

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 5th December, 1929.

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

QUESTION—PETROL TAX, EXEMPTION.

Mr. THOMSON asked the Premier,—In view of the Federal Government's intention to introduce additional taxation on petrol for road purposes, will he make representation on behalf of this State asking that petrol used for tractors, stationary engines, etc., on farms be exempt from the provisions of the Act.

The PREMIER replied: I have no knowledge of any definite intention of the Federal Government to introduce taxation on petrol for road purposes.

QUESTION—INSECT PESTS.

Mr. SAMPSON asked the Minister for Agriculture,—1, Will he advise whether comprehensive measures to deal with the possibility of the admission of insect pests by airplane as well as rail, motor and ship, have been taken, and whether notices warning possible offenders of penalties under the Plant Diseases Act, are effectively displayed in all airplanes, rail and ship services? 2, In view of the widespread multiplication of insect pests and the dangers which thereby confront our food supplies, including fruit, will he inform the House if the State is sufficiently protected in respect of those engaged in entymological and other research work?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE replied: 1, Every effort is made by the Department of Agriculture to prevent the introduction of insect pests into this State. Shipping companies have been supplied with printed notices for display on boats, advising the provisions of the Plant Diseases Act and also the penalties for non-compliance therewith. The Commonwealth railways have been supplied with calico copies for display, of the Commonwealth proclamation regarding the bringing into Western Australia of apples, pears and quinces. These notices also point out the penalty for non-compliance therewith. Arrangements have been made with the W.A. Airways to display these notices. Further, inspectors meet all boats and trains with the object of preventing pests being introduced into the State. It is not practicable to take any steps regarding passengers arriving per motor car. 2, The Commonwealth proclamation provides that no insect or parasite in any stage of its life history shall be brought into the State without the approval of the Federal Minister for Health, and when permission is granted, it will be only under conditions which he may think fit to impose.

QUESTION—EMPLOYMENT, TEMPORARY.

Local Applicants.

Mr. GRIFFITHS asked the Minister for Agriculture,—1, Is it correct that a resident of the Tammin district who is out of work cannot be put on to a temporary job by the ganger, though the ganger is willing to put him on, unless the seeker for work goes to Perth and is sent up from the Labour Bureau or those making the appointments in Perth? 2, Do all such men wanted for temporary work have to be sent from Perth? 3, If this is so, will he see to it that local residents out of work are not compelled to go to the expense of coming to Perth to get such employment?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE replied: 1, No. All supervisors of public works in the country have authority to engage local men when required, provided the Labour Bureau is notified beforehand. This is being done regularly. 2, No. 3, Answered by 1 and 2.

QUESTION—RAILWAY, KULJA EASTWARD.

Mr. LINDSAY asked the Premier,—1, Is it the intention of the Government to complete the Kulja Eastward railway, as authorised by Parliament, before the plant now being used in connection therewith is removed? 2, If not, to what length do the Government intend to construct this line?

The PREMIER replied: 1, Yes. 2, Answered by 1.

QUESTION—MIDLAND RAILWAY.

Acquisition by State.

Mr. FERGUSON asked the Premier,—Considering the importance to the thousands of settlers along the Midland Railway, as well as to the Railway Department and the State generally, of the acquisition by the State of the Midland Railway, will he endeavour to secure the services of Mr. J. Fraser, C.M.G., the retiring Chief Railway Commissioner of New South Wales, an engineering and railway authority of world-wide fame, to make a report as to the value to the State of the Midland Company's line with a view to its acquisition?

The PREMIER replied: This is not considered necessary as the Government have at their command in the State services the fullest means of securing necessary information and of making the necessary valuations and reports.

BILL—LAND TAX AND INCOME TAX.

Council's Requested Amendments.

Schedule of two amendments requested by the Council now considered.

In Committee.

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

No. 1. Clause 2—Delete "two pence" in line 1, and insert "one penny."

The PREMIER: The Council ask that we reduce the land tax from 2d. to 1d. in the pound.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That is easy to understand.

The PREMIER: Yes, quite easy. [move—

That the amendment be not made.

I do not think there is any need to go over the ground again. A similar amendment was moved in this House.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: And carried.

The PREMIER: And subsequently lost. The whole question has been fully discussed here. I have followed the newspaper reports of the discussion on the Bill in another place, and without reflecting upon any of those who supported this amendment I must say some of them were very careless indeed in the figures they used. The statement was reported to have been made that notwithstanding the financial assistance the Commonwealth has rendered the State, no reduction whatever has been made in taxation for some years past. It is amazing to think that any person could make such a statement in view of the reduction that has been effected in the income tax. I do not think anybody desires that the State should go back to the heavy deficits that were experienced for 15 or 16 years, throughout the lifetime of several Governments. Yet I can see no possibility of the finances of the State balancing this year if this proposed reduction in the land tax is made.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell interjected.

The PREMIER: Already I am convinced it is not going to end up according to the estimate. It is easy to point to the increase in revenue year by year, but members know perfectly well that with that increase in revenue come increased obligations and expenditure, constituting a burden upon the Treasury year by year. When this Bill was before the Committee of this House I gave some instances of the increased expenditure the State has to meet, more particularly in respect of hospitals, gaols, lunacy, police and all the other directions, which quite exceed the increase in revenue during the past five or six years. It is unthinkable that we should reduce this tax, which is already a very moderate one, whilst at the same time we have it announced in the Press that it has been found necessary to close a ward in the Children's Hospital because of lack of funds.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That has nothing to do with it.

The PREMIER: It has a lot to do with it. If we are going to reduce taxation, other

wards will be closed in other hospitals. This burden of hospitals alone is increasing year by year. The hon. member found it so when, six years ago, he introduced a hospital tax to meet the situation.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: And you opposed it; you said it was not necessary.

The PREMIER: The burden is increasing year by year. A tax could quite well have been unnecessary six years ago and very necessary to-day. The annual grant to the Perth Hospital alone is £15,000 or £16,000 more than it was six years ago. Many hospitals have been erected throughout the State since then, and the burden thus cast on the Treasury is very considerable. We cannot possibly reduce taxation whilst we are unable to meet some of the more pressing needs of the State in regard to hospitals.

Mr. Sampson: Had the Minister accepted the Council's amendments you could have had the last hospitals tax.

The PREMIER: The Minister could not have had that Bill. We could have any Bill if we liked to accept the proposals that are made from another place. I suppose we could have this Bill if we accepted any amendments that were made there. I want to say emphatically that the Government have no intention of accepting this amendment in any circumstances whatever. I wish to make that quite clear. In no circumstances will this amendment be accepted by the Government.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: If I were in another place, I would show you.

The PREMIER: Another place may not always have its own way. Other places in other States have made the mistake of carrying things a little too far.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You mean in Queensland.

The PREMIER: I mean in Tasmania. About five years ago two money Bills one being a Land Tax and Income Tax Bill, were sent to the Governor for assent in the form in which they passed the Assembly, notwithstanding that the Council had amended them. The Governor assented to the Bills, and they became law. The other was the Appropriation Bill. This was amended in the Council, and the Assembly refused to accept the amendments. The Bill was then passed on to the Governor in the form in which it went through the Assembly, and received the Governor's assent.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: He must have been a very obliging Governor.

