

the State, and later the Attorney General rescued the Bill from the Chief Secretary and had a go at it. Now the Government find it necessary to amend it. It had too many sponsors, and, as in the case of too many cooks spoiling the broth, so we find that the Bill, which is now an Act, requires to have an error corrected. Anyway, we can take consolation from the fact that we passed an Act and amended it in the same session.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. C. F. Baxter—East—in reply) [5.9]: The amending Bill is rendered necessary only because an amendment made by this House, and agreed to in another place, was inserted at the end of the wrong subclause, nothing more. It was not the result, as the hon. member suggested, of interference on the part of several Ministers. It was out of their hands altogether.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

House adjourned at 5.11 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 8th October, 1931.

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QUESTION—TAXATION OF PROFITS.

Mr. NORTH asked the Premier: Will he consider, with a view to remedial legislation, the disparity between Federal and State taxation laws, in that under the Federal Act profits earned on funds borrowed from a wife or husband are not taxable, whereas under the State Act they are?

The PREMIER replied: This provision has been in the Act since its inception in 1907, and it seems to me right.

QUESTION—WORKERS' HOMES.

Reduction of Interest Rates.

Mr. NORTH asked the Premier: 1, What is the rate of interest payable on workers' homes? 2, Do the Government intend to make a reduction in conformity with the recent emergency legislation?

The PREMIER replied: 1, Leasehold: Prior to 1922, 5 per cent.; since 1922, 6 per cent. Freehold: Prior to 1922, 6 per cent.; since 1922, 7 per cent., less ½ per cent. rebate for payment within seven days of the due date. 2, Australian loan moneys advanced to the Workers' Homes Board will be charged for at a reduced rate and the saving will be passed on to the board's clients. It will take some little time to ascertain how much of the board's capital was borrowed in Australia and how much in London. There can be no reduction in that part borrowed in London.

QUESTION—ELECTRICITY, MINIMUM CHARGE.

Mr. NORTH asked the Minister for Railways: Will he further investigate the question of reducing the minimum rate of 15s. per quarter charged to consumers of electricity, limiting its operation (a) to the term of the present emergency legislation, (b) to consumers who are registered as unemployed?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: Yes.

QUESTION—DALKEITH BUS SERVICE.

Mr. NORTH asked the Minister for Works: 1, Does he intend to take a referendum in Claremont regarding the Dalkeith

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

bus service extension? 2, If there is no power to take a referendum on the question, will he initiate the necessary legislation?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, No. It is not now intended to take a referendum. 2, Answered by No. 1.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Mr. Wilson, leave of absence for two weeks granted to Miss Holman (Forrest) and to Mr. Lutey (Brown Hill-Ivanhoe) on the ground of ill-health.

BILL—CRIMINAL CODE AMENDMENT.

Introduced by Mr. H. W. Mann and read a first time.

BILL—POOR PERSONS' LEGAL ASSISTANCE ACT AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

Mr. Richardson in the Chair, the Attorney General in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Amendment of Subsection 3 of Section 7:

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: On the second reading the member for Geraldton raised a point regarding this clause. If he looks at the new subsection he will find that the words proposed are identical with those in the Act. He raised the point that it would be mandatory for the public solicitor or practitioner to act, but if the clause is read carefully, it will be realised that any practitioner may act.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: I think it is mandatory.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The words "or, if they are unable to act" are wide.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: Solicitors often retire from a case because they are not satisfied.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: If they are unable to act.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: If they are unwilling to act.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: If a solicitor were unwilling to act, he would be unable to act. To insert "may" instead of "shall"

would not impose sufficient obligation. If a solicitor undertakes a case, he should see it through.

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: The Minister said we had been doing something that was not quite in order, and he desired to rectify it. Let us rectify it properly. There is a risk of a solicitor acting half-way through a case and desiring to go no further. Yet, according to the measure, no matter what he may desire, he must continue.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I will accept an amendment to insert "or unwilling."

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: That will meet my objection.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I move an amendment—

That after "unable" in line 2 of the proposed new subsection, the words "or unwilling" be inserted.

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

Clauses 3, 4, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with an amendment.

BILL—FIREARMS AND GUNS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR POLICE (Hon. J. Scaddan—Maylands) [4.43] in moving the second reading said: I regret the necessity for this Bill, but either in submitting or accepting or recording an amendment made to an amendment by the Legislative Council, an error crept in which really has no meaning and leaves portion of Section 4 without any meaning or application. I have tried to find ways and means to avoid the need for introducing a Bill to correct the error and to obviate having two measures on the statute-book, but I have found that to be impossible.

Hon. P. Collier: The ex-Solicitor-General would have found a way.

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: Yes. If members look up the measure as it passed both Chambers, they will find that Section 4 read—

This Act shall have the following application:—

(1) It shall apply throughout the State to pistols and air guns.

(2) It shall apply throughout the State to any person who is an Asiatic or African

alien, or who is an Asiatic or African alien claiming or deemed to be a British subject.

