

NOMS.

Hon. L. B. Bolton	Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. J. Ewing	Hon. T. Moore
Hon. J. T. Franklin	Hon. Sir C. Nathan
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. A. Thomson
Hon. E. H. Harris	Hon. C. H. Wittenoom
Hon. J. J. Holmes	Hon. H. J. Yelland
Hon. J. M. Macfarlane	Hon. H. V. Piesse

(Teller.)

Clause thus negatived.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 10.27 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 2nd November, 1932.

Questions—1, Railways, coal analytical tests :	PAGE
2, Karragullen-Midland service	1523
Unemployment, Collie	1523
Infectious cases	1524
Leave of absence	1524
Bills: Reserves, &c.	1524
Traffic Act Amendment, &c.	1524
Gift Coupons, &c.	1524
Land Tax and Income Tax, returned	1554
Mortgages' Rights Restriction Act Continuance, returned	1554
Pearling Act Amendment, &c.	1554
Government Ferries, &c.	1555
Annual Estimates—Votes and Items discussed	1524
Medical and Health	1524
Attorney General	1544
Auditor General's Report	1554

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

QUESTIONS (2)—RAILWAYS.

Coal Analytical Tests.

Mr. MARSHALL asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Is it the practice of the Railway Department to make monthly analytical tests of all coal produced locally and consumed by that department? 2, If regular analytical tests are not made, what is the practice of the department for testing this coal?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, Yes. 2, See reply to question No 1.

Karragullen-Midland Junction Service.

Mr. SAMPSON asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Is he aware that the train which leaves Karragullen for Midland Junction at 8.30 p.m. on Tuesdays and Fridays is scheduled to arrive at Midland Junction, a distance of 21 miles, at 11.30 p.m.? 2, That in order to ensure connection with the Midland Junction-Perth train scheduled to leave Midland at 11.30 p.m. it is sometimes necessary for the Midland-Perth train to be delayed? 3, In view of the short distance from Karragullen to Midland Junction is it possible to reduce the time taken?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, A train runs as indicated on Tuesdays and Thursdays. 2, Yes. 3, In the new time table the train is due to arrive at Midland Junction at 11.25 p.m. As it is a goods train, time allowance is necessary for shunting and further acceleration cannot be arranged. A passenger coach is attached for the convenience of the public.

QUESTION—UNEMPLOYMENT, COLLIE.

Mr. WILSON asked the Minister for Lands: 1, Has the land in the Bushwell Brook district lately inspected by the Premier been surveyed for selection? 2, If not, will he have the land surveyed at an early date? 3, If the land has been surveyed, will he cause the allotments to be made available early for settlement? 4, Will he take steps to see that priority of allotment is given to the families of men who were dismissed from the Collie coal mines and timber mills? 5, Will he extend to the successful applicants the financial conditions operating at the Nannup settlement? 6, What are the conditions of payment for work done by the settlers at Nannup?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: 1, No. 2, The area is at present being operated over on a lease by sawmillers, and it is considered advisable to delay survey for a while. 3, Answered by 1 and 2. 4, Consideration will be given to the inclusion of the families referred to if it is decided to inaugurate a similar scheme to Nannup. 5, Yes, should it be decided to develop this area by unemployed married men. 6, Advances up to £2 per week, which must be

earned at piece work rates on work approved by the Minister. In addition some tools, iron, wire netting and fertilisers have been supplied.

QUESTION—INFECTIOUS CASES.

Mr. RICHARDSON (without notice) asked the Minister for Health: Has he decided what percentage of payment he will make for infectious hospital cases that previously was made by local authorities?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH replied: It is proposed to take 25 per cent. off if the payments are made on a monthly basis. Failing that, the department will pay two-thirds of the cost if the local governing bodies pay one-third. If the payment is made on a monthly basis, the ultimate basis will be that the local authorities will pay one-fourth and the department will pay three-fourths.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Mr. North, leave of absence for one week granted to the Premier (Hon. Sir James Mitchell—Northam) on the ground of urgent public business.

BILLS (3)—FIRST READING.

1, Reserves.

Introduced by the Minister for Lands.

2, Traffic Act Amendment.

Introduced by the Minister for Works.

3, Gift Coupons.

Introduced by Mr. Richardson.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1932-33.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from the previous day. Mr. Richardson in the Chair.

Department of Medical and Public Health (Hon. C. G. Latham, Minister).

Vote—Medical, £19,220:

THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH (Hon. C. G. Latham—York) [4.40]: Of the many activities of Government, I dare to suggest that this is one of the departments that has been called upon to render greater service

during the last year or so than probably any other, excepting perhaps the Education Department.

Mr. Marshall: What about the Mines Department?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: During the year many services have been rendered through the Medical and Health Department that have usually been supplied by the individuals themselves. While it has been recognised that we have to render such services, we have tried to keep the estimates as low as possible, having due regard to efficiency. It is true the hospital fund has greatly assisted hospitals to carry on. That applies not only to country hospitals but also to city hospitals. Without that fund, I am afraid the hospital service would have been sorely tried, and probably would have been in serious financial difficulty.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: When are we likely to get the balance sheet?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: The balance sheet has been on the Table of the House for a considerable time. It has been the policy of the department to assist wherever possible with medical service, and during the year we have done everything possible in that respect. Very few claims made against the department have not been met. One or two hospitals have been opened, and we have done everything that has been required of us. It has been necessary in some instances to provide a subsidy for doctors in order to give them an opportunity to establish a practice in country districts. I regret to say there has been some difficulty in filling the vacancies in the big hospitals of the city, where junior medical services are required, but I am hoping that in the near future those vacancies will be filled by men now on the point of leaving the University. The system of rendering assistance to doctors was arranged when the member for Hannans was Minister. The arrangement was to guarantee a doctor up to £750. After taking into consideration his earnings, one-third of the deficiency was met by the local authority and two-thirds was met by the Government.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: That applies only to country districts.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Yes. The amount has been reduced to £600, and in very few instances are we paying. No new districts have been opened, and we have got down to a basis of paying £100 a year

and not requiring the local authority to make any payment. It is contended by the department that if a doctor cannot establish a practice in two or three years, it is hardly worth his while staying in the district. During the last year or so, some reasons have been advanced for still giving some little assistance to medical men in order to obviate the necessity for sick people to travel. During the year the demand on the sanatorium has been heavier than in most years, owing to the fact that the State is called upon to provide services additional to those furnished when things were more prosperous. The sanatorium has been managed efficiently, and the cost has been materially reduced. Facilities and conveniences at the institution have been greatly improved by the installation of an up-to-date X-ray plant. The Old Men's and Old Women's Homes are being carried on. Unfortunately the Federal Government have made a cut in pensions, and that fact has made itself felt somewhat in the homes. However, inmates with pensions, even though these are reduced, are far better off than inmates without pensions. It is probably the latter who have felt the strain most severely.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: How has this affected the inmates of the Old Men's Home?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: They are paid a certain sum of money by the Federal Government, and from this sum an amount was deducted on account of board and lodging.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: The Treasury, then, has felt the cut; not the inmates.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: The Treasury has felt it; but in some cases there has been a reduction in the amount of 4s. weekly allowed to inmates. The greatest trouble has been between the local authorities and the Health Department in regard to the Infectious Diseases Hospital. There seems to be a belief among local authorities that the Hospital Fund Act is intended to meet all expenditure formerly borne by them in combating infectious disease. In that connection a deputation, representative of all local governing authorities and substantially backed by members from both Houses and both sides, waited on me a little time ago. The department's policy, which I consider perfectly sound, is to make the local governing bodies carry some of the

