

be of benefit to him, he would be laying them along the frontages of other people's property.

Hon. J. Ewing: They could pool the expense.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: The hon. member's interjections are in line with my argument. The pipes should be laid by the board and then a rate imposed. The cost of laying the pipes would be reckoned in estimating the annual rate to be imposed on the different properties served by the pipe line.

Hon. H. A. Stephenson: That is the position exactly. They are making provision for laying down the pipes.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: But if it were a rock catchment dam, it might be impossible to lay pipes throughout the area, and the parties themselves could draw probably sufficient water for domestic supply and for a few horses, but insufficient to carry a large number of stock. We should recognise that, if we pass the Bill, we shall be authorising the Government to impose a rate on property for this class of water supply and under a method that I do not think has been adopted elsewhere. I am quite prepared to support a measure to authorise the imposition of a rate if the water supply is taken to the door of the property.

Hon. H. A. Stephenson: Taken to the boundary, not to the door.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I mean to the frontage of the land.

The Chief Secretary: In an agricultural centre that would cost half a million of money.

Member: That is not the purpose of this Bill.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: If there was a rock catchment and a man drew so many gallons of water from it, a charge could be imposed to defray the cost of providing the supply, but I do not see how properties that are not served and cannot be served by means of reticulation should be subjected to an annual rate merely for the construction of a rock catchment dam or similar supply. I shall consider the question whether I can support the second reading of the Bill, but I would like the Minister to inquire into the point I have raised about the departure from the important principle that has always been adhered to.

On motion by Hon. H. Seddon, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 8.36 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 7th November, 1928.

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

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Mr. Wilson, leave of absence for one week granted to Mr. Corboy (Yilgarn) on the ground of urgent private business.

BILL—LAND TAX AND INCOME TAX.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

Bill transmitted to the Council.

BILL—HOSPITAL FUND.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH (Hon. S. W. Munsie—Hannans) [4.36] in moving the second reading said: I am submitting this Bill with a considerable amount of pleasure. There is not the slightest doubt that for many years past the financing and maintaining of hospitals in this State has become more and more serious. The position of the hospital authorities is that almost all of them are finding it exceedingly difficult to run their institutions as they should be run, and make ends meet. It is commonly said that it is the duty of the Government to look after the indigent sick, a responsibility which, I agree, rests with the Government. But if the Government are going to do it they must have the funds with which to do it. In my opinion there is no other way of successfully raising funds for the purpose than by some means whereby everybody who receives income contributes something while he is well to provide for the days when he

may be sick. That, practically, is the principle and foundation of the Bill. I propose to give some figures to show the increase that has taken place in the beds daily occupied in hospitals during the past few years. Of course the State is expanding and developing, our population is increasing, and so we must expect an increase in the number of people in hospital.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Especially mothers.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Their numbers, too, are increasing fairly rapidly. Let me say in that respect that Western Australia can hold up its head, can be proud of the fact that it has in the King Edward Memorial Hospital a maternity home that is unequalled in the known world. I was about to deal with the increases in the number of beds occupied. I propose to quote the figures for the years 1921, 1924 and 1927. In departmental hospitals in 1921 the average number of beds occupied daily was 230. In 1924 the figures had risen to 276, and in 1927 they reached 346. In public hospitals in 1921 the average number of beds occupied daily was 427, in 1924 the figures were 520, and in 1927 they had risen to 590. In committee-controlled hospitals in 1921 the average number of beds daily occupied was 57, in 1924 the number was 81, and in 1927 it rose to 139, or a total increase from 1921 to 1927 of 361 beds daily occupied. In 1921 there were 54 hospitals in the several categories, departmental, public and committee-controlled, whereas in 1927 there were 82, or an increase of 28. As I have said, the financial problem has been a very difficult one, and several Governments have attempted something for the purpose of relieving the position. The first attempt I know of in this State was a Bill introduced during the term of the Leader of the Opposition's occupancy of the Treasury benches. That Bill was introduced by the then member for Beverley, (Mr. Broun) who was Chief Secretary. The Bill followed the lines laid down in the New Zealand Act. That is to say, it provided for cutting up the State into hospital districts, with a local committee controlling each district and collecting all patients' fees that could be collected: the central Government providing half the cost, the balance to be made up from a rate upon the ratepayers in the

various hospital districts. That Bill was not favourably received in this Chamber, and I think it was allowed to drop. Subsequently the hon. member's Government proceeded with a second Bill that was introduced by the member for Swan (Mr. Sampson). It provided for a penny in the pound tax on all incomes. That Bill passed this Chamber but, fortunately, it was defeated in another place.

Mr. Sampson: Did you say fortunately or unfortunately?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I said fortunately. For the Bill provided that out of the £130,000 odd to be raised, £100,000 was ear-marked to benefit Consolidated Revenue, while the balance was to go to the hospitals.

Mr. Sampson: But the virtue of the hospital movement was unquestioned.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: To the extent of £30,000, yes. If that Bill had gone through, we should not have had any possible hope of levying a tax on incomes at this moment for the purpose of maintaining hospitals. Moreover, had that Bill gone through, the hospitals to-day would have been nearly as badly off as they are at present.

Mr. Sampson: But the principle of the Bill was unassailable.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I am not severely criticising it. Undoubtedly that was the hon. member's opinion. I raised no objection to that Bill other than to the provision that Consolidated Revenue was to benefit from the tax rate imposed.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The entertainments tax went into Consolidated Revenue last year.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: The Leader of the Opposition says the amusement tax went wholly into Consolidated Revenue last year. That statement is not correct, not in the true estimate. I admit that if we had done as much for the hospitals during last year as we did previously without the entertainments tax, Consolidated Revenue would have had to find another £34,000 for the purpose. However, although we have had £32,000 from the entertainments tax—

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The amount is £40,000.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: That included a surplus of £8,000 from previous

years. Although £32,000 was collected through the entertainments tax, Consolidated Revenue paid exactly the same amount as in the previous year. There has been no reduction in the amount contributed by Consolidated Revenue.

Mr. Sampson: But there is the increase of population.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: No one can legitimately say that the proceeds from the entertainments tax were absorbed by being paid into revenue.

Mr. Sampson: No one can say that Consolidated Revenue was not protected by the entertainments tax.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: With the entertainments tax being expended as it was, my personal belief, to judge from the figures of revenue collected by hospitals, is that Consolidated Revenue benefited by about £3,000. That was the £3,000 extra collected for hospital services, an amount which would not have been collected but for the expenditure of the proceeds of the entertainments tax.

Mr. Sampson: The amount was used for a variety of hospital services.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Yes, right throughout the State.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: But you got it all back in credits.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Yes. We have the statement of what the money was used for, and also of the amount contributed from Consolidated Revenue. Moreover, the amount contributed in 1925 was the same as the amount contributed last year. So there was no reduction as regards Consolidated Revenue. The money was all extra, over and above the amount from Consolidated Revenue. Unquestionably hospitals, even under existing circumstances, with the proceeds of the entertainments tax, are finding it difficult to carry on. The position of the Children's Hospital is deplorable.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Yes, and that is the most important hospital.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: It is an important hospital, I admit; but it is not more important than the Perth Hospital or any of the large general hospitals. From the aspect of number of patients treated, the Children's Hospital stands second in the list in Western Australia.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It is the only children's hospital we have.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: But there is a children's ward at the Fremantle Hospital.

Mr. Mann: The Children's Hospital is a very up to date institution.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: It is a fine institution, and is having an exceptionally hard time.

Mr. Mann: I do not think we have been able to pay our August accounts yet.

The Premier: I gave you £1,000 the other day.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I know the members of the committee of the Children's Hospital, and their earnest pleading, with the aid of which I was able to secure an extra £1,000 from the Treasurer. The August accounts of the institution have already been paid. I believe that under the system proposed by the Bill the position of the large hospitals would be relieved considerably. Ever since the inception, almost, of hospitals on the goldfields, an arrangement has existed between the unions and the employers that it shall be practically a condition of employment to contribute to a medical and hospital fund. Ever since the inception of hospitals in goldfields areas, broadly speaking, there has been a small weekly contribution of that nature. It is true that the Government are now maintaining the Kalgoorlie hospital, but I am speaking of conditions on the goldfields generally. The men there have for 30 years, to my knowledge, contributed to the hospitals.

Hon. G. Taylor: Mostly 1s. per week.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: That includes medical as well as hospital.

Hon. G. Taylor: And as much as 2s. 3d.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: The contribution to the hospitals ranges from 6d. to 9d. per week. Later the timber districts adopted practically the same system, and they are contributing a fair amount towards hospital benefit funds. Where the Government or a committee conduct a hospital, the fund pays 6s. per day for the maintenance in hospital of a contributor. The Railway Union also have a fund with a considerable number of contributors who likewise receive that concession in any hospital. The fund of the Railway Union has an arrangement with hospitals in various districts, and their members may enter any one of those hospitals, whereupon the fund pays 6s. per day for the maintenance of the

member while he is in the institution. That is a benefit to the extent sometimes of 1s. 6d. per day, at other times of 1s., and in some cases of 2s., as the charges made by the various institutions range between 6s. and 8s. per day. The number of people concerned in these funds in Western Australia is roughly 30,000. So that the Bill merely proposes to elaborate a scheme which has existed for many years. If the measure becomes law, there will be no necessity for the Railway Union to levy on members for hospital accommodation; and similarly as regards the miners on the goldfields and the workers in the timber districts. They will have to contribute as before, because under the Bill they will not receive free medical attention; but they will not have to contribute towards hospital accommodation. The contribution to the Railway Union's fund is low, but it covers the contributor only, whereas under the scheme proposed by this measure the contributor and his wife and children will be covered.

Mr. Wilson: Collie also has a fund.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Yes. The position is the same throughout the mining districts. At Leonora the weekly contribution is 1s. 9d., and at Kalgoorlie it is 1s. 6d. In the latter place 1s. is for the hospital, and 6d. is for medical, which goes to the doctor. I do not think there will be any difficulty in maintaining that arrangement if the Bill becomes law. At present all hospitals endeavour as far as possible to collect fees. This is done by Government hospitals, public hospitals, and committee hospitals alike. I wish to stress the point that it would be much better to have a national hospital benefit fund, towards which everybody would contribute while well and earning. It would relieve those unfortunates who now go into hospital and upon leaving it are handed a bill. In many cases it is the breadwinner himself who goes into hospital, with the result that the income of the home ceases, while probably the expenditure in the home rises. Then when the breadwinner is well enough to be discharged from hospital, he is presented with a bill for his maintenance while there at 6s. or 8s. per day. He is less able to pay that bill than at any other period of his life. I know, as Minister for Health, of many cases where married men who have been in hospital themselves or have had their wives or children there, are not in a position to pay. They

will not allow me to write the accounts off. They say, "No; we are well satisfied, and we have been well treated. We cannot afford to pay more than 2s. 6d. or 5s. a month, but we are willing to pay something in order to reduce the debt." Many of them are doing that.

Hon. G. Taylor: That was always the system at the Perth Hospital, which never pressed for payment.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: But the Perth Hospital collected just the same.

Hon. G. Taylor: A patient was given plenty of time.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: So he is by every institution.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Thousands of pounds are written off every year.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Yes, but nevertheless the debit is raised, and that represents a hardship for the man or woman who is honest and sincere and believes that something should be paid for services rendered by a hospital.

Hon. G. Taylor: You must raise the debit to see how you are going.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Of course debits must be raised under existing circumstances. If the Bill passes, the fund will pay to the Perth Hospital and similar institutions 6s. per day for every person occupying a bed.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You will have to pay the doctor too.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Nothing of the kind. Every person going to the Perth Hospital is treated free.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: But not in all country hospitals.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: No; but country doctors in many cases do treat people free. If people can afford to pay, they have to pay.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Why should not the position be the same in Perth?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: It is. I undertake to say that a larger percentage of people in Perth pay the doctor than is the case in country districts.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: In connection with the Perth Hospital?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: No. I said, in Perth. They have not to pay the doctor in the Perth Hospital, where the whole of the service is free, in the same way as at the Children's Hospital or the Fremantle Hospital. The staffs are honorary,

with the exception of the doctor in charge at the Perth Hospital.

Hon. G. Taylor: And the junior resident medical officers.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: The junior residents receive infinitesimal salaries.

Hon. G. Taylor: They get a fine experience.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Yes, and we want them to get that experience, because in nine cases out of ten the country doctor has gained his experience in the Perth Hospital. That is why the best experience obtainable there is not too good. The doctors who get their experience at the Perth Hospital will eventually practise throughout the country districts as well as in the metropolitan area. Therefore I want the best possible experience to be obtainable there. I have already stated that the root principle underlying the Bill is that of a benefit scheme. All will pay, and if it is a man's misfortune to go into the hospital he will get some benefit as the result of the money he has paid. So far as the Perth Hospital, the Children's Hospital and the Fremantle Public Hospital are concerned, as well as other public hospitals throughout the State, there will be no debits raised against them. In most of the country hospitals, particularly those of any size, we have what are practically intermediate wards. They are private rooms with single beds. I would instance the position at Katanning. A new hospital was built there three years ago, and we provided for private rooms. They are available for people who desire to have single rooms. Although it is a Government institution, it is run by a committee who have the right to charge up to 12s. a day for a private ward. If people can afford to pay that amount and desire to do so, they have a perfect right to avail themselves of that opportunity. In those circumstances, the fund will pay 6s. a day to the hospital and the occupant of one of those private rooms will have to pay the balance. The same thing will apply to other hospitals in the metropolitan area and in the country districts. The rate of contribution provided under the Bill is 1½d. in the pound. It is estimated that that tax will return a revenue from all sources of income throughout the State, amounting to £217,000 per annum.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You will collect that amount!

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Yes. That is the amount we expect to collect on all incomes, except those that are exempt under the provisions of the Bill.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: There will not be much left for the people very soon.

The Premier: But everyone pays under this proposal.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That makes it worse.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: From the £217,000 that will be collected, there will have to be deducted £29,000 that was taken last year. That amount is fixed on an estimate of payments to private hospitals at the rate of 6s. per day. On top of that there will have to be deducted £80,000 that was collected from the public and from institutions and so forth last year. Hon. members will see that we shall not get such a very large amount from the tax. It is estimated that the hospitals will receive £130,000 per annum, on the basis of payments of 6s. per patient per day, and that will leave an estimated balance of £58,000 for the further extension of hospital requirements.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I hope the Treasurer will pay 10 per cent. interest on the balance.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: The fund will be controlled at the Treasury.

Hon. G. Taylor: We will have to shift that control.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I am satisfied to have the fund controlled there. As a matter of fact, the fund will be controlled by trustees who will be on the board.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Another board!

Mr. Sampson: What about interest on the balance?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I am not looking for interest on the capital involved, but I am desirous of getting sufficient money without harming anyone, if possible, so as to provide an efficient hospital service throughout the State.

Hon. G. Taylor: You do not provide anything in the Bill for capital cost?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: No, the provision is purely for maintenance, and I believe that arrangement will continue for at least two years. We will have to allow for £30,000 subscribed by the public as the result of various appeals that were made throughout the State last year. The amount was not quite £30,000, but I place the amount at that round figure. If the Bill becomes law, there will be no more of

those appeals. As a matter of fact, we have also to allow for administrative costs, and I do not anticipate that they will amount to more than £5,000 a year. I may be asked how that can be done. It will be possible because, while we have not exactly limited the powers of the trust, we have provided that those powers shall be somewhat akin to those of trustees of friendly societies. They will have a say in regard to the expenditure of money, but not too much say in the administration of the fund. I believe the fund can be administered by the Health Department satisfactorily, because the necessary machinery is in existence in the department to enable the work to be carried out. At the present time the department is administering the affairs of 29 hospitals throughout the State, and the officers concerned know the work from beginning to end. The members of the board or trust that will be set up, will be paid so much per meeting, when their services are necessary.

