

mineral about which they know nothing. This may be of no value, but the department encourages these people to send in all these minerals for classification. By this means the department have discovered almost every mineral known in the world. It is not stated that these minerals can be produced in commercial quantities. It is only claimed that they do exist in this State because samples have been seen. That is the right attitude to adopt. Hundreds of men have found minerals of various kinds and sent them in to the department, the officials of which have told them whether or not they are of commercial value. If a certain syndicate in this State had followed that practice they would have been saved an expenditure of about £40,000. There was a gentleman who took two years and four months to walk from Darwin to Derby through the Kimberleys. He discovered what he thought was the greatest deposit of tin ever found in the world. He brought some of the material with him and formed a syndicate. The subscribers themselves thought it was tin. The syndicate obtained a concession and I was condemned for granting it. No one else had ever applied for a mining concession in that part of the State, but immediately I granted this one other people said they had been on the point of going there themselves. One man even chartered a boat and provisioned it to go to the very same spot. Some 14 people applied for concessions around the main area, and I granted them all for a period of six months. The syndicate itself provisioned a boat and put up nearly £40,000 in cash. When the emissaries of the syndicate reached the spot in question, and sent samples down to the department, they discovered that the material was not tin. Immediately upon that none of the other syndicates went on with the concessions. The second boat I spoke of followed the syndicate boat up north, but the latter, after going 100 miles out of her course, evaded the former. Reference was made to tantalite. Were it not for a ring that exists, this State could produce tantalite as profitably as any other part of the world. It is not the production that causes the difficulty but the disposal of the mineral. One lady, who is well known and highly respected in this State, has spent thousands of pounds in the endeavour to find a market for this product. She has sold a good deal but still has

on hand some she bought four years ago. She is employing 10 or 12 men all the year round, and buying small lots of the mineral from outside prospectors. She has been to England and America twice in the hope of opening up a market. I believe the grade of our ore is higher than that in most other parts of the world. The member for Yilgarn-Coolgardie also referred to arsenic. The mine he mentioned at Southern Cross is now being opened up by a company, which hopes to treat the ore for its gold and arsenical contents in opposition to the Wiluna mine. I hope they will make a success of their venture. If Wiluna increases its tonnage another 10,000 a month, it seems likely that it will be able to produce sufficient arsenic to supply the known world. Indeed, I do not know what will be done with it all if any more is produced. Already the requirements of Australia for sheep dip and other things are more than fully supplied. I trust that the optimistic opinions that have been expressed by myself and other members will be realised, and that the mining industry in this State will have a long and prosperous career.

Vote put and passed.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 10.10 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Thursday, 2nd November, 1933.

	PAGE
Assent to Bill	1680
Bills: Entertainments Tax Act Amendment, 2R. ...	1631
Yuna-Dartmoor Railway, 3R.	1637
Southern Cross Southwards Railway, 3R. ...	1637
Fire Brigades Act Amendment, 2R.	1637
Lotteries (Control) Act Amendment, 1R. ...	1689

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

ASSENT TO BILL.

Message from the Lieut.-Governor received and read notifying assent to the Wiluna Water Board Loan Guarantee Bill.

BILL—ENTERTAINMENTS TAX ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. C. F. BAXTER (East) [4.35]: All taxation measures are obnoxious and this one has not been made any less unpleasant by the fact that, while the Federal Government have vacated this field of taxation, the State Government have taken the opportunity to jump in at once and take advantage of the tax themselves. That would be quite all right were it not for the fact that the recent emergency tax Act doubled the tax on those people who would, under normal conditions, take the higher grade seats in places of amusement. I very much doubt if the proposed tax will yield the amount estimated, £11,000, because the people who would ordinarily pay the tax will avail themselves of the cheaper accommodation provided by places of entertainment. It is all very well to say the tax is but a small amount, but people to-day consider small amounts. There is a very great difference between the position to-day and the position three or four years ago. People to-day look upon a few shillings in the same way as they looked upon a few pounds two or three years ago, more especially those persons who desire to take somebody else to a place of amusement. I am, however, more concerned with country residents, who have very little in the way of amusement, and who, of course, participate in other kinds of amusement which the Bill controls. The Chief Secretary said it would be unfair if the Government did not avail themselves of the opportunity to take advantage of this field of taxation which had been vacated by the Federal Government. Were it not for the passing of the Financial Emergency Act, I would agree with the Chief Secretary.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Do you know what happened when those on the lower scale were relieved last time?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: No. I know what has happened during the last few days, when there has been relief from the Federal taxation. There has been a wonderful increase in the patronage of the better class seats, thus bringing in taxation and benefiting those people who have money invested in the different concerns.