(3) Subject to the provisions of paragraphs (1) and (2) it shall apply to all municipalities and within one mile of the boundaries of any municipality. In all other respects it shall apply generally throughout the State.

The words have no meaning whatever where they have been inserted. From my records, which I believe I followed, it appears that the words should have been added to paragraph (4), which then would have read—

Subject to the provisions of paragraph (2), Section 5 of this Act, relating to licenses, shall not apply, so far as regards firearms other than pistols and air guns, in any portion of the State not particularly specified in paragraph (3) of this section, unless the Governor by proclamation from time to time declares it to apply to any portion or portions not so specified. In all other respects it shall apply generally throughout the State.

I explained the matter at the time of submitting the amendment. I have looked up "Hansard" with a view to satisfying myself that I submitted the amendment rightly, and find that I did so. The intention was that we should not impose the taking out of licenses by persons in municipalities, or within one mile of their boundaries, except where the Governor had by proclamation so directed; but in the case of firearms being carried to the danger of the public, the provision is required. By some error the words were added to the wrong sub-section. Therefore this Bill is necessary. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Standing Orders Suspension.

On motion by the Minister for Police, so much of the Standing Orders suspended as is necessary to enable the Bill to pass through its remaining stages at this sitting.

Remaining Stages.

Bill passed through its remaining stages without debate, and transmitted to the Council.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1931-32.

In Committee of Supply.

Debate resumed from the 29th September on the Treasurer's Financial Statement and on the Annual Estimates; Mr. Richardson in the Chair.

Vote—Legislative Council, £1,256 :

HON. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [4.52]: It is not my intention to speak at any great length on these Estimates, nor indeed to analyse the figures which have been presented to the Chamber. The results of last year's operations with regard to revenue and expenditure are before us, and it seems to me useless to indulge in speculation as to the results likely to be achieved during the current financial year. Anything in the nature of an estimate must be a mere speculation. Times and things are changing from month to month, and indeed from week to week; and it is almost impossible to forecast what the results will be at the close of the financial year. I observe, however, that these Estimates are presented in a form somewhat different from what has been the practice. There are considerable sets of figures which have never appeared previously, and I am at a loss to understand the reason for the inclusion of those figures. At the end of the summary of expenditure for each department there appears an item showing the percentage reduction in expenditure as compared with the year 1929-30. I should like the Treasurer to give some indication why that item has been included. I can form no conclusion other than that it has been done for the purpose of making a comparison of the expenditure estimated for this year—mark you, not of the actual expenditure for last year; such a comparison might well have been made as it would be something based upon facts—with the expenditure for 1929-30, being the last year of office of the previous Government.

The Premier: The Plan reductions started from then.

Hon. P. COLLIER: But why not give members, if it is desired to inform them, the actual reduction in expenditure for last year?

The Premier: Because the Plan did not apply then.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The Plan does not impose upon the Treasurer any obligation to furnish those figures. Why include them?

The Premier: Just to show what has been done. That is all.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The item shows what it is expected will be done by the end of this financial year, and that is a different thing altogether. After all, those figures are worthless. They are worse than worth-

less; they are positively misleading. What is the use of showing a percentage reduction in estimated expenditure, estimated only, as compared with 1929-30?

The Premier: They are all estimates.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Of course they are. Why add a line showing the percentage reduction this year, an estimated reduction only, as compared with 1929-30?

The Premier: It will save members making calculations.

Hon. P. COLLIER: But the figures, as I say, are worse than useless, are positively misleading. Here is a column showing only the estimated expenditure for the current financial year, and following that, at the bottom of each department's figures, we are shown a percentage reduction.

The Premier: Don't you see, under the Plan—

Hon. P. COLLIER: Moreover, it is not true.

The Premier: It is true.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The figures are untrue.

The Premier: Why?

Hon. P. COLLIER: I shall show how they are untrue. Taking page 17 of the Estimates, "Summary of Expenditure, Estimates, etc." we see at the bottom an addition that has never before appeared in our Estimates.

The Premier: There is no ulterior motive.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Will the Premier allow me for a moment? The expenditure for 1929-30 is given in the first column, the vote for 1930-31 is given in the second column, the actual expenditure for last year in the third column, and the estimated expenditure for this year in the fourth column—the estimated expenditure. Then at the bottom we find, "Deduct exchange, London, 1929-30, £5,155; estimated exchange, London, 1931-32, £600,000." There is also the item, "Deduct unemployment relief, 1929-30, £60,081," that is to say, deduct from the figures of the expenditure for 1929-30; and in the last column we find the estimated expenditure on unemployment relief for this year, £480,000. Those two items, London exchange and unemployment relief, for the current financial year total £1,080,000. The Premier deducts that total, and then shows at the bottom a decrease in expenditure, as compared with 1929-30, of £659,812, indicated as equal to a reduction of 27.4 per cent. The actual expenditure for the current financial year,

of course, will show a considerable increase; and therefore in the percentage—

The Premier: Don't you see, according to the Plan—

Hon. P. COLLIER: The Plan has nothing to do with this. Why is this item of unemployment relief set out separately? It has never previously appeared in that manner. In the past it has always been shown under the heading of "Minister for Child Welfare and Outdoor Relief." In fact, these Estimates show it under that heading, the expenditure for 1929-30 being given as £170,000, last year's expenditure as £570,000, and the estimated expenditure for the current financial year as £607,000. But here, on page 17 of the Estimates, we find segregated, at the bottom, unemployment relief for 1929-30 as £60,000. Why is the third column vacant? It does not give the expenditure on unemployment relief last year. Why has that been omitted? It tells the Committee what the expenditure was under that heading in 1929-30, but no information regarding the expenditure last year. Why?