The PREMIER: The first was the Lieut-Governor, the Chief Justice of the State, who is an eminent lawyer and a sound constitutional authority. He was the Lieut-Governor when the Appropriation Bill went through. Before the Land Tax and Income Tax Bill was amended, the present Governor had assumed office, and he followed the precedent of the Lieut-Governor. I should like to say that the Constitution of Tasmania gives greater powers to the Legislative Assembly there than the Constitution of any other State on the mainland gives to any Legislative Council.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That Legislative Council could have thrown out the Bills.

The PREMIER: The Council here could throw out this Bill if it liked.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It could not.

The PREMIER: Of course it could, but it most certainly could not press amendments to it, and it cannot make any. There is no question about that. I do not propose to anticipate any arguments that may be advanced in regard to that point. At present I say that the finances of the State cannot bear this reduction. It is well known to everyone who looks around that there is a considerable amount of economic trouble all over Australia. There is depression more or less in every State, and as everyone will admit depression in one State or in one part of Australia re-acts upon the remainder. It is also well known that the outlook for next year at any rate is not too favourable for Australia. This is not the time, seeing that we are approaching the end of the Federal grant, to effect reductions in taxation unless the people are quite prepared to go back to the heavy deficits that we had before.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I have heard the Premier from his present side of the House, and I have heard him from this side of the House. What an entirely different view we have to-day! He has two millions more in revenue to-day than we had when he supported the Upper House in their desire to reduce taxation. It was perfectly right then to make reductions in taxation in the Bills I submitted.

The Premier: What Bills?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Land Tax and Income Tax Bill.

The Premier: Tell us some more of them.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Land Tax and Income Tax Bill.

The Premier: No.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes. The Premier supported another place on that occasion. What do we find now? He has two millions more in gross revenue, and has practically the same services to render. It has been the same all down the years. Hospitals must grow in cost.

The Premier: I will give you your increase in revenue now. It was much greater than mine.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I am obliged to the Premier for giving me notice of his intention to do that. Whatever it was it continued plus two millions a year. If it increased four millions in my time (which it did not) the Premier still has the increase of four millions plus the two millions. I am discussing the increase in the Premier's revenue.

The Premier: You cannot get away with that tale.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: We do not want any bluff. Let us behave like men, worthy of the salary we get if we are not worthy of the positions we occupy. I do not mind the Premier referring to the past. Of course we have had deficits.

The Premier: You referred to the revenue for the past six years.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes.

The Premier: Is there anything wrong with my doing it?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Whatever the increase was during my term, it has continued plus the two millions I have referred to.

The Premier: I will explain that.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: How does that enter into the amendment?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The hon. member does not like it, but he has to listen to it.

The Minister for Mines: He can go out if he likes.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: He cannot go out. Members are paid to sit here. They do sit here when finances are being discussed. We have reduced taxation, and the Federal Government found the money. Of the grant referred to as £300,000 a year from the Federal Government, £200,000 is supposed to be set aside to reduce taxation. That grant has 18 months to run. For that period we shall draw the special grant from the Commonwealth, and over that time there will be this reduced taxation. We

collect more in taxation now than we collected before, although the rate has been reduced. I ask members to realise that the Federal Government paid £99,000 last year plus an amount for the sinking fund that we should have had to pay but for the Financial Agreement. The Federal Government have to take that £99,000 out of the pockets of the people here. To do that they have taxed tobacco, and therefore taxed the poor man. They say they are taxing luxuries.

The Minister for Works: And you have given up smoking in consequence.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Not in consequence. It was not proposed when I gave up smoking.

The Minister for Works: You must have known something.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It is not easy to miss anything evil that is ahead of us. This £99,000 is taken from the pockets of the people, who are to pay the old rate of tax. If they are to pay the old rate of tax, plus the new tax imposed by the Federal Government to meet the amount paid on our account, the Financial Agreement will be a shocking burden instead of an advantage. For the moment it is an advantage because we are saving £360,000 a year that we ought to be paying into the sinking fund in London. This amount plus £99,000 makes a total of £460,000 a year, which represents the advantage under the Financial Agreement this year plus other advantages. If we cannot reduce taxation with this special help, what is going to happen in future when we lose the £300,000 special grant, and when we shall not be enjoying the full advantage of the £360,000 that comes to us from the cancellation of our sinking fund payments in London? It is time the people awakened. It is not so much the tax we put on as the tax we have to submit to from the Federal Government, which does very little for us. In the aggregate, taxation is becoming a heavy burden, especially upon production. These taxes have been the cause of much unemployment and misery. If we go on taxing like this we shall go on increasing unemployment and misery for a great many people. The Commonwealth Government have the right to impose indirect taxation. By that means they can impose a far greater burden upon the people than we can. It is rather hard that we should have to forego the right to collect taxes because the Federal Government

impose burdens that the people find it hard to bear. This has to be. Since we have federated we must live under the system, which is a deadly hurt to us for the moment. In common with other taxing authorities, the Premier has endeavoured to make the taxation upon the people as light as possible. The additional taxation imposed by the Federal Government will be a serious burden upon industry, and already has been the cause of throwing out of employment a considerable number of people. Of course claims will be made upon the State Government for the expenditure of money. There comes a time when the collection of taxation does real harm. We know we must have money to meet the cost of education and of preserving the health of the people. We must have police protection and must have justice administered. We know that even in these things we cannot do all we would like to do. I should like to see adopted in this country the system suggested by Mr. Baldwin and taken up by his party. We cannot get beyond the expenditure that the people can afford to meet. It is not what we should do; it never is; it is what we can do that matters. It is for us to lead the people, and show them they cannot afford many of the things they would like to have, because we cannot get the money necessary to carry out all this work for them. We cannot take too much in taxation from production. We can take so much but no more. It does not matter whether the tax is put on to whisky, beer or tobacco. It is still a charge against production. We have to meet the situation as we find it. The Premier has said that there have been few years when we have not had a deficit. I think in all the 29 years during which we have been federated there has been a credit balance in only six of them. In the other 23 years there has been a debit balance. I am not referring to the accumulated deficit. When we federated, those who urged upon the people that we should do so must have known that there would be considerable difficulty in financing the country and still greater difficulty in providing the services to which I have referred. It is the loss of our right to impose indirect taxation that has produced this burden of direct taxation. Those people who urged we should give up that right to the Federal authorities made a great mistake, and we have had to suffer for it. Cannot the Premier see that if the Federal Government impose taxation and get the £99,000, he will have to let

go the taxation which has produced that amount up to now?

The Minister for Railways: We are not responsible for what the Federal Government do.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes; under the Federal agreement. Let the Federation pay the £99,000. See the unfortunate position in which our people will be placed otherwise. They will have to pay the tax twice over. The relief given by the Financial Agreement is great now, but decreases as the years pass. The people forget that aspect. We need not have made the Financial Agreement, but we did make it. However, having made it, we must stand by it. A great deal of the trouble is due to loan money that does not earn interest and sinking fund. The Premier objects to interference with taxation by members of another place. There is a Constitution under which another place has certain powers which can be exercised. I know what are the powers of another place, and the powers of this Chamber, in matters of finance. To be bound as Western Australia is bound reacts even more unfortunately on the Western Australian people than on this Parliament. Consider the taxation proposed by the Federal Government for the next 12 months, on top of our State taxation.

