Hon. H. STEWART: The difficulty is that the commissioner might not make the order if such a case were proved. Moreover, there are cases where properties may be in the hands of trustee companies acting on behalf of persons drawing their incomes from rent, and that matter would not come before the court.

Hon. W. H. Kitson: That is ridiculous.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I must ask hon. members to allow Mr. Stewart to proceed.

Hon. H. STEWART: Should the Bill go into Committee, it would be perfectly reasonable to amend the paragraph so as to give an alternative reason, namely, loss of income. Then the Bill would give relief to another section besides tenants of what are only dwelling houses without productive lands attached to them. There should be no distinction made between one section in difficulties and another section equally in difficulties.

On the motion of Hon. J. J. Holmes, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.8 p.m.

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**Legislative Assembly.**

Wednesday, 28th November, 1930.

**Questions:**

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**Question—Traffic Authorities.**

Mr. MARSHALL asked the Minister for Police: 1, Is it a fact that Mr. W. J. Carey was refused permission to replace Fiat car No. 10267 on route No. 8? 2, Is it also a fact that Mr. M. Dicton was granted permission to replace his car under exactly similar conditions asked for in this instance, and refused by the traffic authorities? 3, Under what section of the Traffic Act did the traffic authorities demand Mr. Carey’s transfer of his license to the receiver for Nash cars? 4, Is he aware that the traffic authorities kept Mr. Carey out of employment for a period of six weeks awaiting a decision on the condition of the Fiat car for which he asked a replacement, and why was the condition of the Fiat car brought into the matter of a replacement at all? 5, Was the attitude of the traffic authorities governed by their desire to assist a certain finance company in direct opposition to the wording of the Act, which states “the owner of the license shall be the person who had possession of the vehicle for three months or over?”

The MINISTER FOR POLICE replied: 1, Mr. Carey and Nash Cars Limited have been given to 30th November to reinstate the car on Route 8. 2, No—the facts are altogether dissimilar. 3, Mr. Carey has handed back the car to Nash Cars Limited and the license must go with the car, and any person becoming the owner of a vehicle must obtain a transfer in accordance with Regulation 158. 4, Mr. Carey has not been kept out of employment by any action of the traffic authorities. The bus is fit to run on the road when minor repairs are effected at a cost of £10. 5, No. See answer to No. 3. The definition of “owner” has not been fully quoted.

**Question—Unemployed as Prospectors.**

Mr. SLEEMAN asked the Minister for Mines: In view of the fact that there are amongst the unemployed a number of men receiving Government sustenance, and who are prepared to go out prospecting if the sustenance is shifted from the metropolitan area to the place they wish to prospect, will the Government be prepared to do this in order that these men will be given a chance to do some good for the State?
The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: Prospective are not assisted by the Mines Department at the sustenance rate applying in the metropolitan area, and all applications for assistance to prospect are dealt with by the Central Mining Board, which considers each proposal on its merits. It is not proposed to depart from this mode of procedure.

QUESTION—FREMANTLE TRAFFIC BRIDGE.

Mr. SLEEMAN asked the Minister for Works: 1, Is he aware that an under-water survey was made of the Fremantle Traffic Bridge last week? 2, Is it his intention to make a statement to the House, or alternatively, to lay the report on the Table?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied. 1, Survey was commenced last week and is still in progress. 2, Upon completion, a statement will be made to the House, if desired.

QUESTION—STATE IMPLEMENT WORKS.

Qualifications of Mr. Brodribb.

Mr. SLEEMAN asked the Minister for Works: 1, How long has Mr. Brodribb—who has been appointed one of the committee to inquire into the State Implement Works—been in the service of this State? 2, What is his present classification? 3, What salary does he receive? 4, Is he the gentleman who was, for some time, connected with the State Implement Department, and later retained at the Claremont Hospital for the Insane? 5, Are his qualifications such as would make his favourable or unfavourable report on the State Implement Works of any commercial value?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, 34 years 5 months. 2, £456—£552. 3, £552, plus £24 allowance. Total £576 per annum. 4, Yes. 5, Yes.

QUESTION—COAL MINING LEASE.

Mr. WILSON asked the Minister for Mines: 1, How many bores (hand, calyx, separately) were put down on the Wallsend State Coal Mining Lease prior to 1912? 2, Who paid for the cost of such operations?

3, What was the total cost to the Government of those days for such prospecting?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: 1, Not less than 14 in all on ground comprising the Wallsend and other Proprietary Company's leases, boring being completed in 1897. 2, The cost was borne by the Public Works Department. 3, Approximately £8,000.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Mr. Wilson, leave of absence for two weeks granted to Mr. Coverley (Kimberley) on the ground of urgent private business.

BILLS (4)—FIRST READING.

1, East Perth Public Hall. Introduced by the Attorney General.

2, Finance and Development Board. Loan £2,335,000.

3, Forests Act Amendment. Introduced by the Premier.

BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.

1, Hospital Fund (Contributions). Total islator Duty Act Amendment. Transmitted to the Council.

BILL—INDUSTRIAL ARBITRATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. J. Lindsay—Mt. Marshall) [4.43] in moving the second reading said: This is a short Bill, a simple Bill and, I think members will agree, a very important Bill.

Mr. Sleeman: It is not very important to the workers.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I think it is; that is why the Bill has been brought down. The necessity for the Bill, as the member for South Fremantle (Mr. McCallum) mentioned the other evening when speaking on another Bill, is due to the abnormal conditions. Also it is necessary to carry out the wishes of Parliament as expressed in 1924. Members will recollect that this House in 1924 dealt with an amendment to the Industrial Arbitration Act. Although
the exact wording of this Bill is not the same, it is very similar to that other measure. One of the purposes of this Bill is to bring our Act into line with the Acts of the Eastern States, including that of the Commonwealth. It is my intention to deal with every Act in Australia to show the differences between them. Our Act states that—

Before the 14th day of June in every year the court, of its own motion, shall determine and declare (a) a basic wage to be paid to male and female workers, and (b) wherever and whenever necessary, differential basic rates to be paid in special or defined areas of the State. (2) The expression “basic wage” means a sum sufficient to enable the average worker to whom it applies to live in reasonable comfort, having regard to any domestic obligation to which such average worker would be ordinarily subject.

It is not our intention to alter that, but to free the court, so that it may fix the basic wage quarterly if it so desires. The wording of the Bill is clear: It does not give the court any instructions, but if it considers that the alteration in the cost of living is such that the basic wage should be amended it will be able to effect such alteration. I said this Bill was to bring our legislation into line with that of the Eastern States. I have here the South Australian Industrial Code, which states that the Board of Industry shall, after public inquiry as to the increase or decrease in the average cost of living, make a determination declaring what shall be the living wage to be paid to adult male employees, and to adult female employees, with full power to fix different rates to be paid in different areas. It shall hold an inquiry for the purpose of declaring the living wage whenever a substantial change in the cost of living, or any other circumstance has, in the opinion of the board, rendered it just and expedient that the question of the living wage shall be reopened and reviewed, but no such determination shall be made by such board until the expiration of a period of at least one year (amended in 1921 to ‘six months’) from the date of its previous determination. The Queensland Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act says that the court may from time to time declare general rulings relating to any industrial matter for the guidance of suitors before it and of boards. It also says that without limiting the generality of the power conferred by the two preceding subsections the court may from time to time make declarations as to: (a) the cost of living; (b) the standard of living; (c) the minimum rate of wages to be paid to persons of either sex (also referred to as the basic wage); and (d) the standard hours. The New South Wales industrial laws were amended in 1926 by an Act similar to that of South Australia. The commission there may not more frequently than once in every six months determine a standard of living and amend the basic wage. There has been some discussion as to how the Federal basic wage has been fixed. There is nothing in the Federal Act fixing the basic wage, but generally speaking in all awards that are made by the Federal Court it is customary to provide for automatic quarterly adjustments in accordance with the figures issued by the Commonwealth Statistician. The index figures used by the court are those of the cities or towns covered by the dispute, and the different grouping of the figures has the effect of making the wage variations other than uniform. I have a few illustrations of this. In the Merchant Service Guild award, the weighted average of the six capital cities is the base, and on the last quarter’s figures the wages were reduced by 3s. per week. The Waterside Workers’ award is on the weighted average of five capitals (excluding Brisbane), and on the last quarter’s figures the wage reduction was 2d. per hour. The Federated Shipwrights’ award is on the weighted average of the six capital cities, but compared with a different base quarter from that of the Merchant Service award, and the reduction on the last quarter’s figures was 4d. per hour. In a number of Federal awards no variation is made unless there is a specified minimum fluctuation in the index figures. In the Merchant Service Guild award, for instance, there is no change in the wage if the change is less than 10 points (approximately just under 1s. a week). It is the same with the shipwrights’ award. In the case of the waterside workers there is no change if the variation is less than 13 points (approximately 8d. per week). This Bill is somewhat similar to that which was brought down by the ex-Minister for Works, the member for South Fremantle. Clause 100 of that hon. member’s Bill is as follows:—

The court shall of its own motion, from time to time, make a determination declaring what
shall be the basic wage to be paid to male workers and to female workers, with power to fix different rates to be paid in different areas of the State.

The Court shall hold an inquiry for the purpose of declaring the basic wage whenever a substantial change in the cost of living or any other circumstances has, in the opinion of the Court, rendered it just and expedient that the question of the basic wage should be re-opened and reviewed.

This is as the clause was originally brought down.

Mr. McCallum: The two Bills are as different as the two poles are far apart.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is the same as the South Australian legislation except that instead of the term "basic wage" being used it is "living wage" and instead of "court" the word "board" is used. When the hon. member's Bill was brought down he himself moved an amendment, to add the following words:

Or at the request of the Minister.

This meant that the court could at the request of the Minister re-open and review the basic wage. When the Bill went to another place, it was amended. We were not living in abnormal times then as we are now, and probably the amendment was the right one to make. We were not being affected by any of those terrific economic changes that are now going on before our eyes. The leader of the House in another place, however, opposed the amendment. Mr. Drew made the following statement:

I trust no attempt will be made to restrict the powers of the court in this direction. There may be occasions from time to time within a shorter period than 12 months to fix the basic wage.

That is what we have to-day, and that is why the Bill has been brought down. Although it is generally thought that the Federal Court fixes the basic wage, actually it is fixed on the Harvester judgment of 1907. Mr. Justice Higgins in delivering judgment in the Federal Engineers' award, said:

It is very gratifying to find that a practice has grown up, and is increasing now that employers and employees have come to understand the ways of this court, of agreeing to vary the basic wage periodically, according to the fluctuations of the tables of the Commonwealth Statistician. The tables are applied to my rough and tentative finding of 7s. per day, 45s. per week, in the Harvester case of 1907. The value of an accepted standard for wages can hardly be exaggerated. But the finding should, after all those momentous years, be revised in the light of actual facts.

The judge then went on to deal with what is the basic wage and the living wage. He added—

I do not like to quote myself, although I think I was the first to use the expression, "basic wage"; but I may quote "Heydon, J.," who puts the idea accurately (Bulletin or New South Wales Board of Trade, 1928, page 9).

"The living wage must relate to the humblest class of worker. It has to recognise a standard, and that standard must clearly be his; otherwise, there would be as many living wages as classes. Whereas the living wage is the lowest which any male adult worker, not licensed as a slow worker, should receive, and is based, not on the value of his work, but on his requirements as a man in a civilised community, which has resolved that, so far as laws can do it, competition shall be no longer allowed to crush him into sweated condition."

That is the way Mr. Justice Higgins put the matter. I have also extracts to show how the basic wage in Australia originated. I do not want to go into the whole history any more than can be avoided. There is a basic wage in every State in Australia, but that is not always fixed on the same basis. The Federal wage is fixed on the same index figures in every State in Australia, for a man, his wife and three children.

Mr. McCallum: There is no Federal basic wage operating in the same way throughout Australia.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have said that the Federal basic wage was fixed on the Harvester judgment, and on the figures supplied by the Commonwealth Statistician showing the rise and fall in the cost of living. Although there is actually no Federal basic wage, the Federal court has accepted those figures since 1907.

Mr. McCallum: There is a different basic wage in nearly every award given.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have already shown how that is fixed on the index figures all over Australia. It is fixed in each State according to the cost of living in each State, but the principle is the same in all the States.

Mr. McCallum: Nothing of the kind. There is a different principle in nearly every award.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That may be so. The hon. member can explain the matter when he gets up to speak. At present I am putting my case. In Adelaide the basic wage is fixed as for a man, his wife and two children. In Perth it is the same. Brisbane provides for a man, his wife and three children. The Fede-
ral award provides for a man, his wife and three children. In New South Wales the award provides for a man, his wife and one child. There is a difference so far as the judgments of the various courts go.

Mr. Marshall: The child endowment system is in vogue in New South Wales.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes. I have a statement showing the basic wage in operation in capital cities in Australia. In Brisbane, which is the State authority to which I first alluded, the basic wage was reduced from 85s. to 80s. in the 1st August last, and to 77s. on the 5th November, 1930. The Federal basic wage for Brisbane, for the September quarter 1930, plus the 3s. Powers' loading, which members know all about, was 70s. In other words, the State basic wage at present operating in Brisbane is 7s. above the Federal figure. In Sydney the basic wage was fixed in December, 1929, at 82s. 6d., and the Federal at 88s. The Federal basic wage is, therefore, 5s. 6d. above the State figure. In Melbourne there is no basic wage for the State, none having been fixed by the court or by any of the boards. Generally speaking, the Federal basic wage, which is 82s. 6d., on the September figures, is the one that is followed. In Adelaide the State basic wage is now 75s., having been reduced in October last from 85s. 6d., while the Federal basic wage is 78s. 6d., a difference of 3s. 6d. between the two basic wages. In Tasmania there is no State basic wage, but the Federal Court awards are usually followed, and this for Hobart is 82s. In Western Australia the basic wage was declared on the 14th June last, to take effect for the following 12 months, the amount being 86s. That was a reduction, at the time, of 1s. per week. The Federal basic wage, on the figures for the last September quarter, is 79s. The State basic wage thus is 7s. more in the metropolitan area than the Federal basic wage. I mentioned the fact that we are living in abnormal times, and that there have been great fluctuations in the cost of living. In order that hon. members may be aware of the position, I shall quote figures showing the alterations for the last three quarters and also alterations up to date. For the quarter ended March, 1930, the cost of living figure furnished by the State Statistician was 85s. 3d.; for the quarter ended June, 1930, 85s. 1d.; for the quarter ended September, 1930, 82s. 11d.. In addition, however, the State Statistician has provided figures showing that the cost of food and groceries for the month of October was reduced by 3.13 per cent., or 1s. 1d. To-day I have received the figures for house rent for the December quarter. These are collected in the middle of the quarter; that is to say, in November. I find that whereas for the September quarter house rent was 22s. 5d., for the December quarter it was 21s. 2d., or a reduction of 1s. 3d. in the average cost of house rent in the metropolitan area for the current quarter. I mentioned that if the basic wage were fixed on the September figures of cost of living it would be 82s. 1d., whereas it is 86s. However, if the position is brought up to date, then because of the reduction of 1s. 1d. in the cost of food and groceries and 1s. 3d. in the cost of house rent, the basic wage would be reduced to 80s. 7d.

Mr. Panton: That is why you want the Bill through.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Possibly. I will deal with that phase later. I have here the figures of the State Statistician for food and groceries for 1929 and 1930. For October of this year they are 1,576, and for October of last year 1,917, a difference of 341 points, equivalent to a decrease of 17 per cent. For May of this year they are 1,826, and for May of last year 2,005, a difference of 179 points, equivalent to a decrease of 9 per cent. But if we go back to May of 1929, when the figure was 2,005, and compare that with the figure for October of this year, 1,576, there is a difference of 429 points, representing a decrease of 21 per cent. That is to say, the value of money has increased because the cost of living has decreased.

The Marshall: The supply of money has decreased.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I admit that. It is one of the reasons why the Bill has been introduced. As regards the Federal basic wage, taking the various quarters from March last year up to date, and omitting the Powers loading of 3s., for the March quarter the index figure was 1,724 and the wage 82s. 9d. Coming down to the September quarter of this year, we find that the index figure is 1,581, and the wage 76s. Hon. members will see that there is a continual reduction in the cost of living; in other words, the value of the money that the people receive is continually on the in-
crease. I mentioned the fact that the basic wage declared for Perth was 86s., and that it had been declared as from the 1st July of this year to the 30th June, 1931, the basic wage outside the metropolitan area being 1s. less, or 85s. I find that, compared with July of 1914, the basic wage has increased from 54s. to 86s., representing an increase of 60 per cent. As the cost of living index figure has increased by 46 per cent., the basic wage has risen 14 per cent. more than the cost of living. Hon. members will understand that when one deals with basic wage figures, one deals with bottom figures, the foundation of all other wages. The proportion of Western Australian workers on the basic wage is very small.

Mr. Marshall: They are all pretty well employed looking for work.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: In this Bill I am not dealing with unemployment, although the measure has a serious effect on the question of employment, as I shall show later. The variation, however, is not restricted to workers on the basic wage; and to show this I would quote the wages of tradesmen and semi-skilled labourers in 1930. The wages for fitters and turners in 1913 were 12s. per day. This figure relates to the State Implement Works and has been furnished to me by the Minister in charge of State trading concerns. I have here an analysis of the increases, per day, of fitters and turners between 1913 and 1930—

1913—Wage 12s.
Direct increase of wages—8s. 2d.
Indirect increase by shorter hours—1s. 8-1/6d.
Indirect increase by long-service leave—7-7/12d.
Total—10s. 5½d.

Thus there has been a total increase by way of direct wages and privileges of no less than 87.3 per cent. The semi-skilled workers' wage in 1931 was 9s. 6d. per day, and since then has changed as follows:

Direct increase of wages—8s.
Indirect increase by shorter hours—1s. 5½d.
Indirect increase by long-service leave—6½d.
Total—9s. 11½d.

The total increase in direct wages is 83.3 per cent.; and the total increase in direct wages and privileges amounts to 105.04 per cent. The wages bill is a very serious question for the Government of Western Australia, apart from private individuals. This State's expenditure on wages and salaries for the year 1929-30 totalled no less than £5,645,500, of which amount £3,404,500 represented wages and £2,241,000 salaries. The State Statistician has supplied me with figures showing the number of wage and salary earners employed in Western Australia, brought up to the 31st December, 1929. I agree that the figures are not up to date, and that quite a number of these people to-day are not in work. But as these are the only authentic figures available, I have accepted them in order to make this statement.

Hon. P. Collier: Are these Government or private wage and salary earners?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The figures refer to all the wage and salary earners in Western Australia. The number of male earners is 96,938, and of female earners 23,360, or a total of 120,290. I want to make it clear that these are not all people working under arbitration awards. It is not easy to arrive at the exact number governed by such awards. The State Statistician has furnished me with estimates that there are 52,322 males and 3,189 females, or a total of 55,511 workers, governed by arbitration awards. Taking those 1929 figures, an alteration of 1s. per week in the basic wage means to the Western Australian Government an expenditure of £44,000 per annum. Taking the whole of the wage and salary earners in the State, it means an additional cost of £312,750 per annum. It may be said that those wage and salary earners who are not working under arbitration awards are not affected by increases; but the point I want to make clear is that, assuming all these 120,290 persons are in work—probably 10,000 of them are not—it means that everybody at work in Western Australia to-day is, on the figures I have quoted as the cost of living, 5s. per week better off than he or she was six months ago. That is because of the reduction in the cost of living. The question is whether we should continue to allow people who are in work to have this extra money. After all, the Arbitration Court fixes the basic wage on certain standards; and that is all I ask the court to do by this Bill. Owing to the huge fluctuations which have occurred, these people have actually more money in wages and salaries to-day than they had when the court fixed the
present basic wage. The Bill merely asks that the court should be allowed to reconsider its decision in the light of present-day facts. The 120,000 odd wage and salary earners to whom I have referred receive £312,000 additional annually for every shilling of increase in the basic wage, providing, of course, that the same number are still at work. On the figures I have quoted, they are receiving £1,500,000 per annum more than the court decided they should receive. That is to say, the actual money they are receiving has so much more value to-day; and the consequence is that they are so much better off. There is another very serious reason why we should pass the Bill. Wages can only be paid out of production of wealth and the amount of money we can borrow. There are two sources of employment; there are two sources on which we can live. This year we have a reduction of £2,500,000 to £2,000,000 in the amount of loan money available, and we find also a huge reduction in the incomes of the people. I have here some figures, again prepared by the State Statistician, which show that in 1928-29 the quantity of wheat produced was 33,700,040 bushels, valued at £3,236,322. The quantity of wheat estimated for 1930-31 is 50,000,000 bushels, and at 2s. 6d. per bushel, or 6d. more than the present price, the value will be £6,250,000. So that although we have increased our production of wheat by over 16,000,000 bushels, the value of that production is reduced by over £2,000,000. The same position applies in the case of wool. In 1928-29 the wool clip was 58,885,734 lbs., and the clip for the current season is estimated at 78,000,000 lbs., the value remaining just about the same. Notwithstanding the great increase and the consequently greater cost of production, the value received will be practically the same. The timber industry has suffered greatly, more than any other of our industries. In the year 1928-29 the value of timber produced was some £2,000,000, and for the current year the value is estimated at £1,250,000. Combined, the figures show that the value of our production in 1928-29 was £31,992,701, and that for this year the value is estimated at £28,941,000; that is, taking wheat at 2s. 6d. per bushel. Thus we have a reduction of £3,000,000 in the value of our production; and if we take the price of wheat ruling to-day, there is a further drop of £1,250,000. It is right that Parliament should deal with the question on its merits. We shall be told that we are out to reduce wages. All that we are doing is to free the court, as Mr. Drew said in the Upper House, by removing the restriction placed upon that tribunal. We are not out to reduce the basic wage, but to allow the court to fix that wage so as to keep it at the point at which they decided it should be fixed. I do not think it right that people who are in work should receive more in wages or salaries now than they should be receiving, merely because money is more valuable to-day. I believe it would be better for all concerned if the rate of wages could be brought back to the rate the court fixed in June or July. If that were done, there would be more money available for the employment of other people in various parts of the State. I know we will be told we are out to reduce wages.

Mr. McCallum: You have admitted it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have not.

Mr. McCallum: Yes, you did in your last statement, when you said it was better to bring the wages back to some other rate.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, to what the court decided the workers should receive. Because of the fluctuations that have been apparent recently, it is obvious that no one would have expected such a terrific reduction in the cost of living as that which has been noted during the last four months. Why has that reduction occurred? The reason is that the man on the land is not receiving a living wage. The wheat grower, the potato grower and the wool man are all producing at a loss.

Mr. Marshall: How are the bankers getting on?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I will deal with that phase.

Mr. Sampson: What you want is a more equitable distribution.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes.

Mr. McCallum: Equitable distribution! What about your bank account? Never mind the wages man; what about your bank account?

Mr. Sampson interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not mind members questioning me when I am speaking, but I do object to them interjecting between themselves while I am trying to speak.
Mr. McCallum: You object! Never mind about you objecting.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do object to it.

Mr. McCallum: Never mind about you; it is for the Speaker to object; not you.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. McCallum: The Speaker is here to keep order, not the Minister for Works.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I say hon. members should support the Speaker.

Mr. McCallum: Don't take the Speaker's job upon yourself.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have not done so.

Mr. Marshall: You are a paid Minister, and you would be over-paid if you got nothing at all.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The member for Murchison (Mr. Marshall) interjected with regard to the banks. I have figures dealing with banking operations and from these I find that though the primary producers are suffering serious disabilities because the prices of their products are at a low ebb, those who have money have also had their capital reduced. The figures I have were prepared by the Government Statistician and they deal with international share price indexes. In the report I have received from him there is the following—

The magnitude of the fall in share prices during the last 18 months has already received notice in these columns—

That refers to the "Official Record" of the Stock Exchange, Melbourne—

—but the percentage fall in Australia, as compared with percentage recessions in some international markets, has not received attention. Such comparison will bring home to us the severity of the present depression in Australia. From the peak of ordinary share prices in February, 1929, the drop to October, 1930, was over 52 per cent.

Hon. members can appreciate the fact, therefore, that the wealth of Australia is being decreased rapidly. That is apparent when we appreciate the fact that those who have money invested in companies and shares have experienced a fall in the value of their holdings of 52 per cent. That is bad enough, but when we compare the position with that obtaining in other countries, we find that the depression here is much greater than elsewhere. The report I was reading continues—

In New York the recession from the peak in September, 1929, to August, 1930, was 34 per cent. Over the same period London recorded a decline of 25 per cent. and Paris 15 per cent. The peak in Berlin was reached in October, 1929, and the fall from that month to August, 1930, was 22 per cent.

I do not want to go through the whole of the details but I think hon. members will realise that those who have money invested are certainly losing the value of their capital to-day. When I said I expected to receive support for this measure from Opposition members, I based my expectations on speeches delivered by some of them. For instance, the member for Guildford-Midland (Hon. W. D. Johnson)—I am sorry he is not present—had something to say on the subject.

Mr. Panton: The member for Guildford-Midland is away at present endeavouring to secure a better price for wheat. That is what he is doing, if you want to know.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I hope he will succeed.

Mr. Panton: But you did not mention that.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: In the course of a speech, the member for Guildford-Midland said—

We would welcome a review of wages if the cost of living were tackled at the same time, but we object to wages coming down when the cost of living is going up.

The cost of living is going down, and I agree with the hon. member that no Government should do anything to reduce wages when the cost of living is going up. In view of the facts I have established from the Government Statistician's figures, I think, therefore, that hon. member should agree to the Bill. Then the member for East Perth (Mr. Kenneally) was another who dealt with this phase. I am sorry he, too, is absent. In the course of his speech he said—

The subsequent decisions of the Arbitration Court, which takes into consideration the cost of the commodities required by the worker must be reflected in the basic wage finding—

I agree with that—

—If the basic wage is reduced, the amount received per week by the worker will maintain his wage standard by preserving to him the same purchasing power to enable him to buy
the commodities that he purchased in 1912. There will thus be no reduction in the wage standard.

