanding about this clause.

Mr. Davy: That does not concern us. Why not deal with the amendment before us?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: After the conference at which the departmental officers were consulted by Mr. Lovekin and others, a clause was drafted. Then during the discussion on the clause it was found that it did not meet with the approval of members of another place and so it was suggested that progress be reported. Progress was reported, evidently to allow Mr. Lovekin to again consult with the departmental officers.

Mr. Thomson: You know that this amendment was put in by your own people.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: No, the Honorary Minister in another place did propose an amendment, but it was not finalised. Unfortunately we have not yet the records of what occurred.

Mr. Davy: What records do you mean?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: "Hansard." We do not know whether the clause was ultimately submitted by Mr. Lovekin or by the Honorary Minister.

Hon. G. Taylor: So long as it has Mr. Lovekin's hall-mark, it must be all right.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Mr. Lovekin takes up the position of framing legislation so that it might meet with the approval of the Government and this Chamber. How long are we going to tolerate legislation of this kind that so directly affects the people not represented by members of another place? There are thousands of people who have no voice in the election of those members.

Mr. Lindsay: Every road board ratepayer has a vote.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: But there are thousands of people concerned in our hospitals who have no say at all. Legislation affecting the welfare of the community as a whole is framed by members who are not truly representative of the people. We passed this Bill and sent it to another place, where it was remodelled, and we find that in the operation members of another place consulted departmental officers.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must not allude to debates in another place.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: It is quite within my province to draw attention to the method by which the amendment was arrived at.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member has been referring to a debate in another place. Standing Order 127 forbids that.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I have no desire to refer to a debate in another place, but only to what took place there.

The CHAIRMAN: I ask the hon. member to desist.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Surely one is in order in referring to the methods by which the amendment was arrived at in another place.

Mr. BROWN: Although the amendment is not just what I desire, still it is the next best thing. Nevertheless, it contains a flaw. There is nothing binding on a local authority to contribute

towards a hospital. In the Pingelly district we collected money for 18 months to purchase a building for a hospital. Still, a large section of the people were against having a local hospital, and some of them are now on the road board. If the road board refuses to contribute towards that hospital, there will be trouble. It would be much better if the local authorities contributed so much of their revenue. Some road boards in the southern districts have an annual revenue of not less than £2,000. If they gave their full quota it would not come to more than £200 a year, which none of them would miss. The payment of a Government subsidy would raise the sum to £400 a year.

Mr. Thomson: But the Government do not give subsidies.

Mr. BROWN: If road boards gave up ten per cent. of their revenue each year, no doubt the Government would give a similar amount. Possibly in some of the old-established districts the patients would not use the public hospitals. Although the Bill does not go far enough, it is the nearest approach to what is wanted in order to overcome the hospital difficulty. Pingelly has just awakened to the fact that it should have a public hospital. If this Bill is not carried no doubt repeated requests will be made to the Government for special grants for that object. No doubt many people who will use these hospitals will be unable to contribute anything to their upkeep, but we are here in the cause of humanity and to help those who cannot help themselves.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It would be wrong to relieve the Government of the payment of hospital subsidies out of the revenue already raised, and wrong to impose special taxation of this kind. The duty falls upon the Government to see that the health of the people is safeguarded. An attempt is now being made to foist that responsibility upon road boards, which already have enough burdens of their own to carry.

The Minister for Health: Every road board and municipality should contribute towards their hospital. It is their bounden duty to do so.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Not at all. It is the policy to shovel the responsibility upon anyone but the Government. The erection of a hospital is another matter. We cannot have wonderfully equipped

hospitals all over the country, but we can have enough to supply the needs of the people. The Minister thinks it would be quite right for Perth to contribute £500 to its hospital, and for Northam and Katanning to contribute a similar amount for their hospitals. The contribution should be made one that will fall evenly upon everyone. The rates imposed upon local people will have to be increased in order that the local authority may find this extra money, and in that way the burden upon the people will be increased. I hope the amendment will not be agreed to. Particularly do I object to it now I know how it originated. We should thank the member for Guildford for enlightening us on this method of drafting legislation.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: I have not given you the lot yet.