Mr. Thomson: There is to be 20 per cent. super tax.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The position in South Australia has been brought about by the expenditure of 12 millions of loan money which is not producing the results anticipated. The land tax was reduced in this House from 2d. to 1d., though the 2d. was reinstated upon the re-committal of the Bill. I hope the Premier will agree to the reduction made elsewhere. It is the people who have to be considered in the matter of taxation. Owing to Federation this Parliament, unfortunately, must under-tax very considerably, while another Government enjoys revenue without responsibility. I ask the Premier to be merciful as he is strong.

Mr. THOMSON: I regret the Treasurer's declaration that the Government will not accept either this amendment or any amendment of the present rate of tax. Members of another place knew they could not obtain the amendment which they desired; and their only means of protesting against the existing land tax, especially as applying to rural lands, was to vote as they did. If there is

one section of the community faced with a serious financial outlook, it is the section engaged in primary industry. Take the woolgrowers. The average price per bale received in 1924-25 was £33 13s. 10d.; in 1925-26 it fell to £20 19s. 6d.; in 1926-27 it rose again to £21 13s. 3d., and in 1927-28 to £24 19s. 10d.; but in 1928-29 it was £21 10s. So far as this year's sales have progressed, the average return per bale is between £14 and £15. To-day the primary producer is faced, owing to the Federal Government's attitude, with increased costs. That follows as the night the day. Despite the warnings of the Prime Minister and the Minister for Customs against persons who increase the prices of commodities, they must know that their tariff alterations mean higher prices and increased cost of living. Take the case of the farmer who has an average wool return of 22 bales per annum. Owing to falls in price between 1927-28 and 1928-29, he has received £66 less for his wool. If the present price of wool is maintained, the same man will be faced with a further reduction of £143 in the return from his wool. Costs have not been decreased in any shape or form. In voting against this clause of the Bill, members associated with the Country Party have no desire to refuse the Government such supplies as would be made available to them in ordinary circumstances. I do not wish to criticise the taxation imposed by the Federal Government. Turning to the Commissioner's report, we find that there was an estimated increase of £6,667,276 in land values. On the incidence of land tax, 45.57 per cent. of the increase applied to rural land alone. Regarding pastoral land, the percentage was 12.56, or a total in respect of the rural and pastoral areas on which land tax is paid of 58.33 per cent. If we include country towns, which pay 4.6 per cent., it brings the total percentage up to almost 63.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: What would you do regarding the remainder?

Mr. THOMSON: I endeavoured to move an amendment to allow the amount of land tax, where the man makes his income entirely from the soil, to be taken off his income tax, and so place him in the position he enjoyed before the law was amended. The primary producers have been deprived of the exemption, and are faced with falling prices for their commodities, together with increased costs of production. The Treasurer could discuss this phase with the

representatives of the Legislative Council in an endeavour to effect a compromise. That was the course he adopted on a previous occasion, the compromise then being the abolition of the supertax in two yearly moieties of $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. each and the reinstatement of the provision regarding land tax being deducted from the income tax. If the Premier were to effect a compromise, it would indicate a genuine desire on the part of Parliament to reduce taxation. It does not help Western Australia to know that other States as well will have to pay the supertax that the Commonwealth Government intend to impose. We recognise that the Premier requires revenue to enable him to carry on, but the primary producers are entitled to this relief. The manufacturers in the Eastern States can easily carry the extra burden of the supertax, because of the additional protection afforded them under the new tariff. I hope the Premier will meet the managers from the Legislative Council and effect a compromise.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I am prepared to admit that the income of the agriculturists of Western Australia, and those in the East as well, has suffered considerably as a result of the reduction in the prices obtained for their products, but we cannot rectify that through the land tax, which has nothing whatever to do with production. It is solely the responsibility of the user of the land. The outsider does not contribute to the value of production except to the extent that increased population means increased values. We must approach that question from an income point of view. The member for Katanning stated truly that a reduction had taken place in the price of wool. That merely means that we do not pay the same amount of income tax. As values decrease, so our income tax decreases, and vice versa. Surely the hon. member would not urge that we should have a fluctuating valuation that would automatically affect the price of land!

Mr. Thomson: But that seriously affects land values.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: If production falls off and prices are low, the unimproved value of land is reduced, but not immediately. The immediate effect is felt by the individual farmer in his income.

Mr. Thomson: But it stops development.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: At present we are suffering because our development cannot proceed at the rate previously main-

tained. That is a matter over which the individual has no control, but the reason the State takes a portion of the value that the people as a whole create is that it is an equitable basis. The only fair tax imposed is the land tax?

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Who told you that?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I say that emphatically, and every authority supports me.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Even though you do say it emphatically, you are just as wrong.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Necessity is the sole justification for the imposition of the income tax, which is not equitable because the income is earned by the individual. There may be influences upon the earnings of an individual by population, but it is so indirect that it is impossible to arrive at a fair basis for an equitable tax. Regarding the land, however, the unimproved value is not created by the man who owns it.

Mr. Thomson: Of course it is.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Land values are created by population. If the member for Katanning were the only person living at Katanning, his land would be of little value.

Mr. Thomson: It would be of little value if I did not spend money on it.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The work done by the individual may improve the land but its unimproved value would remain stationary if it were not for the increase in population. I would not argue that the work of the individual did not make land more valuable, provided there was competition to secure land. Competition creates added unimproved values, and the same applies to city property. It is true that the values of city land have increased enormously because of the augmented population, but it is also true that the unimproved values of land in the country districts have increased because of the added population there. The member for Katanning would not increase the tax on the city properties, although they have increased enormously in value.

Mr. Thomson: I was dealing only with country land.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Of course! The hon. member was dealing with 60 per cent., but he left out the 40 per cent. applicable to city holdings, which should be rated at 6d. instead of 2d. The Leader of the Opposition referred to hospitals and education. They are essential services that should be

paid for from the land tax. It is wrong to say they should be paid from income tax. It is merely because we will not tackle the land question in a fair manner that the income tax, at its present rate, is necessary. I agree that the farmers are paying out of all proportion to what they should pay under the heading of income tax, but they are not paying out of all proportion regarding the land tax. As a farmer who has gone through all the trials and troubles of the man on the land, I know perfectly well that if taxation were applied to my unimproved land values instead of to my income, I could do more with my farm than is possible to-day. It is wrong to tax my individual work, but it is right to tax me for what others have helped to create for me. I do not subscribe to this effort to relieve the 40 per cent. of the taxpayers in the city merely to secure something for the farming community. If we wish to help the farmers, it should be done through the income tax and not the land tax. The farmers do not want the land tax reduced.

Mr. Thomson: You have no right to say that, because they do want it reduced.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I say emphatically that the farmers do not want this.

Mr. Thomson: They do.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: They want the city taxpayers taxed equitably so that the people in the country areas may be relieved.