Mr. Withers: It would not look too well.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Of course, segregated.

The Premier: No.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It would not look so well under the general heading of "Child Welfare and Outdoor Relief." Why has the expenditure in 1929-30 on unemployment relief been given, and no mention made of what the expenditure actually was last year? I do not know what the motive is.

The Premier: There is no ulterior motive.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The figures are not correct. If we leave out the £600,000 representing the estimated expenditure on exchange this year, which may fairly be left out as it is not normal expenditure, we must remember that disbursements under the heading of unemployment relief represent normal expenditure. I do not say that the amount of the expenditure is normal, but the item itself is a normal one. It always has been there. By deducting the estimated expenditure on exchange, and also that in respect of unemployment relief, the Premier is able to show that there has been a total reduction in expenditure, as compared with 1929-30, of £659,812, equal to 27.4 per cent. On the other hand, the actual fact is, even

if we leave out the exchange item, that the expenditure has been considerably increased.

The Premier: It is adjustable expenditure that is affected.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Why is that entry placed on the Estimates?

The Premier: It is there as information for you and for the Committee.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The Committee have not asked for that information!

Hon. S. W. Munsie: There is a decrease of £60,000 for one department, but there is no information about that.

The Premier: The information that we have placed on the Estimates is such as ought to be given.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Then why has no information been supplied regarding last year's expenditure?

The Premier: It may be an omission of some sort that can be rectified.

Hon. P. COLLIER: But the omission is apparent regarding the other departments.

The Premier: I do not think so.

Hon. P. COLLIER: If this information is desirable and valuable to the Committee, the information regarding the expenditure last year is equally so.

The Premier: The hon. member apparently has in mind some ulterior motive.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Then why do the Estimates appear in this form?

The Premier: It is just to show, as against the expenditure in 1929-30, that the reductions have been made.

Hon. P. COLLIER: To show whom?

The Premier: To show you.

Mr. Marshall: And the Leader of the Opposition has evidently seen it.

Hon. P. COLLIER: If the information were included to satisfy the Premiers' Conference as an indication that the Government are carrying out the agreement arrived at—

The Premier: As a matter of fact, it has been given.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The Premier would have some reason to advance in supplying such evidence to the Premiers' Conference, to show what has been done.

The Premier: That information was supplied to them.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I could understand the Premier making such information available, in that he may be under an obligation to show his fellow Premiers that the Govern-

ment have carried out the details of the Plan.

The Premier: Surely you do not think there is any ulterior motive behind it!

Hon. P. COLLIER: I cannot understand why the entry appears in this form.

The Premier: To show that it has been done.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I quite understand that it looks magnificent. Glancing at it, one might be inclined to say, "What a wonderful reduction in expenditure compared with 1929-30." But it is merely an estimate! It is absolutely useless information. Had we the actual expenditure for 1929-30, it would be helpful. We would then have facts before us. To place figures that represent merely estimates before us, is absolutely worthless. The accuracy of those figures depends entirely upon whether the Premier's Estimates are realised.

The Premier: That is quite so.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That is why the figures are worthless! Why go to the trouble of printing them?

The Premier: It was no trouble.

Hon. P. COLLIER: But think of the expense involved in printing matter of no value whatever, because they represent mere estimates! If the Premier had added to his footnote, the words, "if we realise our Estimates this year," it would have been more satisfactory.

The Premier: Of course, that is the position.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That is simply what it means; there is nothing in this information at all.

The Premier: I can only repeat that there is no ulterior motive behind it.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I have been looking through the departments and I find that the Minister for Works is the bright boy of the Cabinet, because his department shows a reduction of 76.2 per cent., if the Estimates materialise. The member for Nedlands (Mr. Keenan) got out of office just in time, because his departments show up the worst of all. For the Chief Secretary's Department there is a percentage reduction shown of 22.6 per cent. only, and for the Education Department, 19.9 per cent.—the lowest of all the departments.