Mr. THOMSON: I do not think we are relieving the Government of financial responsibility and placing it upon the shoulders of the road boards. The rate-payers are contributing half the cost of erecting their hospital, and have raised a further substantial sum for its equipment. A hospital at Gnowangerup, which was provided by voluntary workers, has also received a pound for pound subsidy from the Government to enable its founders to complete the building. The same thing applies to Tambellup. Therefore I do not regard the Bill as imposing additional burdens upon country road boards.

Mr. Richardson: The Bill makes compulsory what the road boards have been doing voluntarily.

The Minister for Health: It makes nothing compulsory.

Mr. THOMSON: Under the Road Districts Act road boards may subsidise hospitals up to 10 per cent. of general revenue. If hon. members think the clause relieves the metropolitan area of its financial responsibility in this respect, I am prepared to support an amendment that the limitation of £500 shall not apply to Perth, Fremantle or Kalgoorlie. It is not within the province of a private member to introduce words imposing a levy or a burden. I think Subclause 3 should include the word "maintenance" between "enlargement" and "improvement."

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I understand that the Minister by interjection reflected on the support given by the people of

Narrogin to the Narrogin hospital. If my impression is correct, the Minister does not know as much about the administration of his department as I thought he did. The Narrogin people cheerfully found half the cost of an X-ray plant required at the local hospital, and half the cost of the local infectious diseases hospital. They also maintain a comforts fund for hospital patients. The majority of the patients treated in the Narrogin hospital come from outside the boundaries of the town and the district, and some even come from outside the boundaries of the electorate. The hospital is not adequate to the needs, but that is not the fault of the Narrogin people.

The Minister for Health: It is mainly the fault of the Narrogin Road Board.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I will not be a party to putting on country people new and heavy taxation from which the people of the metropolitan area have the option of exempting themselves. I should mention that Narrogin has also a citizens' welfare fund, and that the local picture show is run for the benefit of charities. As regards the Wickpin hospital, the Wickpin people have done their part.

The Minister for Health: Splendidly; and do not forget that I assisted them pound for pound. Further, they asked me for what the Bill proposes.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I do not think any such request has been made at all.

The Minister for Health: The Narrogin Municipal Council and three neighbouring road boards asked me to secure for them the right to contribute 50 per cent. of the cost of building hospitals.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: That right has existed for years, and has been exercised without any oppressive legislation of this nature being necessary.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I must contradict some of the remarks of the last speaker. The Fremantle Hospital Committee have raised more money than any other hospital committee in Western Australia, and they are in the metropolitan area.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: They raised it by running a "White City."

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: They did not raise most of the funds by that means. I subsidised the Fremantle Hospital Committee pound for pound up to £500. Thus they secured £1,000, and a further £500 was also raised. I was invited to

Narrogin by the Narrogin Municipal Council, and there met representatives of that council and also representatives of the Darkan, Narrogin, Williams, and Cuballing Road Boards. Only the representative of the Narrogin Road Board objected to what the Bill proposes. The other representatives carried a resolution asking the Government to do for Narrogin what had been done for Katanning and Collie. The time is not far distant when every municipal council and every road board will be contributing towards the upkeep of hospitals. No man or woman with a spark of humanity would, as member of a municipal council or road board, refuse to do something to provide hospital accommodation for those who cannot afford to pay for it. That is the duty of every local governing body, under the Health Act, the Road Districts Act, and the Municipalities Act. Many of them are performing that duty. All the clause proposes is to vest in municipalities a power which road boards now possess; and, besides, there is the limitation of £500. The Kalgoorlie Municipal Council pay £500 yearly towards the maintenance of the Kalgoorlie Children's Hospital, and have done so for 16 years. When the Bill passed through Committee here, Clause 7 received only about five minutes' discussion, whereupon it was carried. The substituted clause is exactly the same in principle, except that it limits the amount to £500 and directs that the Government shall contribute half the cost. I have no objection to that direction; indeed, I have already given a promise to the same effect. Under the clause the Government can absolve themselves from their responsibility, but there have been many cases in which the Government have found more than half the money required. If I were to adopt the attitude suggested by the Leader of the Opposition, I would refuse to make available a penny more than was authorised in the Bill. Do hon. members think I would adopt that attitude? Have I ever done so?

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You can only distribute the money the House agrees to give you.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: But I have the say in the distribution of the money. No money is distributed among the hospitals for which distribution I do not sign. Only on one occasion have I signed for payments with which I did not

agree. That was when the Premier, without my consent, made available £5,000 for the Children's Hospital. Had he left it to me I would have got out of it for £1,000 and would have been thanked. I will not be restricted to the 50 per cent., and if more is required for the outer districts I will provide it.