That is all I am asking the House to agree to. I ask members to pass the Bill to allow the Arbitration Court to provide for the workers the same wage that will purchase the same quantity of commodities as the court decided he should be in a position to do. The member for East Perth went on to say—

What concerns them most is the purchasing power of the money regarding the acquisition of commodities upon which they live. If the existing earning power of money is reduced and reflects itself through the activities of the community to the extent of reducing the cost of all essential commodities, including rent, that will be made manifest in the decisions of the court in regard to the wages of the workers.

That is what I take as my text. I agree with the member for East Perth, and that is all the Government are asking.

Mr. Panten: It is about the only time the pair of you will be in agreement.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: In this instance the member for East Perth is at least fair. The Government do not ask the House to say to the Arbitration Court, "You shall do this" or "You shall do that." All we say to the court is we shall remove the restriction from you which determines that you can only fix the basic wage once in 12 months, and we shall give the court the right to say that when a fluctuation occurs in the cost of living that increases the value of wages paid, the wage may be brought back to a point in accord with the cost of living. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. McCallum, debate adjourned.

BILL—TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT.

Council's Message.

Message from the Council received and read, notifying that it had proposed an alternative amendment to its Amendment No. 1 in the Bill, to which the Assembly had disagreed, and had agreed to the Assembly's further amendment to the Council's Amendment No. 18.

BILL—COMPANIES ACT FURTHER AMENDMENT.

Returned from the Council without amendment.

LOAN ESTIMATES, 1930-31.

In Committee of Supply.

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

Vote—Departmental, £134,252:

Mr. MARSHALL: May I ask if it is proposed to deal with the Vote as a whole, or whether we are to proceed division by division?

The CHAIRMAN: We are dealing with the Departmental Vote. The general discussion has been concluded.

Item—Salaries, Works, £54,491:

Retirement of Engineer-in-chief.

Mr. McCALLUM: I wish to emphasise how disappointed I was with the reply furnished by the Minister for Works to the representations made by the Leader of the Opposition and by myself with regard to the retirement of the Engineer in Chief. The Minister made no attempt to answer the case we put up, and merely pleaded that his action had been dictated by the need for economy, as though there were not other economies possible without impairing the efficiency of the Public Works Department by the retirement of its chief directing officer. The Minister did not attempt to show why the retirement of the Engineer in Chief was essential, or wherein that retirement would result in the effecting of economies. Most of the statements he made had no bearing on that question at all. He did not show that his objective could not be achieved other than by the period put to the service of the distinguished engineer who has presided over the department for some time. No attempt was made to explain why Mr. Stillman was chosen as the officer to be retrenched; no explanation was given as to why Western Australia should be deprived of the services of so eminent an official. Figures were quoted to show the enormous savings effected during the few years the Engineer in Chief has been in charge of the Public Works Department of this State, but the Minister made no attempt to indicate why services that secured that result for the State had to be terminated. There are plenty of ways in which economies could be effected and the State still retain the benefit of the knowledge, experience and ability that the Engineer in Chief possesses. The only reason ad-
vanced for the move was that the railway construction branch had been handed over to the Working Railways. Strange to say the engineer who is to take Mr. Stileman's place is a man who, if he has experience in one branch of engineering more than in another, has had that experience in connection with railway construction. He gained nearly all his experience in connection with that branch before he received his appointment as chairman of the Main Roads Board. Now he is to be placed in charge of the Public Works Department, and railway construction work is to be taken away from his jurisdiction! There can be no logic in the argument advanced by the Minister and, in my opinion, that explanation was merely a second thought. I do not think it indicated the reason why the change has been made. Regarding the transfer of railway construction from the Public Works Department to the Railway Department, I agree with the view expressed by the Leader of the Opposition that the move was wrong. I believe that as time goes on, it will be shown that the transfer will not be in the interests of the State. It was an amazing admission by the Minister that the change was made without consultation with either the Commissioner of Railways or the Engineer in Chief. This change was made without any consultation with the chief officer in charge of either department. A body of laymen decided this highly technical point without any reference to the chief officers concerned. On a technical matter of high engineering importance, the decision should have rested with trained men. Arguments on this point extend over 30 years, and on every occasion when the question has been raised, the engineers have unanimously opposed amalgamation. Only laymen in the railways have approved of it. I shall quote the opinion of the most highly qualified man we have had. I shall go back to the time of Mr. C. Y. O'Connor, and no one would attempt to dispute such an eminent authority. He not only controlled the Public Works Department, but managed the railways.

The Minister for Lands: The posts were amalgamated then.

Mr. McCALLUM: Subsequently be asked to be relieved of the management of the railways, but the existing lines and the station buildings were still left under his control. When he shed those activities, railway construction was still carried on by him. Consequently there can be no question that he knew the case from both sides. In his report in 1900 he stated—

Personally, I have been convinced for many years, and many experts and others who have had experience of the matter have been convinced for many years, that it is not a wise arrangement to thus combine the designing of railways with the working of them, if for no other reason, for the reason already stated that the designing of an engineering work of this character, to produce the best and most economical results, is a science in itself, and that it is unwise to throw upon officers who have already a great and anxious task in their hands to maintain the way and works and rolling stock in safe and efficient condition and in arranging the train services, and in administering the whole of the operations of goods and passenger traffic, and the collection of all revenue and charges, the additional task of studying, from the experience of various countries, and thinking out and initiating the designs of railway construction which would be most suitable to the surrounding conditions.

To do all this it may, of course, be contended, and in fact it has been contended, that the engineers in the Railway Department itself should be, and possibly are, as good judges as to how railway works should be designed as the engineers of the Public Works Department can be, or possibly better; but even if my own personal and rather special training and experience in the matter (extending continuously over a period of 40 years in Europe and Australasia) be altogether ignored, there is still that very important fact to be borne in mind, namely, that the engineers in the Railway Department itself must necessarily be much more subject to coercion by the traffic officers than the engineers in the Public Works Department would be, and would thus consequently, inevitably, and for the sake of peace and quietness, be drawn into the construction of works chargeable to capital account whenever the Traffic Department pressed for them (as it should be built, or that the motive that the Traffic Department desired them to be), even though opposed to their own judgment.

That man, with 40 years' experience in Europe and Australasia, gave it as his firm conviction that it was a grave error. He went on to say—

In this connection, also, I would wish to say here that the plea upon which the aggressiveness of the Working Railways Department has been principally based, namely, the plea that the officers who work the railways must be the best judges as to how the railways should be constructed, is, to my mind, in view of all the underlying principles involved, an absolute fallacy; as great a fallacy in fact in its way as would be the contention that the man who had to sail a ship would be the best judge as to how it should be built, or that the driver of a locomotive would be the best judge as to how it should be designed.
He made a lengthy report on the subject and stood solidly against construction being handed over to the Working Railways, notwithstanding that for a considerable time he had controlled both departments. Mr. Thompson, on the eve of his retirement from the position of Engineer-in-Chief, submitted a report. Nearly every time there has been a change of Government, or a change of Engineer-in-Chief, the issue has been raised, but on every occasion in the last 30 years the Government decided against amalgamation. Mr. Thompson said—

As you say, this is a question that has been discussed inter-departmentally for many years. I myself have taken part in the controversy during those years, and stand convinced as much to-day as ever I was that the control of construction apart from a revenue-producing department such as the Working Railways essentially is, is in the interests of the State. . . . The Commissioner's interests are opposed to non-paying pioneer lines, and there is too much danger, in handing over the control of construction to him of their being excessively capitalised. . . . I have said that railway construction to suit varying conditions is in itself a science, and calls for expert officers. A maintenance engineer is not usually a designer. His work does not call forth those qualities. A construction engineer is essentially a designer.

We have laymen overriding those contentions and setting aside the opinions of professional men. Mr. Thompson also stated—

I do not wish to make a strong point of this observation, although I am distinctly of the opinion that an arrangement whereby loan and revenue moneys are kept separate in regard to expenditure is advisable. I would not for one moment impugn the honesty of the Railways Commissioner in this connection, although it must be admitted that where the paramount desire is to show favourable returns from a railway working point of view, there is a danger, perhaps almost unconsciously, of the balance swaying over to the advantage of revenue, even at the expense of loan. I have had a lengthy experience of these matters, and speak advisedly.

Mr. Thompson concluded his report with the following statement:—

On the eve of my retirement from the service of the State, I stand in quite a disinterested position in regard to this matter, but so convinced am I from my lengthy experience that my advocacy of construction distinct from the Railway Department is the correct thing for the State that I feel it my duty to sound a note of warning, lest the prevailing system be changed to the disadvantage of the State's interest.

In the face of such reports, decisions have been made in favour of the change. In the Press of the 22nd September last appeared the following report from Sydney:—

The railway line from Ballina to Booyong was officially opened yesterday afternoon, thus bringing to an end agitation that had gone on for 40 years. Mr. W. T. Missingham, M.L.A., said that 15 miles of railway had taken 5½ years to build, and the cost had increased from £140,000 to £412,000. If ever a case has been made out for the removal of construction from the Railway Commissioners to the Works Department, it was provided in the construction of this line.

That line cost approximately £32,000 per mile. It is a serious matter when laymen make important decisions and upset established organisation. Both Mr. O'Connor and Mr. Thompson stressed the fact that railway construction is a science, but that does not count with the Minister for Works.

He overrides the opinion of his highly-trained technical men, and his views are to stand without his even consulting the Commissioner of Railways or the Engineer-in-Chief. He says in effect, "No professional advice at all was obtained." He steps in and makes a change without report, advice or recommendation, or without even seeking the opinions of the men who will be called upon to do the work. The railway construction branch of this State has been commanded by every authority that has examined it. From time to time commissions have visited Western Australia from, I believe, every other State of the Commonwealth and New Zealand. Inquiring into railway construction, they have come here to investigate our methods, and on every occasion they have commended the work of the railway construction branch of the Works Department. It is the cheapest work of its kind in any part of Australasia.

There is nothing to equal it; the contractors cannot compete with it. If there is one branch of Government activity that has stood the test, it is the railway construction branch. Yet this is the branch that is selected for the change. One would have thought the Government would have retained a branch showing such a fine record, but it is to be scrapped, and the work is to be handed over to the Railway Department.

The working of the railways means much to the State at the present time particularly, because the State deficit last year was accounted for by the loss on railway operations. If ever there was a time when the Commissioner of Railways should concen-
trate on making his department pay and be free of undertaking railway construction, it is the present. Yet the construction branch is to be taken over by him at a time when the railways are causing the Treasurer more concern that any other branch of Government activity. I should have thought that the first thing to do would be to say to the Commissioner, "Pay special attention to making the railways pay; devote all your energies to that end." But no. The Commissioner must now take over other duties that he has never before had to perform. That is a retrograde step, and it surprises me to find that this change-over has been made merely on the say-so of a layman, and not on the advice of the heads of the department. It was not even suggested to them that they should give the Government the benefit of their opinions. No; the Government knew better. I do not think any member of the Government can find fault with the way the Railway Construction Branch has been conducted. It cannot be said that that branch was expensive. No fault whatever was found with it in respect of anything in the shape of undue expenditure. The branch challenges comparison with any railway construction branch in any place the Government cares to name. Whilst at one time there was some friction between that branch and the Works Department, it was overcome during recent years, and there has been testimony from both sides of smooth working, harmony and co-operation during the last three or four years. The Government cannot possibly say that there will be more efficiency and more economical running under the altered arrangement because the branch stands out as the most efficient that exists either in this State or in any other State of the Commonwealth. That was put up as an excuse, a reason for the retirement of Mr. Stileman. I am very disappointed that we did not get more definite information than we obtained from the Minister for Works last night. The State is entitled to know just what is behind the retirement of Mr. Stileman. Why should we lose the services of such an eminent engineer, one who has proved himself beyond all doubt, and who has saved this State so many scores of thousands of pounds? The one job alone to which I referred last night—the Peel Estate—is a testimony of the Engineer-in-Chief's ability. On this work alone, Western Australia is now saving £20,000 a year—six times the amount of his salary. And the man who performs a service such as that to the State has had his services dispensed with! It is amazing. One would have thought that in the present circumstances the last man the Public Works Department could afford to lose would be its head, the directing genius, the man who has displayed outstanding ability. All to save a paltry £1,000, the most that could possibly be saved by the alteration, and to save which we are to lose the directing force of the department! I express my great concern at the loss of the services of Mr. Stileman. I have no wish to drag the matter through the realms of party politics at all, but I feel it is so much in the interests of the State that attention must be drawn to it, because we have so many millions laid out in public works that have to be maintained. Economies in maintenance as well as economies in construction, I admit are essential, but the history of the State shows that it is difficult to get a man in charge of a department who is able to achieve what Mr. Stileman has done. Having got that man, and having proved himself, the decision of the Government now is that his services must be dispensed with. I make another appeal to the Government to reconsider the decision they have arrived at, and in the interests of the State to find some way of retaining Mr. Stileman's services for Western Australia.

Hon. P. COLLIER: In the course of a fairly lengthy experience in this State, I have never listened to a speech so wholly inadequate to the situation as that delivered by the Minister for Works last evening. It was the most unconvincing utterance that a Minister has ever delivered. He did not make the slightest attempt to justify the change that has been made, not the slightest. Quoting overhead costs and charges of 13 per cent. and so on, as a justification for the re-organisation of the department, was merely to sidestep the real issue. There is no question about the need for reorganisation of the Public Works Department at the present juncture. No one will deny that there must be retrenchment and reorganisation, but it does not follow that, in order to effect reorganisation and economy, the head of the department
must be retired. The very fact that reorganisation is necessary and that we are passing through difficult times is the real justification why the man with the best qualifications in the State should be retained. As showing what thought was given to reorganisation it might be mentioned that every Government for the past 20 years has had under consideration the matter of placing railway construction under the Working Railways Branch. I presume, too, that every Government carefully investigated the matter and obtained reports and advice from the highly qualified professional officers in both departments. In every instance the proposal was rejected. But this Government comes along and adopts the astonishing attitude of making the change without asking the opinion of the head of the Public Works Department, or even that of the Commissioner of Railways. It is astounding to think that a layman would make a change of this description without considering it to be his duty to obtain the advice of the heads of the departments concerned.

The Premier: The Commissioner of Railways is in favour of the change.

Hon. P. COLLIER: We were told last night that he was not consulted.

The Premier: I spoke to him myself about it.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The Minister for Works said last night that the Commissioner had not been consulted, and I have it on good authority that the Commissioner was never consulted.

The Premier: I spoke to him about it.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The Minister for Works last night confirmed my authority by admitting that the Commissioner of Railways had not been consulted.

The Minister for Works: He was consulted.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The member for South Fremantle dealt with it fully.

Mr. McCallum: I think we should have an inquiry to find out.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Irrespective of what the Minister says, I will make the assertion that the Engineer-in-Chief was not consulted.

The Minister for Works: That does not necessarily mean that what you say is true.

Mr. McCallum: Well, let us have an inquiry.

Hon. P. COLLIER: This is an eleven-hour thought of the Minister. He did not mention it last night.

The Minister for Works: Not the question of handing over railway construction.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The member for South Fremantle dealt with it fully. Government of laymen step in and adopt policy, which of course they are entitled to do; but surely common sense and business methods should have prompted the Government to get the opinion of the profession.
men of the department before finally deciding the matter. That was not done.

The Premier: I think you will find it was done.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Apart altogether from the question of the re-organisation of the department, the speech of the Minister for Works last night was a revelation. It was the most astonishing of its kind I have ever listened to. He told us in detail how he set about the re-organisation, after showing where there was need for reorganisation, which everybody admits. That point is not questioned. But the Minister did not consult anyone; he did not consult any of the engineers to get their professional advice. Surely the position is Gilbertian. Here is a layman with only 25 minutes' experience of office—to be literally correct, six months' experience of office—and in the fullness of that experience he set about re-organising a highly technical department of professional officers. What qualifications did he have for such a task? For some time the chairman of a road board away beyond the back of Wyalpatchem; six months' experience of office, and without the aid of the advice of any professional officer in the Public Service, without having consulted anybody, so he said himself, he proceeds to retire the Engineer-in-Chief of the State. He sets about the re-organisation of a great department, retiring some of the officers and allocating new duties to others. The Minister for Works did all this, so he said himself, without the advice or assistance of any professional officer of the department. It is the most astonishing piece of work I have ever heard of. What qualifications did the Minister possess for re-organising the whole of the Public Works Department? What are his qualifications for determining as between the relative merits of the Engineer-in-Chief and other engineers in the department? If it had been done by a Labour Minister it would have been put down to his want of business acumen, but the Minister for Works did all this alone right up to the point when he brought it to Cabinet and made a recommendation, and Cabinet accepted the recommendation. Up to that point the Minister for Works did it all alone. He has said so himself. After only six months' experience of the Engineer-in-Chief and the other officers of the department the Minister, although a layman, accepted the responsibility of making such a decision. I have had considerable experience of ministerial office, eleven years of it; yet I would not dream of suggesting that I had qualifications befitting me to re-organise a department like that of the Public Works without consulting or getting advice and assistance from professional men, men of knowledge and experience. But the Minister carried out the work without consulting anybody at all. Nobody knew anything at all about it until he took his recommendation to Cabinet and it was adopted, whereupon he sent for Mr. Munt and Mr. Tindale.

The Minister for Works: No, I explained that the Public Service Commissioner sent for them.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I understood the Minister to say that he advised those gentlemen of the position. Then Mr. Stileman was informed the same day.

The Minister for Works: Before the others.

Hon. P. COLLIER: But does the Minister know that he has by his own admission abrogated the whole of the Public Service Act of 1904? In that Act it is definitely laid down how a man may be retired from the Public Service, and how officers shall be appointed. Certain channels are provided in the Act, but the Minister swept all that aside.

The Minister for Works: I did not.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Did the Public Service Commissioner make the recommendation?

The Minister for Works: Yes, the Public Service Commissioner made the recommendation two months before I acted on it.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Last night the Minister said that when he set out to re organise the department he called in the assistance or advice of the Public Service Commissioner—which was the right thing to do—but he did not get any assistance from that officer.

The Minister for Works: Not from him; I did not say that.

Mr. McCallum: Yes, you did. You said you could not get any headway made, and so you did it yourself.

The Minister for Works: I did not.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes, you said you called in the Public Service Commissioner but could not make any headway. Then the Minister went on to say he had to tackle
the task himself, and that he set about doing it without the aid of the Public Service Commissioner.

The Minister for Works: I did not say anything of the kind.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I am sure the Minister did say so. I do not wish to delay the House by sending for "Hansard," but I am sure it will be found in "Hansard." It was at the very moment he said he called in the Public Service Commissioner. That was the time when he went on to say he could not make any headway, and so he then tackled the task himself. In any event it is quite clear that, without the advice of any professional officer, he took the responsibility. In saying that, I presume the Minister did not consult any other engineer outside the department. I presume that the engineers associated with the Engineer-in-Chief were not consulted because the Minister, before investigating the matter, made up his mind that the Engineer-in-Chief had to be retired. Now we have an added appointment made. The Commissioner of Main Roads has had added to his duties those of head engineer of the State. Apparently he had not enough to do before.

The Minister for Works: No, not with the reduction of expenditure.

Mr. Patrick: He has never been the Main Roads Board.

Hon. P. COLLIER: He is not the board now; he is the commissioner. Previously there were three members of the board doing the work, but now there is only one. Surely there is still sufficient work for one man! Can one man control the work of the Main Roads Board and in addition that of the Public Works Department, the Water Supply Department, and the whole of the engineering for the State?

The Premier: Even so, he would not be overworked nowadays.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It is no explanation. There is something behind it.

The Premier: No.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I have just learnt that the Public Service Commissioner made a recommendation for the retrenchment of the Engineer-in-Chief two months before the Minister acted on it.

The Minister for Works: No, a recommendation for the reorganisation of the Public Works Department.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Oh no. I do not want any misunderstanding on this point. I understood the Minister to say that the recommendation of the Public Service Commissioner was for the retirement of the Engineer-in-Chief.

The Minister for Works: No, for the reorganisation of the department.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I am glad to hear that. Of course the Public Service Commissioner would recommend it. A child would know there was need for reorganisation because of the altered circumstances. But that is not to say that the reorganisation should consist of the retirement of the Engineer-in-Chief, the ablest man in the department, or indeed in the State. Is that how we are going to secure economy and efficiency—by retiring the head, and putting in his place an inferior man? I say it not offensively to the other man, but he is immeasurably inferior in intellect, capacity and ability to the Engineer-in-Chief. Even that leaves him without any reflection upon his qualifications. This scheme of reorganisation has been effected by a man with six months' experience of ministerial office, who makes a recommendation—

The Premier: It was done in a constitutional and proper way.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes, but it was an extremely, outrageously and abominably foolish thing to do.

The Premier: That is a matter of opinion.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Of course. I am expressing my opinion. That is all I am doing. In my opinion there is no question about it. It is dismembering the Public Works Department—for you kill the body when you cut off the head. That is what has happened in this instance. No doubt the Minister for Works has been assured in certain quarters that things will go on satisfactorily, and that he still has there men of capacity who will carry on.

The Minister for Works: I am satisfied they are men of capacity.

Hon. P. COLLIER: And the Minister has been there six months! I was there six years, and I had quite a different opinion of the assurances given to me from interested quarters. I paid no attention to the influence that was sought to be exerted on me; and I can say, always modestly, that with six years of experience I am a better judge of what goes on in a department than is the Minister with his six months' experience. I have some idea of what influences
are at work in these matters. I know the influences that were sought to be exerted on me, and the obstacles that were put in the way of my not yielding to those influences. But we had scarcely left office when apparently those influences started to operate again, and this time more successfully. But so sure as this reorganisation has taken place, before many years there will be another reorganisation of the Public Works Department.

The Premier: Surely you were not in that department for six years.

Hon. P. COLLIER: No, but as Treasurer I was pretty closely in touch with the heads of departments and their qualifications. I had to be, and the Premier himself as Treasurer will find that he, too, will have to be, if he wants to know how the money is being expended, and whether the demands being made upon him are justified. The ex-Minister for Works (Mr. McCallum) had six years’ experience of the Public Works Department, and I endorse entirely every word he has said in regard to the matter. It was a colossal blunder; second-rate engineers—they are first-class engineers rather, but they are not of the highest capacity; and nothing but the basis of the highest qualifications and capacity is good enough, or ought to be good enough, in the position of chief engineer for the State. I do not want to repeat what I said last night, but wherever we look we find evidence of the engineering blunders that have been made. Some of the men who were in the department when those blunders were made are still in the department, holding responsible positions. They could not go on blundering while Mr. Stileman was there, for he knew everything that was being done, and he was a check upon them; but now that he has gone they will have a free hand to carry it into effect that they have not made a mistake in regard to the whole matter.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is evident from the criticism meted out to me that either I did not properly explain the position, or that some members did not catch my meaning. I do not intend to reply to the personal attack made upon me, but I do want to make the position a little more clear. In my speech I dealt with the question of the transfer of the Railway Construction Branch to the Railway Department. Some months ago, before any reorganisation was thought of, the Premier asked me to agree to the transfer of the Railway Construction Branch to the Working Railways. I called for the files and reports. In my speech the other evening I said I had had files before me 30 years back, and that I also had files dealing with the late Mr. C. Y. O’Connor. Amongst the files there appeared to be two sides to the question, the railway side and the public works side. At first I refused to agree to the Premier’s request. This was some nine weeks ago. The Premier had impressed upon me by minutes that I must make economies in my department. The Public Service Commissioner put up a scheme, also about nine weeks ago, to re-organise the Public Works Department. When the Premier showed me the Commissioner’s letter I said it frightened me, but he advised me to take it away and think it over. I thought the matter over for two months. One night in the House I told the Premier that, after giving the matter two months’ consideration, I agreed that there was no other way out. I rang up the Public Service Commissioner and told him this, and immediately he set about...
the re-organisation. That was the whole position.

Hon. P. Collier: That is not as you explained it last evening.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have looked through my speech, and I know there is not one place in it where I said "I did it"; and yet the Leader of the Opposition has said that every second word of mine was "I did it."

Mr. McCallum: Did you not say "I did it"?

Hon. M. F. Troy: Did you not make too free a use of the "ego"?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I may have done so, but did not do so deliberately. I do not think members should make a personal attack upon me because of the way in which I speak. Of course I must have used the word "we" or something else. It is four months since the matter of the transfer was brought under my notice by the Premier. After thoroughly investigating it, I as Minister, felt that the request should be complied with. I certainly did not want to do anything to destroy any of my departments to lower their prestige. The files show that from the departmental point of view there is a good case on either side. In my speech I said that when one analysed things and read both sides, it was apparent that the Public Works Department officials and engineers did not want to lower their status or prestige. Very much the same point of view was advanced by the Railway Department. At the time I could not agree to the proposal. Once the Public Service Commissioner—I presume at the request of the Premier—had gone into the question and put up a report, the one of which I was frightened, and after taking two months to consider it, I could see no other way out than the way we took. I still say that, with the concurrence of Cabinet and the Public Service Commissioner, we have done the right thing in the interests of the State as a whole. The overhead costs have to come down. It was impossible to get them down any further without some scheme of re-organisation. When I introduced the Public Works Estimates I said it was my opinion that the department would not be able to secure very much in the way of loan money for years to come, and that consequently I would have to consider a scheme for the re-organisation of all the departments. The member for Guildford-Mid-

land (Hon. W. D. Johnson) who was Minister for Works for some time, and has a considerable knowledge of the subject said—

The question we have to ask ourselves today is whether we can maintain them at their present high salaries. If it is right for the men on the roads and water supplies, on drainage works, and so on—men who are in receipt of the basic wage or tradesmen receiving the tradesmen's rates—to be put off, it is certain that we cannot afford to retain highly-paid officers whose salaries are set out in the Estimates. If the men who do the toil are not employed, there will be nothing for the supervisors to do, and therefore their services should be dispensed with. I am glad the Minister realises that retrenchment is necessary, but I hope he will speed up consideration of the matter, so that it will be not one section alone who will suffer as a result of the financial stringency, but that all will share by going on part time or submitting to reductions so that the highly paid officer also will be relieved of some of his income.