financial responsibility. A further responsibility of those bodies is to administer the Health Act. The main consideration in connection with infectious disease is to prevent its spread, and nobody can do that better than the local authorities can through their inspectors. Owing to the difficulty local governing bodies have in financing, just like Governments, it has been agreed to reduce the charges to them as stated by me to the member for Subiaco to-day. The Government propose to bear two-thirds of the responsibility, leaving one-third to the local authorities, except where the latter make prompt payment, in which case their contribution is reduced to 25 per cent. In those circumstances, therefore, three-fourths of the cost would be borne by the Government and one-fourth by the local authority. That arrangement I regard as entirely satisfactory. After all, it is not merely a question of finance, but also one of human life. If steps are taken to prevent the spread of infectious disease, probably many valuable lives are saved. Therefore the Government throw on the local authorities the financial responsibility of carrying out the provisions of the Health Act. If a person can pay, he ought to pay. As regards persons who cannot pay, the Government meet the obligation. In fact, the Government do pay three-fourths of the cost involved. When the Hospital Fund Act was introduced, it was never intended to relieve local authorities of their responsibilities. I know there will be a good deal said on this aspect, and therefore I mention that, on the view indicated, the Government would have to duplicate the work of the local authorities by putting on another band of inspectors—an indefensible proceeding, having regard to those who cannot pay. The local authorities are now being treated more generously than ever. I entirely fail to agree with members who hold that the Government should pay for everything, and that no responsibility whatever should be cast upon the ratepayers. The ratepayers have some responsibility. They should see that their places are kept clean, so that their premises will not breed infection. Ratepayers should also bear some responsibility with regard to the inmates of their premises. The present arrangement makes local authorities much more careful.

Mr. Marshall: Nothing of the kind.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I feel sure that the arrangement made by the Government will prove satisfactory to the local authorities. They have benefited considerably by that arrangement. It does not apply to country districts, where the local people pay the costs involved out of their own hospital funds.

Mr. Marshall: And get taxed as well.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: During the year we have continued the infant health centres throughout the State. The popularity of these institutions is growing daily. The winning of the overseas shield in competition with countries outside Great Britain has given an impetus to the movement, causing it to spread more rapidly than did the propaganda to look after the children while they are very young. It is anticipated that a few more infant health centres will be opened during the current year.

Mr. Marshall: We want boots supplied.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: It is unfortunate if that is so. However, the Government have a perfect right to advise mothers how to lay a solid foundation for the future citizens of Western Australia.

Mr. Marshall: By teaching them how to do without food!

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: In the time of my predecessor it was arranged to give additional assistance to mothers with young babies. Medical and dental work has proceeded during the year as previously, except that the staff of doctors has been reduced by one, due to the closing of the Training College. A good deal of Dr. Stang's time used to be spent among the students, and that time is now available for other work. To sum up the position, the services of one doctor have been dispensed with, and the remaining doctors have been called upon to do more work than previously. During the year we have kept well within the vote granted by this Chamber. The vote was £83,681, and the expenditure £78,658. The reduction in the expenditure amounts to £2,021. I claim that the departmental officers have done their work in accordance with the desires of Parliament, and done it very well. There is a demand to-day for reduced expenditure, since the people's earnings cannot be increased; and therefore services

are being given at greatly reduced cost. These Estimates contain nothing new. Hon. members will be able to apply themselves to the items. Any information members may desire I shall be pleased to furnish if I possibly can. I hope the Committee will deal with the Estimates in the same liberal spirit as in the past.

MR. MARSHALL (Murchison) [4.56]

I agree with the Minister that this department is highly important, and that its activities must have increased considerably owing to the depression. As a rule, sickness is more prevalent when people are in a state of poverty. Part of the reduction in expenditure to which the Minister has referred applies to the Wooroloo Sanatorium. There is no longer an assistant medical officer at the sanatorium. The remainder of the economy applying to that institution refers to foodstuffs and equipment, the amount of the reduction being £204. I am somewhat concerned about the institution. If the number of inmates has declined, that accounts for the economies; but if the patients are not reduced in number, I fail to see how the Minister could effect economies.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: The Minister said the patients had increased in number.

Mr. MARSHALL: Yet these Estimates show a decrease.

The Minister for Health: The member for Hannans is referring to the patients.

Mr. MARSHALL: Is there a decrease in the number of patients?

The Minister for Health: Yes.

Mr. MARSHALL: That circumstance probably afford the department some opportunity to reduce expenditure. I know the institution has been run on careful lines right through the piece, and there can be very little opportunity indeed to reduce costs unless the number of inmates has been reduced. The reduction would be tragic unless the number of inmates had declined. Before the vote is passed I should like the Minister to give some information as to why the services of the assistant medical officer have been dispensed with. I understand that Dr. Robert Mitchell the chief medical officer of the sanatorium, will shortly tour the Murchison for the purpose of examinations ordered by the Kalgoorlie board.

Then there will be a strange, merely temporary, medical officer in charge of the sanatorium, without any assistant. The idea has been to have at the sanatorium a doctor who would get the run of the patients and the institution before Dr. Mitchell left. True, Dr. Mitchell will not be away for a lengthened period; but he will be away long enough to allow a new doctor, not having the run of the institution, to get well and faithfully mixed up. Perhaps there was not enough work at Wooreloo for two doctors at any time. So long as Dr. Mitchell is in charge of the sanatorium I shall be well satisfied. I respect him as a faithful and capable physician. I am more particularly concerned about the second economy of £204, which takes in all forms of expenditure, such as bedding, clothing and other requisites for the inmates. I would like to know from the Minister how it has been possible to economise to the extent indicated in the Estimates.

The Minister for Health: It is possible to economise a little more without interfering with the interests of the patients.

Mr. MARSHALL: I have been a visitor to the institution ever since I became a member of Parliament.

The Minister for Health: I know that, and you have always found things pretty right there.

Mr. MARSHALL: I confess I have found no grave reasons for complaint, but on this occasion I am afraid an attempt has been made to economise at the expense of the patients.

The Minister for Health: I shall explain the position later on.

Mr. MARSHALL: I hope I am wrong. It would be pathetic to think that we could economise at their expense. Regarding the contributions of ratepayers towards the upkeep of hospitals and so forth, I do not think the Minister advanced any good argument as to why they should contribute.

The Minister for Health: Without it, it may mean less money for the country hospitals.

Mr. MARSHALL: Then why did not the Minister say so, instead of arguing along the lines he did? My experience is that people will not be cleaner because they are ratepayers and are compelled to pay something towards an institution.

The Minister for Health: But ratepayers may be cleaner if they know the inspector will visit premises occasionally.

Mr. MARSHALL: That will not affect them. The Minister's whole argument is elusive. Ratepayers should not be called upon to make contributions towards the maintenance of their hospitals, in addition to the hospital tax. I disagree with the Minister's contentions entirely. We are continually being told that the people must realise the necessity for the hospital tax in order to maintain those institutions, and now we are to compel them to subscribe towards the maintenance of hospitals and other institutions throughout the State. Child welfare clinics are doing splendid work and I reiterate the argument I advanced by way of interjection. In a hypocritical manner, we endeavour to teach the mother how to attend to the wants of her child, although we do not see to it that, both before and after the birth of that child, the mother is able to procure sufficient nourishing food to maintain her constitution. Due to the inadequacy of our present wages system, mothers cannot maintain their constitution and I am afraid the position will be aggravated while the depression continues. Thousands of men are out of work, and children continue to be born daily. In such circumstances, nothing but physical incapacity can be expected. The mother's health and strength cannot be maintained before the birth of her child because the breadwinner is not able to provide the necessary nourishing food. Therefore it cannot be expected that the child, when born, can be adequately equipped to face even the battles of infant life.