Hon. E. H. Harris: The Government are jumping in and taking the money which the Federal Government took formerly.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: That is quite true. If the Bill applied to profits it would be a different proposition. If it did, I venture to say it would not return £65,000, but £5,000. per annum to the Government. Unfortunately, however, the Bill applies to all forms of amusement, and as a result we find that in the country very many amusements have to be done without. When the Chief Secretary was dealing with theatres yesterday, I interjected that the Bill did not apply to theatres only, but to every form of amusement: and, goodness knows, country people have little enough amusement now. People have passed through such a terrible crisis during the last two or three years that I think it is good for them to have a little amusement at times. It lifts them out of the rut, eases their mind, and consequently lightens their burden. We do not want to inflict too much hardship on the people by depriving them of amusement. I know that many different forms of amusement have had to be abandoned in country districts simply because, owing to the tax, it would not pay to hold them. As a matter of fact, a loss has been made throughout all kinds of amusements. Take the case of the theatres, with which the Chief Secretary dealt very extensively last night; there is a large amount of money invested in them, but I venture to say there is not one house of amusement in Perth that has not shown a loss during the past three years. The shareholders in those concerns, and after all there are many small shareholders in them, are entitled to some consideration. Even if they do not get a return on the capital invested by them, they should at least not be taxed so heavily while their capital is fast disappearing. That is the position. I have not been able to get the figures showing the amount of money invested in amusements in Perth, but it would be very substantial. I know of one concern that has a capital of about £282,000. That concern pays £550 per week in direct wages in connection with the theatre, but, in addition, gives work to electricians, theatrical artists, dressmakers, painters, and other work people who are depending upon it for their living. In this way the concern spends another £1,500. Already two very substantial companies in the Commonwealth, who were engaged in providing amusements for the people, have gone into liquidation: and if this proposed increased

taxation will have the same effect here, a very unpleasant position will arise, because the theatre buildings, if closed, would be of very little use for anything else.

Hon. E. H. Gray: There is no fear of their closing.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: They cannot go on eating into their capital all the time. They must get some return. I have often wondered during the last two years why some arrangement has not been come to between the principal companies to close up some of the theatres for their own good.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: If they did, it would throw people on to the labour market.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: That is so. I think that for the sake of a pin-pricking amount like £11,000, it is not worth imposing the tax, and I say the Government will not realise that amount because it has doubled the financial emergency tax payable by those people who would avail themselves of the higher grade seats.

Hon. J. Cornell: Surely the hon. member does not suggest that those released by the Federal Government should not be taxed by the State.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: They have always been taxed, but now they are to be doubly taxed under the financial emergency tax and, with that burden added, the position is becoming very difficult.

Hon. J. Cornell: They will no longer pay Federal entertainments tax.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I am aware of that, for the Federal Government have dropped it in order to give some relief.

Hon. G. W. Miles: They dropped it so that the States might take it up.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: They dropped it in order to get a little kudos for themselves. A lot they care about the States! I am not so much worried about the people in the city, although it must be remembered that every avenue of amusement, picture shows, theatres, stadiums and dances will all be heavily taxed.

Hon. G. W. Miles: This only puts them back to where they were.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: But there is the increased financial emergency tax to be met. The country people deserve some relief so that they might enjoy a little more entertainment than they have to-day. This tax is very hard on them.