Mr. Thomson: As a representative of a country constituency, I say that we do want this relief.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The member for Katanning is associated with a party that is not confined to primary producers. His party represents city interests and big pastoral interests as well. The hon. member is not directly associated with all the trials and tribulations of the producers of this State. He talks of what he hears at conferences, and conferences are largely representative of those who have city interests rather than big rural interests.

Mr. Thomson: You do not know what you are talking about.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The farmers want relief, and are grateful to the Government for the relief extended to them so far.

Mr. Thomson: Great Scott! They are grateful for additional taxation!

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The farmers do not want a reduction in the taxation for the purpose of helping city land

jobbers, who have been making huge profits. They want more in the shape of land tax, and less in the form of income tax. I support a tax of 2d. I would rather see it higher, provided we could get a reduction of income tax, but the whole system of taxation needs to be reviewed. When it is properly reviewed, members will find a consensus of opinion that the land tax is an equitable tax that should be paid in proportion to the values created by the community, but that the income tax should be reduced. I commend the Government for maintaining the 2d. tax. Admittedly the proceeds of the tax are greater than we originally anticipated, but increased values have been created owing to the number of people brought to the State by public expenditure. The large increase of population is due to the activities of Government, and as a result of Government expenditure, values have increased and so the reassessment of land has produced for the State something that the people of the State have created.

Mr. LAMBERT: It is time Parliament seriously reviewed taxation in all its incidence. We should tackle the problem of the progressive increase of land values within the city area and the amount represented by unearned increment. Effort should not be taxed, but if taxation were imposed on some of the more parasitic incomes, we should be doing better service for the State. I do not know the extent to which the 2d. land tax affects the man on the land, but if it is such a serious matter as has been represented, it is peculiar that another place could muster only 13 out of 30 members to favour the reduction.

Mr. Thomson: Nearly one-half.

Mr. LAMBERT: If it was regarded as such a vital matter, one could have expected that it would have received greater support. I hope the suggestion of the member for Guildford will be adopted and that the discussion will not be continued with one eye on the forthcoming elections.

Mr. Thomson: Speak for yourself.

Mr. LAMBERT: Members opposite know the obligations of the Government, and it is regrettable that those obligations are not kept in view. Some industries should be paying higher taxation and so should some individuals. The proprietary racecourses, run purely for gain, might be instanced, and there are many other sources from

which increased revenue could be obtained. A bookmaker earning £3,000 or £4,000 a year is graded in the same way as is a man battling outback under the greatest possible hardships.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The member for Guildford said he ought to be taxed.

Mr. LAMBERT: The burden of the man on the land should be lightened as much as possible. No Government in the world is giving its producers greater encouragement or assistance, and that is necessary because it is the only way to open up our broad acres. I hope the time will come when we shall get away from miserable, sectional, party representation and devise a scientific basis for taxation that will relieve the men battling in the backblocks.

Mr. Mann: You are now speaking in favour of a reduction of the tax.

Mr. LAMBERT: I regret it is necessary to oppose the Council's amendment. We are taxing on a wrong basis. We should be taxing city values and the unearned increment created largely by the men who are developing the country. It is useless to wail about the additional Federal taxation. The Leader of the Country Party knows that no one has been more guilty of increasing indirect taxation in late years than the Federal Country Party.

Mr. Thomson: If your party had been sincere they would have reduced it.

Mr. LAMBERT: The fact remains that the additional indirect taxation imposed upon the people during late years was solely due to the small coterie of Country Party members supporting Mr. Bruce.

Mr. Lindsay: What about the extra million and a quarter imposed by the Labour Government in the last few weeks?

Mr. LAMBERT: Has the hon. member not discovered the callous disregard of his own party for the primary producer?

Mr. Lindsay: You ought to talk about the tariff!

Mr. LAMBERT: When members opposite support a reduction of land tax, they ought to indicate how the money required to meet the services of the State is to be provided. The desire of another place is not so much to relieve the farmer or the taxpayer as it is to create an impression at the elections to be held in March next. Members from another place will then go forth and declare how hard they fought to reduce the land tax.

Mr. Lindsay interjected.

Mr. LAMBERT: It is to be hoped that before you are much older you will have the opportunity to provide the money required to meet the services of the State; then we shall see exactly how you will fare after having relieved the farmer. The hon. member's Federal friends, immediately they became associated with another party, never made the slightest attempt to give relief to the people who elected them.

Mr. Thomson: You are talking about something you do not understand when you make a statement like that.

Mr. LAMBERT: The hon. member knows very well that his party—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member is distinctly out of order in referring to Federal politics.

Mr. LAMBERT: I was referring to their taxation, not their politics.

Mr. LINDSAY: I listened with interest to the remarks of the member for Coolgardie. He made merely an electioneering speech; it could be called nothing else. Anyhow, what is the hon. member's position? Is he in favour of this reduction or not? I failed to gather what his views were.

Mr. Lambert: You will see when the vote is taken.

Mr. LINDSAY: The hon. member wants us to believe that he desires to protect the interests of the farmers, but all he has done has been to belittle those on this side of the House who are here to protect the farmers. The hon. member classes the reduction of the land tax as an electioneering stunt, but I want him to realise this is not the first time members on this side have put up a case for the reduction of that tax. We are not against the imposition of an unimproved land tax, but this can only be called a tax for purely revenue purposes.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: How much do you pay in land tax compared with other taxation?

Mr. LINDSAY: I have said that the incidence of the tax should be altered, and if it were altered it would bear more justly on the people. We have no power to do anything because the Assessment Act has never been before us during this Parliament. Therefore all we can do is to try to bring about a reduction in this way. The Assessment Act was last before Parliament in 1923, and I was not a member at that time. I know, and I believe it is true, the Upper

House would be willing to agree to certain deductions to those engaged in bona fide using their lands.

Mr. Corboy: What right have you to say you believe it?

Mr. LINDSAY: The same right as the hon. member has to express his views, and I declare that in my opinion the method of taxation is unjust. I merely rose to say a few words in reply to the member for Coolgardie who wept tears of blood about the poor farmers of this State, and who when asked what he proposed to do, replied, "You will see when the vote is taken."

Mr. BROWN: Personally I consider it would be of advantage if the Government met another place and endeavoured to arrive at a compromise. In the district I represent it is recognised that the land tax is altogether too heavy, and the position has become aggravated of late by reason of the fresh valuations that have been made. Several practical farmers went into the matter recently and the conclusion they arrived at was that the earning capacity of a lot of our farms, through taxation, is now beyond their real worth. The Premier has told us that it was unconstitutional for another place to even suggest such an amendment.

The Premier: I said no such thing.

Mr. BROWN: I understood the Premier to say that.

The Premier: Then you understood wrongly.

Mr. BROWN: I shall withdraw that remark, but I think he did say that it was not his intention to agree to any alteration in the taxation proposals. It is possible that another place had a compromise in view. If relief could be given to the men who are struggling on the land, it would be greatly appreciated. Suppose another place refuses to pass the Bill, what will the position be? We know that the Premier requires a certain amount of taxation from land and income, and we are also aware of the fact that there is a great shortage of money. At the same time the Premier should remember that the people in the country are the backbone of the State, and that it is a great mistake to penalise them heavily. I am certain that if another place were met something could be done that would be agreeable to the agriculturists of the State.