Members may hold different views on this question. The matter has received very serious consideration, and has been a source of great worry to me. I think now there was no other course to follow than the one we took. I say further that the engineers who are left in the department are quite capable of carrying on the work and doing it efficiently. I do not think the department will suffer; rather that the State will benefit. We are told this means a saving of only £1,000 a year. My view is that we will save at least £20,000 a year. By our reorganisation we have found that the services of several highly paid officials can be dispensed with. The salary part is only one item for one officer. There are numerous incidentals to be thought of, such as motor car services and the like. I have been told that I have overridden the Public Service Commissioner. The whole scheme is that of the Public Service Commissioner, as approved by Cabinet. I believe the action of the Government will prove not only to be justified, but to find favour with the majority of the people.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Railways and Tramways, £541,231:

Item—Bridgetown-Jarndadup extension:

Mr. SAMPSON: I have heard there is a question as to whether a certain railway will or will not pay its way. When I asked that question in the House I was informed that the matter of running motor transport to serve the district concerned was under con-
sideration. I should like a statement from the minister regarding this item. If the railway is not going to pay its way for some time, it would be better that the work should be stopped, and some form of motor transport substituted. If that were done the settlers would not suffer any penalty and the State would greatly benefit.

Mr. J. H. Smith: This railway should be expedited as much as possible. There are many settlers in the Northcliffe and adjacent areas, all of whom are a great distance from marketing facilities for their cream and other produce, and they are greatly hampered by comparison with their more favoured neighbours in the matter of the price they receive. If the railway is hurried on and finished all these settlers will be put on a better basis. The question of price is due to delay arising from only one service per week, and that by motor truck. The same difficulty obtained as regards pigs, but for these the Premier has promised special transport. The Government have also promised to speed up the construction of the railway, and therefore I am satisfied.

Mr. M'Callum: I am surprised that the railway is not yet finished. During the election campaign I learned that the last speaker told his electors that he had the Premier's promise, conditionally upon being returned to office, of another 400 men being put on. Since then I have learned that a number of men have been put off. A boarding house keeper told me she had the definite assurance of the Premier, through the member for the district, that 400 additional men would be put on. People said that the Labour Government were going slow on the job. The community knows full well that the Premier lives up to every election promise he makes. The success won here on election promises set a bad example to New South Wales. We constructed the Jarnadup-Bridgetown railway just at the pace the engineer said the men could be employed economically. In the case of the present Government, all that counted was votes; promises did not matter. The question of cost never enters the Premier's mind. During the last week about 40 men have been put off the railway. Is the member for Nelson pleased with that performance of the Premier's promise? Mr. members opposite think the position is quite satisfactory when thousands of men and women are hungry and will soon be without clothes and boots, despite all the glowing promises held out at election time. The Government's policy is to get away from criticism, from being reminded of the position the country is in.

The Premier: Who put the country in that position?

Mr. M'Callum: We are told that the Bridgetown-Jarnadup country was handicapped because of our slowness, but the railway has progressed very little in the last six months.

Mr. J. H. Smith: While sorry that greater progress is not being made with the railway, I am amused at the imagination of the member for South Fremantle. The hon. member knows that the boarding-house-keeper's story is an absolute fabrication. Is he still sure at his failure in that part of the South-West? As campaign director of his party he thought it worth while to spend six or seven days in my electorate for the purpose of defeating me. In that connection he did something never before known in politics. He usurped his position as Minister to knock off men from their employment, both morning and afternoon, in order that they might listen to a political address from him as campaign director; and the men never made up that time. He told the foreman to knock the men off because he wanted to address them.

The Chairman: We are dealing with the item.

Mr. J. H. Smith: I have the Government's assurance that so far as funds permit, the construction of the railway is being speeded up. The member for South Fremantle knows that there is no money available for the purchase of rails. Motor transport is quite impracticable in that wet country.

The Minister for Works: There is £30,000 on the Estimates for this railway, but the amount has been exceeded by £10,000. The amount provided this year is £10,000 above the estimate. Up to the 30th September last, £23,000 odd had been spent, leaving about £17,000 more to be spent. I am surprised to hear that 40 men were put off the construction work last week. According to my information, 120 men are employed on the railway, working half-time.

Hon. P. Collier: Those men are on half-time?

The Minister for Works: Yes.

Hon. P. Collier: Then that is a reduction, in effect.
The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There is £17,000 left for expenditure during the remainder of the year, and the men concerned agreed to be put on half-time.

Mr. McCallum: Then you have slowed down 50 per cent. That is how you speed up.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The work is proceeding slowly in view of the inability of the Treasurer to provide funds to enable quicker progress to be made. Until recently, the men were working full time, but rather than reduce employment, the 120 men concerned are working half time.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I would like more information as to how far the work has progressed. I understand the line is from Pemberton to Northcliffe, with a view to further extension to Nornalup later on. Is it a practical proposition to construct a section in these circumstances?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I can give information from memory only. No rails have been laid, because no money is available to secure them. Certain earthworks, culverts and bridges are being constructed. The work is expensive and will cost nearly £10,000 a mile.

Mr. J. H. Smith: It will be cheaper after the first six or eight miles.

Mr. McCallum: Over that distance the work would cost more than £10,000 a mile.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The funds available are being used to provide employment. Some of the girders for the bridges are here, but I understand that, owing to difficulties connected with importations just now, the orders for girders for two bridges have been cancelled for the time being.

Mr. WITHERS: The work is expensive and will cost nearly £10,000 a mile.

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Mr. WITHERS: The Minister's explanation must be unsatisfactory to members representing South-West constituencies. When the money is exhausted, what will happen? I do not know how far the Premier will be able to honour his promise to the member for Nelson regarding the early construction of the line. When railways are to be constructed, provision should be made for their completion. Perhaps £10,000 allocated to another line could be better employed on the line now under consideration.

The PREMIER: No one knows better than the member for South Fremantle, who was a member of a Government that spent very freely, that the financial position is extremely difficult to-day. The Leader of the Opposition knows quite well that we cannot borrow in London or in Australia, which means it is impossible to get money. The member for South Fremantle associated my name with that of Mr. Lang in connection with the Loan Council. The Leader of the Opposition and Mr. Lang got us into this jolly mess and if Mr. Lang can help us out of it, I shall not object.

Hon. P. Collier: There is no mess.

The PREMIER: The Leader of the Opposition knows that never was an agreement broken so quickly as the Financial Agreement. The hon. member knows the Loan Council has never been able to raise the loans authorised. Had he known that the money could not be restored from future loans to be raised by the Loan Council, the Leader of the Opposition would not have used various trust funds as he did. That has always been the practice—to use funds available and then restore the amounts out of loans raised subsequently. On the 30th June last, we were down to the extent of £3,516,000 on loan account. Naturally, the funds used up in the past will have to be restored before we can proceed with loan expenditure on any appreciable scale. I am sorry, but the Committee must realise the position. Our works programme must be held up until we can get on the London money market.

Mr. Willcock: What better prospects have we in Western Australia of getting money there than we have in association with the Loan Council?

The PREMIER: I know only that which I am told. If the member for Geraldton were to write to his old friend in London and ask him about it, he would probably learn that we would be able to raise the necessary money.

Mr. SAMPSON: The statements made during the discussion amply bear out my suggestion that where railways become too expensive in some districts, motor transport could be utilised.

Item—Brookton-Dale River, £10,000:

Mr. J. I. MANN: I fully appreciate the present financial position, but nevertheless I hope the Brookton-Dale River line will be constructed while the present Government are in office. People have been farming in the Dale area for over 40 years, and the absence of railway facilities has retarded the progress of that district. I hope
the line will be extended through to relieve the traffic on the eastern sections of the railways.

Item—Lake Grace-Karigarin, £75,000:

Mr. BROWN: I am glad that the railway is under construction. I have been battling for the line ever since I was elected to Parliament. I congratulate the Minister for Works on readily grasping the need for the line and commencing its construction, while I also admit I received wonderful consideration from the Labour Government. Mr. Collier, when Premier, promised that the railway would be built, but it was left to the present Government to commence the actual construction. I hope the line will be completed through to the terminus by the end of February.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The member for Pingelly seems to be developing a very pronounced party attitude. He can find no virtue in the Opposition. In a manner quite uncalled for he threw bouquets at the present Minister for Works, but denied any credit to the Labour Government.

Mr. Brown: I gave you credit.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Perhaps the hon. member knows that the present Minister for Works could not have started the construction of the line, had it not been for the preparatory work carried out by the Labour Government. I told the hon. member on several occasions that the line would be constructed, and that it was hoped to be able to lift this season's harvest. The hon. member should be fair.

Mr. WANSBROUGH: I am pleased that the Government are proceeding with the construction of this railway. The people east of the Great Southern between Lake Grace and Pingrup are deserving of consideration equally with the Karigarin settlers, and I hope the Government will extend the line at an early date.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I should like some information regarding the progress of the line. The member for Pingelly thanked the Minister for what he had done but we do not know what has been done. Is the present harvest to be transported by motor truck; are dumps to be created in anticipation of rails being laid later on, or will the rails be laid expeditiously?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We intend to shift the harvest by the railway and we hope to have the rails out by March at the least.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: You have the rails available?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes. The Government have been much concerned about the expense of getting the rails out. A line is usually cleared three chains wide, but to save money this line has been cleared only half a chain in parts. In other parts where a 14ft. embankment was contemplated, we have made it only 11 feet. It was rumoured that the railway would not be ready to move this harvest, but since then the wheat merchants have been advised that the line will be available, and they are buying accordingly.

Item—Rolling stock, railways £100,000:

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I am at a loss to understand what progress can be made in the matter of rolling stock in view of the reduced activities at the Midland workshops where the rolling stock is mainly, if not solely, manufactured. I appreciate that money is tight and that the Government have to economise, but it is a question whether they are not economising to an extent that will make it very expensive to provide the rolling stock necessary to meet future requirements. On one occasion, the construction of rolling stock was delayed and when a new Government took office, they found the railways so badly equipped that it was necessary to work double time at the workshops, construct special works at Maylands, and do additional work at Fremantle. That delay in the construction of rolling stock probably cost 25 per cent. more in the long run because it had to be done under rush conditions. Are we heading the same way to-day? A comparatively large number of men have been retrenched from the workshops, and I am told that 60 or 70 more men are under notice at present. I appreciate that some farmers are refusing to deliver their wheat. If it is delivered, there will be difficulty regarding the sale, and the congestion at Fremantle will be great. The wheat will not be transported during the months it is usually transported. I am of opinion that the sale of wheat will be fairly general early in the new year or about March, and then there will be a great rush, because the wheat will have to be sold quickly. Consequently the railways will be hard pressed to transport the wheat.
The number of men necessary to maintain the trucks that will be put into the shops for repair are not available. There is a fairly big congestion of rolling stock awaiting repairs at the workshops. The Minister will say that the railways are better equipped than they have been for some time. I believe that applies to locomotives, but I do not think it applies to the general rolling stock. The harvest will be greater than any previous harvest. Yields being reaped are far beyond anticipations. Eight-bag crops are just as common as are four-bag crops during ordinary seasons.

Mr. Griffiths: There are quite a number of 12-bag crops.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: A farmer who is not harvesting seven or eight bags per acre is fairly hard to find. Very few farmers in the eastern districts are getting below that yield. To-day I met a lot of representatives from the wheat country from Northampton to Esperance, and the reports from every centre were most encouraging. Men who could speak with authority assured me that 12-bag crops in the Southern Cross area were quite common. I believe we shall exceed the 50,000,000 bushels anticipated. Considering that increase, the reduced number of men at Midland Junction, and the extra need for rolling stock consequent upon the marketing possibly being rushed and limited to a few months leads me to appeal to the Minister to realise that he may be re-trenching to an unsafe limit. He should consider whether the needs of the working railways can be supplied with the existing staff or whether the men under notice of dismissal should not be retained and additional men put on to repair the trucks.

The Minister for Railways: I assure the hon. member that we are well aware of the facts he has stated. At the moment we have to pay for any work done, and the hon. member knows that money is not available. There was a time when we could transfer our requirements from revenue to loan account, but that is not possible to-day. Work done at the Midland shops in the past cannot now be undertaken because of the lack of funds. I think I have been a source of worry to the Treasurer in my efforts to complete the programme previously commenced. The material had been purchased and paid for, but additional money was necessary to complete the construction of locomotives and steel waggons begun before the money market reached its present position. We are struggling to complete the programme. The best will be done by the staff from the Commissioner to the shunter. I hope the financial position will clear up before the time arrives for us to handle the present enormous harvest, but if it does not, someone will have to work probably harder and longer in order to meet the position. We are completing 10 Garratt locomotives and 125 steel waggons, and that additional rolling stock will help materially. We are increasing our wheat output each year, and have been building rolling stock to cope with the increase. At the moment funds are not available to continue building rolling stock at a rate which would have been maintained had the financial position remained normal. Funds are the deciding factor.

Mr. Willcock: Does the item for rolling stock include the new tramcars being built, or should they be discussed on a later item? If this is the item, I should like to know whether any alteration has been made in the design for new tramcars approved by the previous Government.

The Minister for Railways: No alteration has been made.

Mr. Willcock: The previous Government had decided that there should be an alteration in the design of the new tramcars to be constructed, and approval was given in that direction. The cost would be a little more but not very much. The time is long past for an alteration in the design of the cars. The traffic in the city streets is frequently held up because of the single means of ingress and egress. Trams have been held up at street corners for a couple of minutes at a time while people have got in and out, and during that time motor traffic has had to stand. Even outside the city limits, when the bogey cars have arrived at Brisbane-street and passengers are desirous of alighting, if they happen to be at the front end of the car they have to crowd past a number of people in order to make their exit from the rear of the car, and if they have not paid their fares the conductor has to collect these, and so cause still further delay. The tramcars in Sydney have as many as six doors on each side.
The Minister for Railways: Do you know any other tram track that is of $3f. 6in$. gauge?

Mr. WILLCOCK: Yes, in Brisbane.

The Minister for Railways: What about Sydney?

Mr. WILLCOCK: We need not adopt the Sydney type of car, because you can get off there on the wrong side. But that is a source of danger. Apparently, from the remarks of the Commissioner in his annual report, the new cars are to be built on the obsolete design.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: In the tramways portion of the Report of the Commissioner of Railways the Commissioner says—

The rolling stock was fully taxed to deal with the increased traffic. The old "C" class cars are being remodelled in such a way as will give a prolonged life in traffic. The objections to this type of vehicle have been overcome by making the front cross seats in two sections, leaving a continuous passage way. Two bogey cars are being constructed from working expenses, and will be available for traffic shortly. The designs for 10 new cars have been prepared, and are on the lines of those in use in Melbourne. Provision has been made in the design for four motor trucks, the object being to improve the speed of cars, and give a quicker service.

Mr. Willcock: I do not see that in the Commissioner's report. What are you reading from?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I am reading from page 29.

Mr. WILCOCK: I have turned up the Commissioner's report to find out something about the Tramway Department and in Division 61 I find this—

We have under construction five cars of similar design to the above at the Midland Junction Workshops, and tenders are being called for the necessary electrical equipments.

Surely the Commissioner has not gone back to the old design off his own bat. The Minister must have had something to do with it. The only construction I can put upon the remarks of the Commissioner is that he has reverted to the obsolete type of cars, after approval having been given by the previous Government to an altered and more modern design.

The Minister for Railways: He does not say that.

Mr. WILCOCK: Yes, he says that the cars are to be equipped with four motors instead of two, giving high acceleration and a faster running time with a reduction in the time taken for a given journey. He also adds that there are five cars of a similar design at the Midland Junction Workshops. If there has been an alteration of the approval given by the previous Government, I protest, because we have put up too long with the serious delays in the centre of the city. Apparently, the Minister does not seem to know very much about it. There was an article in the "West Australian" only this week protesting against the serious delays within the city limits, due to the lack of expedition in handing the passengers. I would like the Minister to inform me whether during the past six months the Commissioner has departed from the authority given for the alteration in the design of cars.

Mr. ANGELO: Having occasion to travel a good deal in the trams, I endorse what has been said in respect to the obsolete cars, and the method of entering and alighting.

Hon. P. Collier: Fancy trying to squeeze past you in a car!

Mr. ANGELO: I wish to impress on the Committee my personal observations which are the result of experience. I ask how could two people like myself get out of a crowded tramcar?

Mr. Panton: How could two such as you sit on the one seat?

Mr. ANGELO: The member for Geraldton has referred to the tramcars in Sydney. I have been told that the reason for the design which we employ here is to permit of the easier collection of fares. But whilst travelling on the Sydney trams I have watched closely to see whether anyone escaped payment. I do not think anyone ever escapes payment there.

The Minister for Railways interjected.

Mr. ANGELO: Mr. Chairman. I wish you would protect me from this joking jubilant John, so that I may conclude my few remarks.

The CHAIRMAN Order!

Mr. ANGELO: The overcrowding and all the difficulties appear to occur at the peak periods, that is, when our street traffic is at its busiest. It is a common occurrence to see a dozen motor cars held up by a stationary tram at the busy city corners. It takes a considerable period for the passengers to alight and other passengers to enter the car. I wonder how the Premier and I would manage, if the Premier were entering a car and I were alighting from
I notice that new cars are to be built. Is there any necessity for these? Cannot we get more work out of the existing rolling stock? Sometimes we find three or four hagney cars standing idle at a terminus awaiting the time of arrival to start. Why not do as is done in Sydney and Melbourne, and keep the cars moving backwards and forwards as quickly as possible? Then again, look at the ridiculous number of stopping places that we have. Between here and Thomas Street there are two stopping places with only three buildings between them; I refer to Haylock Street and Emerald Hill Terrace. We could do a great deal more with the present rolling stock if we could get the cars speeded up and the entrances and exits improved. I have spoken of this to the manager, who merely promises to look into the matter.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: It is refreshing to hear the hon. member concerning himself with the operations of the tramway system in the metropolitan area. Because occasionally he requires to travel per tram from the centre of the city to Subiaco, he is concerned only about what happens on the Hay Street line, and can afford to disregard those people who have to travel greater distances on less frequented lines. Why, he thinks, should not the people of Emerald Hill Terrace be carried on to Thomas Street rather than he be inconvenience by having to wait for a moment? But if the tram did not stop at the intersection nearest his own home, there would be trouble. The man who has no experience whatever of running a railway and a tramway always thinks he knows more about it than does the manager of the concern. Apparently the hon. member does not realise that all these questions, such as cars stopping a little time at the termini, have been looked into years ago. If it were better to keep the rolling stock running without cessation it would be done, but there are many considerations that must be taken into account. It is not practicable.

Mr. Angelo: Give it a trial.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Frequently a tram will pick up a full load before it has passed a couple of intersections, and in consequence the next succeeding car will catch it up. Then, of course, the critics talk about two cars running in close company. There is no tramway system in Australia that escapes criticism. Our cars have been criticised even for speeding up. And if they are not speeded up there are plenty of people to say that what is required is a motor bus. Our tramway system is just as well run as is any other in Australia. Everybody admits that a tram must stop as frequently as possible in order that people may have opportunity to board it or to alight from it. As for the rolling stock, the member for Geraldton did not show that he knew so very much about it after all. The point is that the hon. member made his remarks in a spirit of criticism, and so far as I know they have not been varied—except that the money is not there and probably none of those cars will be constructed.

Mr. Willcock: But the Commissioner's report says they are being constructed.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: That report was written on the 30th June, and we did not take office until late in April. So only six weeks elapsed between the hon. member's leaving of office and the writing of that report. As far as I am aware, no instructions have been issued regarding the type of car that is being constructed for which approval had been received prior to the advent of this Government.

Mr. Willcock: Well that is all right.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I am not quite sure that we are not making a false move in modifying our tramcar designs. Our streets are very narrow, and if we have too many points from which people can alight or board a tram, there may be increased danger of street accidents. There are more such accidents in Sydney than we have here.

Hon. P. Collier: Not in proportion to population.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I think so. If we were to build cars of the type used in Sydney, the Tramway Union would protest.

Hon. P. Collier: In Sydney people get off from either side of the car.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Only in one-way traffic streets.

Mr. Panton: That is not so. In George Street, Sydney, I have alighted from cars on either side.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Perth streets are very narrow, and so our cars have to be very narrow. If we were to build more modern cars it would take too much room out of the tram floor space, and
so we would not be able to carry the number of passengers. On the basis of track our big bogey cars carry a greater number of passengers than do any other tramears in Australia. If we were to vary our model too much we might have to raise our fares or reduce the service.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I think we ought to postpone this item until we are quite sure as to what the position is. I am not prepared to vote a solitary pound for expenditure on the construction of our obsolete antiquated cars.

The Minister for Railways: You built a lot of them.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Not very many. We gave definite instructions that none of the old type was to be built. That was 12 months ago. The statement of the Minister as to the width of road and of track does not affect the position in the slightest degree. In respect of quick entrance and exit from cars, whatever is possible in Adelaide and Melbourne can be done in Perth. The State must have lost thousands of pounds because of delays at every street intersection, rendered unavoidable by the necessarily lengthy manner of boarding and leaving our tramcars. There is nothing in any part of the world I have seen to equal our cars in antiquity of design.

Mr. Angelo: Not since Babylon.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Not since Adam. Years ago, when I was a member of the Scaddan Administration, I discussed this matter with the tramways people, who tried to put it over me that if there were several entrances to a car no end of fares would be lost. And I believed it for a time. But now I can see it is too absurd altogether. In the big cities of the Eastern States 10 times as much tramway traffic is handled as is handled in Perth; and there, people are hopping off the trams at every few yards. Our cars are absolutely out of date, and the Committee would not be justified in voting a pound for the construction of one car of the existing type. I should be astonished to find the Commissioner had made an alteration in the instructions he received from the previous Government, without consulting the present Minister. However, the statement in his report seems to indicate that he has done so. If it be true, it ought to be stopped at once. There is nothing else in Australia so exasperating as our humbugging old tramcars. In a journey from the Town Hall to Rokeby-road corner at the peak period the time it takes a tram to do the journey is prolonged by seven or eight minutes compared with the time it would take to do a similar journey in the Eastern States. If this were applied throughout the day, it would mean a difference of seven or eight trips for each car. We should not proceed with this item until we know what is being done.

The Minister for Lands: There will be no money for the construction of these cars.

Hon. P. COLLIER: They may be under construction. I hope the Treasurer will refuse to give the Minister any more money until the matter is put right.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I am not going to waste any more money on the construction of tram cars, but it is desirable we should complete those that were under construction when the hon. member was Treasurer and found the money. He will not object to that.

Hon. P. Collier: No!

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I am not going to ask the Treasurer for any additional money this year except what is required to complete that job.

The Premier: Where is the money?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I do not know whether it will be available or not. I am astonished at the hon. member's remarks about obsolete trams. They did not become obsolete overnight. They had been running for years. The hon. member found for his colleague enough money with which to build these bogeys of the old type.

Hon. P. Collier: I did not know it.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Other members seem not to know everything about the tramway system.

Mr. Willecock: Immediately we began to build them we made up our minds not to do it again.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Surely the hon. member would not hold up the expenditure of money which he agreed to allow his colleagues in order to undertake this work. There is nothing in it beyond that.

Hon. P. Collier: According to the report of the Commissioner, he is not carrying out instructions.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Something may have happened of which I am not aware. A certain amount of money had been expended before we came into
office, and I have no intention of asking for any additional money. I know of no tramway system where at peak periods there is not some complaint about overcrowding. I am advised that the electrical equipment for these trams is not available, and the chances are they will not be completed during this financial year.

Mr. Hegney: I hope the Minister will not reproduce the Sydney tramway system here when he is considering new designs. If he does, the employees will be working under very bad and dangerous conditions. The Sydney system provides a quick exit for the public, but is very hard upon those who have to work the trams.

The Minister for Railways: It is worth a pound a minute to be a conductor on those trams.

Mr. Hegney: Yes. I hope the viewpoint of the workers will be taken into consideration.

Item—Yarramony-Eastwards railway, £10,000:

Mr. Griffiths: This is becoming an historical item on the Loan Estimates. It is about 22 years ago since settlers went to that part of the State, and they are still waiting for their railway. The previous Government had the opportunity to do something. Although well able to do something, they did nothing. I admire the temerity of members opposite for reproaching this side of the House in certain directions, when they themselves ran amuck for six years.

The Chairman: The hon. member is cut of order. The item, Yarramony-Eastwards railway, is before the Chair.

Mr. Griffiths: Are members in league with the American oil and motor car people with the idea of encouraging their industries, to the detriment of the Midland Junction workshops and our Collie coal industry? One would think so from their talk about substituting motor transport for the Yarramony-Eastwards railway. I have often told the sad tale of broken promises, equivocations and the blasted hopes of these settlers, who have been waiting for so long for their means of communication.

The Chairman: Hon. members should hold fewer meetings around the Chamber. The member for Avon can hardly be heard.

Hon. P. Collier: We have heard what he is saying so often.

Mr. Griffiths: At the end of last session I expressed the hope that if the then Leader of the Opposition was returned as Premier we might look forward to the completion of this railway. I have had an assurance from him since that if funds are available, something will be done for these people. The settlers know that nothing much can be done at present, and that they will have to wait. Members on both sides of the House have told them that the railway would be built, but it has never been built. I do not want this matter to be forgotten. It is becoming as famous as the Esperance-Northward railway, which finally came into being. I wanted to have this little say so that the Government might not forget that the settlers have been waiting 22 years for the railway.

Mr. Withers: This is the third railway item for which £10,000 appears on these Loan Estimates. However, this particular £10,000 will not satisfy the member for Avon. Is it a sop to the hon. member from the present Government? The previous Government allowed him only £5,000. Such small items will not be of any benefit to the people interested. Had this £10,000 been spent on the railway to which I previously referred, substantial benefit would have resulted. The spending of these small amounts gets us nowhere, and is absolutely useless.