Mr. Brown: Perhaps the authorities will have to do the same as in Mexico.

Mr. MARSHALL: I do not know the position in Mexico; my worries are all in Western Australia, and if we give close attention to the necessities of the people here we shall do all we are capable of. I appreciate the fact that the officers of the Health Department are doing splendid work, subject to the policy of the Government. I differ from the Government regarding the alterations to the policy adopted by the previous Government, more especially with regard to the hospital tax and the administration of the fund. I believe it is wrong in principle. People in the country areas are called upon to pay the hospital tax and yet contribute towards the upkeep of their local

hospitals. I wish to conclude with another word of commendation for the capable and conscientious work of the officers of the Health Department, particularly as it affects the people in the outback areas far removed from the seat of government.

HON. S. W. MUNSIE (Hannans) [5.7]: I do not intend to discuss the Health Estimates thoroughly, but will content myself with dealing with one or two points. I agree with the Minister when he said Western Australia was to be congratulated on her success in winning the Baby Week shield. We can appreciate the position all the more when we remember that nine years ago the vital statistics showed that Western Australia had the highest death rate, not only in the Commonwealth, but throughout all the British Dependencies and Dominions, with regard to children under one year old. I do not claim credit in that respect myself, but I believe the position Western Australia is in to-day is due almost entirely to the work of the Infant Health centres.

The Minister for Health: They have improved the position tremendously.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: The reduction in the number of deaths of infants under one year of age is due principally to that cause. With the member for Murchison (Mr. Marshall), I believe the mothers do not get sufficient nourishment in pre-natal days. That may be so, but were it not for the work of the Infant Health centres, God only knows what the position would be.

The Minister for Health: We are still paying contributions.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: I know that practical and thorough advice is given to mothers regarding the treatment of their children and of themselves by the various sisters.

The Minister for Health: And we are paying money to enable milk to be purchased.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: I am aware of that fact, and it has assisted mothers to maintain their constitution during the trying ordeal of childbirth. I am pleased to note that the expenditure on this work shows an increase over the estimate of last year, although not by a large amount. However, the estimate for this year shows

an increase of £230 over the actual expenditure last year. The Minister said that it probably meant that another centre would be opened this year. I am glad to know of that. With regard to the Wooroloo Sanatorium, I endorse the remarks of the member for Murchison and if the Government can provide the money, I believe that in such an institution it is necessary, if not absolutely essential, that an assistant medical officer be appointed. I am aware that when Dr. Mitchell leaves the institution for any time, another medical man is sent to take charge, but the Sanatorium is an institution that requires, during Dr. Mitchell's absence, the services of a man who knows something about its actual administration and working. Something may happen to Dr. Mitchell. We have one or two young doctors in practice who have had a fairly extensive experience at Wooroloo from time to time, but whether one of them would accept an appointment there as an assistant medical officer, is quite another question. The sanatorium is an institution that warrants the permanent appointment of an assistant medical officer. I would like the Minister to make an explanation regarding the position of the lepers at Darwin. According to the Estimates, the maintenance of our lepers at Darwin will cost the State £700 this year. Formerly £570 was provided for the transport of the lepers from the lazarette at Roebourne and £565 was spent in transferring them to Darwin. Negotiations took place when I was Minister for Health with a view to the establishment of one lazarette to cope with the whole of the work in the North and the Northern Territory. The Government agreed to establish a lazarette at Darwin and negotiations were then continued to ascertain under what conditions our lepers could be dealt with at the Darwin lazarette by the specialist who was trained in the treatment of this dreaded disease. According to the Estimates it is to cost us £700, and I would like to know if that represents a saving compared with the expenditure under earlier conditions.

MISS HOLMAN (Forrest) [5.12]: I wish briefly to deal with the work of hospitals in my electorate and to place a few requests before the Minister.

The Minister for Health: You can have none left.

Miss HOLMAN: I still want to know when the X-ray plant I have asked for will be provided.

The Minister for Health: You may get that in due course.

Miss HOLMAN: The hospitals have been carrying out excellent work and even the men in receipt of sustenance have been paying a small amount weekly to keep their medical and hospital funds going. I think they are paying up to 9d. a week. At Dwellingup, Nanga Brook, Jarrahdale and Mornington Mills the hospitals are maintained by Government assistance and contributions by the people. Excellent work has been done at the Dwellingup Hospital during the past two years by way of additions and minor repairs carried out by the committee, and much assistance has been rendered by the people of the district. I do not think it can be said that the people do not do their share. Then there are the nurses' quarters, for which no assistance came from the department.

The Minister for Health: We furnished the place.

Miss HOLMAN: I was not going to mention the furniture. I have seen it. When the Minister promised it I was very jubilant, but when I saw it I felt sure the Minister had not seen it before it was sent down. I will tell the Minister what was forwarded. There was one table for the sitting room in the nurses' quarters, two fairly decent cane chairs, and one very ordinary cane chair such as could be purchased for 7s. 6d. at a sale. They have to be well padded before anyone can sit on them.

The Minister for Health: That is a summer chair.

Miss HOLMAN: Well, there were two winter chairs and one summer chair. As curtains for the windows, they sent one huge piece of stuff, beautiful soft silk poplin of a beige colour with blue trimmings, but not at all suitable for curtains. It would have done beautifully for a partition across the room, but not as curtains. As I have said, I did not intend to bring up this question of furniture; the Minister himself did it. We want a good drainage system at this hospital. The Minister promised to send a man down to have a look at it, but

the man has not turned up yet. The building requires painting, if only to preserve it. Then a water supply is required. This is a very fine report from that hospital, and so I propose to read it, as follows:—

This report is being compiled for the purpose of stressing the requirements of this hospital, and at the same time pointing out the work that has been done over the past two years by the Committee, with voluntary labour and voluntary monetary assistance, in the hope that the weight of this latter information will indicate the necessity of our receiving assistance with our present requirements. The Dwellingup Hospital is situated in a central position serving timber mills, and a general district, within a radius of about 18 miles. The hospital contains 14 beds and two cots, and deals with every type of case with the exception of contagious diseases. It is staffed with a double certificated matron, a maternity nurse, two probationers, a cook and a handyman. The hospital treats 200 cases per annum, the average number of beds occupied being seven, and the number of days treatment per annum is 2,500. The deaths over the past two years number 10, but they were due to accident or incurable disease; they were not maternity cases. Like every other hospital, this one has a fairly large list of unpaid accounts. This money is mostly owing by people who are not in circumstances which permit of their paying. The committee have recently appointed a special officer for the purpose of collecting these accounts, and every endeavour is being made by him in that direction.