The Premier: Those refer to salaries; the others refer to works.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The member for Nedlands would have been sacked had he not resigned, because, according to these percent-

age figures, he could not achieve a proper reduction.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: And in years to come that will be quoted as the reason why he went out.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The Minister for Mines is also in trouble because he is the next lowest in percentage with 22.2 per cent. As I have already pointed out, these figures are absolutely useless; worse than that, they are absolutely misleading. Not many members of the Committee will be able to follow the figures. Any outside person not accustomed to dealing with Estimates would consider that a remarkable improvement had taken place if he perused the details. He would be inclined to think that wonderful economy had been practised by the Government during the past two years. The Premier's Department shows a reduction of 41.3 per cent.; the Treasury, 34.9 per cent.; the Medical and Health Department 60.5 per cent.

The Minister for Lands: That is because of the hospital tax.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Other departments are dealt with as well, but all these percentages represent mere estimates.

The Premier: Of course they do; we do not say otherwise.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That is why the details are not worth printing. They are liable to do harm, because they are misleading.

The Premier: We do not want to mislead anyone.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The figures can have no other effect than to mislead. I do not think there is any need for them to appear at all, more particularly as the expenditure for last year has not been given.

The Premier: Of course, this has been because of the Plan. The details are included to show what has been carried out. I assure you they have been inserted for no other purpose.

Hon. P. COLLIER: If that is the position, there can be no reason why the expenditure for last year was not given as well. Whatever the reason may be, I protest against the form in which the Estimates appear. I am not imputing any motives at all, but the figures are calculated to mislead.

The Premier: I am sorry if that is so.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: It is not possible for any member to understand the Estimates this time.

Hon. P. COLLIER: In other directions, the form of the Estimates has been altered, but I shall have something more to say about that when dealing with the different departments. We have rebates here and deductions there until no one can follow the figures at all. It is almost impossible to make any comparison between the estimated revenue and expenditure with the results of past years, because of the manner in which the figures are presented. Certainly it is impossible for anyone not accustomed to handling figures in matters of this description to arrive at any clear understanding. I entirely disapprove of this change. These big percentage reductions—wonderful efficiency, wonderful economy!

The Premier: That is not the intention.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That is the effect of this altered form of the Estimates. There is no reason for the percentages appearing at all. There has been no call for information of such a description. There is nothing in the Premier's Plan that imposes any obligation upon the Government to submit the Estimates in this form. If it had been decided to give these figures because, in a measure, the Premier's Plan affected the financial operations for 1929-30, then the expenditure for last year should have been given. Where does the Premier's Plan require the Government to separate the amount paid on unemployment relief?

The Premier: That is not suggested.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Why segregate that amount? By deducting provision for exchange and £480,000 on account of unemployment relief expenditure, the Premier is able to show a reduction in expenditure of 27 per cent. whereas actually there has been a great increase in expenditure. The correct figures show there has been an increase in the total expenditure, and, therefore, an increase in percentage, not a reduction, as indicated in the printed Estimates. That is positively misleading. If we are entitled to know what the expenditure on unemployment relief amounted to in 1929-30, and what it is expected to be this year, surely we are equally entitled to know what the actual expenditure was last year. But we do not know. All we know is that the expenditure under the Child Welfare Department is given as £570,000, and we are not given the information separately. That total includes other payments as well. It has never been done in this form in the past,

and in these Estimates the expenditure has been segregated so as to enable the Premier to show a reduction.

The Premier: I thought it would be information for you; that was the only reason why it was given.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The information has gone too far, or else it has not gone far enough. We have the information for 1929-30, but none for 1930-31.

The Premier: If this is the only place in which it is omitted, we can put it in.

Hon. P. COLLIER: But the information is omitted throughout the departments.

The Minister for Works: Where do you say it is omitted?

Hon. P. COLLIER: At the bottom of the summary page preceding each Department's Estimates. I do not refer to the detailed Estimates themselves. Of course the expenditure for last year is there. But at the beginning of each department there is this additional information supplied about the expenditure for 1929-30, and the percentage reduction. It is additional and unusual information that has never been supplied before.

The Premier: The reductions would not have been made had they not been essential.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I am talking, not about that, but about the manner in which the information is supplied to the House. There would be some value if the actual percentage reductions of last year, as compared with 1929-30, were given. Then we would be dealing with figures that were facts, whereas to give percentage reductions that are only estimated is positively misleading. Suppose the Treasurer should be just as far astray—I am not saying this in critical mood—in his Estimates this year as he was last year. The Premier last year was out in his Estimates by £1,420,000. He estimates a deficit for this year of £1,226,000. But suppose he should be astray to the same extent as last year, namely, £1,420,000; then these percentage reductions also would be all astray.

The Premier: It would be the revenue side on which we would be out, if at all.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: But that would alter these percentages just the same.

The Premier: No.

Hon. P. COLLIER: No, these are based on expenditure; of course they are not on the revenue side. We entered the year £1,420,000 to the bad, as against £518,000 in the previous year. During the year that

has just closed the State went down by £900,000 in comparison with the previous year.