Hon. G. Taylor: A lot depends upon the members of the trust from the financial point of view.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Yes. It is intended that the trust shall consist of public servants, and certainly one of them shall be the Under Treasurer.

Mr. Teesdale: Are the members of the present board being paid?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: No.

Mr. Teesdale: Then why pay the members of the board you are going to set up?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Because the members of the trust will have more responsibility than the present board shoulders. They will have control of £217,000 a year, and in the circumstances I think it is only reasonable to pay the trustees some fee. If the Bill is agreed to, the amount to be paid to the trustees will not exceed £250 per annum altogether. While I estimate that the administrative costs will amount to £5,000, I desire to mention the fact that at present the Medical Department has a staff employed for the purpose of collecting hospital dues. That staff costs about £3,000 a year. Should the Bill be agreed to, the members of that staff will find their avocation gone, but, on the other hand, they will form part of the service for the purpose of the administration of this measure.

Mr. Thomson: Could not the Health Department undertake these duties?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: It would be most difficult. I think the fund and its operations should be controlled by a trust. Quite apart from that, I do not know that I could make the Health Department a body corporate. I would not attempt to introduce a Bill that would give control of upwards of £217,000 per annum to any section of the community that could not be converted into a body corporate that could sue or be sued. Hence the suggestion for the appointment of a trust. Some hon. members may say that immediately the Bill becomes law, there will be an immense demand for extra hospital accommodation. I am prepared to admit that that will probably be the result.

Mr. Thomson: But there could hardly be a much greater demand than there is at present.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: That is so. I was going on to point that out. The only difference will be that if the Bill is agreed to the people will have the right to demand extra accommodation, whereas to-day they have not that right. Of course I know that I, as Minister for Public Health, will come in for criticism or praise, just according to how this proposal proves effective. I have received a fair amount of criticism, and I say without hesitation that I am prepared to take any criticism that is levelled at me for the time being for lack of accommodation if we cannot provide it under the provisions of the Bill. I know that for a time it may be rather difficult, but irrespective of whether we have legislation of this description or none at all, there must be considerable expenditure in the near future upon the provision of hospitals in the metropolitan area. The country districts can continue as they have done in the past. Where the provision of hospital facilities are necessary those facilities must be provided. On the other hand, if hon. members consider the overcrowded state of the Perth Hospital to-day, they will understand what I mean when I say that irrespective of this legislation, we must spend a lot of money in order to provide more hospital accommodation in the metropolitan area. I wish to emphasise the point that I am of the opinion that no more additions under existing conditions should be provided at the Perth Hospital. When additional expenditure is incurred in the metropolitan area, it should be in the direction of providing an intermediate hospital where I, or the Pre-

mier, or the Leader of the Opposition could go for attention if we so desired.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Why should we not go to the Perth Hospital?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Because they would not take you in there. If the Leader of the Opposition met with an accident in the street, he would, of course, be admitted if he were taken there, but he would be removed from the hospital as soon as possible. I do not wish to say anything in disparagement of the private hospitals in the metropolitan area, but it is a fact that at no private hospital anywhere in the State are the same facilities available as at the Perth Hospital. Seeing that the general public will be paying for hospital services if the Bill is agreed to, it is up to us to see that if we spend money on hospitals in the future, we shall provide an intermediate hospital that will be of benefit to people who at present cannot secure the treatment that is available at the Perth Hospital.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That means to say that in this democratic country you will have grades!

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I want to give all the people the same opportunities to secure medical attention. If I were sick to-morrow and I had the right to select which hospital I would go to, I would choose the Perth Hospital in preference to any other hospital in this State.

Mr. Sampson: There is no need to reflect upon the other hospitals!

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I am not. That is an unnecessary remark for the hon. member to make. The point I am making is that the private hospitals have not the same facilities.

Mr. Teesdale: A remark like that will not assist any hon. member in his election.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: In addition to that, hon. members must realise that if there is a serious case being attended to at the hospital, the patient has not only the advantage of his own doctor, but of the experts who are at the hospital every day. Experts in every branch are available for the patient's doctor to consult.

Mr. Thomson: The Perth Hospital should have the most up-to-date appliances.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Yes, and the institution has the most up-to-date appliances. I am glad to be able to say that the services rendered by the hospital are exceedingly efficient, and that is greatly

in the interests of the people who cannot afford to pay for those services. On the other hand, people who can afford to pay for such services should have the right to equally efficient medical attention.

Mr. Lindsay: That is quite right.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: In working out the estimates, we have allowed for a 10 per cent. increase. Of course we must anticipate that there will be an increased demand for accommodation. Outside the Perth Hospital and the Children's Hospital, there is ample room for increased accommodation. Nearly every hospital could take more patients. At the Geraldton hospital, which has been overcrowded at times, there is a big ward that merely requires furnishing and then ample accommodation will be available for a 10 per cent. increased demand in that town. The same thing applies at Bunbury where there is a ward that only needs furnishing. That, however, takes money. I do anticipate some increase, but the increased accommodation is not required so badly anywhere as in the metropolitan area. As regards the method of collection, we propose that the tax on wages and salaries shall be collected by means of a hospital tax stamp of 1½d. in the pound. That, however, is not made mandatory, and I do not think it would be reasonable if it were. Take the Midland Junction workshops, for instance; with the large number of employees there, if each man had to sign and cancel his hospital stamp, it would take probably a day and a half to pay the men, whereas at present they are paid in 1½ to 1¾ hours. With big concerns such as the Midland workshops and firms like Boans, Ltd., provision is made in the Bill similar to that operating on the goldfields, namely that the amount may be deducted from the employees' wages and paid in as a lump sum to the trust. That will overcome the difficulty of collecting from a large number of employees. In such instances, the trust must be satisfied by the production of audited balance sheets.

Hon. G. Taylor: The Truck Act will not touch you, will it?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: The Solicitor General informs me that it will not; I have put that aspect to him. Those people who are in receipt of income other than wages, that is those who do not receive salary or wages but have other income and supply returns to the Taxation Department,

will be taxed on the amounts submitted to the Commissioner of Taxation and it will be collected in that way.

Mr. Lindsay: Will they be taxed on the gross or net income?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: There are certain deductions, but the tax will not be levied on the amount assessed for income tax. I do not think it would be fair to do so. Under the Income Tax Act a taxpayer receives certain deductions from his income before he is assessed, but such deductions certainly represent income, and on that income he should pay the hospital tax.

Mr. Lindsay: The only deduction would be for children.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: He would not get that deduction for hospital tax if this Bill were passed.

Mr. Lindsay: That could be struck out, but what are the others?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I shall give the hon. member at least eight instances.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It will be necessary to send in another return.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Not at all; the Leader of the Opposition is quite wrong there. I have discussed this measure with the Commissioner of Taxation.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Have you discussed it with Mr. Huelin?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Yes, and in passing let me say that Mr. Huelin deserves considerable credit for this Bill. He initiated the scheme and I am prepared to give him the credit for it. Let me make it plain, however, that no extra return will be required. There are some people in receipt of a small income from businesses who do not send in taxation returns, because they are not earning up to the limit for which it is compulsory to supply returns. Let me point out, however, that all businesses are supposed to supply returns regardless of whether they are earning or not. Some people, however, do not supply them; and for small men forms will be provided in the nature of a declaration and any agent appointed under the measure can certify it and the tax may be paid without the need for supplying returns to the Commissioner of Taxation. Hence we are making it as easy as we can for everyone who has to pay.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It does not sound easy.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: But we shall not make things so easy that anyone who should pay will be allowed to escape. Wherever a man or woman has a legitimate income, I think we have succeeded in making provision for that person to pay the tax of 1½d. in the pound. I go so far as to say that I do not know of any tax imposed on the people of this State about which there would be less genuine complaint than about the hospital tax.

Mr. Sampson: Do you think you will catch some of those people who at present do not pay?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I think we shall. Of course there will be a few inspectors. The hon. member is evidently referring to men who do casual work.

Mr. Sampson: And who sometimes masquerade under another name.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: That will not matter because the stamp must appear on the wages sheet. If a worker turns up at a hospital and cannot produce evidence that he is a contributor, he will have to pay hospital fees, and so it will make all workers a little careful. Under the measure, also both employer and employee will be held liable for the stamping of wages sheets, and I do not think any employer would let a man off without stamping.

Mr. Thomson: Is that the duty of the employer?

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Everyone will be a tax gatherer under this measure.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Then he will be a tax gatherer for a good purpose. There are some people to whom we are not extending the hospital benefit under this scheme. Amongst those are maternity, V.D. and repatriation cases.

Mr. Sampson: Why not V.D. cases?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Because they are part paid for by the Commonwealth Government and I do not see why we should let them off. Such patients will still have to pay. They need not get V.D. unless they like, so they can easily escape.

Member: Query!

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: They take risks they should not take. I see no necessity for exempting them or for exempting repatriation cases, the latter being provided for by the Commonwealth Government.

Workers' compensation cases will also be exempted, but I wish to explain that the worker who meets with an accident and is entitled to £100 medical and hospital expenses, if detained in hospital after the £100 has been cut out, will come under the scheme the same as anyone else.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: So that he will have to pay twice for it.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: No, he will pay only once. An employer perhaps may have to pay a small fraction more by way of insurance premium on account of the £100 the worker would receive, but the worker would be paying nothing. I will not have it that in such an instance the worker would be charged twice. The Bill proposes to impose the tax on all incomes from £1 per week upwards, but the exemptions are old age and invalid pensions, and returned soldiers' pensions. While I have been discussing the provisions of this measure with the department, the only complaint I have received has come from the postal officials who are paying into a superannuation fund. They ask for some relief and after considering the matter, I am of opinion they are entitled to relief. They will have to pay on their income the same as other people, but if they remain in the service long enough to receive superannuation, the superannuation will not be classed as income for the purposes of this tax, and they will not have to pay on it.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: There is not much comfort in that.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I am not so sure of that; I think it is quite fair.

Hon. G. Taylor: They will still have access to the hospital.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: They will get the same benefit as anyone else from the fund. Regarding the financing of hospitals, I mentioned that the Children's Hospital was pretty hard pressed this year. At present it is between £3,500 and £4,000 behind. The Perth Hospital started the financial year with a debit balance of £1,200, and by the end of October it had increased to £3,800. Under existing conditions, that hospital is going to the bad at the rate of about £500 per month. Those facts go to show that even if this Bill does go through—I hope it will—

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It is so complicated that we may oppose it.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: For the first 18 months we shall not get all the revenue we are entitled to, particularly from the Taxation Department, and there is considerable leeway to be made up. During the first 18 months of the operation of the measure, the hospitals will still be pretty hard pushed. If I am still in charge I shall keep a pretty tight hold of the finance to ensure that hospitals do not get all they ask for immediately the tax is put into operation. If they got all they asked for, we should soon be landed in difficulties.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You are going to clear up the deficits of all of them with this tax?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Not all of them.

Mr. Lindsay: Of all the Government hospitals?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Of the Government hospitals I think. It is the public hospitals such as the Perth Hospital and the Children's Hospital.

Mr. Sampson: That is a distinction without much difference.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: There is a big difference. I do not want the hon. member to keep on arguing that the Perth Hospital is a Government hospital. Perhaps it is regarded by a large number of people as such, but it is the Perth Hospital and is managed by a board. The board has sole control. True it is subsidised by the Government, but it is no more a Government hospital than is any other hospital in the State is run by a committee. As a matter of fact, we have to pay the Perth Hospital a fairly big subsidy. For a considerable time there has been a controversy as to the best method of raising funds for hospitals. Some 2½ years ago I introduced a Bill to sanction the conduct of lotteries in order to raise funds for hospitals. The measure passed this Chamber with flying colours, but was defeated in another place.

Mr. Thomson: How much revenue did you estimate you would get from that measure?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: In the vicinity of £40,000 a year.

Mr. Thomson: Tasmania gets £111,000.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Tasmania gets money from practically the

whole of the civilised world and certainly from all over Australia. Various other schemes have been mentioned and several propositions were submitted to me as Minister. Some time ago the Government appointed a committee consisting of the Assistant Under Treasurer, Mr. Reid of the Statistician's Department and the Secretary of the Health Department, Mr. Huelin, to consider the various schemes. The committee presented a report and if any member read it he could not fail to come to the conclusion that we are right in recommending one or two compulsory taxation schemes. Two propositions were put up; one was the payment of a flat rate by each head of a family as a wage-earner, or each wage-earner to pay 7½d. per week, which would amount to just about what 1½d. in the pound on all incomes would come to. Personally I could not agree to tax a man on £1,000 a year at the rate of 7½d. a week, and the man on £1 a week the same amount. I admit they are all getting the same benefit, but the man drawing the larger income is better able to pay than the man receiving a small income. I could not accept that proposal and recommended for adoption the 1½d. in the pound. That committee also went into a scheme that has been discussed very freely and about which a good deal has been written in the weekly Press, namely, premium bonds. As a matter of fact, I submitted the premium bond system to the committee to investigate. The committee turned it down and, when we go into it, we are surprised to find the amount of money it is necessary to raise in order to make a success of it. I thoroughly agree with the recommendation of the committee in respect of premium bonds.

Hon. G. Taylor: They gave a reason?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Yes. I would like to read to the House what the committee had to say on the subject of premium bonds—

In 1908, the British House of Commons appointed a joint select committee to consider the advisability of amending the law in regard to the suppression of lotteries. This committee examined the effect of the issue of premium bonds, and some of the evidence is of interest in connection with this inquiry. The evidence revealed one significant feature in regard to the issue of premium bonds, which was that the Stock Exchange of London would not arrange for the purchase of them. Neither did it allow its members to deal in them. From the evidence of witnesses who were members

of the Stock Exchange, it appears that the reason why such bonds were not quoted on the Exchange was because it was considered that their issue was illegal, as it was held that the bonds were in the nature of a lottery, and as such could not be countenanced by the Exchange. The effect of this exclusion from the quotations was that negotiations in regard to premium bonds had to be effected through brokers who were not members, and over whose actions the Exchange had, of course, no control. The consensus of opinion of the witnesses who gave evidence before the select committee appeared to be that the issue of premium bonds was in the nature of a lottery, and that their appeal was to the gambling instinct of the people. When consideration is given to the possibilities of the issue of premium bonds in this State for the financing of hospitals, several disadvantages are apparent. According to the figures which the committee has obtained, a sum of approximately £200,000 per annum will be required, in addition to the money received from Consolidated Revenue and from the entertainments tax, to finance the hospitals of the State. If this amount has to be found by the issue of premium bonds, a fairly large capital sum will have to be subscribed. Assuming that one-half of the interest payable on the bonds will be devoted to the assistance of hospitals and the other half to the payment of interest and prizes, it is obvious that the annual amount necessary will be £400,000. If the rate of interest payable on the bonds is 5 per cent., the amount subscribed will have to be £8,000,000.

I do not think any hon. member will say that by the issue of premium bonds we have a hope, within the next 20 years, of raising £8,000,000.

Mr. Teesdale: Other countries have made a success of it.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: But a lot of them are going out of it now. The statement goes on—

A further point to be considered is whether the issue of premium bonds would violate any of the provisions of the agreement with the Loan Council.

The committee conclude their report on the subject of premium bonds by saying—

In view of all the circumstances, therefore, and after having given the matter very careful consideration, the committee feel that they cannot recommend the system as being by any means an economical method of hospital finance.