Mr. LINDSAY: Government hospitals cost the State a great deal more than the subsidised hospitals. The Leader of the Opposition made a statement that we were supporting the Bill in order to relieve the Government from responsibility regarding assistance to hospitals. That is not my reason for supporting it. My reason is that it will help to relieve the burden upon many public-spirited citizens who, for years past, have always had their hands in their pockets to find the money necessary to make up deficiencies in connection with local hospitals. I have been connected with a local hospital for 16 years and know the position. There is not only the deficiency in respect of the building that has to be made up, but also in respect of maintenance as well. I think the whole system of assistance to hospitals should be re-organised. The Bill will not relieve the Government of their responsibility regarding one penny, but it will assist those who have had to contribute largely from their private funds in the past.

Hon. G. Taylor: That is what you are doing, helping to relieve the Government of their responsibility.

Mr. LINDSAY: I am not, and I cannot discover any justification for that interjection. There is nothing to indicate that the Government will not have to subsidise hospitals as in the past. The Bill, however, will enable road boards to assist in the hospital work and will relieve those who have had to shoulder much of the burden in the past.

Mr. DAVY: I have listened with a certain degree of patience to lengthy dissertations respecting the principle embodied in the Bill. It appears to me that the question at issue is merely whether we will accept the amendment of the Council, and insert the clause they suggest, or whether the clause in the Bill will be adhered to by this Committee.

The Minister for Health: That is the only point.

Mr. DAVY: Personally, I agreed with the opposition to the clause and the Council's proposal seems to me an improvement on the

original clause, even though it may have originated as the member for Guildford suggested.

The Minister for Health: It did not have that origin, either.

Mr. DAVY: I hope we will accept the Council's clause.

Mr. BROWN: The Leader of the Opposition said that if the Bill were agreed to it would mean such a drain on the revenue of road boards that it would mean fresh taxation to be borne by land owners. I has to be remembered that the land has been revalued and there is the land tax as well. The road boards will be able to work on the basis of the higher valuations and I do not think it will mean fresh taxation.

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

No. 2. Clause 28.—Delete this clause and insert a new clause in lieu thereof as follows:—"Any loan heretofore raised by the municipality of Collie, or the Katanning Road Board, for any such object as aforesaid is hereby validated notwithstanding that such municipality or board may not have had any legal authority to raise such loan, or that any of the relative provisions of its local government Act were not complied with."

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

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

No. 3.—Clause 32: Delete the words "establish public hospitals or" in line two.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: We desired power to establish intermediate hospitals. Such hospitals have been established without authority. Last week-end I met all the doctors of Kalgoorlie and Boulder and as a result of an agreement we have established an intermediate hospital there, the last centre in the State where two or more doctors are practising in the one town.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: What do you mean by an intermediate hospital?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Except in case of accident a patient is not admitted to a public hospital if he can afford to pay for hospital accommodation. The Bunbury, Katanning and Geraldton hospitals, though Government hospitals, are intermediate hospitals.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: Are all Government hospitals intermediate hospitals?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Where there are two doctors practising in the town, an intermediate hospital enables them to follow their patients into the hospital and collect fees from the patient, just as if he were in a private hospital. I want to encourage that.

Mr. Thomson: It is in the interests of patients in the country.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Certainly it is.

Mr. Mann: Why is it?

Mr. Thomson: You ought to know.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Why ask such a question?

Mr. Mann: Do you get any better treatment there than in a private hospital?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Yes.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The only difference is that the patient has to pay.

Mr. Mann: There are private hospitals in country towns.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: In some, but not in all of them. If country patients could not enter intermediate hospitals, they might have to travel to Perth for treatment.

Mr. Thomson: And private hospitals have not the same appliances.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: That is so. If I required hospital treatment I should prefer the Perth Hospital to any other hospital in the State.

Hon. G. Taylor: So should I.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Simply because of the facilities there. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

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

No. 4.—Clause 33, Subclause (2): Insert after the word "woman," in line two, the words "not living apart from her husband."

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: This applies to hospital service rendered to a married woman. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

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

No. 5.—Clause 33: Delete Subclause (3).