Assistance by Donations and Local Efforts.—For the past two years the hospital committee have not been called upon to expend anything out of general funds for the purpose of buying linen, bedding and general equipment. This has been donated by auxiliary committees and has assisted the hospital to the extent of £100 per annum. Provisions to the value of £5 per month are donated—eggs, butter, vegetables and edible dainties. This has been going on for years, and is one of the main factors in the low cost of hospital maintenance. Egg week is conducted each year by all the schools in the district. This year the total result was about 90 dozen. Cash donations are unfortunately not our lot, as we are situated in a working district, and serve working people, although the support given to local efforts and entertainments would do credit to a more wealthy district. Firewood is donated by the mills in the district, and it has not been necessary for the committee to spend anything in this direction with the exception of railway freight—18s. 6d. for a 10-ton truck to be hauled two miles.

Capital Improvements during past Two Years:

1. Quarters for Staff.—This is a building comprising three bedrooms, bath-room, sitting room and conveniences. Total cost £370. The staff increased to such an extent that it was found necessary to provide proper accom-

modation. Financed from funds made available by an art union conducted by the committee under the supervision of the Theatrical Union.

2. Electric Light Plant.—Western electric 32-volt plant. Total cost, plant and installation £220. The plant was purchased out of money made available through the art union mentioned above. The installation was executed by voluntary labour from Perth, organised by the Theatrical Union, in conjunction with the committee.

3. Drying Shed.—A shed 30ft. x 18ft. built for the purpose of having better facilities for winter drying. Total cost to hospital, £16. Financed from local efforts.

Also numerous small improvements have been made, and financed from money collected by local efforts.

This is what we require.

X-Ray Plant.—This is most urgently required. The hospital serves many timber mills, and accidents in this industry are more prevalent than in any other. At present all cases requiring the X-ray are sent to Perth. This entails expense which could be avoided had we a plant of our own. The plant would in time pay for itself. Apart from the expense above mentioned, the patient has to suffer the discomfort and risk whilst travelling 73 miles to have his case diagnosed.

Water Supply.—For the past few years difficulty has been met in maintaining a good water supply, or even a sufficient one, for domestic use and in case of fire.

Drainage System.—This was promised by the Minister at his last visit, and should be done before the summer.

Painting Hospital Building.—The place is in need of paint. The building has not been done since it was built (meaning it has never been painted). The cost of the work is warranted, and would save pounds in repairs later.

In case of fire, the hospital committee are very keen on having another well sunk in the yard and a pump erected. They have a small engine there and it could be managed quite easily. The water supply gets very low at times. Indeed on one occasion it gave rise to a remarkable incident. A man who had met with an accident was brought in, but had to be sent to his own home to be washed because they had not sufficient water at the hospital for the purpose. The report I have read is a very fine one for a country hospital. It shows that the people in the district have done their very best to carry on the hospital. The same may be said of every hospital in the timber areas. Of course the people have been out of work and on part-time work, and

so cannot spend as much as they used to spend on their hospitals. For the Dwellingup Hospital we require an X-ray plant, a drainage system, a water supply, the painting of the place and a little more for the nurses' quarters. I feel sure the Minister will give these matters his best consideration. No doubt his intentions were good even as to the furniture, but I do not think he saw it before it was sent down. He promised £100 for the Jarrahdale Hospital.

The Minister for Health: And we gave them £200 instead of £100.

Miss HOLMAN: Yes, but they were a long time getting it.

The Minister for Health: And we pay for a doctor there, as well as for the hospital.

Miss HOLMAN: Yes, it has probably been fixed up satisfactorily, but it was a long time in the process. I will not complain if the requirements of the Dwellingup Hospital are fixed up, and double the amount they ask for given to them also. I do want the Committee to know that the hospitals in the timber areas are keeping up their reputation of being very good hospitals supported by local assistance. I feel sure the Health Department will give their requests every consideration.

MR. SAMPSON (Swan) [5.25]: There is every justification for the public taking a keen interest in the hospitals. It is regrettable that the stringency in the Government's finances makes it impossible at present to provide sufficient accommodation at the Perth Hospital. As far as is humanly possible everything is being done. I hope that if any money is available consideration will be given to additional accommodation at that hospital. Hospitals in our smaller towns receive greater assistance from the public than do hospitals in larger centres. Concerts and balls and other functions are held with the object of improving the finances of the local hospital and many people in the district bring in wood, meat, chickens, eggs and other commodities so that the cost of running the local institution may be kept down. I was interested to hear what the Minister and the member for Hannans (Hon. S. W. Munsie) had to say about baby clinics and child welfare centres. No doubt the establishment of those activities has resulted in an enormous amount of good; for if we look after the child before birth and after birth, we are going to have stronger and better men and women. I

have a suggestion to make in regard to school medical officers and school dentists. We know of the wonderful assistance rendered at our larger hospitals by the medical fraternity. In the Perth Hospital, for instance, there is a large honorary staff of leading medical men. It occurred to me that something might be done in respect to our country hospitals. In most of the country towns of any size there is a local dentist, and I think if the Medical Department were to make the suggestion those dentists would be quite ready to give honorary service for the benefit of the school children. The same thing might be done in regard to school medical officers. I am not overlooking the fact that in certain cases such services are already forthcoming, but I believe the suggestion would result in a far greater number helping. As to the Woorooloo Sanatorium, I realise with the member for Murchison (Mr. Marshall) that the medical officer should be given relief from time to time. We all know the fine work of Dr. Mitchell and how very deeply his heart is in that work. The same may be said of the matron. I know, too, that the public are very generous in helping the Woorooloo Welfare Fund, and a fund established to help some of the patients who through sickness are unable to help themselves. In that respect some little help has been given to the Government. The public have proved very generous. I hope the question of school medical officers and school dentists will receive consideration at the hands of the Government. I believe this would be the means in many small centres of ensuring those services which under the present financial difficulties are otherwise impossible.

MR. PIESSE (Katanning) [5.30]: I wish to congratulate the Minister and the officials of the department upon the success which has attended their efforts during the past year. I have come closely in contact with the officers of the department, and appreciate the promptness and efficiency with which they have always attended to matters I have brought before them. I do not, however, see eye to eye with the Minister in respect to the policy of the Government concerning contributions by local authorities for hospital extensions or the construction of new premises. The Minister is not justified in asking agriculturists, especially in these times, to make contributions—

The Minister for Health: To carry out their contracts.

MR. PIESSE: Whilst they receive no benefits therefrom, except the fact that a hospital is established in their district.

The Minister for Health: And maintained at the expense of the Government.

MR. PIESSE: If people are sufficiently enterprising and public-spirited to make a contribution on a fifty-fifty basis, the least that can be expected is that some credit shall be given to those who are unfortunate enough to have to use the hospital either for themselves or for members of their families. I know that the department has been very lenient to farmers and others who have been unable to meet their accounts. It is certainly right that people who have made contributions towards hospitals by way of interest and sinking fund in connection with the premises, should be given credit for their payments. I refer to the Katanning Hospital, and similar institutions in other centres. When the Hospital Bill was before Parliament last session I tried to induce the Minister to give some relief to the people whose cause I was pleading. He did not see fit to do so. We are, therefore, in the same position that we were in last year. The district I refer to contributed a fairly large sum towards the Katanning Hospital, which is looked upon as the base hospital for that area. They contend that when they made these contributions they were promised that if it was found necessary later on to introduce a tax, or some provision for a statutory contribution towards hospital expenses, they would obtain some relief. I do not want unduly to worry the Minister, because I know that great responsibility devolves upon the department just now for hospital extensions. I assure him, however, that if it is left to the local authority to make the necessary contributions, hospital facilities will come to a dead-end. The taxpayers are justified in taking the view that they should not be called upon to assist in building hospitals if they are to derive no benefit whatever from the contributions they make towards the capital cost. I hope the Government will see fit to alter their policy.