Item—Electric power station, East Perth, £15,000:

Mr. Kenneally: I wish to draw the Minister's attention to the fact that this vote is considerably reduced as compared with last year's vote. Even when things were normal, current from the East Perth power house had to be rationed. We are getting pretty near to turning the corner in this State's affairs, and as soon as we do turn the corner we shall find that the factories which are already waiting for the supply of increased power from East Perth will not derive the benefit expected from the increased tariff. In that case we shall not have the local secondary industries which the Premier favours. Some considerable time back tenders were called for the extension of the East Perth power house, and one tender was recommended for acceptance; but here we are proposing to reduce
the expenditure on the power house from £43,000 to £15,000.

The Premier: I quite agree with you, but there seems to be no chance of getting even the £15,000.

Mr. KENNEALLY: The Government already have on the ground at East Perth numerous piles in preparation for the foundations when the work is to be carried out. As soon as the present crisis disappears, the State will be met with demands for power from the secondary industries, and will not be able to cope with those demands. We have been down at bedrock sufficiently long. Immediately industries begin to move, the Government will have to tell local authorities and private concerns that they cannot be supplied with the power they require. Advantage will be taken of this State if its secondary industries are not placed in a position to take advantage of the new tariff. The proposed extension was urgently recommended by those in control at East Perth some years ago. We cannot say to-morrow that the work shall be done and have it done the next day. It will take at least 15 months.

The Minister for Railways: Two years.

Mr. KENNEALLY: If so, it is all the more reason for getting on with the job now. If there is anything that warrants the expenditure of money to-day, it is the extension of the East Perth plant. When trams and lights were making a heavy demand on the plant, the power had to be rationed; and that position will recur when secondary industries make their demands. There is a risk that manufacturers will be prevented from working except at certain hours of the day. That will not help unemployment.

The Premier: If an extension is wanted, the Government will be prepared to say to-morrow that the work shall be done! It will be seen when the work is done. Mr. Millington has told the Committee that the money will be available, for the necessary machinery, we would have to be prepared to pay the money. I hope hon. members realise that for the moment it is impossible to say that money will be available and that we can go on with such work as this. The Government recognise the seriousness of the matter, because the extension cannot proceed until the necessary plant has been obtained from the Old Country. We have been told by financial authorities that we shall not be able to get money from London for some time. The member for Bunbury speaks of these items as if every one of them can be spent. I have told the Committee that the money is not likely to be available. If it is available, we shall need these authorisations in order to be able to go on with the work. The Government realise that it is their responsibility to see that people who require power get it.

Mr. MILLINGTON: The Premier's statement is not reassuring. Apparently we can discuss items but must not take too seriously the amounts of money set opposite them.

The Premier: The money may come along.

Mr. MILLINGTON: A further column is needed to show the amount of discount to be allowed. The East Perth power house is certainly one of the cases which will have to take preference if money is available.

The Premier: It is welcome to.

Mr. MILLINGTON: If an extension is favoured, I understand, the distribution management can find the necessary material, but if an extension is not wanted they simply draw attention to the fact that the power house is working to the maximum and that power cannot be obtained to supply an extension. If power is to be rationed, such a secondary industry as the Trotting Association could be more justifiably rationed than the expanding suburbs.

Hon. P. Collier: That is a good idea.

Mr. MILLINGTON: The position is all very well for the inner circle, where power and light are already installed; but surely some consideration is due to the outlying suburbs. My experience has been that this excuse is advanced every time a request is made for provision of more power. What protection have the outlying centres against the Perth City Council, who are the distributors. I was refused additional facilities on the ground that the power station could not supply further current. But, I was informed, if we could give the necessary guarantee, the work could be done! It will be seen that the attitude of the City Council authorities was not very logical. Unless something can be done to provide an additional unit at the station, the outlying districts will be prejudiced. There is plenty of power available within the magic circle of the Perth municipality, but the requirements of those outside that area are neglected. We can give the Minister for Railways all the credit he is entitled to for initiating the scheme,
but the £15,000 provided in the Loan Estimates will not amount to even window-dressing. I cannot think of a greater calamity that could confront the metropolitan area than a breakdown at the power house. If rationing of power is necessary, I hope it will be applied within the city area, and not in the outlying parts. I hope the Minister will see to it that the City Council, who have the right to supply the current, do their job faithfully and refrain from artificial excuses when requests for additional distribution of current are made.

Mr. SAMPSON: I wish to stress the great need for the provision of electric current for primary production in the outer suburban districts. That is a matter of the greatest importance. The metropolitan area mops up all that is available and the outer districts are starved. The power house is a paying proposition and is decidedly reproductive. Primary production will be greatly facilitated when current is available. Successive Governments have expressed their belief in the necessity for current in the outer areas and have admitted it will be a payable proposition. Despite that, we have always been denied the provision of current because the Perth City Council have a specially favourable agreement in connection with the supply of current and the outlying districts are denied an opportunity to procure the desired supply.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I realise, with the member for East Perth and the member for Mt. Hawthorn, that it is a serious matter to delay the provision of an additional unit for the power station at East Perth. I would like an opportunity to go into this question at some length, but I shall not do so this evening. I would like to get the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition together and discuss with them a conversation that took place when I was not a member of Parliament, on the question whether the East Perth power station was, really worth while. That question was put by the then Premier and the then Leader of the Opposition said, "No, I think not." "Has it ever paid?" asked the former and the then Premier replied, "I think not."

Hon. P. Collier: But we were in a facetious mood that evening.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I should think so. If there is one institution of which we have reason to be proud, it is the power station at East Perth. The whole story is not told in the figures published in connection with its operations.

Hon. M. F. Troy: It is all right for the City Council but the State does not get much return.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: That is not so. Prior to the erection of the power station at East Perth, Government offices and buildings were charged 4½d. per unit for electric light; to-day they are charged 1½d. per unit. But the East Perth power station is not credited with that. Notwithstanding that, and the alleged loss on the current supplied to the Perth City Council, the power house has shown a profit of over £500,000 since it commenced operations. Had it been run by a private company, that would have been distributed as dividends.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I presume the Minister will connect up his remarks with the vote. I cannot allow the Minister to continue along these lines.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I shall be delighted, Mr. Chairman, if you rule that I cannot refer to the capital expenditure on the East Perth power station on the item appearing in the Loan Estimates, in which event, of course, I will have to resume my seat.

The CHAIRMAN: Then I am afraid you must resume your seat.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I was replying to the remarks of the member for East Perth and the member for Mt. Hawthorn.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member must not reflect upon the Chair.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I am not doing so, but I maintain my right as a member and a Minister to discuss the capital expenditure on the East Perth power station on the item appearing in the Loan Estimates. The item relates to the expenditure of Loan Funds on the power station.

The CHAIRMAN: The Minister cannot go into past history on the item.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: A little while ago we were discussing rolling stock purchased 40 years ago.
The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS:

Well, you should have been! I am merely trying to justify my attitude as Minister in urging upon the Treasurer that provision should be made for the extension of the plant at East Perth by the installation of an additional unit. The time is rapidly approaching when people will require more current for manufacturing purposes, and will be unable to get it, because the power house will not be able to supply it. The worst feature about it is more serious than that. To-day we are running the power station to its full capacity at different periods of the day, and particularly during certain months of the year. The power station comprises units of different sizes. We started off with a 4,000 k.w. plant and later we installed a 7,500 k.w. unit. If the latter were to break down—and it cannot run for ever—I would not be proud of the position with which we would be faced. There would be justifiable complaints by the consumers, because a number of factories, a fair proportion of our tramway operations and considerable lighting facilities would have to be closed down for a longer period than many people anticipate. That is a serious possibility.

Mr. Millington: There could easily be a breakdown.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS:

Of course there could. Having gone into this business, we must see it through. If Parliament decides to hand the concern over to private enterprise, well and good, but in the meantime we must face the position that confronts us. The trouble is that it will take two years, should we accept a tender for the installation of a new unit, before it will be ready. Then it is suggested that we might erect a new station at Collie. That would take probably three or four years to build and would mean not £300,000, the cost of a new suit, but very much more. This is a problem that I think I fairly understand. If anything can be charged against me regarding the electricity supply, it is that I am inclined to be over-enthusiastic. I hold the view strongly that one of the greatest aids to modern industry is cheap electricity. We have comparatively cheap native coal and an opportunity to turn it into cheap power for the secondary industries which we hope some day to establish. As yet we have not many of them. I hope members will take a slightly different view of the question and consider it from the standpoint of the advantage to the community as a whole. I know of nothing outside the railway system and perhaps the harbours that is of so much value to the community as the production and distribution of cheap electricity. All the money we can find this year is £15,000. That is not the fault of the Government. It is due to conditions over which we have no control. If the so-called unholy combination between the Premier of this State and the Premier of New South Wales were successful in releasing us from the ties of the Loan Council, I believe we could easily obtain the necessary funds to extend the operations of a concern such as the electricity supply. No one could object to such expenditure. No concern we have established has progressed at such a rapid rate as the electricity supply. In the four months of the present financial year we have distributed something like 25 million units. That is evidence of its value. I regret that money cannot be found for extensions. When the time arrives I hope we shall be able to provide sufficient for an additional unit. Meanwhile let us most earnestly pray that we shall get through without any mishap.

Vote put and passed.

Vote, Harbours and Rivers, £147,063:

Item—Bunbury Harbour Works, £5,000:

Mr. WITHERS: I hope the Premier's remarks about the railways will not apply to the Bunbury harbour. I hope he will be able to provide the £5,000 and that it will be spent. If dredging is not continued year by year, there will be no harbour at Bunbury for the shipping to use.

Item—Fremantle Harbour Works, £65,003.

Mr. McCALLUM: The indications are that there will be little loan expenditure either this year or next year. I do not subscribe to the idea that if we, as a State, could approach the loan market, the position would be improved. There are tens of thousands of men out of work and soon many more will be added to the number. Shortly after the Labour Party left office I made a suggestion to the Premier. He seemed to think it was made in a party spirit, but I had no intention of doing that. I have good reason to believe that more than one English firm would be prepared to sub-
mit a tender to build the Fremantle bridge and finance the work, accepting bonds in payment. The bridge and approaches are estimated to cost £2,000,000 and their construction would provide work for 600 men for two years. I believe that the interest and sinking fund on the money would not be much more than the maintenance cost of the two existing bridges.

The CHAIRMAN: I presume the bridge is part of the harbour works?

Mr. McCALLUM: Yes: it is the first job in connection with the additions to the harbour. There is a definite offer on the files from a foreign firm to build the bridge in steel, concrete or marble and accept bonds in payment.

Mr. Angelo: A marble bridge would overshadow the Sydney bridge.

Mr. McCALLUM: It was premature to consider any proposition when we were in office, because the plans and specifications had not been completed. I understand they have since been completed. More than one English steel firm asked to be advised when tenders were called. If loan money cannot be raised, will the Premier consider this matter? There would be no clashing with the Loan Council, but the money could be counted as part of the State's borrowings. We would be doing necessary work, as the engineers have been warning us for years that they would not accept responsibility for the safety of either of the bridges. One of them is anything but safe. The circulation of that money would do a great deal to relieve unemployment. I hope the Treasurer will make inquiries on the lines I have suggested because there is every reason to believe that arrangements could be made to carry on the work on the lines I have indicated. If tenders were called I am sure that more than one British firm would be prepared to undertake the work and find the money for it.

The Minister for Railways: The Loan Council would not allow us to issue bonds.

Mr. McCALLUM: I do not think anyone would object to take Commonwealth bonds. Anyway I put this up because I know that definite inquiries have been made. Our desire should be to have a British firm undertake the work. I do not see how the Government will be able to get money for a considerable time with which to carry out this or any other undertaking. In any case, there is no logical reason why this matter should not at least be investigated. I have good grounds for believing it could be done, and we should then be able to provide work for 600 men for a period of six years and that would mean 600 families would be kept, and in addition, a number of others as the result of the carrying out of the undertaking. I hope the Premier will have the matter investigated.

The PREMIER: There is nothing new in the suggestion made by the hon. member and if we could get the work done at practically the same price as it would cost the State if it were doing it direct, there might not be any serious objection. The interest that would have to be found would be about £120,000 a year. I realise that we cannot carry on the affairs of this country without spending money on some public works. There is much development work to do but it is doubtful whether the Loan Council would give permission for any public work to be undertaken in the manner suggested by the hon. member. In any case, it would be worth investigating, although the Loan Council have said definitely that money cannot be borrowed to replace the money already spent. Certainly the State will not be able to borrow any money and I agree with the member for South Fremantle that we shall not be very much better off next year. I will look into the matter to see whether it is possible to incur interest expenditure on such a work in the manner suggested.

Mr. McCallum: What is the new Bunbury railway bridge costing?

The PREMIER: The cost of that is £26,000.

Mr. McCallum: The estimate for the railway and road bridge at Fremantle is about £2,000,000. That includes the railway deviation and everything else.

The PREMIER: The bridge will be of steel.

Mr. McCallum: Yes, to carry the railway and tramway tracks. There is a big length of railway to deviate and the estimate includes the resumption of land and the cost of rails.

The PREMIER: I understand that.

Mr. SLEEMAN: It would be interesting to know just how much of the £33,000 has been spent. By the way in which men have been put off, it would appear that most of the money has gone. I should like the Minister to tell us how the money has been spent and whether the remaining men there will be put off or whether there is any possibil-
ity of others being put on. It seems to me that if the Government are not prepared to carry on with the unexpended balance of this vote, they should do something at the North wharf with what money is left. If something is not done there, some of the farmers' wheat will find its way into the sea before the end of the season.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: This amount is required to complete the length of Victoria Quay now opened and also for the purchase of four gantry loaders at a cost of £6,200. I agree with the hon. member's remarks about the state of the North Quay. I have been there a couple of times and examined it. There is no doubt it is in a bad way and the Engineer-in-chief has put up a report which is rather alarming. The position however, has not been created in the last few months. The Victoria Quay has been getting worse every year. The Victoria, Quay has been costing the Fremantle Harbour Trust £10,000 a year to maintain. At the north wharf instead of using the loan amount for maintenance, it can be used for actual reconstruction with the £10,000 to which I have just referred. So that instead of putting down wooden piles we could put down concrete piles which eventually will become part of the re-built wharf. I hope it will be possible to find the £20,000 from loan funds to permit of the reconstruction of the north wharf. I have heard a good deal about the bridges too. The position is this: Plans and specifications are practically completed. They could have been ready by now if they had been urgently required. The estimated cost of the North Fremantle bridge is 1¼ million pounds and with the resumption of land for railway purposes the total is increased to £1,475,000. I want members to understand that because of the better facilities we have for handling cargo at Fremantle, it is possible to make a great deal more use of the harbour to-day than in the past, and I do not think that the extension is as urgent as it was. As a matter of fact, the Fremantle Harbour Trust have put up a report to that effect. With regard to the road bridge, I am told that it is in a fairly decent state; certainly it is not in as bad a condition as has been suggested. The cost this year to keep it in repair will not be more than £2,000.

Vote—Water Supply and Sewerage, £327,000:

Item—Water Supply for towns generally, £6,000:

Mr. BROWN: The previous Minister for Water Supply, Mr. Cunningham, promised that a certain amount of money would be placed on the Estimates for an investigation into the proposed new water supply for Pingelly. I appreciate the position in which the Government now find themselves; I know that money is scarce, but I should like to know whether it is proposed to honour the promise made by the previous Minister. The township deserves a better water supply, and that was recognised by the Minister previously in charge of the department. I do not know whether the present Minister has perused the files dealing with this question. I trust he has done so and that when money is available, he will honour the promise made by his predecessor and provide the money necessary for investigatory work to be carried out.

Item—Metropolitan Water Supply, £63,850:

Mr. HEGNEY: The condition of the water supply at Swan View is unsatisfactory. The people there have been agitating for over 12 months for the substitution of 4-inch pipes for the present 2-inch pipes, or else for the linking up of the district with the Northam scheme. The difficulty has been accentuated since the unemployed have been located at Blackboy. The demand on the supply is so great that by the time the people in the outer parts of the district draw upon it, there is often not sufficient for their requirements.

Item—Water Supply in Agricultural and North-West districts (including drainage and irrigation, and loans and grants to local authorities and drainage boards), £100,000:

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: I understand the Government are engaged upon additional works at Harvey, which are covered by this item. I believe the intention is to increase the capacity of the present reservoir, to declare a new irrigation area, and bring in an additional 16,000 acres of irrigable land. What will be the prescribed rate for the new area? Is it the intention to increase the rate to settlers who have been paying rates for years past? Will that be the effect of
the added cost of the reservoir? I noticed from a statement in the Press recently that
the work had been started, but no information was available regarding the financial
responsibility of the settlers or the willingness of the landowners to pay the rate to
be fixed.

Mr. J. J. MANN: I understand the Labour Government made provision for water
supplies in several eastern districts where the settlers have to cart water over great
distances. I realise the position of the present Government, and hope that when
possible, the areas I refer to will be provided with adequate water supplies.

Mr. WILLCOCK: Has any provision been made for improved water supplies in the Dartmoor, Greenough and other northern areas, where many people have to cart water 18 miles or more two days each week in order to maintain their supplies. Under existing conditions, they cannot provide for additional stock, and an economic loss is involved because the full productive capacity of properties cannot be availed of.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: With regard to the irrigation scheme at Harvey, it is intended to raise the embankment of the old weir to provide for a further irrigable area. The head works and the new water channels will cost £150,000, including £31,388 in connection with the Korrijikup area, and the whole cost of the scheme, including other phases, will be increased to £233,632. That will be the total cost of the scheme, including the extensions. Some 18,000 acres of new land will be brought under the scheme, of which half will be irrigable. In respect of the irrigable land only, rates will be charged. Last year the position at Harvey was serious because there was not sufficient water available for irrigation purposes. It is not intended to charge a higher rate than the present one of 7s. 6d. per irrigable acre per annum and 2s. 6d. for each of two separate waterings during the year.

Mr. McLarty: Are you sure that rate is correct?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes. There will be a slight loss on the scheme because of the rate fixed. It is recognised that the settlers could not afford to pay a rate that would cover the additional cost. The scheme was prepared by the Chief Engineer, and the details I have regarding the matter resulted from a conference with the Premier held yesterday. Harvey is one of the garden centres of the State, and will assist greatly in the production of wealth, provided we do not charge the settlers too much for water.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I should like to bring up the question of extension of water supplies in a place like Lake Brown. It is true there has been a reduction in the charges, but also there has been a reduction in the quality of water provided, and so the position is worse than before, because the excess water is now so much greater. I have asked the Minister for Country Water Supplies to go into this matter, but he does not appear to realise that the reduction is not a reduction at all. Again, in regard to rock catchments the department has taken at Barbalin 100 acres from a family that have been settled there ever since 1867. In those days Toodyay was their nearest town. The original settler died and left a widow. The 100-acre area resumed by the department was cleared and fenced and had a permanent water supply. In all some £500 had been expended on that little area, yet when the department resumed it they offered the widow only £100. I want to enter an emphatic protest against the way this settler has been treated.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is out of order in discussing a question of compensation on the Loan Estimates.

Mr. WITHERS: I was not here when the Minister made his statement. Am I to understand that £31,000 will now complete the Harvey scheme?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No, another £100,000 will be required. In answer to the member for Geraldton, I should like to say the only items I have on these Estimates for water supplies aggregate £15,000.

Mr. PATRICK: At Wandana the department put in a water scheme in the form of a dam, which some months ago was quite dry. There was an undertaking from the department to put down two bores in that district, where the water can be obtained at a depth of 200 feet. The promise was that those two bores would be put down from the first money available. Has the Minister heard anything of that?

Vote put and passed.
Vote—Development of Goldfields and Mineral Resources, £31,000:

Hon. M. F. TROY: I should like to know from the Minister whether he is going to initiate a system of assistance to prospectors.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I can only tell the hon. member what I told the Committee on the general discussion. So far as funds are made available assistance will be given to prospectors, as in the past, but I do not expect to be able to render quite as liberal assistance as has been given heretofore. I am willing enough and anxious enough, but I have not the funds, and so I cannot do it. At the moment I am not in a position to make any announcement as to the assistance to prospectors, for I have not yet learnt from the Treasurer how much money he can make available.

Hon. M. F. Troy: There is a lot of money in this Vote.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes, but there is no guarantee that we shall get it. I appreciate with the hon. member the necessity for rendering assistance to the industry, particularly at the present time when gold is the one commodity that cannot be over-produced. All the world is asking for it, and the Federal Government are considering the payment of a bonus on its production. If we can increase the output of gold, it is our duty to do so. But it is all a question of funds, and at the moment I cannot say whether we shall have sufficient money to spend even the amount provided on these Estimates.

[Mr. Angelo took the Chair.]

Hon. M. F. TROY: The Minister says he is unable to declare how much money he will have to spend, but that he will spend all he can get. The Central Mining Board has approved of assistance for these men, but the approval has been held up for months and I am concerned about it. I know that money is scarce, but I should like an assurance from the Minister that if he gets the money he will come to the assistance of the prospectors. The industry is having a very rough time.

Mr. Withers called attention to the state of the Committee.

Bells rung, and a quorum formed.

Hon. M. F. TROY: Prospectors are not satisfied with being put off from time to time in respect to their applications. As the Government assist other portions of the State, we expect some assistance for the mining industry. The prospectors are never heard of except through their members, and they ask only for reasonable assistance. I hope they will no longer be neglected.

Vote put and passed.

Vote — Development of Agriculture, £1,249,814:

Hon. P. COLLIER: I wish to revert to the Normalup scheme.

The Minister for Lands: Go down there and have a look at it.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I have been there. I recognise that the Government have done what they consider justifiable, but in the circumstances I think it is a mistake. I should like to have the matter discussed apart from politics. There are some members of the Opposition who do not agree with my attitude. I propose to move to reduce the item, and I think it important enough to have the vote recorded in the proceedings. I hope members will vote according to their consciences and beliefs. Let us for once get away from party politics. Let us have a vote purely on the merits of the scheme. It may be the commencement of conducting our business on non-party lines. The Premier stated last night that only £6,000 had been expended to date. I did not imagine that much had been expended, because the scheme was commenced practically only yesterday, but I have no doubt that there will be considerable expenditure next year and the year after. With the Premier, I see no prospect of the financial position being any better next year than it is at present.

Mr. Patrick: You disagree with the member for East Perth that we have turned the corner.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I think the corner is still ahead of us and that the road before we reach it will prove to be fairly rough. We have not yet felt the effect of the low prices of our staple commodities. We shall feel the effect of those low prices early next year, when the money which would be avail-
able if prices were reasonable will not be available. I do not wish to be pessimistic, but it is of no use shutting our eyes to facts. I am convinced that the financial position both loan and revenue, will be worse after the new year than it is at present. A large number of people engaged in primary production have been working on credit all the year, and when the harvest is reaped and there is not sufficient return to pay the accumulated indebtedness, our difficulties will increase. The expenditure on the Normalup scheme will continue next year, the year after and the year after that. Even under the most hopeful possibility, the scheme will not be self-supporting inside of three years, and I do not think it can be self-supporting in less than five years. That has been our experience of the South-West country. Even if we take the term of three years estimated by the Minister for Lands, by that time we shall have spent several hundred thousand pounds.

The Minister for Lands: The number is limited to 100.

Hon. P. COLLIER: There are more than that down there now.

The Minister for Lands: The others are repairing roads, etc.

Hon. P. COLLIER: There will be the expenditure on road-making, new schools, and other things incidental to the settlement. I do not believe the Minister's estimate will be realised. He estimated the cost at £800 a block. The house is to cost £120.

The Minister for Lands: The houses are not costing that. We are using second-hand iron.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That is only half the cost of the group settlement houses.

The Minister for Lands: It is not the same type of house.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The ten head of stock are to cost £170. That will not make the settler self-supporting. The clearing cost, £167, must be below the estimate, as must be the sowing down of pasture, £100. We are committing ourselves to an expenditure probably for five years before there can be any return. It is most unwise to do this until we have turned the corner, and got out of the chaotic position in which we find ourselves to-day. The Premier has repeatedly stated that although we are voting money on these items there is no certainty that the works enumerated will be carried out. Probably, many of the works that are now going on will only be partially completed. It is not wise to launch out in new expenditure whilst there are works which yet remain to be completed, before the benefit of the outlay of capital can be obtained from them. We should complete those we have before we start on any new proposition. The item should be reduced by at least £1.

The Premier: That is like a farthing damages.

The Attorney General: Make it £100. That will sound better.

The Minister for Railways: If you make it £100, you will put only one man off a block.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I will accept the advice of my legal adviser, and the verdict will then carry costs. I move an amendment—

That the item be reduced by £100.

The CHAIRMAN: Before I accept this amendment I should like the assurance of the Premier that the Normalup scheme is included in this item.

The Premier: It is.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I hope the amendment will not be carried. I have reason to doubt the sincerity of the Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. P. Collier: I will give you something about that.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: When he was Premier, he thought so much of the scheme, because of the quality of the land, that he deemed it advisable to build a railway from Denmark to Normalup, costing a great deal of money, I do not want to cast any aspersions upon him, but I suggest he surely could not have built that railway for political purposes.

Hon. P. Collier: I did not authorise it. It was authorised by the previous Government.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: He built the railway when things were looking serious from the political point of view. A lot of money was spent on it and many men were employed on it. The railway ran into a deadend at the Franklin River. The present Government have carried on the undertaking of the previous Government. No one can question the quality of the land. It must be the policy of the Government to settle it by continuing the railway.

Mr. Willock: There are five or six groups there already.
Mr. J. H. SMITH: No.
Mr. Wansbrough: There are three close to Normalup.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: There are no groups at the terminus of the railway. They are south of it. The railway is supposed to feed the country to the north and west of the Frankland River. If the construction of the railway was justified the development of the country is also justified. It is proposed to establish 120 farmers. I am astonished that the Leader of the Opposition should seek to reduce this item.

Hon. P. Collier: I have never questioned the country. I am only questioning the time in which the work can be done.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Of what use is it to build the railway from Denmark if the country in the vicinity is not settled?