I have read extracts from the report for the purpose of having them included in "Hansard" so that they may be a record in the form of a reply to the continual statements that have been made, particularly by the "Sunday Times," that by the issue of premium bonds we would overcome all our difficulties in respect of hospital finance.

When we come to realise that to get £200,000 we would have to raise £8,000,000, I say that it would not be possible to get sufficient by means of premium bonds for the next 20 years.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Let us have a try.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I believe that the method suggested by the committee, and which I am submitting to the House, is much more economical, and I will go so far as to say that instead of going to the cost that would be involved in raising the money by means of premium bonds, it would be much more economical for the people of Western Australia to be taxed. I have had some figures prepared with regard to the hospitals as they stand at the present time, that is, the larger hospitals, and the position they will be in under the proposed scheme. I do not want hon. members to believe that if the Bill goes through, the present subsidies will continue; they will have to be revised.

Hon. G. Taylor: Will the Bill relieve the Treasury?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: No. The same amount will be paid, but the incidence of the payment will be different. The Perth Hospital will benefit under the proposed scheme more than any other institution because, it has, on an average about 403 beds occupied per day. Taking the year 1927, the income derived by that institution from patients' fees was £17,215, and the subscriptions and donations and appeals of all descriptions came to £6,660, or a total income from those two sources—and they are the only two that would be wiped out by the Bill—of £23,875. Under the proposed scheme, by the payment of 6s. per day per bed occupied, the Perth Hospital would have received in that year for the same number of patients, £43,927. In other words they would have benefited to the extent of £20,052, including their patients' fees and collections. The Children's Hospital will not benefit to anything like the same extent. In 1927 that institution, from patients' fees and contributions raised, received £2,529, and their subscriptions and donations amounted to £10,114, a total income of £12,643. At 6s. per day per bed occupied they would have received in that year £15,449, or a benefit to them of £2,806. The

Fremantle Hospital, in 1927, collected in patients' fees £3,921, and from subscriptions and donations £4,448, or a total of £8,369. At 6s. per bed per day occupied they would have received £8,334, or a loss of £35 on the year's transactions. Taking all the departmental hospitals which for the same year averaged 361 beds occupied, there was collected from patients' fees, from midwifery cases, approximately £5,000, from workers' compensation cases £2,500, and from other cases £29,756, a total of £37,256. Under the proposed scheme, at 6s. per bed per day occupied, they would have received £33,613—exclusive of the fees for midwifery and workers' compensation cases—or an advantage to the whole of those institutions combined of £3,857. These hospitals include all the institutions in the North-West, and total 32 or 33. I do not think there is any need to say much more. I confidently submit the Bill to the House believing that it will receive sympathetic consideration here. I am optimistic enough to believe also that it will have very little, if any, opposition in another place, and if that is the case I am satisfied that we shall be able to proclaim it by February next. It will take us until that time to prepare the machinery of organisation, and we cannot start our operations until we are ready to collect everywhere. I do not suppose we shall get any revenue under the Bill until at least the 1st March.

Hon. G. Taylor: You have made provision in the Estimates to carry on until then?

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: If it is as complicated as it sounds, you will not be ready by then.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: When the hon. member has had time to carefully peruse the Bill he will find there is nothing complicated about it, that it is straightforward and simple. All that we have endeavoured to do is to see that nobody escapes his just liability. In my opinion the majority of the people in Western Australia will prefer the Bill instead of the methods that have been in existence for so long, the street collections consisting of button days, flower days, wattle days, etc. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

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

BILL—QUARRY RAILWAY EXTENSION.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. A. McCallum—South Fremantle—in reply) [5.45]: Regarding the points raised by the Leader of the Opposition, I should like to say that after all the Bill is only an enabling Bill to permit the Government to enter into a lease of this land in order that the company may run this railway. The idea was to provide in the lease for the points raised by the Leader of the Opposition, but it may be as well to have them set out in the Bill itself as matters to be especially dealt with in the lease, so that there shall be no possible misunderstanding. Consequently I have put on the Notice Paper amendments that I will move to that end. The first point to be included in the lease will be the right of the Government to resume this railway if it be found necessary. At present there is every indication that before long it will become necessary for the working railways to take over the line. It will be a busy line, and the Ford Motor Works are now preparing to erect buildings at a point where they will require a spur from the existing line, the old quarry railway, and the traffic will go over that line.

Mr. Teesdale: The Yankees will cut up all Fremantle presently and have it for their own.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is better that they should come here and do some of the work than that we should be sending all our money to America.

Mr. Teesdale: You would not let our own people cut up the place like this.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: We are providing that the Crown shall have the right to resume the line, and that any person or company or any Government department shall have the right to use this line under conditions to be mutually agreed upon or determined by arbitration.

Mr. Teesdale: Go and try to establish an industry in the Yankees' own country, and see what assistance they will give you!

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The question was asked what fuel would be used on the company's locomotives. But it is not the intention of the company to own

their own rolling stock. The Government rolling stock will be used, and the Crown Law Department say that this is a usual provision in a Bill for a private railway. But it has no significance whatever, for the company will be paying the department for the use of the rolling stock. As a matter of fact, the company will be using Collic coal exclusively at their own works, and they have not any intention of using any locomotive of their own, much less any foreign fuels. So there is no significance in that point. I think the amendments of which I have given notice will meet the points raised by the Leader of the Opposition. It was our intention to have them in the lease, but I agree that it will be as well to have them clearly set out in the Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

Clauses 1 and 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Power to lease:

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: I move an amendment—

That after "conditions," in line 12 of Subclause 1, the following be inserted:—"including the power of resumption by the Crown, subject to compensation to the lessee)."

Amendment put and passed.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: I move an amendment—

That the following be added to stand as Subclause 3:—" (3) It shall be provided by the lease that the lessee shall, if required by the Minister so to do, grant to any person or company or to any Government department, the right to use the said railway by locomotives and rolling stock on terms and conditions to be mutually agreed upon or determined by arbitration."

If the Minister thinks a company or person or any Government department should have the right to use that line, he will advise the original company accordingly, and the company shall be obliged to agree to the use of the line by other parties upon terms and conditions which, failing agreement, shall be determined by arbitration. There is a possibility that other works may be erected within this area and that other people will want to use the line. It would

be wrong to give the sugar company the right to the exclusive use of the railway. I have asked the company if they have any objection to this amendment, and they have said there is none whatever, that no doubt they will be able to make satisfactory arrangements with those who desire to run over the line.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I am glad the Minister has added this provision to the Bill. A fair length of this railway can be used by other factories. It is only right to provide that other people shall, upon terms and conditions, enjoy the right to run over the line without any question on the part of the original company. It would be very unwise to leave out this provision. The Minister requires to make it very clear in his lease, and I have no doubt he will do so.

Hon. W. J. GEORGE: I have had considerable experience of this sort of thing, and I can say that however carefully the Bill is framed, complications with other people wanting to use the line are bound to arise. Personally I think that payment of the cost of construction of the line will somewhat hamper any transactions between the Colonial Sugar Refining Company and other firms that may want to use the line, for the constructional cost of the line will entail an annual charge in interest. When other people want to use the line, an arrangement will have to be made for them to bear their share of the cost. Will this company pay anything for the right of access to the Government lines?

Mr. Lambert: Yes, £20 per annum.

Hon. W. J. GEORGE: I do not want to put any obstacle in the way of these people, but I have had a good deal of experience of this sort of thing, as the result of which I am always a little chary about these matters. I should like to know where these new works are to be built.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The company have bought Billygoat Farm.

Hon. W. J. GEORGE: Is there any land there that can be used by other manufacturers?

The Minister for Works: Yes, plenty of it.

Hon. W. J. GEORGE: Then complications will arise very soon, for I am convinced we are going to have a number of new manufacturers here within the next five years.

Mr. LAMBERT: I do not know that the amendment is altogether satisfactory. The Minister desires to protect those people in the intervening territory between the present terminus of the line and the sugar works. But it is provided that the company shall grant to others the right to use the railway. I presume that the intervening territory is territory owned by other people.

The Minister for Works: It is private land.

Mr. LAMBERT: Apart from the use of the line, the Government should have the right to provide sidings for people owning the intervening territory. If a landowner 20 chains away from the terminus of the line wanted a siding put in on the ordinary terms of the Railway Department, it could not be done unless the company agreed. The wording of the amendment is not definite enough. The intervening land will be rendered useless unless an agreement can be arrived at with the company in regard to sidings, the company being at both termini. Indeed, the company might say, "We do not want any sidings at all put in."

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: But the Government could resume the line.

Mr. LAMBERT: The history of Government resumptions of railways in this State is not a happy one. A mutual arrangement with regard to sidings should be based on the terms and conditions embodied in the Government Railways Act. Then there would be an indication of what might be expected if such a matter went to arbitration.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It is quite all right now.

Mr. LAMBERT: It is not all right. The Bill as it stands means the locking up of the intervening land as regards sidings. Another aspect requiring a critical eye is whether the State should not have a definite right to resume in the case of an inner harbour scheme.

Mr. KENNEALLY: The argument of the previous speaker has some force. I understand that the land marked green on the plan attached to the Bill has been resumed by the Government. Therefore that land is Government property. It is proposed to build the railway on a narrow strip, leaving some 40 chains of private land from starting point to finishing point, excluding the area on which the railway is actually laid. Shall we agree to a Bill giving a company power to dictate terms to other property owners as to railway access to their own

properties? It is easy to visualise the possibility of the Government obtaining a siding rent of £20 a year from the company and having to pay back to the company £40 or £50 a year in respect of another siding.

The Minister for Works: The Government would not pay anything. If a private person wanted a siding, the private person would have to pay.

Mr. KENNEALLY: That position would be just as bad. Under the amendment the company would be able to charge what they liked for accommodation to other people, or, failing agreement, the question of the charge would go to arbitration. The Bill should stipulate that other people shall not be charged more for siding accommodation than the company pay to the Government.

Hon. W. J. George: There are always complications with this sort of mixed ownership. I would sooner that the Government themselves built and owned the line, because then we could deal with any occasion that might arise.

Mr. KENNEALLY: I agree with the hon. member. The right in respect of sidings should be retained to assist in the industrial development of the locality. Future applicants for siding accommodation should not be in a less favourable position than the company. Certainly the company should not be placed in a position to dictate to others desirous of obtaining sidings. I would favour the Government building the line under conditions to be agreed upon, and then leasing it for a period to the company, the Government always remaining sole owner of the line, with the sole right to say when, where, and under what conditions other people may obtain railway facilities for their properties. If that is not done, and if the Bill is to be passed, we must make it clear and definite that the company in whose interests the first portion of the line is being built shall have no veto as regards the furnishing of similar facilities to other people after the line has been constructed.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I move an amendment—

That in line 4 of the proposed new subclause, after "right," the words "to construct sidings or" be inserted.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have no objection to the amendment. Several references have been made to matters that would, in any event, have been included in the leases. That applies to the amendment.

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

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Schedules 1 and 2, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

BILLS (3)—RETURNED.

1, Police Offences (Drugs).

2, Jury Act Amendment.

Without amendment.

3, Wheat Bags.

With amendments.

BILL—MUNICIPAL AND ROAD DISTRICTS ELECTORAL.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from 24th October.

HON. SIR JAMES MITCHELL (Northam) [7.35]: I am sure the Minister must have felt some misgivings when he introduced the Bill. I think he believes there should be no qualifications at all, and that representatives should be elected to local governing bodies in the same way as members are elected to this House. On the other hand, he does not propose to do that, for he leaves in the property qualification. The Minister talked about Parliamentary representation in England and the large numbers that had been added to the electoral rolls. He talked a lot about democracy. We hear a terrible lot of nonsense talked about democracy! It has nothing to do with this question. The Bill cannot in any way be regarded as democratic. Parliamentary representation, in spite of what the Minister said, is one thing and the representation of ratepayers on local governing bodies is quite another question. Parliament is able to do many things that local authorities cannot do. A great deal of our time is spent in saying what people shall do or what they shall not do. We frequently take away their liberty, and provide penalties for all sorts of imaginary offences. We often do stupid things, but we do not allow the

local governing authorities to do anything of the sort. We limit their collections to sufficient to cover the cost of services that are rendered. They are merely business concerns just like any other business. We must not confuse the two positions. We must not confuse our authority with that delegated to local governing bodies. Very often the Government render services for which they are paid but the person who pays does not receive the full service. According to the Minister, although he has left in the property qualification, it will not matter whether a man has property in respect of which he pays £5 or £500. The Minister said that we cannot tax Hay-street. That is quite true. It is a charge against those carrying on the businesses; and irrespective of whether those businesses are profitable or not, the responsibility remains and any special tax applies to the value of the property. That is passed on in the course of business. The Palace Hotel, for instance, may pay as much as a hundred houses in the suburbs. When it comes to a question of the powers of local governing authorities, we permit them to collect money only in respect of specific services rendered. Of course we know that the property must pay for those services. There can be no thought of democracy in connection with that class of representation on the various local authorities. So far as I know, there has been no demand for the Bill. I doubt if that demand is in the minds of any people, apart from a very few. Of course we know there are always a few people who will interest themselves in this sort of question. Those people will make demands. Those demands will apply, not only to the qualification of electors in connection with municipal and road districts, but in respect of all sorts of things. They refer to their interests as those of social reform. The vast majority, however, are indifferent. All they desire is to be allowed to remain in peace, to walk on good footpaths, and to have decent facilities. They are not concerned about voting powers. As a rule there is a difficulty in getting them to vote at all. To-day we have provision for plural voting. The Minister desires to abolish that system, but still he allows property to be the deciding factor. He declares that property, irrespective of whether it is worth £5 or £10, shall have the same voting strength as prop-

erty worth £10,000 or £100,000. He says it does not matter how much the tax paid may be; so long as a man has to pay a property tax, he will have the right to a vote. Irrespective of how much property a man may hold, or how much money has been borrowed by him for various purposes within a municipality, that person will have no more voting strength than the smallest taxpayer. It might be argued that there should be no such qualifications at all. That policy was adopted in Sydney, with the result that a civic commission is now administering the affairs of that city. We do not want that sort of thing in this State. If property is to determine the representation on local governing authorities, then we cannot argue against plural voting.

The Minister for Justice: Carrying that argument to its logical conclusion, a man with £100,000 would have 100 votes!

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: On the other hand, we say it would be better to leave the position as it is. To-day no one can have more than four votes. What is suggested by the Government is illogical. In fact we do many illogical things. We fix our electoral boundaries in an illogical way. We do things in that way because it is wiser to pursue that course. I do not argue that we should increase the proportion of votes for property, but I do argue that there is no demand for any change from the present system. When the Minister argues that there is a demand, I cannot follow him. Then again he says that a man may have property in two different road board areas, and may have a vote in respect of each road board. But if that man has property in two wards of one road board district, he can exercise his vote in one of the wards only. That is surely illogical. When it comes to controlling the powers of local governing bodies we have to do the things that will produce decent government, and we do the things we believe to be right and wise. Since the service is a special one, there is no reason why we should interfere with the present system, which does provide for more than one vote. The Minister wishes to make this change, quite wrongly and improperly, I think. He said that before he brought down any further legislation for the control of local authorities—and by the way this Bill deals with municipalities and road boards—he must have this amendment carried. I think that was a very improper thing to say. If the Municipal Corporations

Act and Road Districts Act need amending, they should be amended, even if we retained the present qualification. It seems to me that the Minister, to be logical, should have removed the qualification altogether. I know that is what he believes he ought to have done, but he has not done it. It is true that people who own a house may collect the rent and retain the vote, but there will be considerable responsibility in the metropolitan area by the time the council borrows all the money necessary to make the city what it should be, and a serious responsibility also rests upon many road boards. I do not know how much the local authorities have borrowed, but I think the Premier is holding a considerable sum by way of sinking fund on money borrowed by local authorities.