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Mr. Thomson: We endeavoured to get that amendment made here.

Mr. Mann: You accept it from another place, but would not accept it from us.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I naturally desired to get all I could, but because I have no possible hope of getting all I want, I am not going to jeopardise the Bill.

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

No. 6.—Clause 34: Delete.

No. 7.—Clause 38: Delete Subclause (2).

No. 8.—Title: Delete "and" in line three and insert at the end the words "and for the validation of certain acts of the Municipality of Collie and the Katanning Road Board."

On motions by the Minister for Health, the foregoing amendments were agreed to.

Resolutions reported, the report adopted, and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

BILL—LOAN, £4,940,000.

All Stages.

Introduced by the Premier and read a first time.

Message.

Message from the Governor received and read recommending appropriation for the purpose of the Bill.

Second Reading.

THE PREMIER (Hon. P. Collier--Boulder) [10.13] in moving the second reading said: This is the usual Bill that is introduced at this stage each session for the purpose of obtaining authority to raise the money to carry on the work covered by the Loan Estimates. The Bill itself does not authorise the spending of any money; it merely authorises the Government to raise the money by way of loan if and when required. The money will be raised as opportunity offers and after consultation with our financial advisers. At present we have a fairly considerable over-

draft at our bank in London, something in the vicinity of £700,000. But it is not an uncommon thing to go up even to two millions. If the market is not favourable, a very large overdraft at the bank enables us to carry on until the opportunity does become favourable to go on the market. A considerable amount of this money—it is not easy to ascertain the amount—will be money under the migration agreement, probably nearly two millions, and therefore it can be described as cheap money. I do not think the Bill needs any further explanation. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. SIR JAMES MITCHELL (Northam) [10.17]: As the Premier says we have already dealt, on the Loan Estimates, with the items leading up to the introduction of this Bill. I draw the Premier's attention to the fact that it is the largest loan Bill this House has ever had before it.

The Premier: No more will be raised than is necessary.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: In 1923-24 the amount was £3,645,000; in 1924-25 it was £4,000,000; in 1926-27 it was £4,370,000, and this year it is £4,940,000. I do not suppose it is more than is necessary. The Premier told us that a couple of millions will probably be cheap money. If the various works coming under the migration scheme are carried out, a great deal of this money will be under the agreement and will be charged for at 1 per cent. I hope the Premier will not charge more than 1 per cent. to the works. We have raised a good deal of money for group settlement—£2,200,000 up to the end of last year—and that money has been obtained at 1 per cent. and charged to group settlements at current rates. That is all right; but the difference should not go to revenue; it should go to a trust account as was done in the case of soldier settlement. I hope the Premier will not credit to revenue more than the State pays for the money. If loans are raised at 1 per cent., the money is charged to the work on which the money is spent, at 5 per cent. The difference is not revenue at all. It is merely transferring money from loan to revenue, which is entirely wrong. We get this money at 1 per cent. so that we may cover losses under the migration expenditure. I hope the Premier

will agree that this money will not mean something to revenue which really is not revenue at all. As a matter of fact, already we have had two and a quarter millions under this scheme. I do not propose to discuss the various items again. That would be futile because the House has agreed to the proposals already. The money should be used for reproductive works, but unfortunately there is not very much provided for railway construction. New railways are urgently needed. We have discussed that matter at considerable length already, but the Premier should have cut out other works so that more railways might be built. Now, under the Federal Aid Roads Agreement, we have to raise a considerable sum so as to provide our share of the expenditure.

The Premier: That is a big item.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: There is the item, "Canning-Fremantle road." I notice here instead of its being £120,000 it is £80,000. I had the opportunity of seeing that road this morning. It is about 8½ miles long and for the most part runs through vacant land. There are plenty of sign-boards along the roadside indicating "Land for Sale." The point is that we cannot afford to spend this enormous sum on a few miles of road which really does not serve very many people. As a matter of fact people along that road have already been served.

The Premier: There is a lot of through traffic to Fremantle, apart from the people who live along the route. All the country traffic from the Williams going to Fremantle will use that road instead of coming through the city.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: No, that traffic will go via Armadale direct to Fremantle.

The Premier: It is not a good road.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes; it is a better and shorter road.

Hon. J. Cunningham: Most of the traffic from York and Northam will go to Fremantle via the Canning-road.