Mr. Wilcock: Are there not sufficient groups there already?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: It is not a question of group settlement, but of settling the people under the best conditions.

Mr. Wilcock: The group settlers could not remain there without a railway.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The Government would not have built a railway for three groups.

Mr. Wansbrough: There are three distinct groups there already.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The Frankland River is the dividing line between Albany and Nelson, so that the settlement of to-day is taking place in another electorate. The Minister for Lands has made two tours through that country. Mr. Moran, the Agricultural Bank trustee, is one of the most pessimistic men I ever met in my life.

Hon. P. Collier: He is the most foolishly optimistic.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: At first Mr. Moran said it was madness to start settling that country. However, after visiting it he said to me, "I have seen some of the finest country in the world, and not to settle it would be a criminal shame. I will settle it for £800 per man, and will guarantee to settle it successfully. I shall pick my men." The ex-Premier's idea in building that railway to Frankland River was to settle the whole of the district for a distance of 15 miles on either side of the line. Yet we find the hon. gentleman moving this reduction, on the ground that he considers Agricultural Bank activities will be fully engaged to keep present settlers on their holdings.

Hon. P. Collier: More than fully engaged.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: To a great extent I agree with that; but the present Government, having considered the whole question, say, "We can keep the present settlers on their holdings."

Hon. P. Collier: They have not said that.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: It is their job to do it. Surely hon. members are not suggesting that there ought to be stagnation in Western Australia! What is the good of having railways if we do not make use of them?

Hon. P. Collier: A few hundred miles of railway will not be made use of next year.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I do not know what will happen on the eastern wheat belt, but I am confident that the building of a railway is justified in the South-West, where there are good climatic conditions and an excellent rainfall, while frosts are unknown.

Mr. WANSBROUGH: The previous speaker would make it appear that this railway is not serving any settlement at all.

Mr. J. H. Smith: I did not say that.

Mr. Wilcock: The line runs through 15 groups, and adjacent to them are three other groups. I agree that the quality of the land is unquestionable. However, I support the Leader of the Opposition in his view that all the money available will be needed to keep on the land those who are already there, but I cannot support the amendment. In my opinion, the roads which are being built in that district to-day will not serve their purpose.

Mr. WILLCOCK: I agree with the Leader of the Opposition that this is not the time to embark on a new scheme of settlement, particularly with indigent people. Our present troubles are due largely to the fact that in the last four or five years many people have gone on the land without any money of their own, the State finding all the capital.

The Premier: We always have done that, of course.

Mr. WILLCOCK: Yes. Such a course is right enough when prices are remunerative and prospects good; but according to the present outlook there is no probability of decent returns for a year or two, at any rate. Over-production is not in wheat alone, but applies to almost everything. To set out at this, the most difficult time we have ever known, to settle yet more indigent people on the land is utterly unwise. Most of us agree that group settlement is worthy.
while, if only as demonstrating the excellence of our South-West lands, and as showing that Western Australia was prepared even to lose some money in proving those lands. In some quarters it is contended that we should not have gone in for such heavy expenditure on group settlements as we did; but that is past and gone, and the consensus of opinion is that in group settlement and the development of the dairying industry we have enough on our hands. If we can get people to put in their own money, with a moderate amount of Government assistance, we should encourage them, because the possibilities are there. Wealth can be produced in that area. But this State is not in a position at present to continue the land settlement policy of the past. It is time we had a stocktaking. At the moment we want every penny we have in order to keep on the land those who are already settled. There are people on the groups now whose holdings are perhaps not more than half developed, and much more money will be required by them. Where will the extra money come from to keep those people going?

The Minister for Lands: From the same source as we could get money, I suppose, for the Engineer-in-Chief!

Mr. WILLCOCK: That is another matter, about which the Government, apparently, are not very definite. They have to take the responsibility for their actions and, for my part, will not evade my responsibility, as a member of this Chamber, by permitting what I regard as a gross mistake in the settlement of the Nornalup area at this particular juncture. I am with the Premier in the desire to further develop the State. I have never decried the South-West, which will undoubtedly be one of the richest parts of the State as time goes on. Its natural advantages must result in the creation of added wealth there. That, however, does not mean that we should concentrate upon the expenditure of all available money in the South-West, one corner of a large State.

The Premier: I do not think you are right in saying that. There was a time when people said Geraldton did not receive any consideration.

Mr. WILLCOCK: I am not speaking in a carping spirit, nor have I ever been a carping critic. I have always been prepared to give credit to any Government who were prepared to carry out good work in the interests of the State. I know that the Premier is prejudiced in favour of the South-West. That fact is apparent to all.

The Premier: You all say that.

Mr. WILLCOCK: I do not blame the Premier.

The Premier: I do not care whether it be south, east, or north, so long as the State as a whole progresses.

Mr. WILLCOCK: The Premier is no doubt justified in his attitude, but he must not persist in it to the exclusion of other parts of the State.

The Premier: I happen to be a Western Australian, and that does not say that I am stupid and narrow-minded.

Mr. WILLCOCK: I have never said that the Premier is stupid. I can remember a time when the hon. member was rude enough, in the course of a controversy with me, to say that I was stupid because I made statements, which were later found to be correct.

The Premier: They were not found to be correct.

Mr. WILLCOCK: They were contradicted, and I produced proof to indicate that they were correct. I do not wish to descend to the gutter and describe other people as stupid or simpletons.

Hon. M. F. Troy: The Premier himself did not show much indication to the contrary in that discussion.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member should deal with the question before the Chair.

Mr. WILLCOCK: The Premier has a big job to do in Western Australia and a stupid person, who is prejudiced and biased, could not undertake such a task. However, an individual's prejudices regarding a particular part of the State should not be allowed to warp his judgment respecting what is best for the State. To my mind, the Premier's attitude is a little warped in favour of the South-West.

Hon. P. Collier: We may not be warped in our opinions, but perhaps slightly unconsciously prejudiced in favour of one part of the State.

The Premier: One may like one part of Australia more than another.

Mr. WILLCOCK: But that should not make us adopt a narrow viewpoint when regarding our activities. I am not objecting to the Premier's scheme merely because it
Mr. WILLCOCK: All I asked was that the Premier would provide £100 in order to carry out an investigation regarding lines necessary to relieve settlers of the task of carting water for 20 miles or more. I ask the Government to look ahead and secure some information that at present is not available on the files. The Government have no money to do that, yet they are saddling the country with an entirely new scheme involving the settlement of areas that cannot reach the reproductive stage under four or five years. I claim that is on entirely wrong lines in these days, in common with the Leader of the Opposition. I think we shall make a grave mistake if this Committee blindly follow the Government in their scheme for settling men in the South-West. What I am most surprised about is that two particular Ministers—the Minister for Lands and the Minister for Works—who were members of a Royal Commission that spent some weeks in investigating the group settlement scheme in the South-West and learned to appreciate the difficulties of pioneering and the subsequent expense involved under that heading, can endorse a scheme of this description. They appreciate how much money will be required before the land in the South-West can reach the reproductive stage. As for the idea that we are going to have an extravagant scheme, actually it is proposed to limit the settlement to 100 farms. Nor is the work being done under group settlement conditions. The actual cost per annum ought to be between £20,000 and £25,000, and it is estimated by the Agricultural Bank trustee who has investigated the scheme, that it can be done for less than half of that. We have benefited from the group settlement mistakes of the past. Provision is made for roads of only a narrow type, the wheel ruts being filled in with gravel. That is almost all there is on the road; actually, culverts are put in where necessary and bad patches are gravelled. It is very unfair to suggest that the settlers on these holdings are settlers only because they are out of work. Really, they are men of very good type, and many of them have had experience in the South-West. Surely it is better to pay the settlers 30 per cent. more in sustenance than they would get if in the city, and have something created by them, and thus give them an interest in the State. Of course it is better to do that for them than to have them idling in the city.
Mr. Slee: Are you going to put any of the unemployed gold prospectors down there?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I am afraid not. We could not supervise the work of 100 prospectors in a settlement. The position has been distorted by some of the newspapers. We are spending money for the sustenance of many people in the city, and under this scheme we are spending sustenance down there, plus 50 per cent., and we are getting a valuable asset in return.

Hon. P. Collier: Then why not send all the unemployed down there?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: We could not accommodate them. If we could get the necessary money it would be far better to put all the unemployed to work.

Hon. P. Collier: I agree that the scheme would be all right if the money were available.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The scheme is for only 100 farms. There will not be many roads constructed; only those which are absolutely necessary. A great deal of the South-West was opened up by roads markedly inferior to those constructed during recent years. Narrow light roads will give to each settler access to his holding, and it may be necessary to put one road through the middle of the area. The supervision will be simple and far less costly than if we had the settlement spread all over the South-West, in which event, as I have said, there would be no objection raised to it. The cost will be a mere bagatelle, especially if we take into account the amount that in any ease we would have to pay those men in sustenance. If the amendment be carried, the most sorry people will be those unfortunate settlers, and next to them perhaps will be the Leader of the Opposition himself; for I am sure he has no desire to rob those settlers of the chance given to them. It is merely an ordinary settlement concentrated in one position instead of being spread over the South-West. Otherwise we would have used the Forrestdania country. Nornalup, however, will be much more profitable than that. Another point to be considered is that the cost to the State will be very little more than if we had had to find sustenance for those people.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I support the amendment. I regret that the Nornalup settlement has been undertaken. This is no time to increase the capitalisation of land settlement. We have problems in the dairying districts that will have to be overcome before we can claim to be on the road to progress. In the Denmark area, which is adjacent to the Nornalup district, the producers are confronted with problems connected with the rearing of young stock. That is a serious matter and it must be overcome. Money should be expended to grapple with the problem, but we are told there is not sufficient money to permit of a proper investigation. The reason why no money is available is because we are embarking upon new expenditure. How can we expect to make a success of the settlement to which we are committed if we are going to waste the small amount of capital we have on new schemes? The member for Nelson (Mr. J. H. Smith) emphasised the difficulty of the Northcliffe settlers in getting value for cream supplied. He said the settlers were getting only 8s. per can, which is not the first class market rate.

The Minister for Railways: You are becoming shockingly pessimistic lately.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I am merely bringing common sense to bear upon the position. The early history of land settlement reveals a colossal blunder due to the fact that we started settlements here, there and everywhere and did not perfect one of them. We undertook railway construction in parts of the wheat belt to serve a few settlers here and there. No one settlement was properly opened up and developed before another settlement was started, and that policy has cost the country millions of pounds. The Minister responsible for it should have had many sleepless nights, but I think he slept, while I lay awake endeavouring to grapple with the problems.

The Minister for Railways: You are referring to selection before survey.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I do not care what it is called; the work was done by halves. It has been the same with group settlement; we have not completed any one portion of that scheme. Take the Denmark area; goodness knows how long its development has been in hand and yet the problem have not been solved and hundreds of acres of land are lying unused. Instead of under taking the clearing of land at Nornalup another remote area, let us finalise the existing schemes. Nornalup is a remote area considering the marketing facilities. Den
mark has not yet been settled thoroughly. We have not sufficient capital to build up a proper settlement there. Farmers are holding land that they cannot possibly use, because they cannot obtain from the Government sufficient money with which to develop it. We have been battling with the Denmark country for the last 12 or 15 years and have not completed settlement there, and yet we are going to start another scheme. We cannot continue land settlement in that way. What is the use of going into the Nornalup area?

The Minister for Railways: Why did you vote the money to build the railway?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I regret that the line was ever started. We are not ready for it yet. Certainly the line is not being used for the purpose for which it was contructed. It is not carrying cream; that is being carried by motors. Why? Because the trains do not run frequently enough to bring the cream in fresh and make it a marketable product. The difficulty at Northcliffe is that the carting of the cream has to be done by motor. What is wanted at Northcliffe is a butter factory, not a railway. The cream produced in the Northcliffe area must be manufactured into butter there. We have to build a butter factory at Pemberton, but that will not overcome the difficulty at Northcliffe. Let us concentrate the limited amount of capital available upon financing areas already settled and served by railways and butter factories, areas in which we should be able to attain some measure of success. Manjimup is not yet thoroughly developed; it is not on a true economic basis. At present we are producing butter far in excess of the State's consumption, but butter is still being imported from the Eastern States. Some people say that the local butter is not to their taste.

The Minister for Lands: The same as some people said about the land.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Although we are producing more butter than the State can consume, hundreds of boxes are being imported from the Eastern States every week. I warn the Premier that during recent weeks the importations have increased. If members walk through Boans, they will see Western Australian butter ticketed at about 2d. a lb. less than imported butter, and yet that firm still imports butter. Where is the sentiment regarding the purchase of local products? There must be a considerable number of people who prefer the imported article. I am proud to say we are increasing at a great rate in the manufacture of local butter. During many months of the year we are meeting the needs of the State. But we have great difficulty in satisfying even our own people as to the taste of the butter. Apparently it is different from the taste of the commodity made in the Eastern States. The problem is to get our butter established on the overseas market, seeing that we cannot get it properly established here. Associated with the settlement of our dairy lands we have big problems to face. Why should we go into new problems and expend money on new lands when we have not solved the problems we already have to settle? The scheme is not one that should be endorsed by this Chamber. It should be suspended immediately. We have enough to do with our present settlement schemes without going any further. We understand there are only 100 blocks to be settled at Nornalup. What will be the overhead charges?

The Minister for Lands: Very little.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The fewer the blocks, the greater will be the proportion of overhead charges to each block. The supervision would not cost more if there were 250 blocks. A certain number of officers is required to supervise the scheme. Roads must be built, and if there are 100 blocks concerned, 1 per cent. of the cost will have to be charged to each one. The same expenditure on roads would serve ever so many more than 100 blocks.

The Minister for Lands: Not at all, because most of the blocks are on end to each other, and the one main road suffices for all.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Local agitation will certainly lead to a greater expenditure than is contemplated by Parliament. When people are settled in an area for the first time the expenditure invariably exceeds the estimate. I am assured that drainage problems will arise in the winter.

The Minister for Lands: Not at all.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The Minister, of course, knows a great deal about the matter from having inspected the locality from the summer point of view.

The Minister for Lands: I have only been there in the winter.

Mr. W. H. Mann: The hon. member is only guessing.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I am told that the drainage problem will be a very serious
one, and that the road construction will also prove expensive. I therefore wish to warn the Minister concerning these points.

The Minister for Lands: You had better go down and have a look at the locality.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: I shall try to kill it before I see it. We have not sufficient money to warrant any increase in the expenditure upon land settlement.

Mr. W. H. Mann: You will kill it, and look at it afterwards.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Even supposing the area is all the Minister says it is, he has no right to proceed with the settlement.

The Minister for Lands: No right to feed the people, I suppose.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: I would rather he-concentrated his energies, upon an effort to overcome the problems in areas already settled. We should develop the lands nearest to the markets.

Mr. H. W. Mann: This will be mainly for the export trade.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: It will be a long time before we reach any export trade from Nornalup. When that trade has to be considered, we shall require all the money we can lay hands on to develop it. Let us increase settlement in a more concentrated fashion. There is no need to go on in this way. We have done little or nothing to settle the land between Perth and Bunbury, where settlement can be far more economically managed than at Nornalup.

Mr. H. W. Mann: A large amount of drainage would be required for that land.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Only a fair amount, but there would be no necessity to spend much on the other facilities.

The Minister for Railways: The hon. member is setting one part of the State against another.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Land settlement should be encouraged close to the railways and the ports. There is no need to go beyond Pinjarra, where partially cleared land can be acquired at reasonable prices. I do not want the Minister to touch any land settlement scheme beyond that which he has in hand. The Agricultural Bank already find great difficulty in keeping the farmers on the wheat belt, and when the next harvest arrives, a considerable number will be unable to carry on without further Government assistance. Unfortunately, money has already been wasted at Nornalup. I say "wasted" advisedly, because the scheme should not be undertaken at present. For some considerable time the scheme must be of no value to the State, although a great burden. Has the Minister for Lands gone into the question of what is to be done next harvest as to supplying super, for instance? I do not see where the payment for super supply is to come from. All this expenditure is reducing the possibility of the Government coming to the rescue of the farmers. The Nornalup proposition is a wild proposition. There should be a declaration from members whether this kind of thing is to be tolerated. Group settlement started in the same way as the Nornalup scheme. The expenditure was to be small, and restricted to certain areas; but to-day millions of pounds have to be written off. Members allowed group settlement to drift on, though there was plenty of talk against it in the corridor. Privately, members agreed that the scheme had not been thoroughly organised, and that a great deal of money was being wasted. Still, Parliament was not game to discuss the report of the Royal Commission on Group Settlement. That will be the last Commission I shall sit on. I took my fees, and I honestly gave the best advice I have ever given. The report showed how millions of money could be saved. However, no serious notice was taken of the report until the member for Mt. Magnet (Hon. M. F. Troy) became Minister for Lands. Parliament simply was not interested in the report. Parliament thought group settlement was all right. Visitors came from all parts of the world to inspect this wonderful scheme. We selected all the good patches to show them, and dodged the bad ones. No visitor was ever shown groups that were not successful; the good groups were inspected and the unsuccessful were avoided. As the result of the Royal Commission's report the member for Mt. Magnet stopped the waste that was going on, but nevertheless he had to write off three or four million pounds. Now we want to stop this Nornalup settlement, for which the time is not opportune. If that belt of country wants developing, this is not the time to start on it. If hon. members endorse the Government's attitude, they will be embarking on an expenditure of which the results cannot possibly be gauged. Mr. Moran cannot estimate it more than anyone else. What special qualifications has he? None better than mine or those of others. He has not had more experience than some of us. He does not
possess the detailed knowledge which is possessed by some of us who are farmers and have been Ministers. Western Australia cannot carry the scheme at present, and there is no immediate need for it. Estimates were prepared for group settlement under Sir James Mitchell. After that Mr. Angwin was going to get the groups established at less cost. Mr. Troy's estimates, too, were not realised in every case, because of the great difficulties of settlement in the South-West. It is no use putting forward an estimate of £800 per holding at which this Normalup scheme is to be accomplished. In the case of group settlement the writing-off has not finished yet. Even at this hour we do not know where we stand as to group settlement.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I support the amendment of the Leader of the Opposition. When speaking on the Address-in-reply I said that something like £5,000,000 worth of timber was likely to be destroyed in the Normalup area. I am glad steps have been taken to protect the timber.

The Minister for Lands: I told you the timber would be preserved.

Mr. SLEEMAN: Timber was to be destroyed, but evidently the Forests Department took a hand. Even in that early period of the history of settlement at Normalup, when blocks were being distributed two of the settlers refused to take possession because the blocks were unsuitable. Those men were commended by the officer in charge for their refusal.

The Minister for Lands: That statement is not true.

Mr. SLEEMAN: The Minister returned from a visit to the area and said that my statement was half true. He explained that the men had been taken off the first blocks because the departmental officials regarded the areas as unsuitable and placed the men elsewhere. I still say that my original statement was correct.

The Minister for Lands: The men did not want to leave the blocks.

Mr. SLEEMAN: There is something wrong when the departmental officials will voluntarily take people off blocks because they are unsuitable.

The Minister for Lands: The blocks were allotted the same day.

Mr. SLEEMAN: That makes the position worse. The departmental officials considered the blocks unsuitable and yet they allotted them straight away. Is that a sample of the splendid country that we were told would be available for the Normalup scheme? Now the Minister claims that the settlers will be put on a profit-making basis after the expenditure of £800 only. How he has changed his opinion since he aired his views as a member of the Royal Commission on group settlement! In his minority report he said—

A group settler in the South-West should be able to make a living, and meet his interest payments when he has a herd of 20 cows. Advances totalling £2,000 should be sufficient to place present group settlers in the South-West on a basis enabling them to attain the position indicated.

The cost will be considerably reduced for future groups, and these should not cost anything in excess of from £1,000 to £1,500.

Hon. P. Collier: He was fairly right because they have penned out at about that figure.

Mr. SLEEMAN: First the Minister fixed the amount at £1,800 but now he has dropped to £800. I am not prepared to accept his figures and I hope the amendment will be carried. I again emphasise the point that the information I have received from Normalup shows that my earlier statements were correct.

Mr. WITHERS: As a member representing a south-western constituency, I should support the vote, but in view of the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition, I feel I must support him. I would not be justified in doing so without indicating my views. I can readily understand how popular some of the Country Party members representing eastern wheat belt farmers will be when the vote is taken and they are found supporting the Estimates. I have been in communication with a number of people in various parts of the State and I know that the Normalup scheme is most unpopular with the farmers in the outback areas.

The Minister for Railways: They do not know anything about the scheme.

Mr. WITHERS: They know quite enough about it to appreciate the position.

The Minister for Lands: If we were to make available to the farmers all the money involved in the Normalup scheme, how much do you think it would represent to each farmer?
Mr. WITHERS: I do not know.

The Minister for Lands: It would not enable them to buy a ton of super each.

Mr. WITHERS: It is strange to hear the Premier and the Minister for Lands claiming that the settlement of the Normalup area will be achieved as the result of the expenditure of £800 only per block. We have no guarantee that the settlers who go there will remain on their blocks, nor yet that they will make good. We have no guarantee that the holdings will be brought to a productive stage by the expenditure of £800.

The Minister for Railways: Your South-West conferences are continually passing motions asking for the settlement of areas down there.

The Minister for Lands: Yes, and when the hon. member brings along some of his requests, I will be able to indicate his views.

Mr. WITHERS: Before entering upon the Normalup scheme, the Government should have availed themselves of opportunities to settle the country closer to established centres, and nearer to railway and butter factory facilities.

The Minister for Railways: Your objection is that this scheme will serve Albany.

Mr. WITHERS: That does not worry me.

The Minister for Railways: There is no question about it.

Mr. WITHERS: I know this scheme is promoted in order to absorb some of the unemployed, and I do not object from that standpoint. I claim, however, that the money spent on the scheme could be better expended by providing employment for men in other parts more favourably situated at the present juncture. Rather than inaugurate an altogether new settlement scheme at Normalup, the Government should make further use of the country served by the Denmark line, and thus save a large proportion of extra expenditure. Why should they go right across to Normalup, when their objective could be gained by settling the people nearer at hand? Is it not that the Government want to have a compact little body of electors located there for a certain purpose?

The Minister for Lands: I have never been charged with doing anything of that description before.

Mr. WITHERS: I think that is the reason why the Government want the settlement scheme in that part of the State.

The Minister for Railways: You would not suggest that the Frankland River should be a bar to settlement?

Mr. WITHERS: No, but it is close to the boundary of a certain electorate. Would it not be better for the people who will be settled on blocks in the South-West if they were nearer to Denmark? Their cream could be landed at the butter factory in better condition than is possible when it has to be carted over much longer distances. I do not regard this matter as a party question at all. I think the Government are unwise in the course they are pursuing, and I would like to see them change their plans. I am afraid we may be saddled with something similar to our experience in connection with the group settlement scheme. Group settlement costs, after all the writing down, have been reduced to what it was originally intended they should be. I hope the Normalup scheme when finalised will be more satisfactory to the State than group settlement has ever been. However, I feel sure that when the £800 per farm has been exhausted, the settlers will be clamouring for further assistance.

Hon. M. F. TROY: If the alternative to the Normalup settlement was the purchase of land lying uncleared existing railways and the settlement of those lands, I should say the advantage lay with the alternative. Every member knows there is along existing railways a great deal of land that could well be brought under cultivation, were it not that the land would have to be repossessed, which would mean a heavy addition to the cost of settling it. I have said that I have no great objection to the Normalup scheme. But I understand that some of the settlers are to be put out 20 miles from the railway, which in my view would be a very grave blunder. None of them should be more than ten miles from a railway. A wheat grower 20 miles out from a railway is in a fairly satisfactory position, but not so a dairymen, who has to bring in his cream to the siding perhaps every second day. Having regard to the financial difficulties in which the State is placed to-day, this is not the time to embark upon new settlement schemes. However, this Normalup settlement is already embarked upon, and
so I will not vote for the motion, but will give the Minister a chance, in the hope that the settlement will be successful and that he will be able to keep down the cost.

The Minister for Lands: You will admit that we have control of this scheme.

Hon. M. F. TROY: If this were a scheme on the familiar lines of group settlement I would condemn it. The group settlement theory is a bad one, for it throws no responsibility on the settler, who becomes a sort of public servant. The Minister expects the cost of this scheme to work out at £200 per holding. I attach no importance to estimates, I do not know any part of the country where the estimate of the cost of development has proved to be correct. The cottage will cost £200, to say nothing of the milking sheds.

The Minister for Lands: The State is not building them.

Hon. M. F. TROY: Well, how can the settler be established and the whole cost arrived at, if the settler is to be left without a home and without milking sheds?

The Minister for Lands: He is to get for the cottage the second-hand galvanised iron of which we have so much.

Hon. M. F. TROY: When group settlement was initiated the present Premier said a selection, including a house, could be established for £750. It was a ridiculous estimate, and the hon. member had not a single figure to go upon. The scheme was started in a muddle, merely by a wave of the hand. In its initiation there was not the slightest degree of organisation. So, as I say, if this Nornalup scheme were a group settlement scheme I would certainly vote against it. A hundred people are being settled there, and the member for Guildford-Midland said they would require a factory. What greater advantage could be desired for a factory than to have a hundred settlers concentrated in a compact area?

The Minister for Lands: The pastures have done better.

Hon. M. F. TROY: In that respect group settlement has done much towards solving the difficulties of settling the South-West. Even the old settlers have profited by the experience. I hope the Nornalup scheme will turn out well, but the Minister should not put settlers more than 10 miles from a railway. Although I consider the time is not ripe to embark upon a new scheme of this kind, I am impelled to oppose the amendment moved by my leader.

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

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<tr>
<th>Ayes</th>
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Majority against 6

AYES.