The Premier: They have borrowed about £70,000 of Savings Bank funds in the last six months.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: That is all a charge against property; the property becomes the security.

The Premier: They are borrowing from the Savings Bank instead of from other sources.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: They have borrowed considerable sums from the Commonwealth Bank. If there was any question about the payment of interest the Premier would have the right to collect the rates and taxes to cover his interest. Thus property is responsible. I cannot for the life of me see how it can be argued that the small property and the big property should shoulder a totally different responsibility. I hope the Minister will not insist upon passing this Bill. I come into contact with many people engaged in local governing work and I have never heard any one of them object to the present method of electing representatives. I think we should leave the local authorities a good deal freer than we do leave them in the control of their own affairs. They assume considerable responsibility; they are helping to develop the country, and they are certainly helping to make life more pleasant for the people. They are taking the responsibility for rendering a special service, and they are accepting the continued liability for the work they are putting in, and therefore we should leave the qualification as it is. My democratic friend opposite cannot be satisfied with the Bill he has put up.

The Premier: It operates in most other countries of the world.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It does in some countries and some places have gone still further. I am not inclined to support the Bill. The present system has been tried for years and has worked very well indeed. If it is right there should be some qualification, then it is right there should be a greater number of votes for a considerable property than for a small property. In all these matters, however, it is a matter of securing the best possible management. We are charging the local governing authorities with special responsibilities and limiting their opportunities, for we say that the work of each shall be confined to a small area for which the area shall pay. That being so, we can well stand by the Act as it exists and not agree to this amendment.

MR. LATHAM (York) [7.52]: The Bill introduced by the Minister for Works is simply to alter the franchise—nothing else. I am sorry we have not before us a comprehensive measure dealing with all the shortcomings in both the Municipal Corporations Act and the Road Districts Act. Had a more comprehensive measure been introduced, it is possible this amendment would have been given a better reception. I cannot understand the Government's bringing down a measure containing this one provision to alter the ratepayers' franchise. At the conferences held in this State, both municipal and road board, there has never been a request for such an alteration. I do not think there is anything unreasonable in the existing provision. If a man pays half-a-crown a year he is entitled to have his name on the electoral list. If he pays £250 a year, or anything approaching that amount, he is entitled to four votes. When we consider the duties of municipalities and road boards we realise that they have very limited powers. Let me explain what their powers are in order to show whether there is any real justification for the alteration. The principal work is to build roads and footpaths, and there is very little else to do. As a matter of fact, local governing authorities have no power, although they may desire it, to run a hospital for the benefit of the district. Under Section 160, which clearly defines their duties, they are not permitted to do anything much outside of providing roads for

the transport of goods. In addition to the money collected for that purpose, they have power to borrow money to carry out their works. The Minister made a point about this State lagging behind the other States and other countries. I have hunted up the local governing Acts of Australia and I can find that only New South Wales and Queensland have made the alteration. New South Wales has gone considerably further by introducing an adult franchise. Bearing in mind the publicity that the city of Sydney has received, I am not sure that its example would be a desirable one to follow. As the Government found it necessary to appoint a commissioner to supersede the Sydney City Council, I think the less we say about the increased power taken there, the better. The powers granted in the Old Country are totally different. I have not been able to get from the "Laws of England" any authority conveying the impression that the principle of one-ratepayer-one-vote applies there, but the functions of local governing authorities in England are quite different from those of local authorities here. Local governing bodies in England take more the form of provincial governments, something like this State would be if the referendum on the Financial Agreement were carried. Our position then would be nearly that of a glorified province. When we investigate the duties and functions of the London City Council and of English county councils we find that they are considerably greater than the duties of our local governing bodies. Not only do they control roads and footpaths but they deal with education, police, hospitals, homes, electric and gas supplies and trams. They control the slaughtering of cattle for consumption, hospitals including homes for the mentally infirmed, and homes for other purposes. Therefore they come so directly into touch with the every-day life of men and women that there may be some justification for altering the franchise there. In this State that does not apply. We collect rates and borrow money and pool it and spend it for the benefit of the people who contribute the money, and it is only fair and reasonable in a State like this to give to the man who pays the greater sum a greater amount of power and a bigger say as to how the money shall be spent. After all, we pool the whole of the money and we say to the man who pays half-a-crown a year, "You shall have one vote," while to the man who pays £100 a

year we say, "You shall have four votes." I cannot see any reason for the alteration. The ordinary man in the street is not affected although the Minister said that all rates and taxes are handed on. I should like to point out that the farmer only wishes he was in a position to pass on his taxation but it is impossible for him to do so. He has to bear all the taxes. He is in the unfortunate position of having to buy his goods at a price fixed by the seller, and having to sell his produce at a price fixed by the buyer. Hence he cannot pass on his taxation. Consequently, there is justification for giving him greater power in the voting strength of local government. I could quote quite a number of conferences of local authorities but I cannot possibly declare where the idea, or the suggestion for the alteration came from. So far as I know there has been no such suggestion. I do not think we shall improve our system of government if the alteration is made. Therefore I feel satisfied to allow the Act to remain as it stands. I shall not vote for the second reading of the Bill because there is no need for it. We shall not get any better form of government, and I am sure that the people who are controlling local government are men of whom we may well be proud. When the request for a change comes from them, I shall give consideration to it. Until it does come from them or from the ratepayers I shall vote against any alteration. Right throughout my district the opposition to this proposed legislation is very strong. Therefore I shall vote against the second reading of the Bill.

MR. SAMPSON (Swan) [8.3]: I am surprised that the Government have brought down this Bill. There is absolutely no justification for it. No request for it has been voiced at any road board conference; as a matter of fact, the road board conferences have taken an entirely opposite view. They turned down the proposition not once but time after time, and in spite of the fact that the Government have been aware all along of the attitude of the people, the Bill is submitted for our approval. It is stated that unless this measure is passed, the Road Districts Act and the Municipalities Act cannot be amended. That savours of something in the nature of intimidation or a threat; at any rate, it is not the class of argument that one would expect from those associated with the Premier.

Mr. Marshall: You have not quite gripped the position.

The Premier: Had there been a broader franchise that catastrophe at Kalamunda would never have happened.

Mr. SAMPSON: It is the duty of a local authority to give effect to the wishes of the people in these matters. Government by the people for the people is supposed to be a plank of all so-called democratic governments, but how any Government can claim to represent people when time after time it has been shown that it is not the wish of the people to bring about a change such as is proposed, I cannot say. Voting is based on the rates that are paid and those who are elected to represent the people are expected to see that the ratepayers' money is wisely spent in the construction and care of roads. Land is valued and a rate is imposed, the object being to provide services for the people by means of the money so raised. Of all the organisations in the State none holds a higher position in the mind of the public than a road board or a municipal council.

The Premier: How can you say that?

Mr. SAMPSON: The records show it. Those who are elected to those bodies give up their time freely and devote their best endeavours in rendering service to the ratepayers. The Minister who introduced the Bill is himself the honorary president of the Road Boards Association and his action now is diametrically opposed to the wishes of the body that conferred the honour upon him.

Mr. Lambert: I may also be a patron of a football club but that would not count.

Mr. SAMPSON: If the hon. member represented the Coolgardie Football Club, he would surely act in accordance with their wishes; he would do what they instructed him to do.

Mr. Lindsay: Surely there are not enough people in Coolgardie to form a football club!

Mr. SAMPSON: If he were making laws for the governing of football clubs, he would give consideration to the advice of the club of which he was an officer. That is always the proper course to adopt. I am surprised at the introduction of the Bill because there is no justification whatever for it.

Mr. Lambert: It has no mandate?

Mr. SAMPSON: It has been introduced without a request, without its being shown in any way that the road boards have asked for it.

Mr. Lambert: Let us go to the country and get a mandate from the bumbles and particularly from the Kalamunda bumbles, or those of them that were not fired out.

The Premier: After having been turned down, don't you want to alter the franchise?

Mr. SAMPSON: The proposition is illogical. It has nothing to support it from the standpoint of logic. The Minister says that if a district is divided into wards, the ratepayer must select the particular ward in which he wants to vote. If he owns property in more than one road board district, he will have a vote in each district. He may vote in every road district and every municipality throughout the State. I cannot see how this can possibly be supported from the standpoint of logic.

The Premier: It does not pretend to be one man, one vote?

Mr. SAMPSON: There is provision in the Bill that no man shall have more than one vote in any one road board or municipality. A man may have a vote in a municipality which is the centre of a big road district. The road board district may extend perhaps a couple of hundred miles and the individual would still have the one vote, even if he owned a fourth of the territory.

The Premier: Do you see anything illogical in a man having a vote in the Perth Road Board area, living, perhaps, at Mt. Lawley and having another vote at Bolgart?

Mr. SAMPSON: Personally I think a man should have a vote in every district where he pays rates.

The Premier: But that is what you are saying is illogical.

Mr. SAMPSON: I say it is illogical because the votes, so far as wards are concerned, are separate and distinct.

The Premier: By Jove, are they?

Mr. SAMPSON: Yes, and each ward is debited with a certain percentage of administrative costs, and the works that are carried out are debited to the particular ward in which the work has been done.

The Minister for Railways: Sometimes funds are re-allocated.

Mr. SAMPSON: It is a most unusual thing to re-allocate funds from one ward to another. If the Perth Road Board or any other board borrowed money, the ratepayers of the particular ward for which the money was borrowed would vote, and then only the resident ratepayers would be the voters. They would not vote as to whether money should be spent in another ward.

Mr. Clydesdale: Some wards may be overdrawn.

Mr. SAMPSON: Then interest charges for the overdraft at the bank are paid. The Premier's reference is not quite correct. People have already expressed themselves against any alteration of the municipal and road board franchise. It is a great privilege to represent people, and it is a privilege to represent them according to their wishes. We should always aim to do that.

Mr. Lambert: It is a very convenient way to represent them.

Mr. SAMPSON: Their wishes have been clearly and definitely shown in connection with the franchise when voting for the election of members. Why then should we seek to foist upon them a system they do not want? What object could be served by compelling them to adopt a method which finds no support in their ranks? There is no argument to support it, and personally I hope the Bill will be defeated on the second reading. I am not expressing merely a personal opinion; it is the opinion of practically everyone who takes an interest in road board matters. There are odd exceptions, I have no doubt, and one may find some person who will support the proposal. In this case I hope the Premier representing the Minister for Works will realise that since the people do not want this system, they will be permitted to carry on their work in the manner that has operated for so many years past.

MR. LINDSAY (Toodyay) [8.13]: The Minister for Works when introducing the Bill referred to the introduction of the Road District Act Amendment Bill on a previous occasion. He said that it had been submitted twice and had been defeated. The actual reason for the defeat of the Bill on both occasions was the attempt to put through what the Bill we are now discussing aims at. When submitting the present Bill to the House recently, the Minister for Works dealt with a good many subjects that had nothing to do with the question at issue. On the previous occasion he withdrew the Bill because of the amendments that were made to it by another place. To some of those amendments the Minister agreed, but when it came to the amendment with respect to plural voting, he informed the House that the abolition of plural voting was the policy of the Government, and that he could not accept the amendment made by the Legislative

Council. Now he has introduced a separate Bill. No road board conference has asked for this Bill. But for years past the local authorities have been asking for some amendments to the Act. The blame cannot be laid on any member of this House or of another place for the local authorities not having got what they asked for. The whole of the responsibility must lie on the shoulders of the Minister for Works. He has refused to allow the Bill to go through, unless the provision for plural voting is abolished. I have attended every road board conference. At the last one this question was discussed, and of the 150 delegates present only two were in favour of the abolition of plural voting; one was from Kalgoorlie and the other from Narrogin.

Mr. Sleeman: Is it wanted by the ratepayers?

Mr. LINDSAY: In the course of time let us hope the hon. member will be a member of a road board. Then when he has to pay his rates and still cannot get roads, probably he will squeal about it.

Mr. Sleeman: That has nothing to do with the extra voting power.

Mr. LINDSAY: I will deal with the extra voting power if the hon. member will refrain from interjecting, or at all events will interject to the point. The Minister said, "We on this side of the House can claim to be democratic." What relation has that to the Bill? He then continued, "Because we represent all the big electorates in the State, where all the people are congregated." Again I ask what has that to do with the Bill? It is an important statement, of course, but I fail to see what relation it bears to this measure. The Minister went on to say, "If it is suggested, as is proposed, that we should take the authority now in the hands of Parliament and give it to the local authorities." I have seen these two Bills, and I have yet to learn that we are giving the local authorities power to make laws. It is we who pass these Acts; it is not the local authorities who do it. Under their own Act the local authorities are limited to certain powers. To say that we are taking away the powers of Parliament and giving them to the local authorities is not right. It is only Parliament that makes laws. The local authorities have no power to make laws. The Minister continued, "We are not prepared to take away from Parliament the powers it enjoys and hand them over to local authorities where one

man can have four votes." I have yet to learn that this Government or any other Government are prepared to hand over to local authorities the power enjoyed by Parliament. No local authority has ever asked for it. I cannot find any argument put up by the Minister for Works as to why we should pass the Bill. On the subject of local authorities I am not going to speak as one of those representing the big electorates of the State where all the people are congregated. But I will speak as one who represents no fewer than eight road boards, since there are eight of them in my electorate. Also I can speak as one who has taken a keen interest in local authorities, having been a member of a board for something like 17 years. It cannot be said that plural voting has pressed harshly on any local authority. What does it mean? It means that if the Bill is passed one man who pays half a crown in rates will have the same voting power as a man who pays £100. After all, for what do we pay rates? Principally in order that roads may be made. That is the main object of a local authority. And for what do we make roads? For the carting of our produce. The man who pays a half-crown rate has very little to cart, probably nothing at all. Probably the rate he pays is for a small humpy or camp.

Mr. Sleeman: Who uses the roads most?

Mr. LINDSAY: The man who pays most.

Mr. Sleeman: You pay only for what you get.

Mr. LINDSAY: I agree with that. That is the great underlying principle of a local authority—you pay for what you get. But unfortunately in this House we pass legislation under which one has to pay something for what somebody else gets. From my long experience of local authorities I can say that in Western Australia they have done their duty and have not received any payment for it. I do not know of any district that has asked for this Bill, nor any district where an injustice has been done through one man having four votes and another man only one. This is all a question of paying money into a fund for the making of roads. Assuming that we get this one ratepayer one vote system, every man in the country will have one vote. It will mean that a portion of a road board district paying one-tenth of the rates will

have half the voting power. Consequently in all probability that area will get much more work done than it is entitled to, while another district under the same road board will not get justice. The qualifications for road boards are very low, and any man who holds farming land must have more than one vote. It does not require any great qualification to secure all four votes. But the people in the country districts are the people who pay and the people entitled to the votes they have got. It has been suggested that greater interest would be taken in local authorities if the existing qualification were altered. I doubt that. I do not think it would make any difference whatever. But it would introduce one thing not known in local government to-day; it would bring politics into local government. I would rue the day when such a thing happened in Western Australia. Yet that is what will happen, as it has happened in every other place where the one ratepayer one vote principle has been introduced into local government. So for that reason if for nothing else I will oppose the Bill. I attended the last road board conference. The delegates present represented all political shades of thought, yet politics were never once brought in, not even by members of Parliament or by Ministers.

The Premier: Except at special conferences.