MR. GRIFFITHS (Avon) [5.35]: I understand the Minister made some remarks about the Kellerberrin Hospital.

The Minister for Health: I did not mention it.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I understood he had done so. A good many complaints have come from the Kellerberrin district concerning the large amount that has been collected by way of hospital tax, an amount that is far more than the people had to pay in the past. The funds of the institution have become depleted, whereas when voluntary aid was the rule they were in a good position. To-day the hospital is almost down to its last pound. The Eastern Districts Memorial Hospital is a well-conducted institution which has been loyally supported by the local people. It is somewhat galling to find that owing to the hospital tax the funds are now so exhausted that the committee had to go cap-in-hand to the department for money with which to pay the wages account. The Minister informed me that certain applications had been made, and that money had been sent in response to the appeals. He practically told me that these particular people had not asked for any money; otherwise they would have received the difference between their expenditure and their income. It seems to me that if one does not ask, one does not receive. This particular hospital, since the tax has been in operation, has reached a worse financial position than it was ever in before.

The Minister for Health: You do not blame the tax for that, do you? Is it not due to the condition of the wheat-growing industry?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I do not see that. People used to bring all sorts of produce to the institution, and do their utmost to keep it going. Men would bring in a load of wood, or would perhaps give a guinea to the hospital every year. One man I know of is paying four guineas a year in hospital tax alone. He told me he would not mind that, if the people were getting back a fair proportion of the money that goes out by way of the tax. I hope the matter will be looked into.

Mr. Marshall: In Wiluna, every worker pays £5 a year to the hospital and gets nothing for it.

MR. SLEEMAN (Fremantle) [5.40]: The Minister said he hoped the Estimates would be as well received this year as was

usually the case. I do not agree that they should be well received. The Minister has got away well with the situation with regard to the funds raised by means of the hospital tax not being spent in the right direction. When the Bill was first brought in for the collection of a tax for hospital maintenance, certain classes of people were exempt from payments. Later on, the Minister amended that. To-day practically no one has a right to claim hospital treatment. The department can discuss the situation, go into facts and figures, and determine whether a patient is in a position to pay or not. They can impose a charge upon Smith and allow Jones to go scot free. No doubt the department are not getting back very much by way of fees, because so few people have any money with which to pay those fees. Notwithstanding that, patients are still being asked to pay. In many cases where no request for payment should be made, people are handed a bill and are expected to pay. If the position had been left as it was when the Minister brought down the first Bill providing for a hospital tax, the position would have been a thousand times better than it is now. To-day, when a man leaves the hospital, he can expect to be presented with a bill, irrespective of his means with which to pay it. The greatest source of complaint is in regard to the Infectious Diseases Hospital. The Minister said he had modified the position to a certain extent. There is no reason why he should not wipe out the payments by local governing bodies. When we reach the item in question, I will test the feeling of the Committee on the subject. The hospital tax is collected for the welfare of the sick of this country. Because a child is unfortunate enough to contract an infectious disease, the Government disclaim responsibility for a good deal of the expense because of a section that exists in the Health Act. When the hospital tax was brought down, we could reasonably have expected that this section would be deleted. When a child or a person is sent to the Infectious Diseases Hospital, the local governing body concerned is asked to contribute 50 per cent. of the uncollected fees. The Minister now says he has reduced that to a quarter. I wish to enter my protest against the local authority being asked to pay anything. The proper

thing to do is to get the money out of the hospital tax. People are being taxed for a specific purpose. It may be said there are other items on the Estimates towards which the local governing bodies could be asked to contribute. The Minister said that the step he proposed to take would mean that the Infectious Diseases Hospital would be kept in a cleaner condition than would otherwise be the case. I do not think that will be so. The health inspectors and the local authorities could still do their work if the latter were not paying a proportion of the amount. One might ask why the venereal disease payments should not be put on the same basis. There is an item for that on the Estimates, because the Government pay the charges. That is a serious disease, and yet if a child contracts diphtheria or measles, the Government say that the local authority must pay. I do not agree with that, and will test the feeling of the House when we come to the item.

MR. HEGNEY (Middle Swan) [5.44]: I wish to refer to the King Edward Memorial Hospital, particularly that portion which is set apart for infants. The sisters organised bridge parties and the like, to raise funds for the purpose of acquiring a set of scales for the weighing of infants. In view of the extensions to the premises, it has been necessary to transfer those scales to the new building. Another set of scales is now required for the local infant health centre, and the local King Edward Memorial Hospital. It is a small matter, and I merely bring it before the notice of the Minister in the hope that he will have the scales supplied. Excellent work has been done in the district with regard to the care of infants, particularly in the case of those with whom difficulties are encountered immediately after birth; and, as has been pointed out, by virtue of the increased knowledge given to mothers by the sisters connected with infant health centres, the death rate has decreased considerably. We are second only to New Zealand as far as the death rate of infants under 12 months is concerned. That is creditable indeed and I hope that by giving what is sought to enable the work to be carried out even more efficiently that the position will be still further improved. I think the food supply of the mothers could be changed for the better.

Whilst I am not an authority on this question I know from what I have been told that on Sunday evening the mothers are given porridge for their meal. Porridge is essential, we know, for mothers, but I think some other food could be supplied in the evening. These are matters to which the Minister can give attention, and I mention them in the hope that the Minister will do so. Regarding the amount that road boards are called upon to pay for infectious diseases in their territory, I have had a communication from the road board in my district protesting against the charges imposed. In respect of the Bassendean Road Board the rate collected was totally insufficient to pay for the cases that arose in the district. These cases could not be put down, as the Minister suggested, to unclean premises. We are aware that some may be unclean but we are also aware of the fact that clean persons are liable to be attacked by infectious diseases. In many instances the local authorities are not in a position to pay the charges that are imposed. I understand that an agreement has been arrived at between the Minister and the local bodies, and certainly the position is much better now than it was formerly. All the same, I think that the infectious disease charges could be wiped out altogether.

THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH (Hon. C. G. Latham—York—in reply) [6.4]: I thank members for having received these Estimates so reasonably. I do not think there has been very much change in the policy of the department during the past three years. Regarding the question of a doctor at Wooroloo, I have not heard any complaints about lack of medical attention there. It is very difficult to get a young man who will stay at Wooroloo for any length of time. We are aware that young medical men are anxious to extend their knowledge as far as possible, and they like to put in a period at Wooroloo to gain experience. Dr. Shanahan who was there—he is a departmental officer—was transferred to Kalgoorlie hospital where he is now resident. His services could be availed of at short notice because his place could be filled much more easily than the position of the officer in charge at Wooroloo. I will inquire into the matter, but I think Dr. Mitchell would have raised the question with me, and up to date I have not heard

anything at all from him. The member for Murchison said he thought we were depriving the Wooroloo institution of certain provisions to which the sanatorium was entitled. The expenditure there has been reduced, and that has been due largely to the fact that we have been able to do a tremendous lot of work on the farm which hitherto it was not possible to carry out there. A large area of the farm property has been sown, with the result that our forage bill will this year be very small. There is a good deal of feed now, and that will account for a considerable saving. I am not going to tell the Committee what the figures are because I am not sure of them. The stock there must be maintained in good condition, and it was considered wiser to supply natural rather than artificial feed. If hon. members care to visit the farm, they will notice a big improvement there. A number of single unemployed men have been engaged in work there and a lot of money has been spent in laying down pastures and top-dressing. From all that we are getting the benefit this year.