The Premier: Actually a little more.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes, by nearly a million did we go to the bad. And although the Treasurer estimates a shortage this year of £1,226,000, which is a formidable sum in itself, I am afraid, after an examination of his Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure, that he will not be able to realise those figures. I think the Estimates of Revenue right through are most optimistic and will not be reached. On the other hand, I am afraid the Premier will not be able to keep down the expenditure to his Estimates. I do not want to picture a doleful story, but I am afraid the Premier will not be able to realise his figures. If that is so, the year will close with a much greater deficit than the Treasurer anticipates. Speaking to the debate on the Estimates last year, which followed shortly after the Premiers' Conference where it was agreed to accept the suggestions and advice of Sir Otto Niemeyer and to balance budgets, I think I said it was an heroic task to balance budgets in one year, and I suggested that a period covering at least three years should be accepted for the balancing of the budgets.

The Premier: I think you said five years.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Perhaps I said from three years to five years. I am still of that opinion. I notice that the recent Premiers' Conference agreed to make it a period of three years. In view of the great leeway all Governments in Australia have made, it is impossible to balance budgets in one or two years. So the most we can do is to strive to reduce the shortage as much as possible year by year. Even if we succeed in achieving what the Treasurer estimates will be the result this year, that is to say a shortage of £1,226,000, we shall still be a long way on the wrong side of the ledger. The outlook is not at all bright. There is falling revenue everywhere, and it is impossible to keep down expenditure to the same degree as the revenue falls. So, to be quite candid, I do not think the Premier will realise his figures at all. I am afraid he will not be able to keep down expenditure to the estimated amount. If, for instance, we turn to the Education Department, there is there a big reduction in the estimate of expenditure. It is not possible to reduce the expenditure on education this year to the figures in the estimate,

except by an almost wholesale closing of schools. I am astonished that the Education Department was able to reduce its expenditure last year to the extent that it did. I have a pretty lively recollection of the Education Department during the years I was at the Treasury, with its insistent demands and the imperative need for expenditure in that department, which I, by force of circumstances, was compelled to deny. I think it will be admitted that, whilst I was in office, the Education Department was administered by one of the most careful and capable men in the country in the person of Mr. Drew, notwithstanding which I found it impossible to keep down the Vote. But last year there was a reduction made of £11,000, as compared with the previous year. On top of that reduction of last year the Premier now estimates a further reduction this year of £118,000.

The Premier: It is nearly all salaries.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Salaries will account for a good deal of it, but for nothing like £118,000. At any rate I hope, no matter where we have to reduce expenditure, and however difficult it may be to find the money to carry on, we shall not be forced to take any action which will deprive the children of the country of an opportunity for education. I am referring to the small schools; the opening of new schools where needed, or the possible closing of small schools where the attendance numbers are pretty near the minimum allowed for country schools. I hope that will not happen, wherever else we may have to reduce expenditure.

The Premier: The reduction is nearly all in salaries.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I think there must be some addition to the salaries reduction. I know there has been a considerable reduction in the Teachers' Training College. After all, the suspension of long-service leave means only an accumulation that will come along some day; the obligation is not discharged, but will come upon this or some other Government later. But neither this State nor any other State of the Commonwealth will be able to balance its Budget—I care not how much it may reduce expenditure or increase taxation—until we are able to get our people back to work. That is what will automatically balance budgets. So long as there is such a large percentage of the wealth-producers of the nation unemployed, so long shall we have deficits. Because one may go so

far in point of taxation that, instead of increased taxation returning greater revenue, it results in the loss of money, for it taxes people out of existence. In the future the men and women of Australia who have to be employed will not be employed to the same extent as in the past by Governments on public works constructed out of loan money. Our people have to get back into private employment, into industry producing wealth, not making roads and carrying out public works on loan expenditure. For the money will not be available in the future; never, or at all events not for many years, as it has been in the past.

The Premier: Not for very many years.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It means that a considerable number of those who, in the past, found employment through money made available by Governments for public works, will have to get into industry. What are we doing in that way? We are going to get some money from the Commonwealth Government, £1,200,000, or £1,500,000, for unemployment relief.

The Premier: No, £600,000 for six months.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes, or £1,200,000 for the year. The Minister for Works has outlined a programme of work, and it has been said that the money should be spent on reproductive work. There is a misapprehension in the minds of people as to what constitutes reproductive work. It has been said that if work will return interest, it is reproductive. Take sewerage connections: A house owner pays interest on the money expended, and because of that it is said to be reproductive work. It is not reproductive at all. Reproductive work in the real sense is work that produces some wealth or commodity that is required by the State, and can be consumed in the State or exported. Because a man can pay interest on £100 expenditure to have his house connected with the sewerage system does not make it reproductive work. The money he pays in interest could and probably would be much better expended by him in some other direction. I know there are difficulties in the way, but the Government should see that as much of the work as possible carried out with the money made available by the Commonwealth is of a reproductive or potentially reproductive nature.