Mr. Thomson: The Canning River bridge will not carry too much traffic.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It is a good jarrah bridge and should last for some time. The expenditure is very heavy and it looks as if the total cost is going to be £136,000. That is an enormous sum of money to spend on 8½ miles of road.

Mr. A. Wansbrough: There will not be required as much for maintenance as has been spent on it during the last five or ten years.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I do not think it was ever maintained.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: Mr. T. M. Burke should have paid half the cost of constructing that road.

The Premier: The local authorities will not get much rates because it is mostly unoccupied land.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It is pretty valuable land, but the point is that we cannot afford to spend such an enormous sum of money on a few miles of road. Already we are paying too much from revenue to cover interest on our loan moneys. When this money is expended we shall still be paying more than in the past. Our finances will not stand the strain. We shall find ourselves in serious trouble. It is no small amount—nearly five millions of money—that is to be found under the Bill. I am ready to admit that in respect of the trading concerns an amount of £481,000 has been lost in the last seven years.

The Premier: That is gone.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: We shall have to continue to pay interest on that money. The amount for roads, bridges and buildings this year is considerable, but that cannot be avoided under the Federal Aid Roads agreement. The amount for the construction of the Canning Road is very big, and though we tried to reduce it the other night, we failed. The other items are much the same as the totals on the Loan Estimates. The amount in connection with the groups is increased by £350,000. We cannot go on spending so much on each group block. I have no doubt that when we meet again the Minister will be able to tell us just how the money has been spent.

Hon. M. F. Troy: It is nearly time the expenditure was decreasing.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: There is one alarming feature that should be looked into and that is the cost of administration and the manner in which it has increased. In 1923-24 an amount of £26,000 was spent. In the next year it increased to £48,000; then in 1925-26 it became £82,000, and last year it increased to £139,000, and that increase, too with 250 fewer settlers than in 1924-25. It would appear that re-

venue has earned at least £100,000 by debiting more than the proper cost of administration to loan. Compare the cost of administration of group settlements with the cost of administration of the Agricultural Bank, including the Industries Assistance Board and soldier settlements which is £82,000, and covers all that institution's staff!

The Minister for Agriculture: I wish we could put the system on the same basis as the Agricultural Bank.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The amount to be charged ought not to be a fraction of that for the Agricultural Bank. It is certainly £100,000 more than it should be. It ought to be looked into. The money cannot possibly have been spent by the board. It must be for something spread over several departments. It is too late this session to ask the Minister a question about it, but I will certainly do so next session. A jump from £26,000 to £139,000 when fewer men are on the groups is altogether outside a reasonable charge. And this is merely for the officials connected with the scheme, the cost of supervision, not including the group foremen. It is five times the amount it was in 1924. If the cost of all the departments had gone up to the same extent, the Treasurer would be ruined. If the whole of the staff of the Agricultural Bank can do their work for £82,000, surely £139,000 for the work of group settlement is beyond all reason. Apparently something has been wrongly charged to group settlement. I hope the difference between the 1 per cent. interest and the amount charged against the scheme at current rates will be credited to a suspense account, as in the case of soldier settlement, when the Treasurer can come down and say, "I had so much in the account, so much has had to be paid out, and the balance is so much." We have already discussed every item that appears here, but I have felt it necessary to raise these points once more. I am very sorry that so little of the sum here is to be devoted to the real work of the country. I would oppose some of the items if I could do it successfully. I hope the Treasurer will exercise the strictest supervision during the coming year and spend as little of this money as possible, doing only the actual necessary work. Without this migration money of course he could not come to the House with such loan proposals. He would not be justified in asking the taxpayer to face an addi-

tional annual expenditure of £250,000 for this loan of four millions. But at this cheap rate the annual cost will be about £125,000, a very different sum. If it were not for that, we could not possibly contemplate the expenditure of all this money.

HON. G. TAYLOR (Mount Margaret) [10.35]: The Bill merely provides for items we have already discussed. But one of these items covers the huge expenditure of £80,000 on the Canning road. Something like £15,000 was taken from last year's Loan Estimates, and £8,000 under Section 36 of the Audit Act. Then this session we have voted another £21,000. Yet the road is only 8½ miles in length. It passes through a very large estate and as one drives along he sees many large boardings intimating that the land is for sale. This road will make that land very valuable.