Hon. H. J. Yelland: The proprietors of the various entertainments do not pay the tax.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: No, but the tax is added to the price of admission, and as a result most of the entertainments are run at a loss. Consequently the proprietors of entertainments will not be able to carry on much farther. It is very hard on the entrepreneurs to provide entertainment and then find that because of the tax there is no profit in it. Having regard to the small amount expected as the result of the Bill, the Government would be better advised to leave the tax as it stands to-day. To add to it will have a derogatory effect in the city and one still worse in the country. I hope the House will not agree to the second reading.

HON. J. J. HOLMES (North) [4.48]: I propose to support the Bill, but first of all I should like to follow some of the statements made by Mr. Baxter. He objects that the increased tax will cause the patrons of entertainments to use lower-priced seats. It seems to me that would be some advantage because, while still getting their entertainment, they will be economising from a monetary standpoint. Then the hon. member spoke of country amusements. If he reads the "West Australian" every morning he will see there a special column of country news. I read that column with some disgust, because I find in it nothing whatever about the rainfall or the market prices, nor anything else appertaining to the development of the country, but accounts of golf matches or some other sporting fixtures. As for the losses made by the proprietors of the picture shows, they are not the only people in that position to-day, for people engaged in the development of the country, producing the wealth of the country, are making extensive losses. The picture companies neither toil nor spin, and so I do not think we should give too much consideration to their losses when people better engaged in the development of the country have to face far heavier losses. If the picture shows referred to by the hon. member were of any educational value there would be something to say for them. Seldom do I go to a picture show, but I think I would go more often if, as I say, they furnished anything of educational value. The pictures that we see serve only to bring

into the mind of our youths bad ideas that would never be there had they not first been illustrated in the pictures. Not long ago I remarked to a picture show proprietor on the lack of educational pictures. He declared that whenever educational pictures were shown, the result at the ticket box was most disappointing. He added that it was necessary to put up pictures that would appeal to the great body of people, and so I say that if the picture show proprietors lose money in so doing, they will not get much sympathy from me. The Bill merely transfers the tax from the Federal arena to the States. The Federal people have evacuated this field of taxation, and the States have come in on it. I understand the Federal Government went out of it in order that the States might come in. What is this generous abandonment on the part of the Federal Government?

Hon. L. B. Bolton: Did you say generous? They are very generous!

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: Yes, I might emphasise the "generous." For us it amounts to £11,000 per annum, if expectations are realised. The whole of the entertainments tax abandoned by the Commonwealth is less than £150,000 a year. I agree with Mr. Baxter that the Federal Government crept out of this direct tax on the people and handed it to the State Governments in order to render those Governments unpopular with the people. That is another evidence of the Federal spirit we hear so much about. It astonishes me that we still have members, even in this House, who wave the flag and cry, "One destiny, one people!" When the depression fell upon us, the Federal authorities should have said to the States, "You people are right up against it, the depression is hitting the States to a greater extent than it is hitting us, and we always have the Customs behind us as a standby, so you had better take the sales tax. This reconstruction programme is for three years. Conditionally that you balance your budgets each year, we will allocate the sales tax to the States in order to carry them over the three-year critical period. That will enable you to finance your deficits and get out of your difficulties; so it will be of no use your coming to us for money for your deficits, for we have now given you a fair chance to finance your own deficit and to get on; you can take that £8,000,000 of sales tax."

The PRESIDENT: Order! We are discussing the entertainments tax, not the general financial policy of the Commonwealth Government.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: But we are discussing taxation, surely!

The PRESIDENT: Only the entertainments tax. I should like the hon. member to connect his remarks with the entertainments tax.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: If we had got what we have been asking for and should have had, there would be no necessity for this measure. I have always understood that on a taxation Bill we are free to talk from the South Pole to the North Pole. If you, Sir, want to alter that rule, I will defer.