Mr. Collier 
Mr. Corboy 
Mr. Cunningham 
Mr. Hegney 
Mr. Johnson 
Mr. Kenneally 
Mr. Landon 
Mr. Lutey 
Mr. Marshall 
Mr. McCallum 
Mr. Mupple 
Mr. Panton 
Mr. Sleeinan 
Mr. Walker 
Mr. Wilcock 
Mr. Withers 
Mr. Wilson 

(Teller.)
Amendment thus negatived.

Item—Assistance to settlers, industries, etc., £50,000:

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: What is the object of this item? Is it intended to meet special circumstances connected with next year's harvest?

The PREMIER: It might be used to assist cases of extreme hardship or distress, and it could be applied to a butter factory, if desired.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Roads and Bridges, £107,000:

Mr. WITHERS: Is it intended to spend this year the whole of the £100,000 set down under this Vote? Can we expect anything as good as that? The position with regard to workers' homes to-day is not as good as we should like it to be. People in Bunbury have made application to come under the new scheme in connection with the group settlement houses. After their applications have been approved and they have been told the number of the blocks, the houses on which they would be interested in, they have been advised that there is no money to enable the authorities to proceed with the scheme. They have thus been greatly inconvenienced. They were led to believe they would get their homes, and now these are to be denied them. If the £100,000 is to be spent, I hope the Premier will see his way clear to continue the scheme I referred to, so that the person who requires a home and cannot afford to build one may be given the opportunity to get one.

Resolutions reported and the report adopted.

BILL—SALARIES TAX.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 23rd October.

Mr. PANSTON (Leederville) [12.32]: It is somewhat difficult at this hour of the morning to make up one's mind exactly which Bill to speak to.

Mr. Sleeman: The one on the Notice Paper.

Mr. PANSTON: There is one Bill on the file, and another referred to on the Notice Paper.

The Premier: We will adjourn the House after the second reading has been carried.

Mr. PANSTON: Are there two different Bills?

Hon. P. Collier: Is the Bill on the Notice Paper in order?

Mr. PANSTON: I am not in the Chair at the moment, and cannot say.
Mr. SPEAKER: The Bill on the file is the one before the House.

Hon. P. Collier: And not the one on the Notice Paper?

Mr. PANTON: If it is the one on the file, I shall make the speech I originally proposed to make.

Mr. H. W. Mann: Hear, hear: When do you start?

Mr. PANTON: The hon. member can say "Hear, hear!" now, but I well remember the look of consternation on his face when the member for South Fremantle (Mr. McCullum) explained some parts of the Bill a few weeks ago, and the hon. member discovered that the nurses in the Perth Hospital, whom he had been so carefully looking after in order to get their votes, were to be taxed under this measure. Your ruling, Mr. Speaker, is that the Bill on the file is the one before the House.

Mr. SPEAKER: It is the one to be spoken to.

Mr. PANTON: I presume we are not allowed to discuss that which is on the Notice Paper. If that is so, it will be very difficult for us, seeing that we will not be able to depart from the one Bill in order to discuss the other. At present the Bill is really in two parts.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Or: a point of order. We have two separate propositions before us. If we speak to the second reading of the Bill to which you, Mr. Speaker, referred as the official Bill before the House, shall we have an opportunity of making another speech on the other Bill when we reach it on the Notice Paper? Casual inspection demonstrates that there are two Bills. I would like to have the point decided now.

Mr. SPEAKER: There is only one Bill before the Chamber at the present time, the Bill introduced by the Premier some weeks ago. It is on that Bill I am prepared to listen to debate. Officially I know nothing whatever about the other Bill, which has never been before me and has never been discussed. We are dealing with the Bill which is on the file.

Mr. PANTON: I agree with the member for Swan (Mr. Sampson) that the position is remarkable. We have a Bill officially before us, the Bill on the file; yet if one glances at the Notice Paper, one finds that three parts of the Bill are deleted by proposed amendments.

Mr. SPEAKER: I cannot take any notice of that aspect.

Mr. PANTON: I am really out of order in discussing things which presently will not be in the Bill. However, I must abide by your decision, Mr. Speaker, and speak to the Bill as I find it. Probably the House will agree that the measure has had a most remarkable career, one almost unique in the history of this House.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: You are wasting time in speaking on it. It is already defeated.

Mr. PANTON: The Bill was introduced by the Premier some weeks ago; but not until the Leader and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition explained some of its clauses did the majority of members sitting behind the Government have any idea of the meaning of the measure.

The Premier: It is quite simple.

Mr. PANTON: So simple that the member for Perth (Mr. H. W. Mann) almost had a fit. I well remember observing the consternation of the hon. member as he listened to the Deputy Leader of Opposition explaining what the Bill really meant to some constituents of the member for Perth. It is perfectly obvious that members opposite must have had a heart to heart discussion on the measure in Caucus. Although it was going to bring in a considerable amount of revenue to a hard-up Government, it has remained in abeyance until one-half of it appears on the file and the other half on the Notice Paper. The Leader and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition have explained the fact that this is a sectional Bill. If it was a sectional Bill when they addressed themselves to it, we may now call it a super-sectional Bill. Formerly it had at least the redeeming feature of a dragnet which brought in as many people as possible under the Bill. The Leader and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition have declared that they are notenchancing the Bill.

Mr. H. W. Mann: It will not touch the nurses.

Mr. PANTON: That is why the hon. member looks so happy now. I wish to point out to hon. members opposite that the railway officers are just as much governed by an arbitration award as are any members of the trade union movement. The Railways Classification Board, constituted by Act No.
38 of 1920, is just as much an Arbitration Court to those railway officers as is the general arbitration tribunal to any ordinary unionist. If the Premier turns up the definition of "worker" in the Arbitration Act, he will find that the term does not include—

Mr. Wansbrough drew attention to the state of the House.

Bells rung, and a quorum formed.

Mr. PANTON: The railway officers, or salaried staff of the Railway Department, are working under an arbitration tribunal just as much as any section of workers who go to the Arbitration Court. The officers are not included in the definition of "worker," but are specifically exempted. Unlike the public servants, the railway officers are and have always been governed by the basic wage. Whenever the basic wage goes up or down, the salaries of railway officers follow it up or down. That has been the position ever since the Arbitration Act has included a basic wage section. The Railways Classification Board fix the salaries of the officers; but whenever the basic wage has been brought down, their salaries have been brought down also.

The Premier: Clause 5 provides for that. Hon. W. D. Johnson: Which one? The one on the Notice Paper?

Mr. PANTON: Clause 5 does not cover that position.

The Premier: It provides the necessary power.

Mr. PANTON: I cannot see how that clause will exempt the railway officers.

The Premier: At any rate, they will not be taxed twice.

Mr. PANTON: Should the Premier's ruling be correct, then, if the Minister for Works secures the passage of the Bill he has introduced and the court does not reduce the basic wage, the provisions of the Bill before us will apply to railway officers.

The Premier: Certainly. The court does not fix their wages.

Mr. PANTON: Quite so, but if the court reduces the basic wage then the Commissioner of Railways reduces the wages of the railway officers to that extent.

The Attorney General: Yes.

Mr. PANTON: Then I claim the railway officers are just as much under the Arbitration Court as other workers. The Premier has a provision setting out that those who go to the Arbitration Court will not be brought within the scope of the Bill now under discussion. I consider the railway officers have just as much right to be exempted from the Bill as other sections of the community who are allowed to go to the Arbitration Court.

The Attorney General: Why should there be any difference between them and an officer in my department?

Mr. PANTON: Because your officers are not affected by any basic wage decision arrived at by the Arbitration Court.

The Attorney General: That may be an advantage or a disadvantage.

Mr. PANTON: But it does not make any difference. The fact remains that the Premier has seen fit to exempt from the provisions of the Bill those who are governed by Arbitration Court awards. I contend that simply because railway officers can approach a different tribunal—not designated an Arbitration Court, but a Classification Board—does not provide a reason why they should not be exempt from the Bill, just the same as workers who can go to the Arbitration Court.

The Premier: At any rate, the men will not suffer twice.

Mr. PANTON: They must suffer all the time. They will be taxed every time the Arbitration Court reduces the basic wage.

The Attorney General: That is not a tax.

Mr. PANTON: The men will be taxed to that extent, and then they will be taxed under the Bill now before us.

The Attorney General: No.

Mr. PANTON: I say yes. If the Attorney General can show me that they will not be taxed, I shall be pleased, but I claim that the only way we can safeguard their interests is to exempt them just as other workers are exempted. My claim is that the Bill is purely sectional legislation. Why should the civil servants and school teachers be deliberately singled out for a tax of this description? Is there any reason why one small section of the community should be singled out for that purpose? The civil servants always seem to be at a disadvantage.

The Premier: Of course, they were taxed by the Labour Government in 1915!

Mr. PANTON: I do not think they were. I have some figures dealing with that phase. I find that in 1914 artisans received £3 12s. per week and general workers £2 14s. 10d. At that time the civil servant received £204
per annum. In 1917, 1919 and 1920, the civil servants still received £204 a year, whereas in 1917, the artisan received £3 15s. 6d. and the general worker £2 19s. 10d. In 1919, the artisan received £4 2s. 6d., which was an increase of 14.6 per cent. compared with his wages in 1914 and the general worker was paid £3 11s. 2d., an increase of 29.7 per cent. The civil servants stopped where they were. In 1920 the artisan received £4 15s. 4d., showing an increase of 32.4 per cent. The general worker received £4 0s. 7d., an increase of 46.9 per cent. The civil servant still remained on £204 a year. In 1922 the artisan went up to 37.5 per cent., the general worker 36.2 per cent., while the civil servant received an increase to £264 a year, or 29.4 per cent. In 1925 there was a change of Government, and the wages of artisans went up so that there was an increase of 49 per cent. and in the case of general workers, an increase of 46.9 per cent. The civil servants went up 41.2 per cent. Strange to say, the civil servants remained on £288 a year, which showed the increase of 41.2 per cent. over the salaries received in 1914, until 1930, whereas the artisans in 1930 were enjoying an increase of 52.8 per cent., and the general workers an increase of 56.7 per cent.

The Premier: That is, in the aggregate from 1914.

Mr. PANTON: The civil servants went up 41.2 per cent., the artisans 52.8 per cent. and the general workers 56.7 per cent. When the claim for a reduction is before the Arbitration Court, the artisan and the general worker will be given an opportunity to show that there should be no reduction, but, on the other hand, the Premier says to the Civil Service, "I am going to reduce your salaries without giving you any classification board or arbitration court before which you can place your views. I am going to reduce your salaries by from £3 15s. to £10 per cent. per annum."

The Premier: Do you not realise that £1 up on £2 14s., represents a bigger percentage than £1 upon £5 or on £10?

Mr. PANTON: I do not think that makes any difference to the point I am making.

The Premier: It makes a difference to the man concerned.

Mr. PANTON: I am taking the aggregate. In referring to the salaries of the civil servants, I have taken the general run, not the men in receipt of salaries of £1,000 and so forth. I took the men on £204 whose maximum is £288. That is what they are receiving to-day. The Premier's argument does not enter into the question at all. I am dealing with the basic wage position and the men in the Civil Service, who are on the equivalent of the basic wage, receive £288. My contention is, in view of the particulars I have given of wages paid in 1914 compared with those obtaining in 1930, the civil servants have been singled out for an unfair attack. When the Government find themselves in financial difficulties, the salaries of civil servants are to be cut down, and those employees of the Government are to have no opportunity of fighting against the reduction at all! The rest of the community have an opportunity to present their case before the Arbitration Court, and to urge that their wages should not be reduced, but the civil servants have not that opportunity. They are not even allowed to send representatives to the bar of the House to plead their case. They are to suffer the reduction without any opportunity to fight against it.

The Premier: Every Government in Australia has had to do it.

Mr. PANTON: I am not concerned with what other Governments have done. The Federal Government had the decency to leave alone those in receipt of less than £750. If the Premier had followed that course, I might have agreed that his Bill had that one redeeming feature.

The Attorney General: What would be the redeeming feature?

Mr. PANTON: Those best able to pay would have paid. To use the Premier's own argument, if the man on £1,000 a year or £1,200 a year is to be brought down only 10 per cent., the Attorney General must agree that the man on £288 who will be taxed £3 15s. per cent will feel the imposition much more acutely than the higher grade man.

The Premier: Everybody is feeling the pinch.

Mr. PANTON: That is no reason why the Premier should want to slaughter these officers. Members on the Government side have had sufficient influence in Caucus to induce the Premier almost to murder the Bill. I hope members will realise that the object of the Bill is to tax one section of the community. If sacrifices have to be made, it is only fair that they should be spread over
the whole of the community. To say that members of Parliament and public servants alone should be singled out for sacrifice is altogether inequitable—and it must be remembered that the public servants cannot make any effective protest. If the Government are determined to go on with the Bill, I for one propose to amend it in Committee in a way that will make it more equitable. During the last few days I have heard a lot as to the position of the Government, which must be pretty bad when they bring down a Bill of this sort on top of all the other taxing measures we have had.

The Premier: We have to make good your Government's deficit of last year.

Mr. PANTON: The deficit of last year was no worse than the annual deficit during the six-year period preceding 1924, and was not anything like the deficit we can look forward to annually during the coming three years.

The Premier: You would oppose every tax, no matter what it was.

Mr. PANTON: This is the first time I have opposed anything the Premier has brought down, but in future I will have to be a little more critical. The Premier has not very much to growl about. If members on his side are not prepared to discuss anything at all. It is the most wonderful example of discipline ever exhibited in the House.

Mr. SPEAKER: There is nothing about discipline in the Bill.

Mr. PANTON: No, but there ought to be, because the Premier and members of the Cabinet have set a wonderful example of discipline for our side to follow when once again we get over there. I will oppose the second reading, and if the Bill should reach Committee I will endeavour to have it amended.

HON. W. D. JOHNSON (Guildford-Midland) [1.0]: A tired House is not an effective House. A tired House should never be called upon to deal with important legislation, so I am going to do what I can to protect the people of the State from the merely casual attention of a tired House to legislation. No Government will do business at this hour of the morning if I can prevent it. We have a responsibility to do our work throughout, and for a weary House, after dealing with Loan Estimates, to be called upon to consider an important measure such as this, is altogether wrong. And how is it presented to us? We do not know which Bill we are discussing, for we do not know the effect the Caucus Bill will have upon the Government measure. The Premier has made no statement, given us no explanation. He submitted a Bill to us and moved the second reading of that Bill. If we are discussing this Bill now we are simply wasting time, for it is not the Bill that ultimately will have to be considered by the House. What position are we in? The Bill introduced by the Premier definitely taxed wages. It imposed a general penalty upon wages and salaries. The Premier explained that. It is true he did not go into a great deal of detail, and it is true also that he did not exactly understand the real effect of the measure. One gathers that from the fact that he has since altered the Bill so materially. If we were to attempt to debate the Caucus Bill, you, Mr. Speaker, would rule that we must discuss the Bill which the Premier now does not propose to submit to us. Surely it is fooling the country, and unnecessarily taking up the time of the House. It is due to the Chamber that the Premier should explain exactly what he intends to do.

The Attorney General: How can he explain? He moved the second reading of the Bill, and under the rules he is not permitted to speak again—at all events, not until he replies to the debate.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: When the Leader of the House makes an extraordinary discovery, as in the present instance, and when his original exposition of a Bill is found to be not in accord with his more matured judgment, it is the practice in the House of Commons for the Leader of the House, on a question of privilege, to explain himself and justify himself for altering that which he had previously recommended to the House. Had the Premier done that, we could have understood what happened and what led to the alteration being made. In the circumstances we can only assume what happened: we do not know.

Mr. Withers: Under pressure.

The Premier: You seem to understand it.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Who has a right to put pressure on the Government? Are we to have Bills explained by the Premier and then pressure brought to bear to have them altered to such an extent that we have two propositions before us? What
does the member for Bunbury mean by pressure? Where does it come from? Is this some new influence lately created for the purpose of swaying the Government into the course they should adopt? I am inclined to think the member for Bunbury is wrong; I do not think there has been any pressure. I think it has been purely reconsideration by the combined forces of caucus.

Mr. Kenneally: And the solicitude of the Premier for the members of the service.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The member for East Perth may be able to speak as to that.

Mr. McCallum: And there was a row in the corridors.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The member for South Fremantle ought to appreciate that there is room for a row over the Bill. The main contributor to the row was the member for South Fremantle himself.

Mr. McCallum: I think I ought to ask for a withdrawal of that.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The hon. member was the cause of all the trouble. The Premier explained the Bill and the member for South Fremantle analysed it, and his analysis caused consternation. We all know what happened in the corridor. Supporters of the Government were running around tearing their hair and seeking the Premier in all directions. Ultimately they found him and wanted him to explain whether his statement of the ramifications of the Bill was correct, or whether the statement of the member for South Fremantle was correct.

Mr. McCallum: He did not give any explanation.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The point I wish to make is that the member for South Fremantle was the cause of the trouble. If he had not analysed the Bill as he did, there would have been no row. The hon. member so criticised the Bill that he convinced supporters of the Government that there was something wrong with it, that the Bill was not all that the Premier thought it was, or what the Premier had told them it was. The result was the debate was hurriedly adjourned, and members were rushing up and down the corridors demanding a meeting so that an explanation could be obtained. A meeting was hastily summoned.

The Premier: No, it was not.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: And the Bill was delayed. At one sitting the Bill appeared quite close to the top of the Notice Paper, and at the next sitting it appeared right at the bottom.

Mr. McCallum: The reduction of salaries was to have operated from the 1st October, and here we are well on towards the end of November.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: It is true that, owing to the meetings, the Bill had to be delayed. The member for South Fremantle knows that there must be a limit to any retrospective period, and that the Bill could not now be made retrospective to the 1st October. The Premier might have made it retrospective to that date had he kept out of the way and allowed members to vote on the Bill, without discovering that it was not quite what they expected. However, meetings were held for the further consideration of the Bill. I do not know whether there were any rows at the meetings. We downstairs could hear members talking; the doors were open and sound travels pretty clearly in this building. We know that discussions took place and that they were pretty strenuous. They were bound to be strenuous. They occupied a good while, but eventually the opinions which had been expressed in the House by the member for South Fremantle prevailed and were adopted, and the whole Bill was reconsidered. I do not wish to go into details of the Bill in the amended form, because to do so would be out of order. I wish to speak for quite a long time and therefore to keep within the Standing Orders.

Mr. McCallum: Which Bill are you discussing now?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The Bill on members' files.

Mr. McCallum: Not the one indicated by the amendments on the Notice Paper?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: No, and the hon. member has no right to direct my attention to it. I wish to stick to the Bill before the Chamber.

The Premier: You have not reached it yet.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The Bill, as introduced by the Premier, proposed a tax on wages. The little criticism that has taken place proves the unfairness of his proposal. It is a question whether such a tax would be legal. I do not think that an award of a tribunal, constituted by Act of Parliament and presided over by a judge, could be set aside by a measure such as this. The
Bill as introduced by the Government does propose to do that. I believe that proposal will be reconsidered. I believe the Government will ultimately discover that awards of the Arbitration Court must be respected, and that wages and conditions once established by a tribunal authorised by Parliament and governed by statute and presided over by a judge must continue until the selfsame tribunal gives the matter reconsideration and prescribes other wages and conditions. Therefore the Government and their supporters, at their caucus meeting, wisely determined, to alter that proposal. I do not know whether the Attorney General discovered the weakness of the proposal. He is the legal authority and the one to whom the Government would look to discover any weakness or illegality. The sad part is that he inserted it in the original Bill, or allowed it to be inserted. We have an Attorney General to advise the Government on legal questions. If anything appears in a measure that has no right to be there or conflicts with another statute, he is responsible for it. It is possible the Attorney General discovered the mistake, and that it was he who advised the Premier to revise his measure by making certain alterations. Some members claim that it was a caucus decision. Knowing the activities of the Attorney General, and having a high regard for his qualifications, I should like to give him the credit, for I believe he discovered the mistake.

Mr. Kenneally: And knowing his objection to caucus rule.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: He has always preached against caucus interfering with Government activities.

The Attorney General: I am sure you cannot find that I have used the word "caucus" in this House once in the last six years.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I cannot go into such matters lest I should be ruled out of order.

Mr. McCallum: What is the definition of caucus?

The Attorney General: We are not discussing caucuses.

The Premier: A meeting of flappers.

Mr. McCallum: Of course you know all about that.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I believe it was the decision of the Attorney General that led to the change. Whilst the Attorney General played that part with regard to the wages section, we are now informed that these provisions of the Government measure will not operate, and that the other Bill is the one that will be submitted to us. I now believe that caucus had a considerable say upon the provisions of the Bill, that the alterations made in the other parts of it were the result of the matured opinion of caucuses expressed at the various meetings that have been held. Not only were these alterations influenced by the Attorney General and by the meetings of caucuses, but public meetings have also been held, made up to those who are directly interested. These meetings were well attended and were held in various places at various times. Action was taken by the executive of the Public Service Association to call a meeting in the early stages.

Mr. Hegney called attention to the state of the House.

Bells rung, and a quorum formed.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The Bill represents a sectional tax. I must oppose it on principle. I maintain that if the Government desire to raise revenue by means of a tax of this kind, they should apply it to all sections of the community. I have stated that the hospitals tax is wrong because it does not apply equitably. The only way to raise revenue of this description is by an increase in the income tax. Members of Parliament and of the Civil Service are to be taxed, whereas the whole community should share in the making of the sacrifices necessary in the interests of the State. Many persons in the city are drawing salaries far beyond those drawn by the Public Service or by members of Parliament, and these will escape any special taxation to meet the position. If the times demand that an increased revenue shall be obtained by the Government, they have a straightforward way in which to get it. It is not right to limit the demand to only a section of the community. The managers of banks and insurance companies, the editors of newspapers and others, are all drawing high salaries, and in the majority of cases salaries far exceeding those of the average public servants and of members of Parliament. Why should we and members of the service be picked out to contribute to the needs of the Government, while the rest of the community escapes? We have no greater responsibility in this matter than other people.
Mr. Piesse: Many of the men you speak of are already suffering.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Many of us are suffering in our private lives. What hardship is the editor of a newspaper suffering more than is suffered by a member of Parliament or an officer of the service? He is doing his work as he did before, and is drawing the salary he drew before. We are now asked to pass a law whereby one portion of the community shall be taxed whilst the others go scot free. The extraordinary thing is that the editors of newspapers, who remain as they are so far as this Bill goes, should be writing articles claiming that other people should be penalised. They admit that circumstances demand the making of a sacrifice, but they would pass most of their sacrifice upon someone else. No Government should pander to that sort of thing. They should be bigger and nobler than that. They should see to it that the sacrifice the occasion demands is distributed so that no one will be unduly penalised by comparison with others, and that each shall contribute in proportion to his ability to bear the burden. I appeal particularly to the Attorney General in this matter.

The Attorney General: You have not yet advanced any good argument against the Bill.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: He knows what income is earned by many members of the legal profession, and the profits there are to be made in it. I do not begrudge lawyers the money they make if they are going to do their duty by the State. If it is essential I should sacrifice £60 a year out of my £600, it is reasonable that the friends of the Attorney General should also contribute something to the revenue. Members have received letters from teachers, from members of the Civil Service, and from railway officers, pointing to the injustices meted out by this Bill, and appealing to Parliament to protect them against this sectional taxation. They all say they are prepared to bear their fair share of the burden, but are not willing to carry the whole lot. They say that if the taxation is to be imposed, it should be imposed on all sections of the community. I am altogether against this taxation Bill, even in its altered form. It is neither just nor equitable. I am only prepared to consider further taxation of incomes by an increased income tax. Then the taxation will be on a graduated scale, imposed in proportion to the capacity to carry; and to that extent it will be just. I wish to see the second reading debate completed in reasonable time, because I am anxious to get some rest. Accordingly I shall not prolong the discussion. I hope the division will defeat the measure because of its unfair incidence.

MR. KENNEALLY (East Perth) [1.27]: I am hopeful that this measure will not find its way to the statute-book. Lengthy discussion is not required to-night. It would not serve any useful purpose, because on the Notice Paper are amendments which the Premier intends to move. We are in the position of having to discuss the measure in its first printed form. In that form it is almost a unique taxation measure. I am not surprised at its emanating from the present Government, who have shown an inclination to introduce class legislation. The Bill follows their bent in that direction. Apparently, class taxation appeals to them. They indicated on the hustings what would be their attitude if they were returned. The people having accepted those statements, Ministers are justified in giving effect to their policy. I think, however, that even some members of the Opposition did not believe the Government were prepared to go so far in class legislation. Some of the Government's supporters are now turning against them on that account. This Bill, as it stands, would prevent any officers from going to a tribunal for a determination in regard to their pay. Even when the Bill returns from the stool of repentance to which the Premier has indicated he is likely to take it, it will not be highly acceptable. In no amended form is it likely to give any officer the right to appeal to a tribunal regarding his pay. The early history of the fixation of officers' wages shows that such a system can easily prove a source of considerable trouble even to Governments, if they are not careful in that regard. It remained for a Nationalist Government of this country to cause the first strike of civil servants in the Commonwealth. It looks as though the present Government are heading for a repetition of that strike. Apparently they thought the first taste of it all right. It is time the Government realised that sectional legislation such as this will not be tolerated beyond a certain point by the community. I do not know why civil servants are specially selected for such treatment. It seems to be a point of Nationalist
policy to select the civil servants specially. When the Nationalists were in power previously, they stopped the increments due to civil servants. That was because the civil servants had no tribunal to appeal to. After tremendous agitation, the railway officers ultimately succeeded in obtaining a tribunal to fix their wages and conditions. Under this measure, even in its amended form, that tribunal will not have the right to decide anything as to wages and conditions.

The Attorney General: Yes.

Mr. KENNEALLY: Only subject to this taxation measure saying, in effect, to the tribunal, “You may fix so and so, but we will see that the officers do not get it.” Subject to such a limitation the tribunal will have the right to determine wages and conditions.

The Attorney General: Nothing of the sort.

Mr. KENNEALLY: The Attorney General may be able to explain the matter. Does he say that the railway officers will not be subject to the provisions of the Bill?

The Attorney General: No.