The PREMIER: I have no fault to find with another place requesting an amendment. They are quite within their rights in

doing so, but I do object to the reduction in the tax, and I want to call the attention of members—it should not be necessary—and the people as well, to the fact that there has been a lot said about the taxation of the farmers. This is really not a tax of 2d. in the pound, although the amendment requested by another place seeks to delete 2d. with a view to inserting 1d. It is actually and virtually a reduction of a tax of 1d. to $\frac{1}{2}$ d. The rate on improved land is only 1d., and the amendment would halve that amount. The greatest part of the land in this State is improved and escapes the payment of the 2d. tax.

Mr. Maley: That is twice what it was before.

The PREMIER: Previously there was a 15 per cent. super tax.

Mr. Maley: What about valuations?

The PREMIER: I know that valuations have gone up, but I am dealing with the rate of the tax, and if valuations have gone up, is it suggested that they are unfair? It merely means that the land owners, for many years, had the benefit of areas that were infinitely below their real value.

Mr. Maley: It does not follow.

The PREMIER: Of course it does follow. What other logical deduction can be drawn? If assessors have increased values to three times the amount they were before, is that not a clear indication that values were increasing year by year? Again I remind members that the proposed reduction is from 1d. to $\frac{1}{2}$ d., because the great bulk of the land escapes the double tax by reason of the fact that it is improved. Section 9 of the Assessment Act says that if certain improvements are effected there shall be a rebate of one half. An overwhelming majority of the land tax payers of this State come under that section. It is well to remember that this is an attempt to reduce the tax in this State to $\frac{1}{2}$ d. in the pound, which would make it the lowest tax in any State in Australia. I repeat that a tax of 1d. in the pound is not excessive.

Mr. Maley: Does that apply here now?

The PREMIER: Of course it does. No farmer who is working his property to-day is paying 2d.; he is paying 1d.

Mr. Thomson: He has been paying more.

The PREMIER: A great deal has been said about the farmer and the decrease in the price of his products, but this amendment if agreed to, will relieve not only the

farmer but all city land owners. It is not a genuine attempt to relieve the farmer. The Leader of the Opposition laughs; what is he laughing at? If it were a genuine attempt to relieve the farmer the reduction would be made to apply to agricultural land.

Mr. Thomson: We tried.

The PREMIER: Hon. members in another place did not genuinely attempt to relieve the farmers; they want to relieve those who are profiting by the unearned increment in the cities as well.

Mr. Thomson: At the conference they will be able to explain their meaning.

The PREMIER: We can only understand what they mean by what they say in their amendment.

Mr. Thomson: But you will get their meaning more precisely at the conference.

The PREMIER: I will not go to a conference. Surely members of another place are just as capable of expressing their meaning as are members of this House capable of expressing it for them. We could hardly imagine members of another place saying, "We have not made our intentions clear, but our colleagues in the Assembly will explain what we mean and what we are prepared to do." We know that they have sought to make a reduction of 1d. in the taxation of all city lands, as well as of country lands. One of the scandals of this State is that while such enormous increments are being reaped—prices doubled in 12 months—landholders have not been paying one fraction of the taxation they ought to have paid. The land speculators in the city have been reaping enormous profits in recent years. All members know of instances where property has been bought, and sold again within 12 or 18 months at double what was paid for it. Those are the people, as well as the farmers, whom this amendment would relieve. This is the only State in Australia where taxation has been reduced during the last 12 or 15 years. Members harp upon this miserable land tax, which is not a burden upon anybody, for it is altogether too small to be a burden—

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: The reduction has not been requested by the land owners.

Mr. Thomson: Yes, it has.

The PREMIER: It is only once in two years, when a Council election is pending, that we hear anything about it. Last year

the tax went through without any suggestion of amendment. Yet this amendment comes along each second year, that is, in the session preceding the Council elections, which are held in May. While so much has been said about this small increase in taxation, I remind the Committee that when the increase was made its equivalent was given away in the shape of reduced railway charges, which to-day represent £60,000 to the Railway Department. If the railway charges were restored to what they were in 1924, the railway revenue this year would be £60,000 more than it actually will be. So there is another £60,000 that has been given away. As I have said, this is the only State in Australia in which the income tax has been reduced; and in this State in recent years it has been reduced by 48 per cent. It is just as well to remember that when talking about the burden of taxation. The Leader of the Opposition spoke of my increase of £2,000,000. I have never heard a more bootless argument.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I have heard it from you.

The PREMIER: No, it was not that kind of argument I used. This talk of £2,000,000 a year increase in revenue is almost an attempt to mislead the people. The hon. member says, "The Government have had £2,000,000 more this year than I had in my last year, and therefore they ought to be able to reduce taxation enormously." Earlier this session I told the Leader of the Opposition that even if I have had £2,000,000 more in my term, he enjoyed £2,900,000 more in his last year than in his first year in office. Yet he did not find it any easier to carry on the affairs of State because of his increased revenue. He knows that increased revenue such as that is not revenue in the proper sense of the word; it is not taxation, but merely the volume of money coming in from railways and tramways, and consequently, side by side with it, comes increased expenditure, and very often in greater ratio. The trouble of every Treasurer in this State has been to keep his increasing expenditure somewhat level with his increasing revenue. The fact that we have built up deficits of millions shows that we have never been able to do it. Every year revenue increases but so, too, does expenditure, and at a greater rate.

Mr. Maley: You do not take sinking fund and depreciation from revenue, do you?

The PREMIER: No, I do not—in fact I do not know what the hon. member has in his mind.

Mr. Davy: It is rather a gloomy picture you are painting.

The PREMIER: It is a picture of the actual facts as they have existed for the past 20 or 30 years. It is not a gloomy picture. Can we be said to be standing still while our revenue increases? Are we not to spend more every year in building schools for the education of an increasing number of children? Are we not to have an increased number of hospitals and increased expenditure upon the Medical and Health Departments? In every direction there is new expenditure every year. For instance, this year we have to find £40,000 for payment under the Miner's Phthisis Act to men suffering from tuberculosis. Last year it was £30,000. There must always be increased expenditure because of the growth and expansion of the State. We cannot get increased revenue from our railways and have our expenditure standing still. So the trouble for every Treasurer for generations past has been that he has not been able to keep his increased expenditure within his increased revenue.

Mr. Davy: We have to make a start to do it some time.

The PREMIER: We have been making that start for some years past. But we are not entitled to reduce taxation until we have achieved that end. If, in this financial year the figures balance, and if there is anything over, the taxpayers will have the right to ask for some reduction. But although Parliament would not be justified in reducing taxation at this juncture, it might with advantage adjust taxation so as to ease the burden in one direction and increase it in another; but until we balance our ledger we are not justified in reducing taxation, especially while we are closing hospitals for want of money to keep them open. Every year brings us expenditure obligations that could not be foreseen. In three years £100,000 has been paid under the Miner's Phthisis Act. That is a very substantial sum, which would go a considerable way towards balancing the ledger. In all Australia there is no other tax like our land tax. The only one approaching it is to be found in Victoria. Some members have said we are not entitled to go on, because bad seasons have been experienced in the other States. But I think we are en-

titled to consider the difficulties of this State in comparison with other States, and at a time when every other Treasurer in Australia is being landed with heavy deficits and with the necessity for increased taxation. Only this week we learnt from South Australia that this form of taxation is to be increased 25 per cent., and that, despite the £400,000 grant from the Commonwealth, the year will close with a deficit of £600,000. Although it is unfortunate that the prices of staple commodities, principally wool and wheat, have gone down, still we are not in a position to reduce taxation, and I take it the people of this State are well off as compared with people in most other parts of the world, including the other States of Australia.