The PRESIDENT: I do not think that rule relates to the entertainments tax.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: Had you allowed me to proceed, we might have got some entertainment out of it.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. member may proceed now with his discussion of the Bill.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: The main point I desired to make on the Bill is the way in which we have been treated in regard to other taxes: but unless I have the same liberty as I have been accustomed to in the past, it is of no use proceeding.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: You can get around it.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: If, when a Bill for a specific purpose comes before the House, we are not allowed to show how taxation can be raised by other means, I will not detain the House any longer.

HON. J. CORNELL (South) [4.57]: If memory serves me aright, I think the Entertainments Tax Act of 1925 imposed tax on tickets below half a crown at the rate of 1d. on every 1s. I opposed that tax, and the Government of the day urged that it was required to provide hospitals revenue; as a matter of fact, it was earmarked for that purpose.

Hon. E. H. Harris: That is correct.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Then the Mitchell Government, of which Mr. Baxter was a member, came in and passed the Hospitals Tax Act, and thus taxed the community to maintain hospitals, giving the community practically nothing for it, inasmuch as we still have to pay hospital fees. Then they amended the Entertainments Tax Act to take the proceeds into Consolidated Revenue, and increased it by 100 per cent. That is

the history of the entertainments tax on tickets below 2s. 6d. I opposed it because I thought the poor man ought to have been left out, but it was said that he had to pay up in order to maintain the hospitals. Then, later, he had to pay the hospitals tax in addition. The Bill looks quite harmless. It continues the 100 per cent. increase which Mr. Baxter, as a Minister, supported, and applies it to the field evacuated by the Federal Government. I understand that the Federal Government did not increase their entertainments tax 100 per cent. as the State did. The Bill, however, proposes to increase what was the Federal tax by 100 per cent.

Hon. G. W. Miles: How do you make that out?

Hon. J. CORNELL: The original Federal entertainment tax was a war measure and the tax was 1d. on tickets above 1s. in value. When the Federal Government evacuated this field of taxation up to 2s. 6d., the State Government came in and taxed tickets beginning at 9d., so that nobody would escape paying the tax. The Federal rate continued to apply to tickets above 2s. 6d. Later the Mitchell Government increased the tax on tickets between 9d. and 2s. 6d. by 100 per cent., but the Federal Government did not increase their tax on 2s. 6d. and over. While it may sound very nice to hear that the tax on 9d. and not exceeding 1s. shall be 2d. and for every additional 6d. it shall be 1d., it would be all right if the conditions were the same throughout the State. But they are not. In the city a mother can take her children to the pictures on certain nights and secure admission for 6d., but in the country districts that is not possible. People there have to pay 200 or 300 per cent. more in their prices of admission to see a picture show and the tax is increased correspondingly. If it were not for the itinerant picture showman in the country, there would be no form of entertainment other than perhaps dancing, which is of no use to small children. A picture that may be seen in the metropolis for 1s. costs 3s. in the country and the tax on that is another 6d. I repeat that on admission tickets from 9d. to 2s. 6d. the State Government doubled the tax. Did the Federal Government correspondingly increase their tax on prices of admission above 2s. 6d.? Now the State Government are going to impose a tax 100 per cent. over what was the Federal rate.

The Chief Secretary: You are wrong.

Hon. J. CORNELL: The people in the country on tickets above 2s. 6d. paid Federal tax, not State tax, but now they are going to pay the State tax which will be double that which was collected by the Federal Government. I have already pointed out that to see in the country exactly the same show as was exhibited in Perth, the country resident will pay 200 per cent. more.

Hon. G. W. Miles: This Bill will not alter the position.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: The Bill will only bring the tax up to the level that existed before.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I admit it will continue the State tax, but the State tax ended at 2s. 6d. and the Federal tax began above that. People in the country were paying the Federal tax which was lower than the State tax and now they will have to pay the State entertainment tax which is 100 per cent. higher than that which they paid in the past.

The Chief Secretary: You are wrong.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I think I am right.