Mr. LINDSAY: At the last conference the Acting Minister for Works treated us to a fine speech, the speech of a statesman, but he never touched upon politics. The same thing occurs when we hold the conference in country districts; there is no question of politics. I hope it never will be brought in and I think that if voting be left as it is, politics never will be brought in. Who has asked for the Bill? Nobody connected with the local authorities. No local authority nor any road board conference has asked for it. The last conference turned it down with a bang. I have received a letter from the Metropolitan Local Government Association informing me that at their conference also it was turned down. Those people ought to know even better than we do, for every day in the week they are dealing with local authority matters and so they should know what the people want. For the Minister for Works to talk about taking away the powers of Parlia-

ment and giving them to local authorities only leaves us to believe that he was romancing. I can hardly credit that he believes it himself. I hope the House will never pass a Bill that will give local authorities equal power with Parliament.

MR. BROWN (Pingelly) [8.26]: In my view there is no justification whatever for the Bill. It appears to be a hardy annual, and it would not be going too far to say that the speeches are merely repetitions of what has been said on previous occasions. The whole crux of the position is the one ratepayer one vote provision. We know it is the desire and aspiration of the Labour Party to apply the one man one vote principle to everything. But in municipal affairs it cannot be applied. Take the city, where we may have a man holding property worth a million pounds. But there may be in that property 100 tenants, and it is the tenants that have the vote. We know there is not much love lost between tenants and landlords. What, then, would be the result of the introduction of the one man one vote principle? The landlord and his tenants cannot have the same ideas in regard to money matters. If a company is willing to come here and spend, say, £200,000, should they not be granted more votes than the man who pays half-a-crown in rates?

Mr. Sleeman: But your rich foreign companies are here for their own good, not for the country's good.

Mr. BROWN: They help to make the city and the State. When people come here from overseas and are willing to pay an enormous price for Perth property, it stands to reason they are doing good for the country. The maximum is only four votes, no matter what rates a man may pay. There is no hardship in that. Despite plural voting, the local authorities are always elected by small voters. What community of interest can there be between the small man and the wealthy man? None whatever. If it is proposed by a local authority to strike a high rate or spend a considerable sum of money in a certain locality, what does it matter to the man who pays only half-a-crown in rates? It is the other man who has to pay large sums in rates, and nine times out of ten he manages to pass it on. I do not think we should alter the existing system: None of our local authorities have asked for the

Bill. I believe the Government are well aware that there is no chance of putting the Bill on the statute-book. Still, possibly the Government are fulfilling their duty to their electors by bringing down the Bill for they will be able to say, "We did our best, but it was thrown out in another place." That is what is going to happen, and nobody knows it better than the Minister who introduced the Bill. It would be absolutely unfair to carry the Bill. No hardship results from the provision for four votes, and that is the whole crux of the Bill. I cannot support the measure.

MR. THOMSON (Katanning) [8.31]: The Government's attitude in introducing this Bill is rather amazing. The Minister has said that unless the Government are able to dictate the conditions under which local authorities shall work in future, other amendments which have frequently been requested by municipalities and road boards will not be granted. That, I submit, is a wrong position for any Minister to adopt. The hon. gentleman said, "When we start to allot authority and power, we want to know by whom those to whom authority is allotted are elected, and whom they represent." One would imagine that a Minister making such an utterance was introducing a Bill to deal with the administration of local affairs for the first time in the history of Western Australia. As mentioned by previous speakers, the Minister did not bring forward any evidence whatever to show why the amendment proposed by the Bill should be made. If he had given proof of a demand for such an amendment, or proof of the existence of abuses under the present system, members on this side of the Chamber would probably have been prepared to give more consideration to the measure. I have been in this House for many years, and I know that time after time there has been a request for amendment of the Municipal Corporations Act. It is a matter for surprise that such ardent believers in the unimproved land tax as the present Government are, have not introduced the necessary amendment to secure to local authorities the power to levy rates upon unimproved land values. Such a power exists in regard to road board districts, and has been repeatedly asked for by municipal conferences. Taxation of unimproved land values

is alleged to be a plank of the Labour platform, but the Government say, "We will not amend the Municipal Corporations Act in that respect unless the provision permitting a property owner to have four votes is first deleted." With all due respect to the Minister, I maintain that the man who has to pay the piper should call the tune. Local authorities have power to borrow, and their Act contains a provision enabling 20 ratepayers to demand a poll in respect of a loan. Surely the man with a property carrying high rates is entitled to a little more say in such a matter than is the man with a small property. In my electorate there is a water board under municipal control, and yet ratepayers pay as much as £46 a year by way of water rate without requiring or using the water. They have no need for the water, because they have adequate supplies of their own. Still, it is in accordance with the law that they should pay, and they do pay. The man with a small holding, however, would be quite prepared to vote for the acceptance of greater financial responsibilities by extending the water scheme. It does not matter to him, as he would have to pay only 5s. or 10s. a year more. But it is a very serious question to the man with larger assets involving a greatly increased rate. There is no justification for the Bill. It has never been asked for by the municipalities, or by a road board or municipal conference. The Minister said, "We want Parliament to decide the basis of representation." Parliament decided many years ago a basis of representation which has proved satisfactory to the people administering local affairs. When the Minister gave notice of the introduction of the measure, I looked forward to a comprehensive local government Bill including many of the alterations which have been frequently requested. It is most unsatisfactory to members on this side to find that the Bill aims merely at taking away a privilege that has been enjoyed for many years. I regret to say this is becoming a habit with Governments. Certainly, the present Administration seem to go out of their way to take away privileges possessed by the people. We boast of our freedom, but Parliament is filching from the people, slowly but surely, rights they have enjoyed for many years. I oppose the second reading of the Bill, because it

has not been asked for and because it will be of no benefit to the local governing bodies.

On motion by Mr. Panton, debate adjourned.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1928-29.

In Committee of Supply.

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

Department of Public Health (Hon S. W. Munsie, Minister):

Vote—Medical, £171,758:

MR. THOMSON (Katanning) [8.41]: I congratulate the Minister for Health on the sympathetic consideration he has extended to various country hospitals, so far as funds available to him have permitted. I trust that when preparing the Loan Estimates the Government will make provision for the erection of nurses' quarters in connection with the Katanning Hospital. The Minister himself recently inspected the institution, and the committee took him over the building and showed him that accommodation for the nurses is sadly lacking. Proper accommodation is essential to efficient nursing. The results from the establishment of the hospital have far exceeded the anticipations of the department. The average of patients has been much higher than expected, and because of that a larger nursing staff has been required. It is found necessary to utilise the isolation ward of the hospital for sisters on night duty, that being the only means whereby they can get sleep during the day. As regards the child welfare movement, I am indeed pleased that it has been possible to establish a centre in my district, and I am hoping that the Minister will be able to persuade the Government to grant a free railway pass for the use of the sister who now visits the outlying portion of my electorate. The hospital committee have undertaken fairly substantial financial responsibilities in the establishment of the centre. The sister has to visit Kojonup, Tambellup, Gnowangerup, Nyabing and Pingrup, and the only means of transport which enables her to observe the roster drawn up is the railway. In view of the free passes given, if I may say so, to less deserving causes, I hope the Minister

will be able to persuade the Government that a free pass should be granted in this instance. It is estimated that it will cost something like £75 a year for railway fares. Seeing that the train service is available, it would not be too much to ask that the nurse be permitted to travel by those trains on a free pass. I commend these two requests to the Government. I know the Minister is sympathetically inclined, and that it will all depend upon how much the Premier will feel disposed to make available. In the interests of the nursing staff it is desirable that additional accommodation should be made available and the provision of a free pass for the sister would do much to facilitate her work. When the Minister is replying to the debate, I would like to know his views regarding a request that has been made to him for the appointment of a special honorary welfare officer who would go to the Old Men's Home and look after the interests of the inmates. This evening I received a communication embodying that request and intimating that it had been made to the Minister by letter but no reply had been received from him. In view of the additional funds available from the Federal Government in connection with pensions, it is hoped that the Government will be able to introduce some variety into the diet available for the old men so that the meals may be a little more appetising.

The Minister for Health: The old men will get that when we receive some of the money.

Mr. THOMSON: I would like the Minister to indicate what his attitude is regarding this request. Personally I think the appointment of a welfare officer would be of advantage to the Minister as well as to the old men. I would also like to know if he could inform me what is the average cost per head per week in respect of the inmates of the Old Men's Home. I want to make it clear that I am not out upon an inquisitorial expedition, but I received the letter I have referred to a few minutes before I rose to speak. Had I received it earlier, I would have discussed its contents with the Minister. We appointed a committee in connection with the Claremont Hospital for the Insane and the members of that body have done excellent work. If the Minister is agreeable to the appointment of the welfare officer to assist in looking after the old men at Dalkeith, equally good work

might be carried out. By means of that officer the inmates' point of view might be placed before the Minister more adequately than at the present time. I do not wish it to be inferred that I am in any way criticising the officer in charge of the Old Men's Home, for he has done excellent service.

MR. MARSHALL (Murchison) [8.50]:

I wish to take advantage of this opportunity to congratulate the Minister and his staff upon the sympathetic administration of the work of the department. Wonderful work has been done during the last few years, particularly in connection with child welfare. Not only have the departmental activities been apparent in the city, but their activities have been extended throughout the country districts as well. Everywhere about the back country one hears mentioned the names of the Minister and his departmental officers, and always eulogistic references are made to the sympathetic attention given by them to various matters.

Mr. Teesdale: This sounds like a second edition of the Governor's speech!

Mr. MARSHALL: I desire to stress the need for the provision of an X-ray plant at the Wooroloo Sanatorium. Before dealing with that subject, however, I wish to thank the Minister and his officers for the provision of the X-ray plant that is in use at Meekatharra. Since its installation it has proved of untold benefit to quite a number of people.

Hon. G. Taylor: Is it a portable plant or a fixture?

Mr. MARSHALL: It is stationary. At the present time Meekatharra is regarded as the terminus of the Government railway line, and consequently victims of accidents that occur in the North-West, or at Wiluna, for instance, are brought into Meekatharra for attention. It is the nearest centre where the services of a doctor can be obtained. Although the plant has been installed for a few months only, already at least one person has been saved from months of suffering. In view of the good that has been done so far, hon. members can imagine what benefit is likely to accrue over a period of years as the result of the provision of the X-ray plant at Meekatharra.

Mr. Thomson: Did you get it free?

Mr. MARSHALL: No, it is just as impossible to get anything free from the Minister as it was from other Ministers.

Mr. Teesdale: How long have you had your plant in Meekatharra?

Mr. MARSHALL: It has been in use for about 10 weeks.

Mr. Teesdale: I just wanted to know. I have been trying to get one for about five years!

Mr. MARSHALL: I understand that similar plants can be obtained on the same basis as we procured ours in Meekatharra. We got it on a pound for pound subsidy basis, and the committee at Meekatharra provided for the housing of the plant. Coming to the question of an X-ray plant at the Wooroloo Sanatorium, it seems to me pathetic that that institution has been in existence for 14 years, and the patients are still without the benefits of such a plant. With one exception—I will refer to that phase later on—all the patients at Wooroloo are tubercular. I do not know that Dr. Mitchell has made any direct request for an X-ray plant, but we know that experts have insisted upon the importance of that plant in the study of consumption. It is said it is almost impossible for one doctor to properly look after the interests of the patients at Wooroloo and study the progress of their disease without the aid of an X-ray plant. The patients there realise the position, and some of them adopt the attitude that although their cases may be hopeless, there are the little children who would probably be greatly assisted if an X-ray plant were available.

Mr. Sampson: At any rate, if they had the plant, the experience gained with one patient would assist the doctors in the treatment of others.

Mr. MARSHALL: Particularly would that apply to the children.

Mr. Sampson: But it would apply to the older people, too.

Mr. MARSHALL: I do not deny that it applies to every patient, but one must be particularly concerned about the little children. If we can arrest the course of the disease and perhaps cure some of these children, we should not hesitate to spend the £1,200 that is necessary, and we should spend that money immediately. The other night I heard it suggested that the institution had been established for 14 years, and it was only now that the discovery had been made that an X-ray plant was required. That is not the position. It is only now that we appreciate how negligent we have been in the past in not providing these facilities before. An X-ray plant has always been

wanted there. I believe the Minister will do his best to secure the necessary money from the Premier. I hope he will make every effort to instal the plant before the end of the financial year. I know there is no need to impress the importance of this matter upon the Minister because he is quite well aware of the position, and is sympathetically inclined towards it. I hope the Minister will not lose heart or fail because difficulty is found in providing the money. We must recognise that £1,200 may represent a fairly large sum when we are confronted with difficulties, but when it is a question of assisting little children, I consider we can ill afford to waste another day in putting off the installation of the plant. There is only one fault in the institution and that is its locality. I am speaking solely on behalf of the miners and the ex-miners. Although it is late in the day to attempt to repair the defect, I am convinced that the air at Wooroloo, or anywhere else near the coast, is not good for those who come down from the interior. It is too cold, too damp, too humid. I do not know that it was wise to place at Wooroloo an institution established for the care of miners.

Mr. Sampson: Scientists reckon the hills districts are the best for tubercular patients.

Mr. MARSHALL: That is so, provided the hills district has a dry atmosphere. But we bring these men down to a coastal hills district where the atmosphere is damp. I have been informed that the Wooroloo Sanatorium will now accept no patients unless they are positively declared T.B. I remember the fight that was put up to have that institution established. The main argument advanced was that the sanatorium would be for the care and attention of worn-out miners. Now I am told that unless those men are definitely T.B., they cannot be received there. So any man suffering from minor forms of lung disease is thrown out on the cold world and has nowhere to go, while Wooroloo, instead of fulfilling the functions for which it was originally established, has become an institution for T.B. patients alone to the exclusion of all others. The information I have on that point is from a highly credible source. The Minister will be able to tell me whether it is correct. I shall be very disappointed if it be true that worn-out miners found themselves debarred from entering an institution expressly established for their care. I hope the Minister will let us know whether it is a fact that silicosis,

fibrosis and other forms of miner's complaint are excluded from the sanatorium unless the patient is positively T.B. And if unfortunately it should be so, then I wish the Minister to tell us to which institution those patients can go to spend their declining years.

MR. BROWN (Pingelly) [9.4] : I have always admired the policy the Minister has been pursuing in the interests of the public health. I believe more hospitals have been erected and more money expended on the health of the people during the Minister's regime than for many years before he came into office. But still a great deal remains to be done. We have in Western Australia some of the finest hospitals to be found in the Commonwealth. Visitors have told me that we have some of the most competent doctors also. I know of a patient who has come from the Eastern States to be treated in Perth. It speaks well for the qualifications of our medical men. I was very much perturbed when I heard the Minister speak of the health of some of our children, more particularly the instance he gave of 170 children in one school being affected out of a total of 177. That is truly alarming. I do not know whether the younger children of Western Australia are not as healthy as they ought to be. When we see them playing about, well-grown and of good physique, they do not seem to be at all backward. I do not know whether any of their deficiencies are due to their food, or what the matter may be. Perhaps it is they get too many sweets. It seems to me their chief defect is in their teeth.

Mr. Teesdale: The result of chewing gum.

Mr. North: Do you suspect the food?

MR. BROWN: The member for Claremont will tell us that if they ate brown bread they would be all right. I do not know whether young children like brown bread.

The Premier: They should be taught to like it.

MR. BROWN: It is said that Mussolini has declared that no Italians must use white bread. The Minister might make inquiry into that and insist upon the use of brown bread in Western Australia.

The Minister for Health: But I am not Mussolini.

MR. BROWN: Mussolini must be wonderful if he can dictate to the people of Italy what bread they shall eat. I hope the position is not quite so alarming as the

Minister made out. For instance, he said the average age of those children was 6½ years. But children of 6½ years have not developed their permanent teeth.