The Premier: Increase commodities rather than conveniences.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes, increase essential things. The position regarding unem-

ployment all over Australia is deplorable. It is a tragedy. If we may have regard for indications the world over, in England great demonstrations have been held by men out of work; in Glasgow Park 50,000 people assembled; hundreds of shop windows were broken and the shops looted. The people who did those things are just as good citizens as other people in the Empire. Dire necessity and desperation have driven them to commit those acts. I believe that Great Britain herself is facing a crisis somewhat similar to that which confronted her in the days of Cromwell, and if the position of the great army of unemployed in Britain, in Australia, and in other countries continues and steps are not taken to enable those people to get back to work, I am afraid there will be a great change bordering on—I hesitate to use the word—revolution. Thousands of men who in normal times were considered to be conservative members of trade unions are to-day what might be termed Bolsheviks. All revolutions, so far as we have known them, have sprung from the desperate conditions of the masses of the people—from poverty. If we are going to stick to fetishes such as the gold standard and the monetary system, which may have served us well enough in normal times, and if we are going to sacrifice a large number of men and women merely for the sake of adhering to traditional methods, the whole country, as well as those systems, will collapse. People will submit to much, but when a condition of affairs such as prevails to-day continues for a year or two, men grow desperate. For the first year they are able to struggle along by drawing upon their resources and the savings they have made in good times. When those resources become exhausted, as they are almost exhausted now, those men will take things into their own hands. We must get our people back to work even if it means throwing overboard all the methods of finance that have been accepted in the past. The Premier's figures show that 16,000 persons are receiving Government sustenance, men, I take it.

The Premier: No, girls as well.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The Premier quoted the number of girls separately, 560. There are 1,630 men in the Blackboy and Hovea camps. Are we going to spend money in future as we have been spending it—on Blackboy and other camps, and on making roads to and through pleasure resorts? Is

this a time when we should spend money on making roads through the National Park or to the Yanchep Caves? The State is bleeding, and yet we are spending a large sum of money to make a road to the Yanchep Caves so that people may travel to picnic grounds.

The Minister for Works: We might have some land out there.

Hon. P. COLLIER: There are a few undrained swamps, but that land would have been taken up long ago had it been needed. There is plenty of land in and around the metropolitan area available for the purpose for which that land could be used, and it is already served by roads. It is a scandalous waste of public money to expend funds to cater for the pleasure of a relatively few people. Roads through the National Park! Roads to the Yanchep Caves! We might as well build a picture theatre with the money. The unemployed should be put to work where they can produce something, even if it were only clearing land that would ultimately, if not immediately, be settled and made to produce something. I saw a letter in the newspaper from a man along the South-Western line—I think he lived in the electorate of Murray-Wellington—one of the most sensible letters I have read. He was a farmer with an area of land and was willing to make a considerable area available to the unemployed and assist them with advice. He pointed out that potatoes, onions and dairy produce could be raised, and he was willing to let the unemployed have the use of the land for nothing if they would cultivate it. That would be much better for men out of work if they could grow their own food or produce food for somebody else.

The Minister for Agriculture: Do not you think they would object to clearing land for a private individual?

Hon. P. COLLIER: If a man is unemployed and the Government say to him, "Here is work for you; we will give you two or three days a week at say £2 a week," what does it matter to him whether he is clearing land or making a road?

The Minister for Agriculture: A private individual would have got the benefit, and the land would have been unsuitable for the purpose.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Obviously it would be of benefit to the private individual, but it makes no difference to the man what work he is doing.

Mr. J. H. Smith: What about all the Crown lands?

Hon. P. COLLIER: It makes no difference to the man what he works at.

The Minister for Agriculture: It would not have been fit for growing potatoes, as suggested, for some years to come. It was not a practical scheme at all.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I do not think the man had any ulterior motive.

Mr. J. H. Smith: Does the Minister mean to say that new land will not grow potatoes?

Hon. P. COLLIER: Surely there is plenty of land on which men might be put to work at clearing and cultivating so that something useful could be produced! This is a time when every available pound should be used to produce something that the people require by way of food or something that can be exported. It should not be used to do work that is unessential and is really of no value. Even the making of roads is of no value to-day; it never added one pound of wealth to the community. What is the use of spending money on snagging rivers?

The Minister for Works: That is for the purpose of producing more food. It is for the draining of land; it will enable the water to get away.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Then it is for a good purpose if it will enable land to be brought into cultivation.

The Minister for Works: That is the object of it.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I thought it was merely undertaken with the idea of finding work for men.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: And to permit of a motor boat being run.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The Minister should get his committee to consider this matter, as I am satisfied that large numbers of men could be set to work clearing and cultivating land and making it ready for production so that essential and useful commodities could be produced. It would be far better than making roads to caves. I note that we never hear from our friends in the Blackboy Camp. They must be thoroughly satisfied and amongst the happiest people in the world.

The Minister for Mines: They had a strike the other day.

The Minister for Works: We offered some of them jobs and they would not take them.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I realise the difficulty. The Government cannot send all the unemployed to Blackboy. There is the difficulty of taking them from their homes and of their having to keep two homes. With the money to be made available, some works will have to be undertaken that are not in the nature of the reproductive works I have indicated because of the circumstances of the men. Wherever it can possibly be done, it ought to be done.