The Honorary Minister: The only difference is that what a person paid before to the Federal Government he will now pay to the State Government.

Hon. J. CORNELL: The man in the country who pays the higher prices of admission will be penalised.

The Chief Secretary: The tax will be exactly the same as if the Federal Government were continuing it.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I am in favour of taxing entertainments, particularly in these days, and if the man in the country is not expected to pay more than he was paying under the Federal tax, then of course his position will be no worse. But if it is intended to ask him to pay more, I object.

Hon. G. W. Miles: He will not pay more.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Then I will leave it at that.

HON. H. J. YELLAND (East) [5.9]: I agree with the principle of taxing entertainments. Under the Federal tax the proportion was less than under the State tax. This was shown by the figures quoted by the Chief Secretary. The tax imposed by the State is double the tax that was levied by the Federal Government and the total amount that will be paid will be no greater than before, though what will be paid above 2s. 6d. will be double what was paid to the Federal Government. Those who were able to

enjoy the privilege of occupying a higher priced seat will continue to pay as before, the only difference being that the revenue will go to the State Treasury instead of to the Federal Treasury.

HON. G. W. MILES (North) [5.10]: I shall support the second reading of the Bill and I hope there will be no delay in carrying it as there was in connection with the previous taxation measures that we had before us for many weeks. I refer to the financial emergency Bills and to the relief from the tax which the people got through the action of the previous Parliament in not making the tax expire in December instead of June. I would not like to see a recurrence of that. All the Bill before us is doing is to provide that the £11,000 which was collected by the Federal Government shall be paid into the revenue of the State, and the House should see that that revenue is collected as soon as possible. The Federal Government are to be congratulated on abandoning this tax. Indeed they should abandon other avenues of taxation as well and so enable the States to balance their Budgets. The State Government are entitled to receive every penny of revenue that they can get at the present time. I hope there will be no delay in passing the Bill.

HON. J. NICHOLSON (Metropolitan-Suburban) [5.15]: I confess to some little misgiving regarding the Bill in view of Mr. Cornell's references to the rate of tax. That phase should be inquired into. From the remarks of Mr. Baxter, I realise that there is much to be said, not only on behalf of the people in the country areas who attend entertainments, but in the interests of those residing in the metropolitan area as well. It has been suggested that the Commonwealth Government vacated this field of taxation in order to enable the States to impose corresponding taxation and thus benefit the State Treasury. I cannot accept that suggestion, because I have been credibly informed—

Hon. G. W. Miles: The Chief Secretary gave the House an assurance that that was so.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I would like the Minister to make further inquiries because I have been credibly informed that in New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland and Tasmania, the Governments have not imposed

any higher rate of tax than applies under the existing State law.

Hon. G. W. Miles: That may be so, but that does not affect the correctness of the Minister's statement.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: I think that in most of those States, the Governments are facing general elections. They will increase the tax after the elections have been held.

Hon. J. Cornell: The Governments are a long way off facing the electors yet.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I do not know whether the Governments are facing general elections, but I am informed that they have not increased the rate of the entertainments tax. It has been said, with a considerable amount of force, that entertainments and amusements represent a source from which we may quite legitimately seek to derive additional taxation. On the other hand, when we consider that in practically every award issued by the Arbitration Court, reference is made to provision for entertainments, we are forced to realise that the various forms of entertainments that are so popular to-day, have really become part of our everyday lives. They cannot be regarded as in years gone by, in the light of a luxury, something that can legitimately be heavily taxed. We must also bear in mind that the tax is to be imposed on people who patronise entertainments. Therefore, it will fall doubly hard on a large section of the public. I am wondering whether it is wise to impose this additional taxation. There is another aspect that was mentioned by Mr. Baxter, who pointed out that the companies engaged in providing entertainments have been sustaining serious losses.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Are they the only people in that position?

Hon. G. W. Miles: What about the Government and the country?