Mr. KENNEALLY: Then, if the Railways Classification Board will have the opportunity to determine wages and conditions, the special tax gatherer for civil servants will say to railway officers, “The Railway Classification Board are wrong, and we are going to take so much from you.” Thus the right of determination by the board, under either the present or the original form of the Bill, will be taken away. As to the exemption of certain people from the operation of the measure, the result will be that place the Government in the position of saying, “All except those who have no tribunal to go to will be exempted. As to those who have a tribunal, we have provided that they shall not be touched by the Bill.” I hope the measure will be thrown out on second reading. It ought to be. Some of the members of my own party do not altogether agree with me as to the attitude adopted by the Labour movement regarding the methods by which taxation should be obtained in order to meet the present peculiar and serious position. Early in the piece we approached the Premier and pointed out to him that as unemployment was so serious a question to the community, a better method of dealing with it would be to raise the incidence of income tax.

Mr. Sleeman called attention to the state of the House.

Bells rung, and a quorum formed.

Mr. KENNEALLY: I was saying that the position in which we find ourselves is that the special tax introduced by the Premier is merely an indication of the continuance of the attitude adopted by him and his party with regard to the civil service. They pick the service out for a course of special treatment simply because the civil servants have not the right of appeal to a tribunal appointed to protect their interests. The attitude of the Premier and his party caused the first strike of civil servants in the Commonwealth.

Mr. Sleeman: The first in the world.

Mr. KENNEALLY: Apparently the Premier is looking for a repetition of that strike.

The Premier: The civil servants struck then after they received an increase.

Mr. KENNEALLY: They struck because their increments were stopped by the party to which the Premier belongs. I am inclined to think that the Premier has not altogether forgiven the civil service for that strike.

The Premier: Nothing of the sort.

Mr. KENNEALLY: He is holding it up against the civil servants and so they are selected for victimisation under the Bill before us.

The Premier: You have no right to say that.

Mr. KENNEALLY: All the employees of the Government and of some Government institutions are included under the measure, but as the result of representations the Premier proposes to alter that position. I am entitled to ask why the Premier reaches out specially to deal with those who have no tribunal to go to. It is for the Government to endeavour to justify their attitude in that respect. No successful effort has been made in that direction so far. We have been told by the Press from day to day that the time has arrived when wages should be reduced. That policy has been preached to us in the newspapers for the last 12 or 18 months, the subject being to create an atmosphere to justify a reduction of wages. The Bill to authorise a decrease in the sal-
aries paid to members of Parliament was merely to prepare the way for a reduction in the salaries of civil servants. We know that those who support that action are doing so because as soon as the Government furnish the lead and give effect to the reductions I have indicated, then the salary and wage reductions will be reflected in those paid to people outside Government employment. We do not hear people who preach reduction of salaries, both inside and outside Parliament and the Government services, talking about bringing down the price of commodities as well. The whole plea is that the extent to which salaries and wages are reduced will be reflected in the decreased prices of commodities. The contention is that the reduction in salaries and wages will give rise to reduced cost of production, and that the reduction in salaries and wages will be reflected in the decreased prices of commodities as well. The whole plea is that the extent to which salaries and wages are reduced will be reflected in the decreased prices of commodities. The contention is that the reduction in salaries and wages will give rise to reduced cost of production, and by that means we shall be able to compete with other countries of the world.

The Premier: Of course we shall.

Hon. P. Collier: Of course that is not so.

Mr. KENNEALLY: The Chief Secretary dealt with this question the other night. He talked about the possibilities of competition and I asked him whether he meant that we were to get down to coolie conditions. The Chief Secretary replied in effect, "What is to be done if we cannot compete without getting down to coolie level?"

The Attorney General: Well, what are you going to do?

Mr. KENNEALLY: I will accept the Attorney General's interjection.

The Attorney General: What are you going to do if you cannot compete?

Mr. KENNEALLY: The Minister must not cut off the latter part of the query—"without getting down to coolie level."

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I do not know that there is anything about competition in the Bill.

Mr. KENNEALLY: That is so, Mr. Speaker, but when people are taxed under such circumstances, surely unfair competition arises when we compare the position of civil servants with that of outside employees. As I was arguing when the Attorney General interjected, and thereby followed the disorderly lead given him by the Premier, some people suggest that with wage reduction, decreased cost of production will enable us to compete with other countries. As a matter of fact, I heard it claimed by the Chief Secretary that our problems will be solved in that direction, including that of unemployment. On the other hand, I would ask hon. members to consider countries where low-wage conditions and low cost of production apply, and ascertain whether the unemployment problem has been solved there. They will find that in those countries the problem is just as serious, if not more serious than it is in Australia. People who advocate reduced standards and lower production costs ignore the fact that where those conditions obtain, the problems we are faced with are still with the countries to which I have referred. I shall not cast my vote to enable the Government to impose a special class tax on a portion of the community. The Bill as originally drafted, and now before us, includes all sections of the community who are employed by the Government. You, Mr. Speaker, ruled that we could deal with it only from that standpoint, and that we could not deal with it in the light of the amendments to be proposed by the Premier later on. Even should it be amended as the Premier desires, the Bill will control the decisions of the Railway Classification Board. In its original form, the Bill represented an attempt to control the decisions of the Arbitration Court. The court can give a determination as to wages and grant a certain amount upon which the employee is to live and maintain his family. Then under this measure somebody in authority will go to the court and say, "You have fixed a certain wage, but you know nothing about it. We are going to deduct something from it." The time has arrived when a modern Wat Tyler should arise. We would not then have this desire on the part of the Government to tax the people to the fullest extent. In that respect the Government are making a great name for themselves, especially since they promised to reduce taxation which, according to the Premier himself, is a burden on industry and on the people. In all these measures I do not see any effort made to reduce interest.

The Premier: Interest is taxed of course, except interest on certain bonds.

Mr. KENNEALLY: And that is saerobanet.

The Attorney General: Because that was the bargain made.

Mr. KENNEALLY: So, too, was a bargain made with those people whom we now propose to tax.

The Attorney General: For how long?
Mr. Munsie: Until they appeal to the board, and the board amends it.

Mr. KENNEALLY: There is an existing bargain with the railway officers, prescribing that their terms and conditions shall be fixed by the Classification Board. Now you propose to get away from it. It is a bargain, but when it affects railway men you can destroy it, although when it affects bondholders it must not be touched. If the Attorney General will stick to the principle that once a bargain is entered into it cannot be abrogated, then I will expect him to vote with us on this Bill. The question of interest is very important; because if it is sound reasoning that to the extent to which you reduce wages and salaries the cost of commodities will be reduced, then every time we reduce salaries and wages and so reduce the cost of production we automatically increase the rate of interest. Because if 6 per cent. on a bond will cover a certain amount on commodities, if you reduce the cost of those commodities and leave interest untouched, interest relatively will rise. But our friends opposite say, "Whatever you do, do not attempt to touch interest."

The Attorney General: Do you suggest we should introduce a measure to reduce interest?

Mr. KENNEALLY: I suggest we tackle interest in the same way as we are tackling wages. Apparently the difference is that while we say interest shall receive the attention of those who are in control, those in control say it is wages that must receive their attention, consequent upon which interest will be affected. I say that if interest receives their attention a reduced rate of interest will affect all commodities, including rent.

The Attorney General: Do you suggest we should pass a law reducing the rate of interest?

Mr. KENNEALLY: We do not require to pass a law to do it; it can be done without passing a law. One of the worst things we could do to bring that about would be to pass a law for the purpose. I say the Government are giving too much attention to the wages of the workers.

The Attorney General: No, you say something ought to be done about interest.

Mr. KENNEALLY: If the Government would spend in the tackling of the interest problem half the time they spend in attacking wages, the rate of interest would fall.
but in all his taxation measures no mention is made of unemployment. His taxation measures are designed to produce additional money for Consolidated Revenue. This Bill will have the same effect. I hope the second reading will not be carried. It is a class tax. It seeks to tax employees who are practically in the hands and at the mercy of the Government. The Government are reaching out to hit a class of people who some years ago were goaded into taking certain action, simply because of the domination by the then Government. The present Government are evidently seeking to ascertain just how much their employees will stand before they repeat the action into which they were previously goaded. I hope the House will declare itself against the class taxation proposed in the Bill.

MR. WITHERS (Bunbury) [1.58]: I realise that we shall have to devote a fair amount of time to this Bill in the Committee stage, but on the second reading I wish to raise a protest similar to that entered against the reduction of Parliamentary salaries. Ever since the Government took office they have been playing with the question of taxation. When this Bill was discussed by the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Opposition, they pointed out that it was a sectional tax. Representations have been made to the Premier and he has now decided to amend the Bill, as indicated on the Notice Paper, so that certain people will not be affected by the reduction. If the Government desire to do the right thing by the whole of the people of the State, they should at least bring down an equitable proposal. Even if the Bill passes this House, which I suppose it will do, as members on the Government side favour it, we can look for some sympathy from another place in view of its recent treatment of another taxation Bill. The object of the measure is to tax Government employees, but why not tax also individuals outside the service who are earning as much as, or more than those in the service? We have been told that people outside the service are suffering. If the Government taxed them, instead of leaving it to private employers to reduce the salaries of their employees, it would be a different matter. Employers have reduced salaries to such an extent that the proceeds from income taxation will be considerably affected, and the employers are the ones who will benefit from the reduction of salaries. Private employees are making sacrifices to their employers, probably equal to the sacrifices that Parliamentarians are making and that will be demanded from civil servants under this measure. When the member for Northam was previously in office, a request was made for a reduction of salaries, and the railway men were so loyal to the Government of the of their employees, it would be a different in the shape of a voluntary reduction.

Mr. Kenneally: And the present Premier has been quoting it ever since in justification.

Mr. WITHERS: I was one who suffered a reduction on that occasion.

The Premier: It was not when I was in power. It was in 1915.

Mr. WITHERS: I was one of the individuals concerned and I ought to know. I recollect outside people saying to us, “All right, Jimmy, we will shift the wheat for you.” That is what happened after employees had gone to the assistance of the Government and volunteered to accept a reduction of wages.

The Premier: It was your own party who reduced the wages.

Mr. WITHERS: It was not. My wages were reduced from 21s. to 20s. 6d. per day.

The Minister for Lands: In what year was that?

Mr. WITHERS: In 1920-21.

The Premier: It was in 1915.

Mr. WITHERS: It was not. I remember the reduction. I was receiving a guinea a day at the time, and voluntarily agreed to work for 20s. 6d. The point is that during that time we voluntarily reduced our wages to help the Government through a trying period. The same Government are now putting it over the same class of people, and trying to tax them instead of imposing a universal tax.

The Premier: You are wrong. It was in 1915.

Mr. WITHERS: This is really a Bill for Committee. Meanwhile I shall oppose the second reading.

Hon. T. WALKER: I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

Motion put and negatived.

MR. SLEEMAN (Fremantle) [2.7]: I intend to oppose this so-called taxation measure. It is nothing less than a provision for wage reduction. Why are the Government
not fair and why do they not call this a wage reduction? It is really imposing a special tax upon salaries.

The Premier: To protect the rights of officials of the service.

Mr. SLEEMAN: It does not afford them much protection when their salaries are to be reduced. I would rather be without such protection.

The Premier: The Bill protects their rights.

Mr. SLEEMAN: If that is protection, I would prefer free trade.

Mr. Parker: You would not know the difference.

Mr. SLEEMAN: This is the tenth taxing measure we have had this session to relieve the people of some of their spare cash.

Mr. Panton: Spare cash?

Mr. SLEEMAN: I would describe this as "a taxation and stagnation Government."

We have taxation on every hand. Although the Government are bringing down all these taxation measures, stagnation and unemployment are still stalking through the land. If the Government are going to tax people in this way, they should show something for what they are doing. A few weeks ago, when the Bill was being debated, and the member for South Fremantle was analysing it, it seemed there was no one in the House except the hon. member who had gone carefully through it. Very likely the Premier himself knew what was in it. I remember how the member for Perth (Mr. H. W. Mann) cocked his ears when the nurses were mentioned. There was immediately a row in the dovecote. The Minister for Railways: You should not be offensive.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I was not offensive.

The Minister for Railways: You called him a donkey.

Mr. SLEEMAN: What does the Minister mean?

The Minister for Railways: You said the hon. member cocked his ears.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I did say he had cocked his ears. No member on the Government side of the House knew what was in the Bill. Immediately the nurses were mentioned the member for Perth sat up and took notice of it. The member for Subiaco (Mr. Richardson) then bobbed up his head, and the debate was adjourned. Since then I understand it has been the decision of the party opposite to make a number of amendments.

The Minister for Railways: Cannot you make this a story without words?

Mr. SLEEMAN: I will give the House the words now. The Bill is supposed to impose taxation on one section of the community. Prior to its introduction, we thought that all sections of the community were to stand their fair share of the burden.

The Premier: Most people are carrying four shares.

Mr. SLEEMAN: Those who can best afford to carry the burden are not carrying any of it.

The Premier: Are they not?

Mr. SLEEMAN: The first person to be exempt from the tax is His Excellency the Governor.

The Premier: I have told you His Excellency has sent in his cheque.

Mr. SLEEMAN: Members of the Civil Service who are employed at Fremantle have been continuously sending their cheques to the Fremantle Unemployed Relief Fund. They are nearly the best contributors we have. Why should there be this exemption? Seeing that the Governor, the highest paid man in the land, is to be excluded, why are members of the Civil Service to be taxed? If the tax is to reign from the highest to the lowest, let it be imposed without exemptions. But the Government are not satisfied to exempt the Governor, for they also include any other person mentioned by His Excellency. It would be a good thing to be a colleague of the Governor just now. He might mention one to the Government. If I were a civil servant I would try to get on very good terms with His Excellency so that I too might be mentioned by him. Of course I know the Governor is a gentleman and has filled the position well, but he is drawing between £4,000 and £5,000 a year and has had a little more than a good look in.

The Minister for Lands: He is voluntarily making contributions.

Mr. SLEEMAN: So are the civil servants.

The Minister for Lands: He is doing it twice over.

Mr. SLEEMAN: And the civil servant has done it 20 times over. We get our cheques regularly every week from the civil servants in Fremantle. What is the Governor contributing?
The Minister for Lands: If you have seen the paper you will know.

Mr. SLEEMAN: The Minister for Lands is trying to educate me as to what should be contributed.

Mr. Parker: That is impossible.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I see the hon. member has awakened. Who disturbed him?

The Minister for Railways: You did, with your raucous voice.

Mr. SLEEMAN: In Committee we shall be able to start at the beginning. Our first effort should be to bring everybody under the Bill. We should strike out the Governor and the people whom the Governor is likely to nominate. The Bill applies to the departments and branches set out in the Second Schedule including workers under the Fire Brigades Board. These men might well have been classed with the Governor and excepted.

The Premier: We may exempt some of them.

Mr. SLEEMAN: The men working under the Fire Brigades Board have already been circularised with a demand that they shall accept reductions. This Bill will impose another reduction. Firemen serve the country to the tune of 84 hours per week. In return, they are bludgeoned into accepting a reduction, and this Bill proposes to take something further from them. As the member for South Fremantle (Mr. McCallum) has said, under this measure we shall have the spectacle of waterside workers employed by the Fremantle Harbour Trust being taxed whilst their comrades on the ships will go free. I do not know that anybody should be taxed as here proposed; but if the one is, the other should be.

The Premier: You do not object to someone being taxed as long as everyone is taxed?

Mr. SLEEMAN: I object to any tax which is not fair and reasonable. Again, the nurses in the hospitals are to be taxed, but professional men such as lawyers, who can sit in Parliament and still attend to their professional pursuits, will be exempt. If the poorer classes are to be taxed, the professional classes should also be taxed. The Bill does not propose to touch the medical profession, or the land shark, or the agent who travels around the country, or the auctioneer. Auctioneers are making a good living out of the misfortunes of people who have to sell up their homes owing to the depression. If one section is to be taxed, let all sections be taxed. The member for East Perth (Mr. Kenneally) said it was no wonder that civil servants working under a Government of this description were driven to put up a world's record by striking. However, we shall have plenty of time to discuss the Bill in Committee.

MR. CUNNINGHAM (Kalgoorlie) [2,20]: I do not wish to cast a silent vote on the Bill. I oppose the measure on account of the principle it embodies. Very truly the Bill has been described as a piece of class legislation. I realise the position of the Treasurer and also the problems of the Government. All of us understand that Western Australia, like the entire Commonwealth, is faced with a financial position that tests all the people and the brains of the whole world. For that reason I feel a great measure of sympathy for our Premier and Treasurer in his difficulties. Those difficulties, however, are not sufficient excuse for the hon. gentleman to present to Parliament such a Bill as this, in which he proposes to tax one section of the community while other sections, earning equally good incomes or perhaps larger, are to go free. On that account I regard the principle of the Bill as bad. I am rather surprised by the Premier's intention to go on with the Bill this evening. I was inclined to think that the discussion which arose on the original presentation of the Bill would induce him to listen to reason and drop the measure.

The Minister for Railways: He probably waited to see what the Federal Government were going to do.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: The House is asked to pass the Bill and allow it to go into Committee. In Committee it will be found that the self-same Premier who introduced the Bill will do his level best to emasculate it as regards certain principles. It would have been much more honourable to drop the Bill altogether. If the Government are anxious to get the revenue required for carrying on the affairs of the State, it is the duty of Ministers to place before this Chamber a measure that will tax not only one section of the community, but all sections in a position to pay. Therefore I am bound to oppose the present Bill. I am sorry the Premier is not in the Chamber, but I must point out that this is a piece of legislation which he did not promise during the general election.

Mr. Panton: You are right.
Mr. CUNNINGHAM: Certainly he did make promises, including some important promises. Many of these remain unfulfilled.

The Minister for Railways: All Australian Governments are placed in the position of being unable to do things which they have promised. That applies to the Federal Government, the last to come in.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: That may be.

Mr. Munroe: I admit the Federal Government slipped a bit in taxing any section of the Federal civil servants.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order: The member for Kalgoorlie is the only one I can listen to.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: The Bill is not in conformity with promises made by the Premier on the hustings and it is well for the people to realise that fact.

Mr. Panton: They will realise it all right when they pay.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: We had the spectacle of responsible public men seeking election and announcing policies and then immediately after the election they asked Parliament to agree to special types of legislation. Why are the Government adopting this attitude? Why are they hanging on to office when they know that they cannot redeem the pledges they made on the hustings. In other walks of life there is a code of honour that demands that promises made shall be observed. Apparently that code of honour is not possessed by the members of the present Government. Promises were made and they have been broken. During the election the Premier said that increased taxation was not necessary, yet since the session has opened the Government have asked us to deal with taxation measures. No explanation has been given regarding the urgency or necessity for the Bill now before us. The Premier did not explain its provisions when he introduced it. No explanation was furnished as to what this Bill actually meant. Why should the Government discriminate between sections of our citizens? It is proposed to tax heavily a civil servant in receipt of £600 a year, yet lawyers, business men and others who may earn salaries as high as £2,000 will not be called upon to pay anything in addition. That is not fair. It is not honest legislation. It represents discrimination and fleecing from those who are in a helpless position. Should we pass the Bill it will mean that Parliament agrees to the principle of specialising in taxation as between one section of the community and another. For that reason alone I shall oppose the second reading of the Bill. I ask the Minister for Railways to tell us why he is sitting in his seat this evening.

The Minister for Railways: Because I am pretty tired.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: The Minister for Lands made promises on the hustings.

The Minister for Railways: You would not expect us to follow better examples than those set by Scullin, Hogan and Hill, and they have done the same thing.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: They have done nothing of the sort. The Prime Minister is carrying out his job.

The Minister for Railways: So are we.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: The Prime Minister is working in the interests of Australia as a whole and he is giving effect to part of the policy of the Labour Party. He is doing his best to redeem the promises he made to the people.

The Minister for Railways: He did not promise the sales tax or the primage tax.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: The present Ministers promised the people of this State many things but they have not carried out their promises. They promised work for all and have made no attempt to provide it. They promised no taxation and claimed that all that was required was better management. Now the Government have introduced special taxation of a discriminatory nature. Why do the Government specially select for that treatment those who are in the employment of the State? It is the duty of the Premier, if he cannot fulfil the promises he made to the people, to give others an opportunity to carry on the affairs of the State.

The Premier: You had that opportunity and made a mess of it.

Mr. Panton: Nothing like the mess you are making of it; ten taxation Bills within two months.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: Is the Premier proud of his Bill?

Mr. Panton: Too right.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: Of course he is not. If he thought he was doing the honest thing, he would not have placed amendments on the Notice Paper with the object of emasculating the Bill.

The Premier: I promised a deputation I would do so.
Mr. CUNNINGHAM: The Premier may have received a deputation, but that does not get away from the fact that he had ample time long before that to have the Bill properly drafted.

The Minister for Railways: At any rate the deputation was merely so much camouflage.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: It would be better for the Premier to withdraw the Bill and present to Parliament a measure worthy of consideration. I oppose the Bill because it is wrong in principle. Parliament should not agree to a special tax to be imposed upon one section of the community. I sympathise with the Premier and his Government, because I know it is necessary to provide additional revenue. Nevertheless all citizens should be treated on an equitable basis, and one section of the community should not be taxed merely because they are employees of the State.

MR. J. H. SMITH (Nelson) [2.33]: I support the Bill, partly because of the united efforts of the Opposition to defeat it.

Mr. Panton: We have achieved something by getting at least one member on the Government side of the House to express his views.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I shall always speak my mind. Opposition members are aware that the Bill seeks to impose a special tax that no Arbitration Court could award. While the cost of living was mounting higher and the difficulties were increasing all round, civil servants were indeed fortunate to be in their positions. The cost of living has decreased enormously but those in the service have continued to receive their salaries.

Mr. Hegney: They are giving service to the State.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: There are hundreds of men who can only secure work on one or one and a half days in each week. The Government want to keep men in employment and they must impose this special tax. In my opinion 70 per cent. of the civil servants are in accord with the proposal.

Mr. Panton: That is why they sent to the Premier a deputation to oppose it.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: But unfortunately members of the Opposition are taking the opportunity to make political capital out of this proposed tax. Meetings have been called at the Trades Hall to deal with this Bill. There we had the member for East Perth in the chair.

Mr. Panton: Why not?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The member for North-East Fremantle, in a weak moment, attended the meeting. Also we had the champion from South Fremantle come along in order of battle, with drums beating. The hon. member said, “Let us give it to them for all we are worth.” The member for East Perth, with that characteristically pious look on his face, declared, “We are not here to discuss politics; we are here to discuss the Bill.” The meeting said, “We will stop industry throughout the State if the Government dare to put the Bill through.” The Government are brave enough and are daring to put it through now.

Mr. Panton: Why didn’t you say all that while the hon. member was here?

Several members interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: I propose to give every member fair play so long as he confines his remarks to the Bill, and I will ask other members to refrain from interjecting.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The Government, on the strength of their numbers in this House, will dare to put this special tax into operation. And at a later date they may even dare to bring down some other tax, perhaps a tax on the whole of the community. However, on this Bill they are prepared to stand or fall, irrespective of the threats used by the member for East Perth at that meeting.

Mr. Kenneally: I rise to a point of order. The hon. member declared the member for East Perth used threats at the Trades Hall meeting. The member for East Perth did no such thing. It ill becomes the hon. member to make a statement which he knows to be untrue.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I am sorry if I have offended the dignity of the member for East Perth. I withdraw. But irrespective of the attitude of the two or three meetings over which the member for East Perth presided, meetings called to deal with the Bill, this side of the House is prepared to go on with it and say the public servants must make a sacrifice. For this is the only way of dealing with public servants, and I know that quite 70 per cent. of them are agreeable to this tax. I am sorry the member for South Fremantle is not in his place.
Mr. Panton: He has taken a sick man home.

Hon. J. H. SMITH: The hon. member, ignoring the policeman's baton that was circling around his head, said he would bring the Government to their knees if they dared to impose this sectional tax. It is not a sectional tax, but a special tax on a favoured section of the community. Surely members of the Opposition are not sincere in their protests this evening. I hope this question will go to a division, for this is only the forerunner of what is to come. If I had my way I would tax the man in work to provide for the man out of work. We all recognise the strength of the Opposition. They have said, "The Premier may weaken, he may be afraid of the threat of what will happen if he dares to carry this Bill. If he does so, the whole of industry in Western Australia will stop." Let the member for South Fremantle try to organise his forces, and if they want to stop industry let them attempt it on a legitimate issue. Not less than 70 per cent. of the public servants are quite agreeable to this tax.

Mr. Kenneally: I suppose they have asked for it.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The member for East Perth said the object of the Government is to cut wages all round, and the member for Leederville declared it was the ambition of the Government to cut wages.

Mr. Panton: On a point of order. I said nothing of the sort, and I ask that that statement be withdrawn.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I will withdraw. We are prepared to abide by the awards of the Arbitration Court, and have always done so. I will support the second reading and I hope it will be carried by a large majority.

MR. HEGNEY (Middle-Swan) [2.44]: I am sorry the member for Nelson has disturbed the tranquility of the Chamber with his eloquent speech. I will oppose the Bill, because it is distinctly unfair and inequitable. If the Government desire to balance their Budget, they ought to bring in an equitable measure of taxation. This Bill, as the Premier proposes to amend it, will be even worse than it was previously. The Trades Hall meeting referred to by the member for Nelson was a public meeting called by published advertisement, and members of both sides of the House were invited to be present. I am pleased to say that the member for North-East Fremantle (Mr. Parker) designed to attend, but other members refrained from doing so. There is not a scintilla of truth in the statement that threats were made to hold up industry in this State. The speakers expressed themselves quite openly: they protested against this unjust legislation. Their protest was successful. Notwithstanding the theatricals in which the Deputy Leader of the Opposition is alleged to have indulged, his efforts have proved fairly successful. If members of the civil service had displayed any spirit of fight, they would have been as successful as the trade unionists have been. Legislation of this kind has been attempted in other countries. In the journal "Industrial and Labour Information" of the 10th February, 1930, I came across the following interesting references to Japan:

The Japanese Government announced on the 10th October, 1929, its decision to reduce the salaries of Government officials in order to effect a reduction in the budget for the coming fiscal year. The Government anticipated, as a result of this reduction, a saving of about 8,400,000 yen. The reduction was to be enforced as from the 1st January, 1930.