Mr. Marshall: Before you leave this subject, why is the medical superintendent down £4?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: That is the difference between the period July 1 and July 10, on which latter date the Financial Emergency Act applied. With regard to the question of the maintenance of lepers raised by the member for Hannans, this has never been a special item. I took up the matter where the hon. member left off. I noticed a minute of his which rather impressed me, and it was that as leprosy was a curable disease, we should give the aborigines the opportunity to be cured by sending them to Darwin, where there is a special officer whose duty it is to attend to those cases. I understand that by sending the natives there we save roughly about £600 a year. This year there has been a slight increase because a few lepers had to be picked up further along the coast, and we had to keep them under control.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: What was the number transferred?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Seventeen, I think. To-day I believe we have four lepers.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: While I was Minister for Health it cost £185 just to bring one in.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Members, I suppose, know the story in the Bible about the lepers.

Mr. Marshall: What is it?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: That they were unclean. To-day it is not as contagious a disease as the story would have had us believe. For all that, I don't suppose many of us would like to come into close contact with lepers. I am pleased to know that we have been able to do so much for the member for Forrest (Miss Holman) as to justify her commendation, except as regards the Dwellingup hospital. We are aware that the timber districts have felt the effects of the depression perhaps more than others, and it is the first time that these institutions have had to appeal to the Government for assistance. It is intended to provide X-ray plants for as many hospitals as possible in the near future. May I take this opportunity of saying that I appreciate very much the help given to us by the Art Unions Committee towards the provision of X-ray plants for the various hospitals in the State. If we had to meet all the demands, there would be very little available to cope with any outbreak of disease that might occur.

Hon. A. McCallum: That is tainted money.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Yes, but tainted in the right direction. If it gives relief, we need not worry very much about the taint. The Geraldton hospital has one of the finest X-Ray plants in the State and its installation was due to the money provided from local trust funds and to the help given by the Art Union Committee.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: Where does the King Edward Memorial Hospital appear in these Estimates?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: It gets its revenue from hospital funds.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: I see nothing about it in the report.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: It is grouped with other hospitals. With regard to that institution, we were able to get from the hospital fund and from art union funds the money required to build a new ward. Now the Art Union Committee, as far as funds will permit, will assist to provide X-Ray plants throughout the State.

Miss Holman: Which will be served first?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: In rotation, according to the need for the plant.

Miss Holman: Where do we stand on the list?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Dwellingup hospital stands fairly high on the list. There may be another hospital or two in front of it. I hope that in the near future the hon. member will be in a position to tell us how pleased she is at our having installed a plant at Dwellingup. The old question was also raised about the right of local governing bodies to throw the whole of the responsibility of the hospitals on the people of the State. I point out to the member for Katanning that many hospitals in the State have been built by the people themselves finding 50 per cent. of the cost of construction, and that the people are maintaining those institutions. In the case of Katanning, the Government lent the whole of the money, and the local body undertook the responsibility of finding interest and sinking fund for half. Thus the Katanning hospital is in a good position in comparison with other hospitals in the State.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: Only another, the Collie hospital, got a similar concession.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Collie and Wagin.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: Wagin did not quite get the same treatment.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Wagin got a concession on similar lines and it seems a breach of faith for a person to come along, after having entered into a compact, and say "We are not going to carry it out." As a matter of fact the Minister of the day, when opening the hospital at Katanning, said definitely that if his hospital Bill had been carried, funds would have been available for the maintenance and carrying on of hospitals throughout the State. The member for Katanning never misses an opportunity to voice the opinion of the local authority in that district, which is that the member for South Fremantle told the people of Katanning that if the hospital tax was passed, Katanning would be relieved of its obligations. I have read the notes of the hon. member's visit to the town. Those notes were made by his secretary and there

would be no occasion for the exclusion of anything that was pertinent, and there is nothing to indicate that any such statement was made or that such relief would be given.

Mr. Piesse: You would not call on the ratepayers of Perth in the same way.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: That very work is being carried on in the Perth Hospital by the people. We have found only half the actual cash and the rest has been obtained from other sources. The womenfolk raised the money with which to furnish the building, a sum of about £800. People should not make a contract and then seek to knock it down when they feel so inclined. There is an obligation on people to carry out their contract. I consider that the Katanning people have protested too much. The member for Avon (Mr. Griffiths) referred to the Kollerberrin Hospital. Some members think that all we have to do is to hand over a cheque saying, "Here is the money you want." During these trying times, it is difficult to get sufficient money to go round. The member for Murchison (Mr. Marshall) knows that the department have had a worrying time with regard to his district. If an accident happened on the big mine at Meekatharra, where so many men are employed, the lack of hospital accommodation would place us in a shocking position. We must have some little reserve. The Kollerberrin people have been told the same as the members of every other committee in charge of a hospital. Provided they keep control of their expenditure, we will find the difference between revenue and expenditure from the hospital fund. It is not a matter of going to the Government cap in hand. People in that centre endeavour to calculate the collections from the district and then talk about the thousands of pounds that are being paid into the fund. The hon. member referred to one man who had paid £4 by way of hospital tax. If that man is a farmer, he is in a fairly decent way because his income would require to be not less than £700 for the year to make him liable for that amount of taxation. I only wish that that was a fair index to the condition of the farming industry. The people of Kollerberrin must remember that they cannot be treated differently from other people. There has not been a request for an amount from any hospital on the basis suggested that has not been met by the Government.

I do not think the member for Middle Swan (Mr. Hegney) was justified in complaining that the patients in King Edward Memorial Hospital were not being adequately fed. There is no better woman in the State than Matron Walsh and we would probably have to go outside Australia to find one as good as she is. She has a free hand in the matter of feeding the patients. The statement was not fair to Matron Walsh, but I will bring it under her notice.

Mr. Marshall: I think we had better leave that matter to the matron.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Yes, she knows better than we do how the patients should be fed. I have visited the hospital frequently and I have not heard a word about her patients having been kept short of food. We should not keep an institution short. If I thought there was a shortage, I would rectify the matter at once.

Miss Holman: Are you doing anything regarding the maids' quarters?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: It has been suggested that we should renovate them, but I have given instructions that nothing be done until we ascertain whether it is possible to raise money for new quarters. The building in use is an improvised structure, probably one of the worst buildings ever attached to a hospital. I had never before seen cardboard partitions used in a building. Evidently the State has previously experienced trying times and the building dates back to those times. I am hopeful that we shall be able to raise enough money to provide decent accommodation away from the present site. If that is possible, the existing building can be pulled down, because it will be unsuitable for anything else. I was surprised at the comments of the member for Fremantle (Mr. Sleeman). If there is any hospital in the State that has received benefits, it is the Fremantle Hospital.

Mr. Sleeman: No more than it has deserved.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: The hon. member said we should do this and that with the money. If we follow his advice, we cannot continue to do what we are doing at present.

Mr. Sleeman: No town has done more for its hospital than has Fremantle.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Not much has been done by the people of Fre-

mantle since the department took control, and I do not think the people will be pleased at the proposal of the hon. member that we should spend the money in other directions.