Hon. H. J. Yelland: What about the people?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I know that everyone is in the same boat, but we must look at these matters in a sensible way. Assuming that those losses continue, and the picture theatre proprietors and others find that there are no means by which they can make up the lee-way, which apparently they thought would be overcome when the Commonwealth vacated this field of taxation, other steps may have to be taken. As Mr. Baxter remarked, when the Commonwealth

vacated this form of tax it was found that there was an appreciable improvement in attendances at entertainments. Personally, I do not know that the smaller attendances were solely on account of the Commonwealth entertainments tax, but the falling off was probably also due to prevailing circumstances. To continue the taxation imposed in the past, or, as Mr. Cornell suggests, at an increased rate, is, I think, inadvisable.

Hon. G. W. Miles: It will not be any more than it has been in the past.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: We will assume that the taxation will be the same as when the Commonwealth Government imposed their tax. The position is that during the period the Commonwealth Government did impose the tax, the attendances were detrimentally affected.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Was not that to the benefit of the community?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I want to take the matter a little further. When the Commonwealth vacated this field of taxation, there was a distinct indication of improvement in the attendances.

Hon. G. W. Miles: That was because wool prices improved. It had nothing whatever to do with the Commonwealth vacating this field of taxation.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I do not think wool prices had anything to do with it.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Of course they did; it meant the circulation of £500,000.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: That would not affect the people in the metropolitan area to such an extent or the country people either.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Some of them would be in the wool sheds attending the picture shows.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I think Mr. Miles is endeavouring to pull some wool over our eyes. I will pursue the matter a little further in an endeavour to pull the wool from his eyes. When a burden of any sort is placed on people, the effect is seen in decreased revenue and smaller attendances at entertainments. It affects the Government in connection with taxation. The same amount is not derived from the income tax as in former years.

Hon. G. W. Miles: And when we can get another £11,000, you want to block us!

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: If the hon. member will restrain himself for one moment.

I shall show him that he, by his support of the Bill, will probably block the Government from securing revenue from this and other sources. I suggest that it is quite worth while the Government considering whether by imposing this extra taxation, they may make it impossible for those who provide entertainments to continue in the industry as hitherto. If the losses continue that have been suggested—I have not inquired into the matter myself—there must be one inevitable result. The companies will go out of business.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: If their losses are as Mr. Baxter indicated, their position would not be affected if they got the whole £11,000.

The Chief Secretary: The race course provide over £5,000 of that amount.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: If the companies make losses instead of profits, the result is reflected in taxation, and that is apparent from the reports of the Commissioner of Taxation. Where the community suffers losses, there is a great falling off in the income derived by a section of the public and that means the curtailment of revenue available to the Government. The result of the imposition of this tax may mean closing the doors of houses of entertainment, and that would mean throwing a large number of people out of employment thereby creating further difficulties for the Government. I question whether it is wise to impose the additional tax, particularly in view of the fact that other States have not taken advantage of the position.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Are we here to represent the theatre people, or the taxpayers of the State?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: We should endeavour to improve the financial position of the State.

Hon. G. W. Miles: The Chief Secretary has told you that the race courses pay half the amount.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: It is the people who pay the tax.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Anyone would think we were representing the proprietors of theatres.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: If we make it impossible for people who are engaged in providing entertainments to operate at a profit, they will not be able to make profits so as to pay income tax.

Hon. G. W. Miles: The sooner they go out of business the better.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Some years ago a similar suggestion was made in the Arbitration Court in another State, and the result of people going out of business—

Hon. G. W. Miles: If you can call it a business.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: The result there was that many people were thrown out of work. That suggests the course indicated was not a wise one.

Hon. G. W. Miles: It is better than representing sectional interests.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Can you discuss Arbitration Court matters under this Bill?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I am not; I merely mentioned the fact. There is another point I want to place before members. To what purpose is this tax to be applied? If the extra taxation is to be used to assist in relieving the unemployed, then we should bear in mind the fact that in a Bill that has been before the Legislative Assembly, provision is made to include unemployment relief bodies among those who may receive assistance from the Lotteries Commission. If the money derived from the entertainments tax is also to be applied to that purpose—

The Chief Secretary: It will go into Consolidated Revenue.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Quite so, and therefore may be used for unemployment relief.