Mr. Sleeman: It will carry a large proportion of the traffic to Fremantle.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: That traffic is all on this side of the river.

Mr. Sleeman: And it has become necessary to relieve the congestion on this side.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: But we cannot pave the road with golden sovereigns for a distance of 8½ miles. I do not know what there is about Fremantle that we should be voting these large sums of money. Fancy £121,000 for 8½ miles of road! It is time some noise was made about it. Quite recently I asked certain questions about it and was led astray by the answers. The House itself was deceived by those answers. It is not a Federal aid road at all: it is being constructed out of ordinary State loan money. Something like £30,000 has already been spent, whereas we were told that a large proportion of the total of £121,000 had been spent.

Hon. J. Cunningham: Well, approximately £40,000 is a fairly large amount.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Not out of £121,000. We were told that most of it had been spent.

The Premier: That was six weeks ago. Your question asked for the amount spent to the 31st October.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: That was after four months of this year had passed. When we were discussing the items on the Loan Estimates last week it was conveyed to the Committee that the greater part of the money had been spent.

The Premier: A big portion of it.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: It is difficult to justify such a huge expenditure on so short a road passing through private property and serving so few people.

The Premier: All roads pass along private property.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: But not the same, not property held for speculative purposes.

The Premier: What has the speculative purposes to do with it?

Hon. G. TAYLOR: The Government should pause before spending so much money on so short a road.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Lutey in the Chair; the Premier and Treasurer in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 6—agreed to.

First Schedule:

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I agree that Herdsman's Lake ought to be sold. The drainage of that area was estimated to cost £25,000, whereas it cost £100,000.

The Minister for Agriculture: The Peel Estate drainage eventually cost £531,000.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It is time the Herdsman's Lake area was sold. For the past three years it has been all ready for sale.

The Premier: You know that the experts considered it was necessary to wait till the salt disappeared. Twelve months ago there was absolute fear on the part of the experts that it would never be of any use, because it contained so much salt.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The same fear was held regarding Wanneroo at one time, but the salt has since disappeared. If you analyse any land in this country you will find the same thing. The sooner the land is sold the better. I do not know what it will bring, but I think some of it is bringing over £100 an acre. It ought to bring in nearly enough to pay the cost of the land plus the drainage. We are losing £500 a month, but we ought not to lose one day's interest. The drainage works advantage a large area.

The Premier: The first estimate was about £30,000.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: If the land brings anything like the price the Osborne Park lands brought, it will cover the

cost that has been incurred. Delay is costly, because we are losing £6,000 a year by holding the land. In three years this has meant £18,000.

The Premier: It was hung up because of the advice of the officers.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The records of the department show that the Stirling Estate was too salt to be used, and that the Wanneroo land, magnificent as it is, was also too salt, and the price was reduced accordingly.

The Minister for Lands: It is good land when it is highly mineralised.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I believe there are 150 acres of swamp land which have not been settled around the locality we are speaking of. Rich swamp land near Perth is worth a lot of money. I think at Osborne Park people are paying £10 per acre per annum for some of their land. We paid £100 an acre for it for closer settlement. This Herdsman's Lake land should not fetch less than the other land is fetching. If we go on losing money it will add to the cost of the estate. I admit that the land was bought in my time, and that it cost more than we imagined it would cost.

The Premier: It was a case of where the engineers went astray in their estimates.

Hon. G. Taylor: And the engineers go scot free.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I am willing to take the full responsibility.

Hon. G. Taylor: The engineers should take that.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Governments have to take the full responsibility for everything done during their administration.

The Premier: If you get an estimate and decide to do the work, and it pans out at three times the amount, how can the Government be blamed?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Works have cost more than the engineers thought they would cost. When professional men give an estimate it ought to be somewhere near the mark.

The Premier: It ought to be reasonably near.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Sometimes Ministers alter their plans and that makes the costs higher. If £50,000 has been spent up to date on this road, I should think the great bulk of the expenditure has been

incurred. It may cost another £25,000 to complete it. The rough work has been done over 8½ miles.