The Minister for Health: I gave you the number of permanent teeth treated and the number of the others treated.

MR. BROWN: I did not catch that. There must be something missing either in the constituents of the water being used or in the food consumed. I would advise the Minister to follow up this matter with a view to devising some means of remedying it. I believe that on our population we have more hospitals than are to be found in any other part of the world.

The Minister for Health: We have greater distances, too.

MR. BROWN: I admit it. Once I was of opinion that the little country hospitals were not in the best interests of the State, that it would be better to have a well-equipped central hospital with all modern appliances, including an X-ray plant. Honorary doctors could be appointed to the hospital and could act in consultation, as a result of which the patient would get the very best attention. However, these small hospitals represent the policy of the Government. I am not condemning them. Indeed I think it is a wise policy that every little centre should have its own hospital. But some of the small country towns have considerable difficulty in raising funds with which to build and equip a hospital. I urge the Minister to give them every assistance he can in that respect. In my own electorate we have been trying for a considerable time to build and equip a hospital. For this purpose we have raised £900. The building was formerly used as a private hospital and was purchased. We have used £400 and the Government Architect declares that another £800 will be required to put the hospital in working order. An estimate has been given by a local builder, who suggests that a few things might be cut out. If the local specifications were adopted, the hospital could be well equipped and made thoroughly efficient. But the Government Architect says he believes in all conveniences being furnished straight away because if they have to be added later they will cost a good deal more. There is something in that, but it is holding up the completion of the hospital. The medical board, through their architect, say that the conveniences must be furnished before they will

grant us a license for the hospital. I want the Minister to give us every assistance he can. I do not wish to speak on the Hospital Fund Bill, but if it should become law every little country district should then have its own hospital. I was pleased to hear the Minister say that the health inspectors are going to spend two-thirds of their time in the country and only one-third in the city. There are still several small schools in country districts that have not had a visit from the health officers.

The Minister for Health: We have had them only 18 months. We cannot reach all the schools in a few months.

Mr. BROWN: There are doctors in every little town. Why could not those doctors be requisitioned to visit the local school once or twice a year? The charge on the department would not be very great and it would save waiting for the travelling inspector to come along. These clinics will do a great deal of good. I will never oppose anything the Minister may bring forward for the health and welfare of the people. But the country people should get every consideration the Government can give them. Speaking on the Address-in-reply I mentioned that even adults should have medical attention. I repeat that. If there were an Act compelling every adult to undergo medical examination once a year, it would obviate a great deal of misery. An adult will go on without medical attention and without examination until he is so far gone that he cannot help himself. When he turns to a doctor, the doctor says "You are too late. If you had come to me six months ago, I could have done something for you, but it is now only a question of time."

We know that the older a person gets—

Mr. Clydesdale: The more silly he gets.

Hon. G. Taylor: I'll be getting the wind up directly.

Mr. BROWN: I believe something like this is in force in certain parts of the world. Since in many things we are in advance of some nations and countries, I fail to see why the Minister for Health should not introduce something like this. It might be unique, at all events in Australia.

Mr. Panton: It would be interfering with the liberty of the subject.

Mr. BROWN: No, it would not. Under it we might keep a lot of our patients out of the hospitals.

Mr. Clydesdale: And we might put a lot more into them.

Mr. BROWN: The Perth Hospital is a national hospital. The Minister informed us that it is an assisted hospital, not a straight-out Government hospital. We all know that patients go to the Perth Hospital from all parts of the State. If a doctor in any little country town cannot cope with the complaint, or the patient has little means, he is sent to the Perth Hospital, and serious cases cannot be refused admission there.

The Minister for Health: And so it is with the Children's Hospital. That is a national hospital.

Mr. BROWN: The Children's Hospital is an institution we all admire.

The Minister for Health: Twenty-five per cent of the beds occupied there year in and year out are by patients from outside the metropolitan area.

Mr. BROWN: I quite realise that. Serious accidents and complaints befall children in the country, and often the only way to treat them successfully is to send them to the Children's Hospital. That institution is a credit to the State; it is doing a very fine work indeed, and the country people fully recognise that fact. Consequently, all possible assistance should be given to that hospital. I hope the Minister will give the greatest consideration to the small country hospitals, for that will mean obviating the necessity for many country patients going to the Perth Hospital.

Hon. G. Taylor: That is a good gag.

MR. SLEEMAN (Fremantle [9.17]): In perusing the Health Estimates, it seems that the Wooroloo Sanatorium absorbs a large sum of money. While I realise that the institution may be doing very good work, it seems to me there is one little thing lacking and that is a place to which some of the unfortunate patients might go when they are discharged from Wooroloo. Some of them are discharged as having the disease arrested, but they are not in a fit condition to go out and battle in the world, and there seems to be no place to which they can go. I have in mind a man who was told the disease had been arrested. He left the institution, and immediately his pension was stopped because the Commonwealth Department ruled that he was not totally and permanently incapacitated. Negotiations with the department are still proceeding in order to get that man's pension restored, but so far I have been unsuccessful. The doctor for the Pensions Department says the dis-

ease has been permanently arrested. The man, however, is unfit to earn his own living, and his pension has been stopped. I do not think it would take a big outlay to provide a small convalescent home to which such people could go until they were fit once more to battle in the world. It would be interesting to hear the Minister's opinion on the subject.

THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH (Hon. S. W. Munsie—Hannans—in reply) [9.19]: I thank members for their many kind remarks about the Health Estimates and for the very small amount of criticism levelled against the administration during the last 12 months. The chief complaint by various members has been that we have not provided an X-ray plant at the Wooroloo Sanatorium. The member for Murchison (Mr. Marshall) said such a plant had always been recognised as a necessity. That is not altogether correct. I think I am right in saying that it is not more than five years since the medical profession in Australia realised the true benefit of examination for tuberculosis by X-ray.

Hon. G. Taylor: I do not think it is that long.

The **MINISTER FOR HEALTH**: Perhaps it is not that long. The Resident Medical Officer at Wooroloo has repeatedly made application to the department for an X-ray plant. The Government realise the necessity for it if only the funds were available. It is all very fine for members to say, "This would involve an outlay of only £1,200, and what is £1,200 after all?" Twelve hundred pounds here, £1,200 there and £1,000 somewhere else mount up to a large figure.

Hon. G. Taylor: And then the Treasurer starts to squeal.

The **MINISTER FOR HEALTH**: If the Treasurer ended up the financial year with a deficit of £200,000 or £250,000, members would say he knew nothing about finance and had been squandering money. It is necessary to keep a tight hold of the finances.

Mr. Sampson: Members would not blame him for such expenditure.

The **MINISTER FOR HEALTH**: But there are a lot of other things required, too. The Government recognise, as much as does any member, the necessity for an X-ray plant for Wooroloo. I go further and say

it will be provided as soon as money is available.

Mr. Sampson: That is something.

The **MINISTER FOR HEALTH**: We cannot do more than that; we cannot do impossibilities.

Mr. Sampson: Do it this year.

The **MINISTER FOR HEALTH**: It is a remarkable fact that the hon. member was Minister for three years and did not do it.

Mr. Sampson: The Minister has just admitted that the need was not recognised until five years ago.

The **MINISTER FOR HEALTH**: And it is not five years since the hon. member was Minister.

Mr. Sampson: It is just about five years.

The **MINISTER FOR HEALTH**: We shall not get into an argument about that.

Mr. Sampson: Not if we keep to the facts.

The **MINISTER FOR HEALTH**: Every time anything of the kind is mentioned, the hon. member wants to know why we have not done it.

The Premier: And it is always something that he himself should have done.

The **MINISTER FOR HEALTH**: The present Government have done as much as any other Government for the health of the community.

Mr. Sampson: And this is a new phase of treatment.

The **MINISTER FOR HEALTH**: It is not treatment at all. The X-ray plant is not designed to effect cures; it is used to enable the doctor to ascertain the exact condition of the patient.

Mr. Sampson: Precisely, and that points to the treatment necessary.

The **MINISTER FOR HEALTH**: It enables the doctor to decide as the years go on whether he is arresting the complaint. The X-ray examinations in South Africa have proved, and I think were chiefly responsible for proving, that it is the best method for discovering and arresting tuberculosis. That has been proved by the examinations in South Africa during the last seven or eight years. The member for Katanning (Mr. Thomson) said he had a request for the Minister to permit of the appointment of an honorary welfare officer at the Old Men's Home. Representations to that effect were made to me some time ago. I made careful inquiries and secured all possible information as to whether such an appointment would

be an advantage, and I have come to the conclusion that in the interests of the home and of the men I should not appoint a welfare officer. There is a visiting committee of three, consisting of two doctors and Mrs. Casson, appointed under the Act. For the after care of patients in the Hospital for the Insane, the Old Men's Home or the Old Women's Home, there is no one who takes such interest in the work as she does. Some of the inmates of the Old Men's Home have approached me with certain complaints and I have asked them whether they had any complaints to make about the visiting committee. Some of them have said that on almost every occasion when the visiting committee went to the home either the master or the chief orderly accompanied the committee. On inquiry I found that was not correct, but that the members of the committee often went through the institution without any member of the staff accompanying them.

Mr. Chesson: And any member has a job to go through without their being present.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I have had several complaints from the men and I have asked Mrs. Casson personally to interview the men quite apart from the officials of the institution. The Old Men's Home has 614 inmates and I do not know of any similar institution in the world where so few complaints arise.

Mr. Sampson: Hear, hear!

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: The request I received was that the inmates should be permitted to elect one of their number to act as a welfare officer. The man who would be likely to get the job would be one who was loudest in his complaints and who made the most complaints. In some instances the men who complain most are certainly not sufficiently reliable to undertake duties of that kind. I would not mind if I or someone else had the selection of the welfare officer. I had almost decided to turn down the application when the Under Secretary of the department produced evidence as to what was being done at the Fremantle Gaol, and he said perhaps something on similar lines might be adopted at the Old Men's Home. I considered that aspect as well, but it is impossible to compare a welfare officer at the Fremantle Gaol with a welfare officer at the Old Men's Home. The officer at the gaol is accepted by the superintendent and is changed each week. All he

does is to go into the kitchen to see that the food is properly cooked and, if he makes any complaint, it is made to the officer in charge and investigated immediately. It has been admitted that in some instances things have been prevented from occurring that would not have been in the interests of the inmates. The difference between the two institutions is that the men in prison are not permitted to go other than where they are sent or taken by a warder, while the inmates of the Old Men's Home have access to almost any part of the institution. In the kitchen of the Old Men's Home up to half a dozen of what are known as "tup-peny" orderlies—old men—assist in the preparation of the meals. If there was anything wrong, would not one of them make a complaint? I cannot understand the information of the member for Katanning that I have not replied to the request.

Mr. Thomson: I have not received it.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I assure the hon. member that instructions were issued for a reply to be forwarded over a week ago. Another point was raised by the member for Murchison who said that other than tubercular cases were being prevented from entering the Wooroloo Sanatorium. I do not know where the hon. member obtained his information, or on what grounds he has formed the opinion that any other than tubercular cases ever did enter the Wooroloo Sanatorium. That institution was built expressly for the purpose of treating tubercular cases. I have known Dr. Mitchell ever since he took charge of the sanatorium in Coolgardie, and I can state that he, as head of the Wooroloo institution, never permits a patient not suffering from T.B. to enter it. If the presence of such a patient who has been admitted by inadvertence is discovered, he is immediately discharged. For a patient who is suffering from phthisis, if the lungs are affected by dust, the Wooroloo Sanatorium is the last place to remain in. While Dr. Mitchell is in control—I may say that he is on holiday at present—such cases will not be permitted to enter, or remain in, the Sanatorium. The member for Pingelly stressed the necessity for repairs to the small hospital at Pingelly. Some considerable time ago—in fact, in connection with last year's Loan Estimates—half the amount required was made available conditionally upon the Pingelly people providing the other half. The Government half

has been available for the last nine months. I cannot do more than that, and will not attempt to do more. Pingelly is in the same position as most other country districts which are called upon to find pound for pound. I do not say there is no exception to that rule. There are some exceptions. Occasionally a district deserving of hospital accommodation is not in a position to find half the money. If such a case is proved to the satisfaction of the department, the Government go further and find more than half the cost. However, the general policy is that half the capital cost of a country hospital will be found by the State, and that the other half must be found by the local people.

Mr. Thomson: Can the Minister say anything with regard to nurses' quarters at Kataanning?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: That is a matter for the forthcoming Loan Estimates, about which the hon. member knows as much as I know.

Mr. Thomson: What about the free pass for the nurse? Can that be granted?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Personally I do not think so. The Government do a good deal in providing an annual subsidy of £100 towards the maintenance of each child welfare centre. If it were only a matter of granting a free pass to infant health sisters, probably not much objection would be taken, as there will not be too many centres established and consequently too many passes would not be required. However, another institution has been doing remarkably good work for the last 25 or 30 years—I refer to the Silver Chain. As regards bush nursing, the Government only subsidise a bush nurse in a district where there is no doctor. Then an annual subsidy of £50 is granted. The bush nurses are stationed in outlying districts where travelling is far more inconvenient than in the Kataanning district. If a free pass were granted as suggested by the hon. member, no Government could reasonably refuse a pass to a Silver Chain nurse. And it would not end there. Good claims would be put up in other quarters. If the Commonwealth Government do what was recommended by the Royal Commission they themselves appointed, and also what they agreed to do at the conference of health authorities, namely, to subsidise the States in the matter

of infant welfare work, probably I shall be able to assist a little further.

Item—Chief Resident Medical Officer, Wooroloo Sanatorium, £1,020:

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Can the Minister state the percentage of cures within the last two years?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I cannot answer that question. Records are kept of the number of patients admitted and the number of patients discharged; but I know of no institution of this kind which, in discharging a person diagnosed as suffering from T. B., will definitely state that that person is cured. I do, however, know of a fair number of patients discharged from Wooroloo with the disease certainly arrested, and in a condition which does not make them a danger to themselves or others.

Mr. Sampson: Apparently cured.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Dr. Mitchell states that it is possible to arrest the disease in its early stages, so that it may not become active again even if the patient lives to be a hundred; still, the disease is always there, and so a patient cannot be described as cured. Two or three former Wooroloo patients, to my knowledge, are now employed in the metropolitan area; one of them has been at work for eight years. Unfortunately the average Wooroloo patient leaves the matter until it is almost impossible for anything to be done to him.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I know of several young people who, after having been at Wooroloo for six or eight months, have been discharged with the disease arrested. Some of them now follow their ordinary avocations, and are seemingly quite well. However, the trouble is that they are always highly susceptible to the germ. After recovery from a long illness anyone is inclined to believe himself perfectly strong, and to take risks; and I presume tubercular patients do not vary in that respect. I believe that if they were taken in hand younger, when the disease has not such a strong hold, a great deal of good could be done for them at Wooroloo. There should be propaganda to advise people, young and old alike, who feel anything affecting their lungs, to be examined.

The Minister for Health: That is done by posters on every railway station and every public building, and by leaflets issued by the Health Department.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Every effort should be made to convey that advice to the public generally.

Item—Chaplain, £50:

Mr. SAMPSON: Would the Minister favourably consider the making of a grant to take the place of the free railway passes issued to the Wooroloo chaplains, as it is impossible for the railway service to provide what is necessary in the way of transport? The two chaplains, an Anglican and a Roman Catholic, attend the Sanatorium very frequently, and sometimes at unusual hours. They are both very hard-working and earnest men, and their task is difficult. The Roman Catholic chaplain comes from Toodyay, and the Anglican from Mundaring. In view of the fact that the trains do not give the transport which is essential to the discharge of the chaplains' duties, cannot some small grant be made towards the cost of running a car? It would be highly appreciated. I will not press for a reply to-night.