Mr. Sleeman: I think they will be very pleased.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: If we spend the money in the way the hon. member suggested, Fremantle hospital cannot have the money that is being expended on it at present. When the department took it over, it had liabilities approximating £4,000, which we paid. The money was paid to local tradespeople who had been giving the hospital credit. We provided half the cost of a new X-ray table, the other moiety having been met by the ladies' auxiliary. We opened an additional ward which had previously been closed; we opened the children's ward, which was closed when the department took over the management. Recently there has been a movement to raise a memorial to a young fellow who was killed.

Mr. Marshall: That lad was injured, not killed.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: He died as a result of injuries; the hon. member is merely playing with words. We agreed to find £1,500 on a pound-for-pound basis towards the memorial. We have inaugurated an orthopaedic department with a half-time masseuse; the medical staff have been increased from two to three; the staff have been strengthened by the appointment of an assistant matron and five staff nurses, one for each ward.

Mr. Sleeman: There are only two extra doctors.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: The third is unfortunately away, but the strength will be restored as soon as possible. We have placed a full-time sister in the X-ray department, and every month we have paid the difference between the hospital's revenue and expenditure. The management of the hospital to-day must be very pleasant work for the local committee. Local hospital committees have rendered great assistance. If the hon. member wishes us to spend the money in other ways, it will be impossible to find sufficient to go round. We have the greatest difficulty now to make ends meet. In these trying times people have not the

money to give to hospitals that they had in better times. The people who use the hospitals cannot now pay as they used to pay in better times. True, the hospital tax has been used by some people who could give as an excuse for not giving. With the money that has been available, we have done our best and I do not think there is much reason for anybody to complain. To-day I wrote off £16,000 of fees owing by patients to the Fremantle hospital, so it will be realised that we are not worrying people a great deal. The department is being carried on as before. There is no intention to harass a man who cannot pay, but in the interests of the people who need hospital accommodation, those who can pay must pay, and those who can afford treatment in a private hospital must go there in order to leave room for those who cannot afford private hospital treatment.

Mr. Sleeman interjected.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: When I was at Fremantle I told the people that the hospital would have all it could manage to look after the indigent people of the district. The management of the hospital was taken over so that the local committee would not be called upon to approach the Fremantle people. The hon. member should be generous enough to admit all that we have done for them.

Mr. Sleeman: You admit the one and I will admit the other.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: What, that we are harassing people?

Mr. Sleeman: No, that the people of Fremantle have done as much as the people of any other centre.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: In the early days they were doing as much, but I am speaking of last year. The people of the State generally have been very benevolent. They have given a tremendous sum to hospitals, but members should not ask us to use funds for purposes which would necessitate our depriving a section of the people of relief, probably the section that the member for Fremantle would least desire to see deprived of such relief.

Item. Homes, contingencies, £10,928:

Mr. MARSHALL: The item shows a reduction of £400. How has that reduction been made? I understand that the Old

Men's Home and the Old Women's Home are more or less crowded. I believe there is not a vacant bed in the Old Women's Home and that some inmates have been accommodated in improvised quarters. That would imply an increase in the cost of maintenance, whereas the cost is being reduced.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Since sustenance has been paid outside, a number of men not in receipt of pensions have gone on to sustenance because they received more cash than they would have if they remained in the Old Men's Home. Inmates on a pension receive a small allowance from their pensions. It was 4s.; I think it is now 3s. 6d. Quite a number of inmates were not entitled to pensions, and they thought they could do better outside while sustenance was being paid. That does not account for the whole of the £400.

Mr. Hegney: Would those men be over 55 years of age?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: No. There are a number of men who ought to be in some kind of a home but who are not entitled to a pension.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Not only is there a reduction of the number of inmates in the homes, but the cost of living has been reduced considerably, and last year a large amount of money was spent on beds and clothing—an expenditure which will not be repeated this year. Consequently it is anticipated that without interfering at all with the living conditions of the old people in the homes a saving of £400 will be effected.

Miss HOLMAN: The Vote shows numerous reductions. In almost every item there is a diminution. Medicines are less by £20; the amount for telephones is smaller; burial of destitute persons is also less. The Press has contained many complaints of the manner in which the destitute are buried. On what are these reductions based?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I pointed out that the number of inmates was lower, that there had been a reduction in the cost of living, and that last year there had been a non-recurring item for bedding and clothing. The amount for medicines is lower thanks to an arrangement for wholesale buying and for control of the issue of medicines. Burial of destitute persons has for many years been done by contract, and

this year there is a reduction in the contract sum. The manner of burial of the destitute has been brought under the Government's notice, and an inquiry has been held. It is hoped that there will be no occasion for a recurrence of complaints.

Miss HOLMAN: The year before last the amount for destitute burials was £890, last year it was £596, and this year it is £475—showing progressive reductions.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: The amount represents merely an estimate, based on the number of inmates that die from year to year. There is far more competition to-day than previously, and a consequence has been lower tenders. Due regard is paid to decency of burial.

Mr. H. W. Mann: A proper standard is stipulated in the form of contract.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: There has not been, so far as I know, any scandal in that regard. If the work can be done for half the money previously paid, the Government have no right to pay more, provided the same decency can be preserved.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Public Health, £27,417:

Item, Payments to Local Health Authorities, £1,615.

Mr. SLEEMAN: Payments should not be required from local governing bodies in respect of cases of infectious disease, seeing that there is a hospital tax. The Government ought to do their job, whether the hospital concerned be one for infectious diseases or an ordinary hospital. I do not agree with the Minister that the new arrangement will be better for local authorities, and that they are likely to do their work more efficiently because they are called upon to pay something. I cannot, unfortunately, move to increase the amount of the item: but as a protest, and to test the feeling of the Committee, I move—

That the item be reduced by £1.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I hope the amendment will not be carried. I have given an undertaking that instead of the £50 which the State has found in the past towards the cost entailed by outbreaks of infectious disease, 75 per cent. will be found where payment by the local authority

is made within one month. The item will have to be excessed on account of the arrangement recently made with the local authorities, who have been treated very fairly indeed. The hon. member cannot have consulted them. To get hold of money to-day is most difficult. If the item is reduced, the Perth Hospital will suffer. Originally the local authorities were to pay 37 per cent. of this cost: now, subject to prompt payment, they pay only 25 per cent. There must be some responsibility on local authorities in this matter. Our hospitals must be maintained first of all. If the amount going to the hospitals is increased, a heavier burden must fall elsewhere.

Mr. KENNEALLY: The application made by the representative deputation to which the Minister alluded in introducing the Vote was that the Government, through the hospital fund, should assume full financial responsibility for cases of infectious disease. The argument advanced was unanswerable. Local authorities are called upon to meet expenses involved in cases of infectious disease occurring in their districts even though the people affected are not ratepayers to the local authority concerned. It is the duty of either the local authority or the Government to see that disease does not spread. The local authority has not the means of taxing. A hospital tax being in existence, surely it can be claimed to be for hospital purposes; and if there is one thing which more than another calls for attention by those collecting the hospital tax, it is the prevention of the spread of infectious disease. A representative deputation placed before the Minister the request, not that the local governing authorities should bear a certain proportion of the cost and the Government the rest, but that, as taxation had been levied for hospital purposes, the whole of the responsibility regarding the non-spread of infectious diseases should be accepted by the Government. As infectious diseases are calculated to spread amongst people who do not pay anything to the local governing bodies, the whole expense should be borne by the Government who collect the hospital tax from the whole of the people. I hope the amendment will be agreed to as an indication that the Committee are in accord with the representations of the local governing authorities.