The decision of the Cabinet was strongly opposed both by the Government officials themselves and by the general public. On the 16th October a number of procurators in the local, district and supreme courts in Tokyo met and adopted a resolution to oppose the Government plan and request its withdrawal, stating that in view of the present salaries of judicial offices, the adoption of such a plan would be unreasonable. On the 19th October about 140 judges in the local and district courts in Tokyo passed a resolution requesting the withdrawal of the plan. Officials in the administrative departments, army and navy and overseas colonial territories, also protested against the decision of the Government to reduce their salaries.

The decision of the Government was warmly opposed by the general public, and in view of the nation-wide opposition the Government decided, at a meeting on the 22nd October, to withdraw the proposal. The formal announcement of this decision was made on the same day.

Had the civil servants of this State cooperated with the rest of the workers in protesting against the reduction, they would have been successful. However, civil servants claim that their organisation is non-political, and consequently they are receiving non-political treatment from the Government. During the election campaign the Premier made many statements that we now know were extravagant. He is head of the
Government to-day by virtue of having made those statements. In his final appeal to the electors he said that legislation of this kind would not be imposed on the people.

Mr. Marshall: He said he would reduce taxation.

Mr. HEGNEY: That is so. He also said—

Can any worker honestly approve of a Government that will guarantee wealthy trading companies to the extent of hundreds of thousands of pounds and yet refuse to find one penny to relieve the distress of the unemployed.

The Attorney General: Who said that?

Mr. HEGNEY: The present Premier in his appeal to the electors. He was criticising the Collier Government because of their leaning towards wealthy trading companies, and indicated that his Government would give every consideration to the workers of the State. Unfortunately, many workers, civil servants and teachers supported the Premier's party, believing that he would stand up to his statements and would not fail, as he alleged the Labour Party had failed, to impose taxation on the wealthy companies. Since the session began, not one measure has been introduced to impose taxation on wealthy companies, as the Premier implied he would do. On the contrary, nearly every taxation measure he has introduced has aimed at penalising the workers and the recipients of salaries.

The Attorney General: Where are the wealthy companies?

Mr. HEGNEY: It is clear that the Government are bent on passing this kind of legislation. The object of the Bill is to give effect to decisions reached by the Premiers in conference with Sir Otto Niemeyer. The injunction of that gentleman was that budgets must be balanced, and this is part of the Premier's scheme to balance his budget. It is a well-recognised fact that not one of the States will succeed in balancing its budget during the present financial year. One of the Premier's financial measures has been rejected in another place, and to that extent his calculations have been upset. Under this measure, he is now prepared to forego a fair amount of money which he had originally hoped to derive from the impost on salaries. However, the object of the Bill is to assist in balancing the budget. On trade depression and unemployment, it will have no effect, and therefore the position will not be improved and we shall still have a large amount of unemployment. No taxation measure of any description has been introduced to alleviate unemployment. All we have been asked to consider is this class taxation. The measure will be worse with the proposed amendments than in its original form. It will be more sectional. The Government should have been honest with the country and brought down a decent measure in which the incidence of taxation would have applied fairly to everybody. Then there would have been no room for complaint. Undoubtedly the members of the civil service and the teachers have a genuine grievance against the Government.

The Attorney General: It does not worry you that they should have a grievance against the Government.

Mr. Marshall: It would as an organisation. They are not like the legal profession.

Mr. HEGNEY: If taxation is to be imposed, let it operate fairly all round. I do not think anyone would object to paying his share, but one section should not be singled out for special taxation and thus compelled to pay more than their fair share. The man in private employment who is drawing salary equal to that of a civil servant will pay a very small amount by the way of income tax, compared with the wage cut under this measure. It is a wage cut, and it is not improbable when they go before their boards again that further substantial reductions will be made. The plea will be that owing to the decreased cost of living haste must be made to compel these people to come down to a lower level in the matter of wages. I am certain if the Government went to the country tomorrow they would not receive the support of these organisations.

Mr. WANSBROUGH: I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

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

Ayes ... ... ... ... 17
Noes ... ... ... ... 21

Majority against ... ... 4
MR. PIESSE (Katanning) [3.3 a.m.]: I do not propose to give a silent vote on this Bill. One thing that has struck me forcibly during the debate is that no practical suggestion has been advanced by the Opposition to meet the special set of circumstances which has arisen.

MR. Corboy: It is not our place to do that.

MR. Withers: We formulate the policy when we are in office.

MR. PIESSE: These are unfortunate circumstances in which the Government find themselves.

MR. Panton: In which the country finds itself.

MR. Withers: Because of bad management.

MR. PIESSE: The bad management lies at the door of past Governments and past Parliaments.

MR. Marshall: You were in a past Parliament.

MR. PIESSE: Never in the history of the State has any Government been faced with a similar position. I consider it the duty not only of members supporting the Government, but of all members, to assist Ministers in the special circumstances. Every member experiences a feeling of sincere regret at the necessity for the introduction of such a Bill.

MR. Marshall: That is all bunkum.

MR. PIESSE: Honestly, I do not like the measure; and I feel sure that almost every member will say he does not like it.

MR. Corboy: Now you are shedding crocodile tears.

MR. PIESSE: Perhaps the hon. member interjecting will, like some members on the other side of the Chamber, say that the Government should have introduced a graduated income tax. Is the hon. member prepared to support a graduated income tax, on severe lines, to be paid by the farmers in his district who have no income?

MR. Corboy: If they have no income, they will pay no tax.

MR. PIESSE: Yes. The Commissioner of Taxation will base his assessments on their incomes for last year.

MR. Corboy: The hon. member knows that that is not so.

MR. SPEAKER: The member for Yilgarn will have an opportunity of refuting the arguments of the member for Katanning. I cannot permit this cross-firing.
Mr. PIESSE: The debate has developed a party tone and I presume the division will be on party lines. That is unfortunate, because the responsibility rests upon Parliament as a whole. It is just about time this Legislative Assembly was brought to its senses in the matter of finance. A reference to the financial record of this Parliament shows that in only five years out of 30 have we had credit balances. There have been 25 deficits, averaging about three-quarters of a million sterling. All party differences should be set aside, and the Government assisted in a practical manner. The country is experiencing one of the most serious upheavals in trade and commerce that it has ever passed through. If we examined the balance sheets of the rich companies referred to by one hon. member, we would learn that very few of them were making profits. I was not born yesterday, and I am convinced that hon. members who have raised uncompromising opposition to the measure have not done that for nothing. Doubtless their present attitude will make them highly popular with a number of electors at the next general election. However, the matter should be regarded from a non-party standpoint. Nearly every business undertaking in this country is experiencing severe financial difficulties. Very few companies indeed are likely to pay a dividend this year. Numbers of them will make losses. The people controlling those undertakings have had to review the position, and it has been very distasteful to them to make serious reductions in the salaries of the people employed. I do not say that they will find me equally determined. My sympathy goes out not only to the civil servants but to those in private employment who are making serious sacrifices owing to conditions of trade and, in some instances, have lost their employment altogether. I am sorry the Bill has had to be introduced but I am pleased to support it, not because I like it, but because I find it necessary to support the Government in their effort to balance the Budget and to help the State to live within its means.

Mr. MARSHALL: The Industries Assistance Board was established for one year only, but it has survived for 15 years.

Mr. PIESSE: I can merely hope that the House will remember those who are making sacrifices under the Bill, and that there will be no necessity for its re-enactment at the end of 12 months. There is one feature that has not been mentioned during the debate. It is hoped that the Bill will be a temporary measure and that the salaries will not be reduced for longer than one year. On the other hand, those who may be affected by the Arbitration Court decisions may suffer a reduction for a longer period. I hope that the financial position will have improved so that the Government will soon be able to pay the highest wages possible. No one likes to see salaries reduced, and it is always a pleasure to be able to increase them. My sympathy goes out not only to the civil servants who will have to pay the special tax, but to those in private employment who are making serious sacrifices owing to conditions of trade and, in some instances, have lost their employment altogether. I am sorry the Bill has had to be introduced but I am pleased to support it, not because I take pleasure in doing so, but because I find it necessary to support the Government in their effort to balance the Budget and to help the State to live within its means.

Mr. MARSHALL: I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

Motion put and negatived.

MR. MARSHALL (Marchison) [3.20]: I regret that hon. members are forced to deal with the Bill at such an early hour, but as the Government are determined, so they will find me equally determined. I will not allow the Bill to be passed without registering my strong protest against it. Notwithstanding what the member for Katam-
ning (Mr. Piesse) said, some of those who are to be taxed are getting less than the basic wage. The member for Katanning takes pride in the fact that that is to be done.

Mr. Piesse: I did not say that. You are misrepresenting my views.

Mr. MARSHALL: The hon. member made that clear in his remarks. People in receipt of high salaries will be able to pay the tax, but the wages men cannot possibly do so.

Mr. Piesse: They will not be asked to pay it.

Mr. MARSHALL: The hon. member does not understand the position. Has anyone made an attempt to attack interest rates? Certainly not. No one has attempted to touch doctors, lawyers, banks, insurance companies, land owners or landlords, but the man in receipt of £205 a year is to be attacked.

The Minister for Railways: Scullin is taxing them.

Mr. MARSHALL: I am not troubling about Scullin; I am troubling about Mitchell. Why should one section of the community be singled out for special taxation? The Premier told the people that better management was necessary and that extra taxation was not required. Now we have a different tale. He promised work and we saw those unfortunate men outside Parliament House to-day. He wanted good management and now we have shovels of taxation Bills.

The Minister for Railways: The Chief Secretary could probably explain to you the difference between finding work and finding money.

Mr. Piesse: And the country has to pay its way.

Mr. MARSHALL: There is more unemployment than ever to-day and increased taxation as well. The Premier singles out certain sections of the community for taxation. Unless the Government are prepared to tax other more comfortably placed citizens, they cannot expect to get support for this measure. Why should not the Government tax those who can afford to pay, instead of boding their attack upon helpless public servants who can make no effective protest? Men on £200 a year with which to raise a family are to be penalised, and we here can do nothing to help them, because the Government have a brutal majority in this House.

[The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Angelo) took the Chair.]

MR. BROWN (Pingelly) [3.30]: It was not my intention to speak on the Bill at all, but members of the Opposition have been twitting this side of the House with being afraid to speak, and to express our opinion. We are not afraid at all. Also it is said by the Opposition that the acid has been placed on members on this side. I suppose I shall be accused of shedding crocodile tears if I say I am very sorry that this Bill should be necessary.

Mr. Marshall: Borrow my handkerchief.

Mr. BROWN: If I wish to wipe my eyes, I have no need to borrow the hon. member's handkerchief! Western Australia, in common with the other States, is passing through a period of such financial stringency that something must be done to square the ledger.

Mr. Marshall: Have a go at the banks.

Mr. BROWN: I shall deal with them directly. Consider the conditions enjoyed by civil servants. I have frequently left this House at 10.30 p.m. or 11 p.m. and have noticed the principal streets of the city ablaze with the lights of motor cars, and 90 per cent. of them are owned by civil servants. Consider also the class of house in which civil servants are able to live. Yet we are told that the poor unfortunate civil servants are so hardly treated that they cannot afford to have a few pounds knocked off their salaries. Members on the other side have talked a lot about the civil servants, but it is nothing else than propaganda. If they can capture the votes of the civil servants they know there is a chance of getting back into power.

The salaries paid to civil servants in this State range from £2,400 to £2,000. The recipients of those salaries will be affected by the Bill. It is proposed to take 10 per cent. from a man receiving £2,000. Will he feel the reduction?

Mr. Marshall: What about the man getting £4,000?

Mr. BROWN: The hon. member is referring to the representative of His Majesty. I do not associate him with the Civil Service, and he should not be mixed up with party politics. If 10 per cent. is deducted from the salary of a civil servant, he will
not feel it because the cost of living will be reduced.

Mr. Marshall: What about the man receiving £200 a year?

Mr. BROWN: I am surprised at that interjection coming from the member for Murchison. Doubtless he has had to work hard in his time and earn a living by the sweat of his brow.

Mr. Marshall: I am referring to the man on £200 a year.

Mr. BROWN: How much will he lose?

Mr. Marshall: Four pounds.

Mr. BROWN: But for how long? This measure is not intended to operate for ever.

Mr. Panton: We have only your word for that.

Mr. Marshall: It will be like the Industries Assistance Act, which was introduced for a year and has been operating for 15 years.

Mr. BROWN: Consider the farm hand; he has been receiving something like 50s. a week and has been reduced to 30s., because the farmer simply cannot afford to pay him more. Yet members object because we propose to take a few paltry pounds from civil servants living in the city and enjoying all the luxuries of city life.

Mr. Marshall: What are the luxuries of the city.

Mr. BROWN: If they are not in the city, they are certainly not in the country. What is the lot of the poor unfortunate who lives in the bush? Many a man there does not know the moment when his employment might be terminated, whereas the civil servant knows that his position is permanent.

Mr. Panton: The Engineer-in-Chief got the sack.

Mr. Marshall: You would argue that the people in the Fremantle gaol have permanent positions.

Mr. BROWN: Members opposite have argued that only civil servants will be reduced and have asked why they alone should be affected. With very few exceptions, all classes of workers have suffered a reduction of wages. Workers in the country towns have to take a week off every little while. Some of the storekeepers require their employees to stand down one day a week and their pay is reduced accordingly. The civil servant draws his salary every fortnight and what has he to complain of?

Mr. Withers: What sacrifice is the professional man making?

Mr. BROWN: The doctor is doing a lot of work for which he is not receiving payment.

Mr. Panton: You try the lawyer and see.

Mr. BROWN: I do not know that I would say that of the lawyer. I think he has a hard job to get his money. Possibly some lawyers are generous enough to take up a case for nothing.

Mr. Panton: You are thinking of the Crown Solicitor.

Mr. BROWN: If another Bill before the House becomes law, the wage-earner may have his wages reviewed by the Arbitration Court every three months. The basic wage is fixed on the cost of living. What is wrong with that? Could we have anything fairer? In the past the civil servant has been on velvet. Regarding the increase of Parliamentary salaries a few years ago, I ask with pride if every Country Party member did not vote against the increase, who did? The records show that every Country Party member opposed the increase. Doubtless that salary grab was engineered by the Labour Party.

Mr. Sleeman: Did you not accept the increase?

Mr. BROWN: Of course I did.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I remind the hon. member that he is getting away from the Bill.

Mr. BROWN: Then I must appeal for your protection. It is only human to reply to interjections.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. member will receive protection provided he sticks to the Bill.

Mr. BROWN: It is by no means pleasant for the Government to have to introduce such a measure, but everyone has to make a sacrifice, and the civil servants are merely asked to make a sacrifice for a time. I do not think a majority of them object to the sacrifice. Those who object are misled by some people on the opposite side of the House and by other agitators.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

Mr. Withers: Have you received a letter from the civil servants?

Mr. BROWN: Of course I have, but if members have not the backbone to stand
up to their responsibilities and consider the good of the country; of what use are they? We all hope that the finances will improve in the near future and, if they do, no one will grudge the civil servants their salaries. Some of the school teachers in the bush live at considerable distances from the towns, and are not getting large salaries. They submit to a good many inconveniences, but one cannot deny the fact that their conditions of labour are much more congenial than are those of the man who toils with a pick and shovel and whose work is laborious. True, a teacher must possess a fair education, which has cost him a good deal to obtain, but he should remember that he too must make sacrifices in times of stress.

Mr. Kenneally: How has he made a sacrifice?

Mr. BROWN: His salary has not yet been reduced.

Mr. Corboy: Have not teachers' increments been withheld?

Mr. BROWN: If a referendum of civil servants were taken, I feel sure a majority would vote in favour of the sacrifice.

Mr. Panton: You try it.

Mr. BROWN: They realise that they should make a sacrifice for the good of the State in which they are making a living.

Mr. Corboy: Have not their increments been withheld?

The Minister for Lands: No.

Mr. BROWN: I do not think they have.

Mr. Corboy: Of course they have, in times past.

Mr. BROWN: The civil servant gets holidays every year, whereas a working man, as soon as he loses his employment, loses also his holidays.

Mr. Marshall: Your leader has given many of the workers a long holiday.

Mr. BROWN: That is unfortunate. If we reduce salaries, a considerable amount of money will be saved and that will permit of many more men being kept in employment. Unless salaries are reduced retrenchments will have to be made in every department.

Mr. Corboy: Retrenchment is going on now. The Government have dismissed nearly 200 men from one department.

Mr. BROWN: If that is so, it only means that the difficulty will mend itself the sooner, and that these men will regain their positions. There is retrenchment because the Government have no money for public works. The Federal Government, too, are reducing their staffs. In South Australia the Labour Premier is doing the same thing. He has the endorsement of the civil servants there, because those who remain are only too pleased to be holding their jobs.

Mr. Corboy: He did not get into office by promising work for all.

Mr. BROWN: He would not have got there if he had done so. Men in positions are fortunate to be holding their jobs in these times. The man who is doing manual labour never knows when he will be put off. I am really sorry the Bill has been brought down, but I see no alternative for it. We shall all have to suffer. Every firm with the exception of a few that are exceptionally prosperous, has reduced staff and wages, or has rationed the work available.

Mr. Kenneally: You are not dealing with the sectional aspect of the tax.

Mr. BROWN: How are the Government to get at private individuals?

Mr. Kenneally: By increasing the income tax.

Mr. BROWN: That is impossible.

Mr. Corboy: That would drag you in.

Mr. BROWN: Too many people in this State have no income to tax. The Government cannot interfere with private enterprise. If I like to give one man £2 a week and another £10 the Government cannot interfere with me.

Mr. Corboy: The Government could take the man who was in receipt of £10 a week. If you want more money why do you not increase the income tax?

Mr. BROWN: I am sure the basic wage has been the cause of much unemployment. It is impossible for firms in these times to engage men on the present basic wage. When salaries and wages are high there is always a lot of unemployment.

Mr. Kenneally: If you create a special fund you can prevent that unemployment.

Mr. BROWN: How is that to be done? We are doing more for our unemployed than is being done in any other part of Australia. It is costing the country about £50,000 a month to feed the unemployed and sustain their wives and families. I do not think the Bill will cause much hardship upon those whose cause members opposite are espousing.
Mr. Kenneally: It is only a sectional tax.

Mr. Brown: We can discuss this measure further in Committee, when we shall know where we are. The Government intend to amend the Bill. In fairness to all I intend to support the second reading.

MR. CORBOY (Yilgarn - Coolgardie) [3.52]: The Government might well say at this moment, "God save us from our friends," seeing that we have had such disclosures as were made by the last speaker, to the effect that the Government did not mean what they said when they stated they would find work for all, although they intended by fair means or foul to win the elections.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must speak to the Bill.

Mr. CORBOY: I am merely commenting up on the remarks that have been made during the debate. The member for Pingelly (Mr. Brown) said in effect that the Government would not be worrying but for the fact that they are taking advantage of the specious promises they could not keep. I have been amused by the references of members opposite to the control exercised by Caucus. It is said that nothing can be done on this side of the House unless Caucus permits it to be done; that unless the Leader says, "You may do this," we must sit dumb. I knew of no more shocking illustration of control by Government autocracy than that which we have witnessed in connection with this Bill. It is only because members opposite were goaded into speaking that we were able to get them on their feet.

The Chief Secretary: Thank God!

Mr. CORBOY: Then we have noticed recently that there have had to suffer the humility of a Minister turning towards them and saying in effect, "For God's sake, sit down." There was a definite demonstration of the fact that Ministers reserve to themselves the right to dictate to members on their side, especially those sitting upon the cross-benches, whether they should express the views of their electors or sit dumb and be mere heads to be counted in a division. I strongly object to the fact that class legislation is apparently the policy of the Government. This Bill affords another example.

Mr. Piesse: Land taxation is class legislation, too.

Mr. CORBOY: I know that such things exist. However, this Bill presents a very different aspect of class legislation. The member for Perth (Mr. H. W. Mann) interjected something which I did not catch. Some six or seven months ago the hon. member was angling ardously for the votes of the people.

Mr. H. W. Mann: I merely said you were making a good last-wicket stand.

Mr. CORBOY: The hon. member got the votes of the people on a first-wicket stand which I hope will prove to be a last-wicket stand.

Mr. SPEAKER: I must ask the hon. member to restrict himself to the four corners of the Bill.

Mr. CORBOY: A considerable amount of latitude has been allowed, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: We are not now discussing elections.

Mr. CORBOY: No; and I did not introduce that subject, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER: I hope there will be no further interjections on that subject.

Mr. CORBOY: The Government have introduced legislation which is definitely sectional. As a kind of gesture, they attacked us members for a start. Only last week they placed on one section of the community a burden that should be borne by the whole community. To that section of the people who live in houses and cannot pay rent for them, they have said that the owners of the houses must bear a burden which should be a community burden. Again, in this Bill the Government say to a particular class that they shall bear the burden which ought to be borne by the community as a whole. The whole thing is wrong in principle. Apparently the Government take the view that because they have a few individuals in their grasp and can do as they wish with them, can hold over them the reprials of dismissal or retrenchment, they can treat them as a section to be specially taxed, to bear burdens that are not placed upon any other section of the community. That is wrong. Ministers will tell us that persons outside the Government service have already suffered reductions of salary. I reply that there is a method by which this burden can be distributed over all classes of the community, irrespective of whether they work for the Government or for private individuals. It can be distributed over all of them according to the incomes they are earning, whether or not the incomes are less than they were six months ago. After all, why
should the public servant on £350 per annum be specially singled out for taxation while the bank manager working for the Bank of New South Wales across the street and receiving £400 a year goes scot free? That is wrong.

Mr. Brown: How do you know the bank manager is not getting his salary reduced?

Mr. CORBOY: Apparently the hon. member interjecting does not understand the position. Let us assume that six months ago the bank manager was receiving £350, and that the bank since reduced his salary by £100. He is now receiving £345 per annum. Across the road there is a Government employee in the mining registrar’s office getting £350 per annum. The Bill proposes to single out for taxation the man getting £350 because he works for the Government, but does not propose to take a penny of taxation from the man still getting £350. That is wrong. It is necessary for the community to provide extra revenue, the burden should be distributed over the shoulders of all the people according to their ability to pay, and irrespective of whether they work for the Government, for a private company, a private bank, Foy & Gibson, Bonn Bros., or any other firm or person.

Mr. Brown: How can you do it?

Mr. CORBOY: The hon. member knows just as well as I know, that it can be done. The Premier also knows that it can be done. By this Bill the Government are establishing a highly dangerous precedent. I believe they do need every penny of revenue they can by any possibility raise; but they should tax me, and Tom Smith of Wyal, they can’t believe they do need every penny of revenue, while the bank manager working for the Government is in receipt of the same amount of money, shall not be taxed at all. Why differentiate between different sections of the community? The principle is wrong and dangerous. I do not want to beat a dead horse, but the Premier constantly repeated during the elections that the country required proper management which would avoid the necessity for additional taxation, and that he would provide work for all. What do we find? The taxation measures introduced by the Government this session alone represent additional imposts of over one-third of a million pounds per annum.

The Premier: Nonsense!

Mr. CORBOY: That is a fact. Apparently the Government are bankrupt of ideas and therefore attack men who are in a position in which they cannot assist themselves. They know that the civil servants cannot put up a decent fight against this legislation. That is made apparent by the exclusion of the wages men who showed that they would not take any such proposal lying down.

The Premier: They put a decent request before me, not what you are doing.

Mr. CORBOY: That is utter rubbish. The Premier: Nothing of the sort. They behaved decently.

Mr. Panton: It shows the way they have been brought up.

Mr. CORBOY: I know what was in their minds just as well as the Premier.

The Premier: But I know what they said.

Mr. CORBOY: When the wages men showed that they had sufficient courage to fight, the Premier agreed to exclude them from the Bill.

The Premier: Nonsense!

Mr. CORBOY: The Premier’s amendments prove that that is so.

The Premier: At any rate, they did not put the position in your way; they put it in a perfectly decent way.

Mr. CORBOY: I hope I am not behaving in an indecent way! The men of the starched
collar brigade—the civil service—are not prepared to take the same stand, and therefore they alone are to be attacked. The Premier used the big stick with the civil servants, but put the stick down when the wages men showed fight. I record my opposition to the principle of class taxation. The member for Nelson (Mr. J. H. Smith) has returned to the Chamber and that gives me the opportunity to remark that he made a song about the attitude of the member for South Fremantle (Mr. McCallum) and was particularly emphatic regarding his absence from the Chamber.

Mr. J. H. Smith: Not a song; the truth.

Mr. CORBOY: In ordinary decency, the hon. member should have refrained from his attack on the member for South Fremantle, knowing, as everyone did, that that hon. member had sat in the Chamber until five minutes before the member for Nelson rose to speak and then left only in order to take home another member who was very ill.

Mr. J. H. Smith: I assure you I did not know that.

Mr. CORBOY: That was the reason for his absence. The member for South Fremantle sat in his seat for as many hours as the member for Nelson and I had sat in ours for minutes. His attack was most unjust.

Mr. SPEAKER: I suggest that the hon. member confines his attention to the Bill.

Mr. CORBOY: The Premier knew it was necessary that one hon. member, because of his ill-health, should be escorted to his home, and the member for South Fremantle undertook the duty.

The Premier: I suggested that he should accompany to his home the member who was ill.

Mr. CORBOY: That is so. The Premier knew of the position and recognised that the condition of the hon. member's health made it necessary for him to be escorted home.

Hon. P. Collier: In any case, the member for South Fremantle had not been out of the Chamber for seven hours at a stretch.

Mr. CORBOY: That is so. The Government would be well advised to consider the whole financial position. They should take into consideration the imposing of the additional burden on the whole community rather than to single out a particular section for carrying an impost that should be shared by the whole of the people.