[*Mr. Lambert took the Chair.*]

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It is perfectly true that during my term of office revenue increased by £2,900,000, but it has now increased to such an extent that it is double what it was in 1919. It is perfectly true that in my time the deficit was £652,000, whereas it has gone up—

Hon. W. D. Johnson: What has this to do with the question before us? Surely one speech and one reply is sufficient.

The CHAIRMAN: Yes, I was thinking of that.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: In gross revenue we collect per head of population more than any other State of the Commonwealth. Also we spend more loan money per head of population than does any other State.

The Premier: The hon. member knows the reason: because in the other States trusts and boards are doing half the work that the Government are doing here. Here the whole thing is charged up to our revenue.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I had no entertainment tax in my time. The point is that this land tax may seem a very small thing, but in the aggregate it imposes a heavy burden on the farmers. Members of another place were perfectly justified in asking for this reduction, and I say they are entitled to be treated with respect.

The Premier: Who has treated them with disrespect?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I thought the Premier did. I am glad to learn now that apparently he did not intend it. I say let us reduce some of the increased burden placed on the people by way of land tax.

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

Ayes	19
Noes	14

Majority for .. 5

AYES.

Mr. Chesson	Mr. McCallum
Mr. Collier	Mr. Millington
Mr. Corboy	Mr. Munle
Mr. Cowan	Mr. Panton
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Rowe
Mr. Kennelly	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Kennedy	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Lamond	Mr. Withers
Mr. Lutey	Mr. Wilson
Mr. Marshall	

(Teller.)

NOES

Mr. Angelo	Sir James Mitchell
Mr. Brown	Mr. Richardson
Mr. Davy	Mr. Sampson
Mr. Ferguson	Mr. Teesdale
Mr. Lindsay	Mr. Thomson
Mr. Maley	Mr. A. Wansbrough
Mr. Mann	Mr. North

(Teller.)

PAIRS.

AYES.	NOES.
Miss Holman	Mr. Barnard
Mr. Clydesdale	Mr. J. H. Smith
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. J. M. Smith
Mr. A. Wansbrough	Mr. Latham
Mr. Troy	Mr. Stubbs

Question thus passed; the Council's amendment not made.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

No. 2. Clause 2, Subclause 2—Delete "twopence" in line 2 and insert "one penny."

The PREMIER: This amendment is consequential on the other. It deals with the tax on pastoral leases. I move—

That the amendment be not made.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment not made.

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

BILL—MAIN ROADS ACT AMENDMENT.

Council's Message.

Message from the Council notifying that it did not insist on its amendments Nos. 1, 4 and 8, disagreed to by the Assembly, had agreed to the amendment made by the Assembly to amendment No. 5 made by the Council, and insisted on its amendment No. 7, disagreed to by the Assembly, now considered.

In Committee.

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

Council's amendment No. 7: Insert a new clause to stand as Clause 12, as follows:—

12. A section is inserted in the principal Act as follows: 18a. (1) Where the Board, in reconstructing an existing road or building a new road, prejudicially affects the access to a property having a frontage thereto, the Board shall at its own expense provide reasonable access to the reconstructed or new road. (2) If in carrying out the provision of Subsection (1) of this section, it becomes necessary for the Board to acquire any land belonging to a private owner, the expense of so doing shall be borne by the person requiring such access: Provided that before any such land is so acquired, the Board shall give at least 21 days' notice of their intention to acquire, and in the event of the person requiring such access dissenting from their so doing, the Board's responsibility under Subsection (1) hereof shall cease.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: This deals with the alteration of grades of roads and approaches to private property. It is the only amendment the Council have insisted upon. I think a way can be found around the difficulty with which the Main Roads Board will be confronted, but I do not like accepting the principle. First of all, if an owner requires an approach made, he will have to pay for the land to be resumed, and if he is not prepared to do that, the obligation of the board ceases. Secondly, if the board find the cost too heavy, they may not make the road. This may mean that those who would be served by the road will have to suffer. As it is the intention of the Government next session to bring down a comprehensive amendment to this Bill, it

would be just as well to accept the Council's amendment. The financial arrangements under the Bill are a long way ahead of those now existing. In order to save it, and with the hope of improving it next session, I move—

That the Council's amendment be no longer disagreed to.

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

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

BILL—INSPECTION OF SCAFFOLDING ACT AMENDMENT.

Council's Amendments.

Schedule of five amendments made by the Council now considered.

In Committee.

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

No. 1. Clause 2—Delete.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I move:

That the amendment be agreed to, subject to the following amendment:—Strike out the word "delete" and insert "amend" in lieu thereof, and add the words, "by adding to proposed Subsection (3) the words 'the term shall not include scaffolding of less than 8 feet from the horizontal base unless used in connection with the erection, alteration, addition or demolition of a building'; and consequential on the above amendment insert a new clause, to stand as Clause 5, as follows:—Amend Section 25: Section 25 of the principal Act is amended, as follows:—1, By adding to Subsection (1) the words "with respect to all scaffolding exceeding 8 feet from the horizontal base. 2, By adding to paragraph (c) of Subsection (2) the words "and regulating and inspection and use of scaffolding of less than 8 feet from the horizontal base if used in connection with the erection, alteration, addition or demolition of a building."

I think this modification will to some extent meet the objections which have been raised. Scaffolding under eight feet will come under the Act if used in connection with alterations, additions to or the demolition of a building, but will not include such services as a servant girl cleaning an electric light globe, the building of an aviary, kalsomining a kitchen, and so on. The regulations that are part of the Act, and which set out

the standard of scaffolding to be used, would not apply to scaffolding under eight feet. Regulations may then be made to cover a different type of scaffolding for work under eight feet compared with that which applies to scaffolding over eight feet. The same strength of timber, or the same weight, may not be required. Every cottage now has to be inspected, as the scaffolding over the chimney is more than 8 feet high; and but a few minutes more of the inspector's time would be needed to complete the inspection of the building. The measure will not apply to buildings in the country until the height of the scaffolding exceeds 15 feet; that is to say, in the country single-storey buildings will be exempt.

Mr. DAVY: Should not the definition of "gear," in Section 2 of the Act, have a few words added to it? Otherwise that definition is likely to clash with the wording of the Minister's amendment on the Council's amendment.

The Minister for Works: The Act contains a definition of "gear," and also a definition of "scaffolding."

Mr. DAVY: Then it must be some structural arrangement or alteration before the measure applies. These amendments render the Bill much more acceptable to me.