Hon. G. W. Miles: It should be used to reduce the deficit.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Originally, the entertainments tax proceeds were used for the benefit of hospitals. It has been suggested that provision should be made for unemployed relief bodies to participate in the profits from the lotteries.

Hon. G. W. Miles: We will deal with that matter when it comes before us.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: As this additional money from the entertainments tax could be used for a like purpose, we should retain the present rate of tax and not impose an additional burden on the people. Therefore I propose to vote against the second reading.

On motion by Hon. L. B. Bolton, debate adjourned.

BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.

1, Yuna-Dartmoor Railway.

2, Southern Cross Southwards Railway.

Passed.

BILL—FIRE BRIGADES ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 31st October.

HON. C. F. BAXTER (East) [5.35]: This Bill, with the exception of Clause 3, is really a machinery measure, and as one who was responsible for the administration of the Act for a brief period, I cannot see anything wrong with it. Clause 3, however, is in a different category. An experiment is being attempted to place on the Fire Brigades Board a representative of the Firemen's Union. To my mind that would be a very dangerous experiment. The Fire Brigades Board consists of two representatives of the Government, two representatives of insurance companies, two representatives of country municipalities and road boards, one representative of the City of Perth, one representative of suburban road boards, and one representative of the Volunteer Fire Brigades. The Government contribute two-eighths of the funds of the board, the insurance companies three-eighths, and the municipalities and road boards three-eighths.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Then representation is in proportion to the rates they pay.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: No; there are two Government representatives and the Government find only two-eighths of the money, whereas there are only two representatives of insurance companies, who find three-eighths of the money. Apart from the nine members of the board, it has always been open to the Minister to attend the meetings. That is his right. If there was any business concerning the men, the president and the chief officer would always be accessible to their representative interests. The union secretary has always had access to them. The firemen are working under an arbitration award and therefore are well protected. I cannot see that the efficiency of the board would be increased by adding to its strength a representative of the union.

Hon. G. Fraser: Its efficiency would not be decreased, either.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Yes, it would.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I agree that it would. To appoint a representative of the union to the board would create a ridiculous position. While the representative was a member of the board, he would be superior to the chief officer.

Hon. J. Cornell: Is there any union representative on the Fremantle Harbour Trust?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: No.

Hon. J. Cornell: A union representative has as much right there as on the Fire Brigades Board.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: It would be just as logical to place a representative of the unemployed on the Unemployment Board. If this precedent is established, where is it going to end? Parliament is asked to sanction the appointment of a representative of the men to the board, although the Government contribute only two-eighths of the funds. Thus we are asked to foist a representative of the men on to the other organisations who contribute six-eighths of the funds. To do that would be quite wrong. A representative of the union sitting on the board would be concerned only with matters appertaining to the men.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Industrial matters.

The Honorary Minister: Why suggest that?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Because it is common sense. The Honorary Minister mentioned New South Wales and there that very thing has happened. I have confidential information on the point.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Was that part of the Lang plan?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I do not know. It is the only State where that departure has been made.

Hon. E. H. Harris: The departure was made in 1927. Who was in power then?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I do not remember. Another important point is that confidential matters pertaining to the board are discussed at board meetings, and it would not be wise to have a representative of the men present because those matters would no longer be confidential.

The Honorary Minister: That is a strong statement to make.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: It is true.

The Honorary Minister: Cannot the working men of this State respect a confidence?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: The representative of the men would be present in the interests of the men, and if anything affected them, he would be present to carry it back

to the men. If the Honorary Minister wants it stated in plain English, there it is. The volunteer firemen are entitled to a representative on the board.