The Minister for Works: That is what we are trying to do.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I hope it will be kept well in mind. The mere making of roads and work of that description is of very little value in these times.

The Minister for Railways: The man who produces from the land cannot sell his commodities. You know the price of potatoes last year at the time when we were urging people to grow them.

The Premier: It is good now.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The Premier frequently quotes figures to show the amount of money we send out of the State for goods that could be grown within the State. We are still importing goods from other parts of Australia, largely for food supplies. These could be produced within the State, and will be produced, if only we make the effort.

The Minister for Railways: We can produce them, but what about people buying them?

Hon. S. W. Munsie: They buy them from the Eastern States, do they not?

Hon. P. COLLIER: I agree that people are improving very greatly in respect to the purchase of Western Australian goods.

Mr. H. W. Mann: They are.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes, due to the work that has been done in the last year or two, through propaganda and the like. The number of people who are asking for Western Australian goods is increasing daily.

The Minister for Railways: Can you imagine the state of mind of the unemployed man who demands imported goods amongst his rations?

Hon. P. COLLIER: I went into a shop a little while ago and asked for a certain article, Plaistowe's chocolates. The shop-

keeper had every brand of chocolates in the world to offer me but he had none that were made in Western Australia. He tried to palm off something else on me, saying it was very good, but I refused to take the substitute. If people would only refuse to take other goods when they can get Western Australian goods, the business men of the State would soon find it would pay them to stock local goods.

The Minister for Railways: The unemployed man wants a right to demand imported goods.

Hon. P. COLLIER: He must have very refined tastes, or perhaps he wants something from the land he came from. I urge upon the Government the need for expending any money they may have for the employment of people in some manner that will produce goods and commodities that represent the real wealth of the country.

The Premier: I quite agree with that.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It could be spent in the clearing of land that would be useful at some time or other, upon which something could be grown, and by which the land itself could be improved in some way. The future of the State is wrapped up in the things that can be produced from the soil. There is no future for Western Australia outside the things we can grow and those things we produce from the soil.

The Minister for Works: The only money spent on roads is Federal aid road money. We must spend that on roads.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The money that is coming now is not Federal aid road money, and can be spent in any way the Government think fit. I see from the figures that whilst there were 1,630 men at Blackboy Hill and Hovea receiving sustenance, the number of persons receiving it for prospecting was only 196. As the Minister for Mines knows, the gold yield last year was greater than it has been for five years. Most certainly there will be a considerable increase this year over the total of last year. That is something of real value to the people. Whilst I agree that most of the men in the unemployment camps would not be of much use in prospecting, I do urge upon the Government to make more money available for the assistance of prospectors. Even if those people failed to discover anything, the money would be just as well spent on them as it would be in the making of roads to pleasure resorts. One discovery would be worth all the money

spent in assistance to the unemployed and in other directions. This is the greatest gold-producing State in Australasia. There is such a buoyancy on the goldfields and in the industry as has not been in evidence for many years. The price of gold is better than ever before, and in addition there will be the payment of the bonus at the end of the year. This is the time to increase the assistance being rendered to prospectors. We have an immense area of gold-bearing country, thousands of miles of it. Notwithstanding this, the number of persons who are receiving Government assistance in prospecting is only 196. At the same time we have 1,500 or 1,600 men in camp, and 150 making roads at Yanhep. Surely something is wrong with the position. I hope the Minister for Mines will see that he gets some of this money, and that he will be able to send out a larger number of prospectors. I know such work requires experienced men, but I would point out that there is a considerable number of old goldfielders out of work to-day. I have been doing my best in the matter. For 12 months I have been backing prospecting parties, in conjunction with a member in another place.

The Minister for Railways: Will you guarantee that you will not cease doing this if we supply sustenance to others?

Hon. P. COLLIER: Only recently I have had to write to one party saying that I cannot carry on any longer.

The Minister for Railways: That is the trouble.

Hon. P. COLLIER: One party consists of three Western Australians who would rather go prospecting than accept the dole. One of the three is an old goldfields man, and he took two young fellows with him rather than go on the dole. Private people are doing this sort of thing, but they cannot afford to keep it going indefinitely. I had great difficulty in getting tools from the department, because they were not available. Some of the tools had to be bought. The department could not supply a blacksmith's bellows and anvil. We had to buy these ourselves because there were none in stock at the time. The officials said they would be available if any came in, but none did come in. It is better to spend money in assisting prospectors than to have them doing nothing at Blackboy or have them engaged on useless work. I hope the Government will keep that well in mind when considering the expenditure of the money that

will come to them from the Commonwealth Government. There is no outlet that I can see. The Government have no policy to meet the position. The decrease in the income tax rebate of 13 1/3rd per cent., which is estimated to bring in an additional £30,000, is all. There is no outlet. The position will not be any better next year. How is it going to improve?

The Premier: It depends largely on the price of wheat and wool.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Very largely. The prospects there are not very good, certainly with regard to wheat. Wool may improve in price. I have lately been reading a good deal about the position in Russia and the five-year plan. Until something in the nature of Empire preference comes into existence in Great Britain I am fearful of the future of Western Australia as a wheat-growing country.