Mr. SAMPSON: With the extensive and extending use of electric current, the construction of a chimney is not essential, as nowadays much of the cooking and heating is effected by electric stoves, heaters, radiators and so on. In these altered conditions, the Council's amendment might be accepted. The Minister is hardly justified in saying that a chimney is a necessity.

Mr. THOMSON: The amendments of another place have been before us for some considerable time, and it is rather a pity that the Minister for Works did not put his amendments upon the Notice Paper. Personally I feel that I have not had an opportunity of examining the Minister's amendment on the Council's amendment closely enough. Perhaps there is a nigger in the woodpile. I have taken and I take strong exception to stretching this measure and the regulations under it so as to cover the construction of a chimney. That was not intended when the Bill was previously before this Chamber. In the country, we are told, buildings up to 15 feet high are to be exempt. Where is the regulation granting this exemption?

The Minister for Works: It is in the Act.

Mr. THOMSON: That exemption removes part of my objection to the Bill from the aspect of buildings outside town boundaries. I feel disposed, however, to support the Council's amendment as it stands.

Amendment on the amendment put and passed; the Council's amendment, as amended, agreed to.

No. 2. Clause 4—Delete.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: This amendment speaks for itself. I move—

That the amendment be not agreed to.

Mr. DAVY: My objection to the clause which the Council have struck out is that I am not satisfied it is an honest clause. On the face of it, it purports to be an attempt to protect our workers from other workers who are not able to speak English well. But is that the real object? Is not the real object to preserve jobs for English-speaking workers? All persons living in Australia ought to enjoy equality of opportunity. What may be the underlying idea of the clause does not tally with my view of what ought to be passed as legislation.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment not agreed to.

No. 3. Clause 5, Subclause (1)—Delete the word "calendar" in line eight, page three.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The word "calendar" may come out with safety. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

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

No. 4. Clause 5, Subclause (1)—Delete all words after the word "year" in line eight, page three, down to and inclusive of the word "succeeding" in line ten.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: This amendment would make the position impossible. One must know whether the year is a calendar year, or the State's financial year, or any period of 12 months. There must be some date from which the department would obtain returns. The clause represents a specific financial concession to the contractors. When the contractor sends in his return, he will be charged accord-

ingly. The small jobs will be lumped and the fee fixed on them. Formerly these small jobs meant that the contractor paid out of all proportion to the size of his operations. Now all the jobs within the financial year will be lumped, and on the total, the fee will be paid. The department cannot double-bank, because the works will be on the contractor's list. I move—

That the amendment be not agreed to.

Mr. SAMPSON: It seems to me that if a job is approved by the scaffolding inspector and is started in February, but is not finished by the end of June, the contractor will be liable to pay a further fee on the work in the second financial year. That is what probably prompted the Legislative Council.

The Minister for Works: That would not be so because the contractor pays the fee before the job is started.

Mr. SAMPSON: If the Minister is satisfied that the contractor will not be penalised, I shall not pursue the matter.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment not agreed to.

No. 5. Clause 5, Subclause (1).—Add at the end the following:—"The foregoing fees may be modified, but not increased, by regulations under section 25, subsection (2)."

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: This amendment is in keeping with the promise I made to the Leader of the Opposition that I would have a clause inserted to allow of fees being reduced by means of regulation, thus avoiding the necessity for an amending Bill on each occasion. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

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

Resolutions reported, the report adopted, and a Committee consisting of the Minister for Works, Mr. Richardson and Mr. Chesson, drew up reasons for disagreeing to three of the Council's amendments.

Reasons adopted, and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

BILL—GERALDTON SAILORS AND SOLDIERS' MEMORIAL INSTITUTE.

First Reading.

Received from the Council and, on motion by Mr. Davy, read a first time.

Second Reading.

MR. DAVY (West Perth) [8.10] in moving the second reading said: The Bill relates entirely to a domestic matter. Some years ago a committee was formed in Geraldton with the object of raising funds to establish a sailors' and soldiers' memorial institute. The committee comprised some public-spirited citizens, who were extremely successful in their efforts. They raised a large sum of money and purchased a handsome building. After furnishing it, they had a substantial surplus. The committee became incorporated. A year or so ago the number of soldiers in the Geraldton district, who were taking an active interest in their own affairs, fell off and it was thought the building was not being utilised as it might be. There was a move to hand over the institute to the Geraldton Municipal Council, not for their own benefit but for the sake of control.

The Minister for Justice: I do not think you have the correct facts.

Mr. DAVY: I think I shall show I have as I continue.

The Minister for Justice: The Bill is all right, but your facts are wrong.

Mr. DAVY: Perhaps the Minister will show where I am wrong when he speaks later on. Following upon some disputes about the matter, a conference was held between representatives of the municipal council, the original trustees of the fund, the president and the general secretary of the Returned Soldiers' League. Eventually it was agreed that the incorporation should be wiped out and a special body of trustees incorporated to take charge of the property and administer it in the interests of the objects for which the money had been raised. Accordingly the Bill was prepared. The trustees are to be the Mayor of Geraldton, ex-officio, who will be the chairman of the trustees, two of whom will be ratepayers of the municipality to be appointed by the mayor from time to time, and two to be appointed by the Geraldton sub-branch of the R.S.L. The Bill contains clauses vesting in the trustees the necessary power to deal with land and property and certain procedural clauses found in all such Bills in connection with the vesting of property in trustees. I do not know that there can be any objection to the Bill, which relates to a domestic matter in connection with

which all the parties concerned are in agreement. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. W. D. JOHNSON (Guildford) [8.15]: The Bill proposes to confer extraordinary powers and I am surprised at the member for West Perth agreeing to them. To provide that the mayor shall automatically become one of the trustees, be chairman, and appoint two ratepayers, and thereby constitute a majority of the trustees, and give them power to sell the land, is something extraordinary.

The Premier: And the mayor may remove anyone he appoints and then appoint someone else.

HON. W. D. JOHNSON: That is so. The mayor himself would really constitute a majority. The two he appointed would naturally be men to his liking, whose ideas of administration would accord with his own. I think we should insist that the two ratepayers should be elected. No great expense would be involved to elect them at the time of the annual elections.

The Minister for Railways: They could be elected by the council.

HON. W. D. JOHNSON: Yes, that would do. I think the member for West Perth will appreciate the danger of those provisions. I am surprised that another place should have endorsed them. If it were a matter that did not affect the public in any way, one might be inclined to take the risk, but this is a semi-public matter, of interest to a great number of residents. It is provided that the Governor-in-Council shall approve of certain things. Therefore Parliament, in passing the Bill, would be accepting responsibilities in connection with the administration of the trust. A Bill of this kind should have been introduced by the Government and not by a private member. I should like to hear what the member for Geraldton has to say, because we should have a little more information on the second reading. Then in Committee we could perhaps amend the Bill to make it accord with the accepted policy of the State, so that this body would be an elective body subject to the control of the people.

MR. DAVY (West Perth—in reply) [8.18]: I welcome any suggestion for improving the Bill. Of course I cannot guarantee that all the details are accurate.

HON. W. D. JOHNSON: But I have referred to a principle.