The Honorary Minister: Could you tell their representative anything in confidence?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: He is the representative of the large body of firemen who give their services free, and there is no need to discuss their services. In this State there are 125 officers and firemen fully paid—

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: All members of the union?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: They must be.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Will you guarantee that?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Otherwise they could not hold their jobs. In addition, we have 11 partially-paid firemen, a total of 136 officers and men. Under the volunteer system we have 518 firemen who render entirely free service, and in those circumstances they are entitled to a representative. In New South Wales, in the Sydney fire district embracing Sydney and suburbs, there are 607 permanent officers and firemen, in addition to 252 who are called volunteers but who are partially paid. In the country fire district of New South Wales there are 65 permanent officers and firemen in addition to 1,245 volunteers partially paid. Thus, New South Wales has 2,165 paid firemen. In Victoria the Metropolitan Fire Brigades comprise 296 officers and firemen in addition to 175 partially-paid men, and there are 62 special firemen partially paid, a total of 533 paid men. The volunteer firemen in Victoria number 2,887 and give free service. In South Australia there are 104 officers and firemen and 61 auxiliary men partially paid and 47 theatre firemen partially paid, a total of 212 paid men. I have had some experience of fire brigades. I know they have rendered good service to the State, and we are indeed fortunate in having such a thoroughly competent body of officers and men to do this work. They are a credit to Western Australia. I know of no dissatisfaction having existed in the past, and I know of no reason why representatives of the men should be placed on the board. It cannot be said that the board has not always been open to receive any representations that may be made to it, and the chief officer and the president are always available to the men if it is desired to approach them. In fact, the chief officer attends meetings of the board.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: Is he a practical fireman?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Certainly. There is no necessity for this provision. The principle is bad. If we are going to put employees upon boards that are controlling the industry with which they are connected, what is going to be the finish of it all? This is one of the most dangerous precedents that could be brought before Parliament. Although many portions of the Bill could be agreed to, I hope this part will be amended in Committee.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: It is all padding to cover up this particular clause.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I will support the second reading, with the idea of helping to delete Clause 3 when in Committee.

On motion by Hon. E. H. Harris, debate adjourned.

BILL—LOTTERIES (CONTROL) ACT AMENDMENT.

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

House adjourned at 5.48 p.m.

QUESTION—RAILWAY CONSTRUCTION.

Mr. HAWKE asked the Minister for Railways: 1, What factors are taken into consideration in deciding the order in which proposed railway lines authorised by Parliament are to be built? 2, What is the order in which such lines stand at the present time?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, Consideration is given to the relative urgency and importance of the authorised lines, from all aspects, and a decision made accordingly. 2, No decision has been made, but when occasion demands, the matter will be dealt with and a decision reached in accordance with reply to question No. 1.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Mr. Wilson, leave of absence for two weeks granted to Mr. Nulsen (Kanowna) on the ground of urgent public business.

BILL—LAND TAX AND INCOME TAX.

Introduced by the Minister for Railways (for the Premier) and read a first time.

BILL—LOTTERIES (CONTROL) ACT AMENDMENT.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 2nd November, 1933.

ASSENT TO BILL.

Message from the Lieut.-Governor received and read notifying assent to the Wiluna Water Board Loan Guarantee Bill.

BILL—PURCHASERS' PROTECTION.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT (Hon. J. J. Kennecally—East Perth) [4.35] in moving the second reading said: Members will recollect that the House previously gave attention to the question of the protection of purchasers in connection with land transactions. As a result of information supplied, the then Government appointed a

	PAGE
Question: Railway construction	1639
Leave of absence... ..	1639
Assent to Bill	1639
Bills: Land Tax and Income Tax, 1R.	1639
Lotteries (Control) Act Amendment, 3R.	1639
Purchasers' Protection, 2R.	1639
Geraldton Sailors and Soldiers' Memorial Institute Lands Vesting, 2R., Com. report	1643
Yuna-Dartmoor Railway, returned	1673
Southern Cross Southwards Railway, returned	1673
Annual Estimates: Votes and Items discussed	1644
Medical Department	1644
Lands and Surveys Department	1661

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