The Premier: You cannot get it, and that is the end of it.

Mr. SAMPSON: I am very sorry to hear it.

Item—Public and Assisted Hospitals, Perth, Children's Hospital, and Fremantle, £53,000; Grants-in-aid of maintenance, buildings, additions and repairs, fees, etc., public hospitals, £15,051:

Hon. G. TAYLOR: It would be well if each hospital knew exactly what amount Parliament voted for it. Then the board of management would know how to finance.

The Premier: The boards know now.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: These Estimates do not show the allocations.

The Premier: But the boards know what their grants are.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: The item is made up as follows:—Public and assisted hospitals, Perth, £38,000; Fremantle, £7,502; Children's, £7,500, and other hospitals, £15,019.

Item—Homes, Master, £456:

Mr. CHESSON: Has anything been done in the direction of segregating dirty patients at the Old Men's Home from those who are clean in their habits? The greatest

punishment that can be imposed upon men like some of the old prospectors and others is to bring them into contact with dirty patients.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I am rather surprised to hear such a complaint from the member for Cue. It is news to me that there are dirty patients at the Old Men's Home. It is possible that some of the old men may be dirty when they reach the home, but they are clean shortly after they get there. If it can be shown that inmates occupy beds that are not clean, I will take steps to find out who is responsible. A staff is employed at the home to attend to those duties.

Mr. Sampson: It may be due to sickness.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Then the old men would be in the infirmary, and not in the dormitories. I will make inquiries about the matter.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I do not think the member for Cue desired to infer that there were dirty patients at the home.

Mr. Chesson: I mean that there are men who are dirty in their habits.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Such persons do not realise how objectionable they are to persons who are more clean in their appearance and habits. The staff should be able to so arrange matters that segregation could be effected, thus keeping those who are clean apart from those who are not so clean. It is well known that as people grow old they become less particular about their appearance and habits. I suppose the same applies to the patients at the Old Men's Home. I do not think the member for Cue wished to imply that the institution itself was not clean.

Mr. CHESSON: I referred distinctly to patients who are dirty in their habits. Any one who has gone to the Old Men's Home can see the position for himself. When I was there on several occasions complaints were made to me, and I could see the position for myself. I do not say for one moment that the institution is not clean, or that the food is not good. I merely claim that clean patients should be segregated from the dirty ones.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Public Health, £34,418, agreed to.

Department of Agriculture (Hon. H. Millington, Minister):

Vote—Agriculture, £84,254:

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE

(Hon. H. Millington—Leederville) [9.51]: I shall deal briefly with the work of the department in introducing the Estimates. Matters of outstanding interest in connection with the departmental activities have been the increased production compared with last year. In wheat we had an increased production of 36,370,219 bushels, representing 6,348,603 bushels in excess of the production of the previous year. In dairying we produced over 4,000,500 lbs of butter as against the production in 1914 of only 451,000 lbs. In respect of sheep and wool, it is interesting to note that the number of sheep increased last year by about 1,000,000, and now our flocks number nearly 8,500,000. The wool product of those sheep represented 59,346,414 lbs., or over 9,000,000 lbs. in excess of the production for the previous year. These are facts worthy of note and although widely advertised, are worthy of mention at this stage. It is gratifying to know that throughout the State the average production of wool per sheep—that is, weight of fleece—was 7.1 lbs. as against 6.8 lbs. in the previous year.

Mr. Teesdale: Was that throughout the State.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes, that is the average throughout.

Mr. Teesdale: In the Roebourne district, we contributed 7 lbs. 6 ozs. towards that average.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Many flocks produced fleeces in excess of that average and some went as high as 10 lbs. However, the increased average for the State was very satisfactory. The same applied to the improved quality of the wool.

Mr. Angelo: Does that include lambs as well?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes. Another point worthy of notice is the assistance given to stimulate the breeding of draught horses for farm purposes. The Government realise the importance of that activity and the increased importance that will be attached to the horse in view of the expansion that has taken place in connection with land settlement. The view has been expressed that in the competition between the

horse and the tractor, the horse will eventually prove to be the more economical. We have every reason to believe that that will be the result, and the Government went to the assistance of the industry and imported eight horses.

Mr. Thomson: From the Eastern States?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes. We got them from the Eastern States because we required their services for this season.

Mr. Thomson: Is there anything wrong with importing breeding horses from the Old Country?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Not from Scotland, but in view of the presence of foot and mouth disease in England, the export of horses from that country is prohibited. During last year we inaugurated a centenary campaign with a view to stimulating production for the forthcoming year. That was not a campaign to speed up farmers, but with a view to inducing farmers to fallow larger areas. That will be a great factor in securing increased yields later on. We know that the present season has not been up to expectations and we do not hope for a big return this year. The benefit of the fallowing will be felt next year. There are many other matters of interest, but I propose to refer to one or two only.

Hon. G. Taylor: Keep it short!

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: A lot of time has been wasted on far less important questions than that of agriculture. It is only the lateness of the hour that causes me to rush through some of the matters I wish to place before hon. members, so as to give them an opportunity to discuss items.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You have plenty of time.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The length of my remarks will not indicate the importance of the subject, for I shall not waste any time. I wish to refer to the work of the experimental farms in various parts of the State, and to draw attention to the lessons they have taught us this year. We have seven experimental farms situated in various parts of the wheat belt. Those farms include Avondale and Dampawah. I visited each farm during the last few months. We have been accustomed to regard this year as a very disappointing one, but at Avondale the bulk crop is very satisfactory in-

deed. The same may be said of the results at the Merredin farm in the drier areas. The rainfall there has not been good, particularly during the growing period. The season took up earlier. At Ghooli, near Southern Cross, a good farm has been established and it will serve as an indication of what can be done in the development of the country to the south of Southern Cross. The records that we are keeping are of the utmost importance to the future development of the outer areas. The same thing obtains at the Salmon Gums farm. That is typical of the mallee country. I regret to say that this year the results at Salmon Gums, and indeed over all the Esperance district, are disappointing, due largely to the methods of farming.

Hon. G. Taylor: And they have had a very light rainfall.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes, but still they had about $6\frac{1}{2}$ inches during the growing period, which should have been nearly sufficient. As I say, the State farm is in typical mallee country. Although it is impossible to accurately forecast the results, the general opinion of those experienced in the district is that the bulk crop grown on that farm under proper conditions will prove to be on a commercial basis. That is of the utmost importance since many of the crops grown in that district are a failure and some of them will not be worth harvesting. We are fortunate in having the farm established, and the record of the farm will stand and to an extent will save the reputation of the district. For we have to demonstrate what can be done under the worst conditions.

Mr. J. H. Smith: What do you regard as a commercial basis?

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I am not going to risk forecasting yields, but local residents say that the crop is sure to go over 12 bushels. It must be remembered that it has been grown on a rainfall a little over six inches during the growing period.

Mr. J. H. Smith: But what price do you regard as a commercial basis?

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The market price. It is generally assumed that if one can grow a 12-bushel yield it is a commercial proposition. And that crop has been grown in the worst year known in

14 years. If we can do that, it is a fair indication of what the district can do in more favourable seasons. But that is the test we have to take. If we were to take the records of the Salmon Gums district for the past year we would have to say it is not a commercial proposition to grow wheat in that district. So we shall have the farm results to point to when we get the records. At the Yilgarn farm the bulk crop has been grown on a $5\frac{1}{2}$ inch rainfall during the growing period. That also is satisfactory. At Wongan Hills, another test farm for light lands, the bulk crops are quite satisfactory; in fact the result is rather surprising all things considered, the year being recognised as the worst for the last 14. I believe that at the Chapman farm, too, the results are satisfactory and that in almost every case the crops in the Midlands show good returns. Those farms are situated in key positions throughout the agricultural belt, from north to south and away east to Southern Cross and south-east to Salmon Gums. So I would be satisfied to take the results of those State farms, which represent the whole of the agricultural area, and say definitely that in all those several districts the tests, under proper conditions, show what we can produce. That is a better indication of what Western Australia can do than is the average yield throughout the State under farming conditions that are not always satisfactory. It will be also a lesson to those who have not yet adopted up-to-date farming methods. I have mentioned this illustration of the State farms because, in a season such as this with a light rainfall, there is engendered a feeling of depression. But we are now in a position to demonstrate, irrespective of the general average or the total yield, what Western Australia can do over the whole of the wheat belt, provided we adopt proper farming methods. So if the State farms have only demonstrated that one lesson, it will be invaluable and will do much to confirm the reputation of Western Australia as a wheat-growing State. I have purposely passed over many matters of importance associated with the Department of Agriculture. I consider the State farm results the outstanding lesson of the year, affording a bright ray of hope in spite of a disappointing season.

HON. SIR JAMES MITCHELL (Northam) [10.7]: Of course agriculture is the most important industry in the State. About that there can be no two opinions. The Minister has said there are many problems awaiting solution in the agricultural districts. When we come to Esperance a different problem presents itself. I firmly believe that Esperance will prove to be the best sheep country in the wheat belt. That mallee land at Esperance is capable of growing splendid fodder crops. Years ago Professor Paterson said there would be some difficulty in growing wheat there. It seems to be the very difficulty they are now encountering. But I think we are trying the wrong methods and probably have been so doing for years. When I was down there I noticed that the district grew stock feed very well, turnips, root crops, lupins, anything of that sort. And the old residents have known that for years. When those fodder crops have been grown for a few seasons, probably we shall find the district growing wheat really well.

The Minister for Agriculture: But that is not the trouble; the trouble is that of water supply.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The ground there holds water satisfactorily. I had the first dams put in down there many years ago. At first it was said the ground would not hold water.

The Premier: You are referring to farther down, Grass Patch, where there is a good catchment.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I am referring to the mallee belt. We ought to show a little enterprise in trying to grow other crops down there. I saw sheep down there and I was told some staggering tales about the wool and meat they produced. Can we not face the position there? We have the railway, we have the land and we have good people on the land. In such country as that the settlers need not grow more than two crops of turnips before they grow oats. It is well worth trying. I should say it is not necessary to establish a State farm at Grass Patch. We could get one of the established settlers down there to put the necessary wire netting round the place and grow feed for stock. Turnips are not an expensive crop to grow; peas probably are, but the cost is not prohibitive. Let us give it a trial. What is important is to make

the trial at once. I have no doubt at all about the result. I talked to a lot of the settlers about the fodder crops. I consider they are getting results that are not obtained anywhere else. They grow a very heavy wheat, though the yields are comparatively light. That is the strange thing about it.

The Minister for Agriculture: That is so.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: If we could show them how to grow fodder crops and stock the land they would be doing well, probably as well as if they were growing wheat, and we should convert that part of the State into a great and valuable province. There may be some hesitation about growing wheat, but I am certain there need be no hesitation once we have carried out a proper stock feed test. It may be asked why this was not done before. I realise that having built the railway, we must lose heavily on it, and we may as well lose something on trying to produce freight for the railway. I noticed that the cattle and horses were doing very well on the deep-feeding plants that were quite green in the middle of summer. The settlers were ploughing up turnips that had been in 12 months and the stock was eating them. That would not be possible in most places. New Zealand grows turnips and stock feed, and there is no reason why Esperance should not do well out of stock. From inquiries I made during a stay of a couple of days, I have no doubt that the experiments would be successful. I should not hesitate to provide the money for the experiments. If they cannot be carried out in more than one place, let them be done in one place. What can be done on one block can be done over the whole area. The limestone country extends over a large area. I do not know how far east and west it runs, but it certainly does cover a considerable distance. The settlers there have been a long time trying to grow wheat alone and have not been very successful. If they run stock first and then wheat, they will be successful. There is not the slightest doubt about that. I hope the Minister will endeavour to convert that area, which is now regarded as doubtful, into something that will be exceedingly valuable. Salmon Gums is a little further north and slightly different from the limestone belt. That land is similar to the land at Kellerberrin, that is, the next 30 miles from Salmon Gums in the direction of Norseman. I do not see why we should not get results there with wheat that will

mature in 100 days or very little more. The railway has been built; the water supply has been provided at McPherson Rock and all is ready. We should not hesitate to go on with the clearing. It is not expensive country to clear. I should like to see it all settled. We have 120 miles of railway there and very little work for it to do. If we do develop that 120 miles of railway, we shall have to improve the port considerably, but apparently that will not be an expensive item. The first thing is to convert the land to its best use. In building the jetty at Esperance, for some reason or other, the deep water was missed, but it is a very old jetty, and by no means permanent.

Mr. Ferguson: It will not be too permanent if another boat hits it. It is pretty rotten.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: That is so. When we develop the back country, Esperance will be a great port. I have no doubt of the ultimate result. I was doubtful of that country at one time, but I am now certain that the settlers there must undertake the stock proposition. It can be done, and I hope the Minister will have the tests made. Turnips will grow on fallow and probably the one ploughing would grow the turnip crop and the wheat crop too. When a turnip crop is eaten off, the manure should not be turned in deeply. I fancy the land could be developed in that way. To test it would not cost much, and it would mean so much if the experiment proved successful. I do not know whether the Minister noticed how well the stock looked in summer time. The few sheep in the district seemed to be exceptionally well grown and they were certainly ordinary sheep. There is a problem in this State every few miles. At Northam we put in 90lbs. of seed per acre, while at Southern Cross 25 to 30 lbs. is sufficient. All along the line we meet with different problems. Wheat growing is a simple matter in the wheat belt. We have good farms everywhere and this season we find good crops mixed with bad crops, which goes to show that there is just the right method of ploughing and the right time to do it. Before I entered Parliament I inquired closely into wheat growing at Dowerin. I remember being told by a man that he had not followed, but had simply scratched his crop in. The men who won the gold and silver medals at the Franco-British Exhibition had grown six successive crops on land that had

never been ploughed. Farmers take a risk when they try to farm without ploughing, but those men had done it successfully. That is due to the fact that in that country there is a natural mulch. Professor Paterson says there are few spots in the world where the natural mulch is to be found, and fortunately the salmon gum timber country does possess it in parts. If we have the natural mulch in the country between Norseman and Salmon Gums, say 30 miles out from Salmon Gums, as I believe we have, it makes possible things that seemed to be impossible. Only during the last six or seven years have we realised what the natural mulch means. This should give us courage to test that country. East of Southern Cross the actual danger would arise from early hot winds that sometimes blow there. I saw a crop of the latest wheat—Noongaar—bred by Mr. Sutton at Southern Cross last year. It is a quick grower and I have no doubt it will prove suitable on the land east of Southern Cross. There is a great deal to be done in stock-breeding, and a great deal has been done. The clover in the South-West has had a marked effect upon the cattle, and will have a greater effect in the next few years. The South-West has been transformed. For nearly 90 years we depended upon the getting of grasses by chance. People did bring in odd little packets of grass seed and sowed them, but it is not even yet realised that there is not a good grass in the South-West that has not been imported. Now thousands of tons of grass seed are being distributed, and thousands of tons are being planted upon the land in the South-West, and thus are transforming those areas. On a recent trip to Donnybrook I saw even the poorest land along the line, that near Serpentine, carrying excellent grasses; and land in the Busselton districts, which formerly would hardly keep a cow to 10 acres, is now carrying cattle to the acre, and fattening them, too. The whole district has been transformed by the application of superphosphate. I doubt whether any better grasses are to be found in Australia than are to be seen in our South-West. As the Minister has said, we are getting far more butter now than we got even a little time ago. The Busselton factory, Mr. W. J. Mann informs me, made 12 tons of butter last week, worth about £2,400—not a bad cheque for a week. The Bunbury factory, I understand, pays out about £10,000 a week for butter fats. Last