MR. DAVY: That is purely a matter for consideration in Committee. I suppose the object of the Committee stage is to rectify any mistake in the clauses. I am in the hands of the House. I am not anxious to rush the Bill through with undue haste. The object of the Bill is a good one, and I am informed that it expresses the exact wishes of all the people concerned. I do not say that everybody should get exactly what he asks for.

HON. W. D. JOHNSON: Quite so; you mentioned that the other night.

MR. DAVY: Yes. If the member for Guildford, or any other member, points out convincingly that the Bill needs amending, I shall agree to it.

HON. W. D. JOHNSON: Would you suggest that I have not shown the necessity for amending it?

MR. DAVY: I shall meet the position when we reach the clause in question. The suggestion by the hon. member, endorsed by the Premier, is probably very sound, namely, that the two trustees should not be appointed by the mayor, but should be elected by the municipal council. That would probably overcome the difficulty. If the member for Guildford would prefer that the Committee stage be deferred, so that he can frame his amendments, I shall be pleased to agree to it.

HON. W. D. JOHNSON: I would.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

BILL—VERMIN ACT AMENDMENT.

Council's Message.

Message from the Council received and read notifying that it did not insist on its amendment to which the Assembly had disagreed.

BILLS (2)—RETURNED FROM COUNCIL.

1, Interpretation Act Amendment.

2, Loan, £2,250,000.

Without amendment.

BILL—LAND AGENTS.*Council's Message.*

Message from the Council received and read notifying that it did not insist on its amendments Nos. 7, 8 and 10 disagreed to by the Assembly, had agreed to the amendment made by the Assembly to amendment No. 12 of the Council, and had insisted on its amendments Nos. 5 and 11, to which the Assembly had disagreed, and had disagreed to the amendment made by the Assembly to the Council's amendment No. 3.

BILL—RESERVES, No. 2.*Council's Amendments.*

Bill returned from the Council with two amendments which were now considered.

In Committee.

Mr. Panton in the Chair; the Minister for Mines in charge of the Bill.

No. 1. Insert a clause, to stand as Clause 5, as follows:—5. That portion of Reserve A1720 (King's Park), described in the Third Schedule hereto, is excised from the said reserve for the purpose of additions to Ferdinand and Thomas streets.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: When the Bill was introduced the department did not know it was essential to obtain Parliamentary sanction for the granting of land by the King's Park Board for the widening of the road from Thomas-street to Ferdinand-street. I am informed that the King's Park Board and the Subiaco Council are in accord with the proposal. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The Minister should say where the land is, and what we are giving up.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: A Bill was passed to grant a strip of land along King's Park-road down to Thomas-street. This provision will permit the continuation of the widening from Thomas-street to Ferdinand-street, the latter being the street running to King's Park gates at the University endowment lands. The proposal includes sufficient land at the intersection of Thomas-street and Rokeby-road to construct a circus.

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

No. 2. Add the following schedule, to stand as the Third Schedule:—Third Schedule. All that portion of "A" Reserve 1720, bounded by lines starting from the intersection of the Northern alignment of the Perth-Fremantle Road with the Eastern alignment of Ferdinand Street, and extending 359deg. 29min. 917 links; thence 359deg. 37min. 5,239 links; thence Northerly 394.1 links by a circular arc radius 500 links bearing 89 deg. 37min. from the tangent point; thence 44deg. 48min. 10,029.7 links; thence Easterly 231 links by a circular arc radius 200 links bearing 134deg. 48min. from the tangent point; thence 110deg. 58min. 99.4 links; thence Westerly 231 links by a circular arc radius 200 links bearing 200deg. 58min. from the tangent point; thence 224deg. 48min. 5,928 links; thence Southerly 88.1 links by a circular arc radius 100 links bearing 134deg. 48min. from the tangent point; thence South-Westerly 352.4 links by a circular arc radius 200 links bearing 264deg. 19min. from the common tangent point; thence Westerly 88.1 links by a circular arc radius 100 links bearing 185deg. 17min. from the common tangent point; thence 224deg. 48min. 3,419.4 links; thence South-Westerly 99.5 links by a circular arc radius 411.5 links bearing 134deg. 48min. from the tangent point; thence 210 deg. 56min. 418.3 links; thence Southerly 97.5 links by a circular arc radius 178.4 links bearing 120deg. 56min. from the tangent point; thence 179deg. 37min. 5,184.1 links; thence 179deg. 29min. 894 links; and thence 255deg. 18min. 93.9 links to the starting point, all bearings and distances being subject to survey.

On motion by the Minister for Mines, the foregoing amendment was agreed to.

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

BILL—ABORIGINES ACT AMENDMENT.

Received from the Council and read a first time.

BILL—ROMAN CATHOLIC NEW NORCIA CHURCH PROPERTY.

Returned from the Council without amendment.

BILL—PUBLIC BUILDINGS.*Order Discharged.*

Order of the Day read for the resumption of the consideration in Committee from the 27th August of the Public Buildings Bill.

On motion by the Premier, Order of the Day, discharged from the Notice Paper.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

THE PREMIER (Hon. P. Collier—Boulder) [8.33]: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn until 7.30 p.m. on Tuesday next.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 8.34 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Tuesday, 10th December, 1929.

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

ASSENT TO BILL.

Message from the Governor received and read, notifying assent to the Sandalwood Bill.

BILL—MENTAL DEFICIENCY.

To Restore.

THE HONORARY MINISTER (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [4.37]: I move—

That the Committee on the Mental Deficiency Bill be revived to sit on Wednesday, the 11th December.

I am prompted to take this action because of the fact that the Bill is regarded as most important and long overdue. Hon. members will be well aware that when the measure was before another place it was referred to a select committee, who went into the subject exhaustively and submitted a report which, in all essentials was adopted. This Chamber has discussed the measure thoroughly. It is a lengthy Bill, comprising 72 clauses; and only on the sixty-fourth clause was the motion moved "That the Chairman do now leave the Chair." That motion was submitted to the Chamber when the attendance was thin. In my opinion the fate of a Bill of this character should be decided by, at all events, a larger proportion of the Council's membership. The subject of the measure is not by any means new, although some hon. members have expressed a contrary view. Similar legislation has operated in America for over 30 years.

Hon. H. A. Stephenson: I think we have heard that before.

The **HONORARY MINISTER**: I am just reminding hon. members that that is so.

Hon. H. A. Stephenson: We are getting pretty tired of that piece of information.

The **HONORARY MINISTER**: There is nothing novel about the remark or the legislation. It simply points out that those hon. members who say the measure is new are not, perhaps, seized of the importance of the subject in the same degree as are legislators of other countries. Great Britain has had corresponding legislation on its statute-book for 16 years, and in Tasmania it has operated for a number of years. Western Australia has been losing a considerable amount of money simply because numbers of children who should come within the jurisdiction of such a measure as this have been compelled to attend the ordinary State schools for a period of seven or eight years. We have warped kindly disposed natures simply by reason of unmerited reprimand, ridicule and disparagement. That fact is now admitted, I believe, by all students of the subject.

Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom: What is the reason for such a number of children being in that condition?

The **HONORARY MINISTER**: We have put into gaol, as vagabonds or thieves, adults who are only children in mind, that