The Minister for Lands: There will come a stage when the Dominions will not be able to pay interest to the British bondholder unless some protection is afforded.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes. Very few people realise the enormous internal wealth of Russia. I had no understanding of it myself until recently. It is one of the richest countries in the world in internal wealth.

The Minister for Lands: Second to Australia.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Much greater. It has base metals and produces iron and steel and oil. It has enormous wheat areas. It is also a great wool-producing country. Russia is now branching out with large mills under the most expert engineers from Germany and the United States. The people are erecting enormous works for the production of commodities they never produced in the past. If this five-year plan is a success—so far the indications are that it will be a success—with an open door to the markets of Europe, Russia is going to be a menace to the whole world.

The Minister for Railways: They are planning an electric power station in one city the output of which will be as great as that of Australia.

Hon. P. COLLIER: People have no idea to what extent Russia is developing on the latest scientific lines. They are employing the best engineering skill and advice the world possesses. Russia has an enormous population and is wonderfully wealthy in internal resources. If it becomes established on these lines, it means that it is going to

tap the wholesale markets of Europe which hitherto have been open to Australia and other countries.

The Premier: When Russia improves its standard of living to a decent level, it will require a lot of our produce.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That will take a long time. Russia possesses an enormous territory, and great potential wealth. If the door to Europe is opened, we are going to be shut out in the future. If our wheat lands are rendered valueless and we are not able to grow wheat at a profit continuously, that will be the end of Western Australia as a growing and developing State. It is well we should keep our eyes open to what is being done in Russia. There is a possibility that in Great Britain a change may be effected. Some form of protection may force itself upon Great Britain. Unless we have some form of preference in the British markets, no matter what our wishes may be, we shall most certainly be forced to default.

The Minister for Railways: Can we expect preference up to a point irrespective of what our own methods of production may be?

Hon. P. COLLIER: We cannot expect to hold our markets unless we can produce at a price that will somewhat approximate the price at which similar goods can be obtained in other countries.

The Minister for Agriculture: Can we reduce our cost of production to enable us to do that?

Hon. P. COLLIER: It will have to be done. I shall not enter into the old story. It is a long one, and everyone knows it; but although I am a protectionist, and believe in the policy of protection, I consider that in many directions the Australian tariff operates most detrimentally to the primary producers of Australia. If primary production is killed, the secondary industries of Australia will be useless. If wool and wheat are made unprofitable, the cities and their factories will not be of any value. The position is indeed most serious. I only hope that the Treasurer's estimates will be realised or improved upon, because in this State, as in any other State, it is an absolutely imperative need to balance the finances. All outside sources of obtaining money that have been available in the past are now closed to us. We have to balance our budgets, or else default. Exchange undoubtedly is a heavy item—£600,000 this year; but the indications are that it will come down. That will be bet-

ter for the Governments, but worse for individual producers, especially in this State.

The Minister for Railways: Don't you think we would be justified in taking a little bit of the increase in order to give something to the prospector? Gold is bringing £7 per ounce.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That might be considered. Unfortunately, in the days when Western Australia was producing gold in large quantities, the Treasury of this State did not receive from gold production anything like the revenue that ought to have come to it. The question now is whether it would be wise to do anything that might give a check to the enterprise evident on the goldfields.

The Premier: They have had a pretty rough time.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes. I hope the position will improve; but unless we reduce our expenditure, I see no hope of it, as there is no prospect of increasing the revenue. The people cannot bear increased taxation, and unless we can bring revenue and expenditure more closely together, the position must inevitably get worse rather than improve. So far as I am concerned, on matters of finance I will not at any time be a stumbling block. I will not say or do anything to make the financial position worse than it is. I shall do everything in my power to improve the financial position of the State, because upon that rests the whole future not only of this House but of the people of Western Australia.

Progress reported.

BILL—LOCAL COURTS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 30th September.

HON. J. C. WILLCOCK (Geraldton) [6.7]: I shall not waste the time of the House in discussing this Bill, which is something that is really necessary to rectify a mistake that has been made. If the measure which passed last session creates unnecessary expense, an amendment to do away with the need for that expenditure is entirely warranted. I support the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

[6]

In Committee, etc.

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

House adjourned at 6.9 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 13th October, 1931.

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

QUESTION—UNEMPLOYMENT RELIEF.

Boyup Brook—Cranbrook Railway Earthworks.

Hon. W. J. MANN asked the Chief Secretary: With a view to absorbing unemployed men in the South-West, will the Government have the preliminary clearing of earthworks necessary for the construction of the Boyup Brook-Cranbrook railway commenced without further delay?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: The matter will receive consideration.

QUESTION—COMMONWEALTH LOAN, CONVERSION.

Western Australian Dissenters' Securities.

Hon. H. SEDDON asked the Chief Secretary: 1, What amount is represented by Western Australian State securities whose holders have dissented from converting into