The Premier: It is at a stage when it ought to be completed. All the foundations have been made to the full length, and some top has to be put upon them.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The road must be completed now. I hope the Minister for Lands will have the Herdsman's Lake country sold promptly. This daily loss of interest is a serious matter. Some people say the country is becoming overrun with couch.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I have visited Herdsman's Lake. I understand that the settlement was held up for some years pending the determination of the question as to salt in the soil. Even now there is magnesia there, but I do not think that is very objectionable. What is holding up the settlement is the question of the foreshore along the lake. Settlers must be able to buy land on which to erect their homes. I cannot understand why the foreshore was not purchased when the lake was acquired.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: A good deal of it was purchased.

The Premier: The settlers must have dry land for their houses.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: There is a lot of dry land there.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That is not so. I made a personal inspection of the country and spoke to people in the neighbourhood. The only land available for settlement is a block at the south-west corner at the other end of the lake. People who settled there would have to go some distance to reach the lake, and some further distance to get to their plots. Market gardeners should be near their work, because they are assisted to a great extent by their families. The settlement cannot be either effective or economical unless the foreshore is purchased.

Hon. G. Taylor: Will that be a further expense?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The Honorary Minister (Hon. H. Millington), the Surveyor General, and one of the residents visited the locality with me. I cannot see how the lake can be effectively settled unless portion of the foreshore is purchased so that people may have a dry place on which to erect their homes. We have asked the owners to put a price upon their land,

and the question is now being considered by the Land Board.

Hon. G. Taylor: How much land will have to be purchased?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I do not know. Some of it has been turned down by the board. We must buy sufficient to give the settlers their homes contiguous to their work. I hope it may be possible to resume some of the foreshore. I am afraid the Leader of the Opposition will never agree that anything else is required to be done, but I am sure that any reasonable man who visited the place would agree with the view I have expressed. With regard to the Peel estate, the third estimate, which was the highest, was £75,000. One estimate was £10,000. I refer to the drainage. The cost to date has been £521,000, and the maintenance is costing £25,000 per annum. The Opposition Leader said something about 120 acres of swamp land being unutilised. That land cannot be utilised because it is not drained, and the completion of the Peel Estate drainage is estimated to cost another £100,000. A number of settlers may have to be moved unless that additional drainage is carried out. I am discussing the matter with the board this week. The western end of the Peel Estate is the worst off of all.

Hon. G. Taylor: What is the total cost of drainage of the Peel Estate up to date?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: £520,000. Of the western group a good many blocks will have to be abandoned. Then there is the drainage of the salt lake, estimated to cost £140,000. Ministers are sometimes afraid to embark on a work as, in spite of having estimates, they do not know what the cost will be. The Peel Estate position will have to be considered by Cabinet. Rumours, of course, are usually great exaggerations. I have heard it said that the Government are removing settlers against their will. For that statement there is no foundation. If the additional drainage is not carried out, the Bateman Estate may have to be abandoned entirely. The information regarding Herdsman's Lake will be obtained as speedily as possible.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: One hundred and fifty acres of high land were bought along the western side of the lake. The State will not have to find homesteads for the purchasers of that land, because there are small homes all around the lake.

The Minister for Lands: But those people want to sell.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: At Osborne Park the people do not live on the edge of the lake, but at some distance from it. The Bateman Estate was used for 50 years without any drainage at all.

The Minister for Lands: Only part of it.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Four or five years ago a great deal of produce was coming from the Peel Estate, and a good deal may be coming this year.

The Minister for Lands: The position this year is not very encouraging.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: A great deal can be produced from the swamps on the estate. If land has to be bought, the Government should act promptly. I believe the people in the vicinity will buy the swamp land, for they need it. I would put a price on it and let the people take their chance on it. The lands around the swamp can be used, since they are surrounded by high land. Every crop lost to the estate of course means an additional charge on the estate.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: The statements of the Minister for Lands concerning the Herdsman's Lake and Peel Estate properties are indeed disappointing; and in view of the results disclosed by the Minister, the Chamber will henceforth be careful in accepting estimates of cost. Before we can utilise land which has cost £500,000, we must spend the same amount in draining another area.

Mr. Lindsay: And £25,000 annually to keep the drains open.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: It is time our engineers learned to keep within their estimates. When it comes to a matter of £25,000 or £75,000 and we find it works out to £125,000 or £175,000, the capitalisation is so tremendous that it is impossible to make a success of the work. Some remedy should be adopted to keep the estimates of engineers within bounds. It is a scandalous position.

Schedule put and passed.

Second and Third Schedules—agreed to.

Preamble, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

House adjourned at 11.14 p.m.