year we imported about 17lbs. of butter for each person in the State, and made about 11lbs. All the cheese we eat we import. A great deal of the tinned preserved milk we use is imported, and so is a great deal of the bacon. In the South-West there are unlimited opportunities for the production of these commodities. People are now coming from the East perfectly willing to settle in the South-West, and we ought to make land available to them there. If settlers want first-class land, it is now a matter of going on the fringe of the wheat belt or taking land to the west of the Great Southern. We shall get a large population between the Great Southern and Kojonup. We know now that we can establish pastures cheaply, spending little on clearing and sowing on the surface. Mr. Ben Prowse, one of the very successful men in the South-West, tells me that he does not touch the surface now. Accordingly it is now possible to do for a couple of pounds what four or five years ago cost £10 or £20. It has become a habit to sow seed, and people here are doing it as successfully as it is done in New Zealand. When we suggested the New Zealand method, the reply was that it would not do in Western Australia, having been tried. The department did try it at Denmark years ago, and the method failed. That was not the fault of the country; the experiment was undertaken at the wrong time. At any rate, what failed then is being done now, and with extraordinary success. It has changed the whole front of the country. By that method it is as easy to bring 1,000,000 acres under grass as five years ago it was to bring 100,000. At the Abba River I was told that a field of light land which was sown with clover had by some means a strip left right through it unploughed. That strip was sown like the rest of the field, and while the clover grew high on the unploughed strip, there was none on the part that had been ploughed too deeply. Knowledge comes with experience, and the road to dairying and fat stock seems to have been made much easier in the South-West during the last few years. However, it takes a long time to accept the truth. As long ago as 1835 it was reported to the British Government that tropical plants and cold-country plants grew side by side in this country. But the lesson was lost. We always think we cannot grow plants because this is the wrong latitude for them. That is utter nonsense. We ought to

try everything that looks like having a chance of growing. Tropical plants can be grown here with good results. And so it is with English plants. I believe the oak grows about twice as quickly here as in the Old Land, though I do not know that the timber is as good. Until ten years ago clover was sown by chance. However, we sow clover systematically now, and thus the country is transformed. Agriculture seems to be our great chance; for the moment it is our only chance. Not so long ago many people thought it mad to go anywhere near the Murchison River, but now all is changed there. Our light lands are still producing better crops than they did. In 1914 a great deal of light land was brought into use, and subsequently a great deal went out of use, when wheat went back in price. Probably nearly all the money lost by the Agricultural Bank was lost on the light lands. Now we are getting wonderful crops from those lands, which are so easily cultivated. I do not know how long the light land will stand cropping, but it is doing very well for the moment. If we continue to get 5s. for wheat, we certainly shall grow 100,000,000 bushels. I believe that wheat will become dearer and that the world will be more difficult to feed, and so we shall get still a better chance. I do not think we realise the enormous events of the last 20 years which have made our wheat so valuable. Except for the high price of wheat, we should not be able to grow it. I am glad stallions were brought in by the Government, and I hope far more will be introduced. I agree with the member for Katanning that it would be advisable to go to Scotland for them. The cold-country stallion is the best, as has been proved in the breeding of racehorses and of all kinds of stock. I do not why it is, but it is so. A stallion will be responsible for 30 or 40 foals in a year and an additional £100 or so spent in the purchase of a stallion does not make much difference in the cost of foals, particularly when we remember that they will live for 10 years or more. It is certainly a good idea to bring in stock so as to improve the breed of our animals, and as we require 3,000 replacements on the farms each year, we shall require a good many stallions. A few years ago we would have paid to get rid of a lot of rubbishy stallions that were to be seen all through the agricultural

areas. Fortunately for us the motor cars have driven them off the roads and the rubbish is dead. There is no necessity to spend money to get rid of the rubbishy stallions. All we have to do is to spend money to purchase good stallions and we can breed up accordingly. There is no reason why we should bring thousands of horses each year from Victoria or South Australia seeing that we can breed the animals here. The pastures in the South-West will soon enable us to go in for horse-breeding, and we shall shortly be able to do with horses what Mr. Hampshire has been able to do with the breeding of cattle within the State. As for the price of butter, a few years ago in Victoria 1s. a lb. for butter was considered a good average price.

The Premier: I remember when Victorian butter growers got 9d. a lb.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes, and 6d. a lb.

Hon. G. Taylor: In those days 1s. 3d. was considered a very big price.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Nowadays the public have to pay 2s. a lb. for their butter. As a matter of fact there is a better outlook all round. Of that there can be no doubt. We know better what to do and we are getting better results. The Agricultural Department is a most important one and I am glad that at Muresk we have provided opportunities for boys to learn a good deal more about farming than was possible before.

The Premier: Each boy that goes out from Muresk will be a voluntary adviser to his neighbours.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: And a very few will spread their influence throughout the whole State. The recent Royal Agricultural Show served to indicate the improvement that has been achieved, for the stock was first-class. We have alienated only about 32,000,000 acres in the South-West and we have much that we can draw upon there yet. Much of the light country will be put to use in the future, and there is hardly any limit to what we can do in those parts.

The Premier: There is hardly any limit to the possible increase of sheep.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: We could put all the sheep we have in the State to-day on a few million

acres west of the Great Southern railway, if it were all improved. There are places in the State where four sheep are carried to the acre.

The Premier: Trucks of wool are to be seen all over the goldfields now, and there has been wonderful transformation from cattle to sheep there.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: And in the South-West we shall be able to do better than ever before. I hope that next year the yield of 50,000,000 bushels will be accomplished, but I think the Minister should do more than merely tell the farmers to produce it. It is so easy to tell the farmer to do more work.

The Minister for Agriculture: We have told him to do more fallowing.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: We are in a happy position when we are able to tell the farmer that he must work a little harder for the centenary year to help the Government shoulder the load.

The Minister for Agriculture: We asked them to work more effectively in order to get better results.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It is easy to tell the farmer to do that.

The Minister for Agriculture: And some of them require to be told.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Without fear of contradiction, I can say that there is no man who cannot do better than he is doing. Of course there is no golden rule because what may be suitable this year will not apply next year. As a rule the farmer learns from experience, and knows what should be done. Experts are very good, but it is necessary to keep an eye on them.

Mr. Chesson: The elements play a big part in it.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Of course the farmer can be helped by the experts. For instance, look what selected seed has done for the potato growers. The crop has been doubled this year.

The Premier: I remember an old prospector saying that a geologist could not see an inch beyond the point of the pick.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: And that is quite right. I hope the Minister will import more pure-bred stock. I should like to see a herd of first-class Shorthorn milking cattle from England. As soon as we get the pastures in the South-West

really established we could go in for a herd of those cows. Our Shorthorns are not quite similar to the English Shorthorns. I remember seeing a Shorthorn herd on Sir Francis Newdegate's estate, and I saw a yearling bull for which £2,500 had been paid by the Argentine, weighing as much as our four year old or five year old bullocks in Australia. I congratulate the Minister upon having control of this department. There are great things to be done in it and I think the staff just now is very useful and is doing very good work. Farmers are now more ready to take the evidence of the experts, each of whom is helping the agriculturist.

The Minister for Agriculture: I think they are following the advice and following the results of experiments.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes, they are. We are transforming much of the country and we know now that much more can be done.

The Premier: But for agriculture the State would be in a bad way to-day.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes. Last year 24 millions came from the soil. We might have had it 25 years ago and been taking 100 millions from the soil to-day if only we had been true to ourselves 30 years ago. The opportunity is here, but we want more people. I wish the Minister could see his way clear to subsidising the agricultural societies in each district. Prizes at the shows are comparatively small and one notices that the stock, while actually improving in quality, is falling away in numbers. I am pleased to say the work of the department is being appreciated from one end of the State to the other. We do not hear the experts damned to-day, as they once were.

[Mr. Panton took the Chair.]

MR. THOMSON (Katanning) [10.43]: We have every reason to be satisfied with the excellent services rendered by the officers of the department, from the director down to the office boy. I have had experience of the director and his officers, those of them who have visited my district, and I am pleased to say that the results of their visits have been beneficial. It is gratifying to know of the increase in our wool from 6.8 to 7.1. And I am proud to think that the highest average belongs to Gnowangerup in my dis-

trict, where Mr. O. P. Richardson has secured 14lbs. per animal for his flock last year.

Hon. G. Taylor: Were they all rams?

Mr. THOMSON: If the hon. member has any doubt about it he can come down and see whether he can judge between a ram and a ewe. The statement is perfectly true. It shows what can be done by judicious breeding, and it is an objective that the State can set. The officers of the department are endeavouring to point out to the people how then can improve the yield from the soil. That is the main reason why so much money is being spent in the department. While the department is doing excellent work in the way of conducting experimental plots and farms, it is contended by many that it would be in the interests of the State if we had an officer, a specialist in the establishment of pastures. It is said that what pastures have been established to a great extent have been brought about by what the farmers themselves have done. After all, if we are to increase our cattle and stock, it is essential that we should experiment with pastures in order to determine which will give the best results. In company with the Minister I had the pleasure of inspecting the property of Mr. A. J. Monger at York. Mr. Monger has clearly demonstrated what can be done by top-dressing and the cultivation of clovers. He is carrying more than two sheep to the acre on that property. If that can be done on one farm under a proper system of top-dressing and the establishment of pastures, then instead of our having 8,000,000 sheep in the whole of the State, there is no reason why, in a few years' time, we should not be carrying that many along the Great Southern alone. So I feel it is in the interests of the State that the department should give a little more attention to the establishment of permanent pastures. As the result of Mr. Sutton, in company with one of his experts, visiting a portion of my electorate, they recommended to the Agricultural Bank that assistance should be given to establish pastures and for top-dressing. The Minister for Lands and the trustees of the bank also visited the district and decided to grant the assistance. But I am afraid they are not as liberal as they might be, for one year's assistance is not going to make the pastures permanent. I congratulate those who put up the proposal to the Government, and the Government on having accepted the proposal for the importation of high-class

horses for the purpose of increasing the number of such horses in this State. In South Africa the Government assist not only in the purchase of high-class horses, but also by freight concessions. In England there is a system under which committees or clubs of farmers pool the amount they will have to pay in fees and with a substantial subsidy they are able to import horses of a very high class. It has been suggested—and I hope the Government will adopt the suggestion—that we should establish committees of that kind in this State. I hope the Government will subsidise them and that we shall have an opportunity to bring high-class stallions from the Old Country. If the case were put up to the Federal Government, I see no reason why they should not offer a subsidy also. It is contended by people who claim to have a knowledge of the subject that while the horses being imported from the Eastern States are good, they are on the light side. I should like to see heavier stock imported from the Old Country. With committees established in the various districts, if a horse had served a useful purpose, it could be exchanged for a horse in another district. The suggestion certainly seems practicable. Years ago a suggestion was made by the Director of Agriculture for the training of cadets. That system has produced good results. Some of the cadets who went out for a term to gain useful knowledge are now agricultural advisers drawing fairly substantial salaries and each year they must become of greater value to the State. On the subject of the establishment of a pasture, I should like to direct attention to a portion of the policy we submitted to the people at the last election. We considered that if experimental State nurseries were established at Mount Barker and Bridgetown, fruit trees that were giving the best results could be propagated and fruit growers could be supplied with young trees true to type, while the nursery could also be utilised to conduct experiments in the combating of diseases common to the fruit industry. Such nurseries would be of great value to students as a means of imparting practical knowledge so essential to those desirous of following the fruit industry as a calling. Recently I noticed in the Press that the Parents and Citizens' Association of Mount Barker had carried out certain experiments on pasture in 1926, but they were not wholly successful owing to the soil

being unsatisfactory. After negotiating with the University endowment authorities, a block of land was secured that has given excellent returns. When the new block was secured, it was stated that for immediate demands the funds of the association were available, but would be insufficient to carry out the more extensive operations of fencing, clearing etc. Hence it was decided to appeal, not only to the fruit growers of the district, but to others interested, directly and indirectly, throughout the State. The response was gratifying and assistance in many forms was readily forthcoming. In addition the proceeds of concerts organised by the association helped to swell the funds. The report went on to say—

Strangely enough the only refusals of assistance were those received from the Education Department and the Department of Agriculture.

I regret that the Department of Agriculture should have refused to give the Mount Barker association assistance to lay down a pasture, because the work is providing valuable instruction to the children and to the district generally. I hope the Minister will see that some assistance is given. It is a policy that we advocated at the election because we considered it would be in the interests of the fruit-growing industry. If it is good enough to establish experimental plots for wheat and oats, the same principle should be adopted for orchards and pastures. I hope the Government will reconsider the question and see that assistance is granted to the association that has set out to do such excellent work. In view of the importance of the wool industry, another officer should be appointed to travel the country and give advice to settlers. The Sheep Inspector is certainly rendering very fine service to the State, and the results of his advice and practical demonstrations on various farms have been excellent. If we are going to increase this branch of industry, which is a very valuable one to the State, the department might well consider the appointment of an officer to assist the Sheep Inspector. Western Australia is a large State and an additional adviser could do good work, especially in the newer districts where totally inexperienced men are taking up land.

Mr. Teesdale: The wool officer is one of the best workers in the department.

Mr. THOMSON: I think all of them are good workers, but he is obtaining excellent results.

Mr. Teesdale: I think a lot of them are a bit tired.

Mr. THOMSON: That has not been my experience of the officers with whom I have come into contact. I hope that the good work of the department will be continued and that the primary producers will be assisted in every way. If by means of the experience and experiments of the department it is possible to increase the yields of cereals and production of other kinds, the expense entailed will be money well spent and the return to the State will be indeed valuable. I trust that the Minister will give serious consideration to the suggestion for establishing district committees for the importation of high class stallions and that financial assistance will be made available.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 11 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Thursday, 8th November, 1928.

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

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Hon. V. Hamersley, leave of absence for three consecutive sittings granted to Hon. W. T. Glasheen on the ground of urgent private business.

BILL—LAND TAX AND INCOME TAX.

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [4.35] in moving the second reading said: This Bill is similar to that of last year and the previous year. The rates of tax remain unaltered. Although last year ended with a small deficit, it is not desired to increase taxation until we are forced to do so. It is hoped that a general advance in prosperity will render any increase unnecessary. On the other hand, the Treasurer is unable to grant any further relief at present. The rebate of 33½ per cent. in the amount of income tax payable was an important concession, and the rates of tax compare favourably now with those of the Eastern States. This applies more particularly to lower incomes. The maximum rate now payable is only 2s. 8d. in the £. I regret to say that the return from income tax showed a further falling off last year. For the year prior to the granting of the rebate the return was £566,344. For the following year—the first year of the rebate—it was £345,527, a reduction of £221,000. For last year it was only £323,597, a further falling off of £22,000. In this period of two years the State has progressed greatly. The reduction in the amount actually paid by the taxpayers shows the great amount of relief granted to them. It must not be forgotten that this relief is shared on an equal basis by all sections of the taxpayers. On the other hand land tax returns have slightly increased. This is not due to any increase in the rates of tax but to the steady growth in values of land generally and more particularly in the metropolitan area. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. A. LOVEKIN (Metropolitan) [4.38]: I notice that the formula for computing the tax has been changed since last session. I drew attention to the matter before, and I asked Dr. Saw to be good enough to calculate the tax on the then formula. He worked it out that under the formula then in the Act the Taxation Department had to give taxpayers something instead of getting something from them. However, I have not received a rebate from the department. It is set out in this Bill, as I thought it ought to have been last session, that the rate shall be equal to $R = 2 + .007 (1 -$