Mr. H. W. MANN: I take this opportunity of expressing my thanks to the member for East Perth for taking charge of the deputation that waited on the Minister from the local governing authorities, when I was prevented from doing so through an accident. I do not agree with the reasons advanced by the member for East Perth in support of the amendment. The local authorities have to shoulder some responsibility, and if they are to be relieved of it, the next move on their part, I imagine, will be to dispense with the services of their health officers.

Mr. Kenneally: That does not come into the argument.

Mr. H. W. MANN: The local health authorities administer the Health Act and have by-laws that they require to be observed. Their officials are more in touch with local residents than are the departmental officers, who have to deal with meat inspection, medicines, and so on. The inspection of premises where disease has broken out is carried out by the local authorities, and if their responsibilities in that regard are decreased they will become lax in the administration of the by-laws. The Government have acted generously in undertaking to bear three-fourths of the cost.

Mr. KENNEALLY: The member for Perth has misjudged the position. The local authorities will still have to shoulder the responsibilities they have now. We are dealing with the payment of fees of patients suffering from infectious diseases.

Mr. H. W. Mann: The one thing leads to the other.

Mr. KENNEALLY: It is a question of who shall pay the fees, the local governing authorities or the Government. Under the hospital tax legislation, we made provision whereby certain people were to receive hospital attention free. The Government should indicate to the local authorities that as those particular people were not called upon to pay anything, the Government themselves would undertake the responsibility. The Government do not adopt that attitude, but require the local authorities to bear the burden.

Mr. H. W. Mann: If the local authorities are lax in the administration of the by-laws, disease may spread.

Mr. KENNEALLY: It must be obvious that the fact that local authorities are to be compelled to pay additional money in the direction I have indicated, will not make them more careful in the prevention of the spread of disease than they are at present. The whole aspect is changed as the result of the imposition of the hospital tax. I do not think the Government's attitude is fair to the local authorities.

Mr. MARSHALL: There is another phase that has not been mentioned. Inasmuch as the Government force local authorities to contribute towards the cost of the treatment of those unfortunate enough to contract infectious diseases, they are penalising those who can least afford to be penalised. The bulk of those who contribute towards the funds of local authorities are married people who have greater responsibilities than single persons, and it is upon these married people that the burden will fall. If the local authorities have to bear additional expense, it will be reflected in the rates, which are largely paid by married people. I do not agree with the Minister's argument that payments made by individuals will affect their attitude from the standpoint of cleanliness.

Mr. H. W. Mann: Then you would do away with health inspectors altogether.

Mr. MARSHALL: That does not follow at all. If the Minister continues to be persistent in his determination to impose this tax upon local authorities it will not make individuals keep themselves or their premises any cleaner.

The Minister for Health: That is not fair. This has been in force for a number of years.

Mr. MARSHALL: Then it is time the impost was removed.

Mr. Sleeman: The people have not had the hospital tax for years.

Mr. MARSHALL: The Minister should recognise the fact that this added burden will increase the difficulties of married people.

The Minister for Lands: If that is the position, then it is a wonder that they do not take notice of the charges levied by the local authorities for electric light and gas.

Mr. MARSHALL: We are not discussing that at the moment. The more the Minister grabs from the local authorities by way of

payments under this head, the more will the rates be increased and the obligation thrown on people who can least afford to bear it.

Mr. HEGNEY: I will support the amendment. Numbers of road boards, when confronted with an outbreak of sickness, have no funds to meet the expense. This applies to the Bassendean Road Board, who have brought the facts before me, while the Bayswater board have made complaints on the same score. The difficulty is that whole families who have been stricken down by some infectious disease have left the district before the local authority received the account from the hospital. There should be no charge against local authorities for such a service. They have to support a health inspector to see that the health requirements are carried out, and when there is anything like a serious epidemic they are hard put to find the money to cope with it. I think the road boards are entitled to relief, and so I will support the amendment.

Mr. SLEEMAN: The only thing the Minister had to say was he hoped the amendment would not be carried, because the Government had agreed to make certain payments.

The Minister for Health: I said that if it were carried the Government would have to increase the tax.

Mr. SLEEMAN: Since the Government are collecting the hospital tax it should be their responsibility to maintain the hospitals. The Minister said I had no authority from the road boards in my district.

The Minister for Health: I said you had not consulted them.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I have received communications from three local authorities in my electorate, and they have thanked me for the interest I was taking in the matter and trusted that I would maintain it until their object was achieved.

The Minister for Health: I do not remember seeing you on that deputation.

Mr. SLEEMAN: No, I was not there. I may have been in Fremantle trying to collect food for the starving unemployed. The Government are collecting taxes for the maintenance of the hospitals and so should maintain them.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: For many years past it has been the responsibility of local authorities to pay for in-

fectious diseases. The Infectious Diseases Hospital is not a Government institution, but is part of the Perth Hospital. It is not a question of payment altogether, but a question of checking any outbreak of infectious diseases. If the Government were to accept the whole of the financial responsibility, we would have to set up an army of inspectors to see that there was no spread of infectious disease. The local authorities are doing this quite well. The combating of an outbreak of disease has always been the responsibility of the Government when local authorities could not cope with the position. When we had that outbreak of pneumonic influenza some years ago, it became the responsibility of the Government. Still, where infectious diseases can be checked, they should be checked by the local authority. Section 206 of the Health Act prescribes that in order to check or prevent the spread of any infectious disease, the local authority from time to time on its own motion, or when the Commissioner so requires, shall exercise any powers conferred by the Act to remedy any sanitary defects etc. Under the Health Act it is the responsibility of the local authorities to maintain hospitals in their own districts for the care of those suffering from infectious diseases. In order to prevent unnecessary expenditure, arrangements were made with the Perth Hospital to have a common infectious diseases hospital for the whole of the metropolitan area. If the Committee insist that the money has to be found by the Government, I can say definitely there is no chance of getting the money from the Treasury. We know that certain relief has been given to the Treasury by the imposition of the hospital tax, because previously £104,000 per annum was found from Consolidated Revenue, whereas that is not being found to-day. If the Committee insists upon the Government paying for these services and so relieving the local authorities, since the Treasury is empty it will be of no use coming to me for additional services. If there were to be an outbreak of infectious disease, we would have great difficulty in finding the money to cope with it. Members should give a 12 months' trial to the new arrangements entered into with the local authorities. It seems to be a question of shifting the responsibility from the pro-

perty owner on to the wages man, but I do not think we should do that.

Mr. KENNEALLY: The Minister's concluding remark indicates that he has not given proper consideration to the position. Is it the property owner who pays the tax, or is it the person who lives in the property owner's house who pays the tax? We know that these taxes are passed on to the worker. The Minister said that for years the local authorities had been paying this money. But there has been an alteration in recent years. For many years there was no hospital tax, but now there is, which makes a very great alteration. It is not right to say the local authorities have become lax in their efforts to prevent the spread of disease, for it is in the interests of the local authorities to see that infectious disease is not allowed to spread. The expenditure in the case of local authorities for the year before last was £712, and the estimate for last year was £500, the actual expenditure being £344. The estimate for the current year is £350, showing an increased liability over last year of only £6. The Government are receiving £133,000 from the public but the extent of the relief to local authorities is £350, or £6 more than when the Government did not get the hospital tax.

The Minister for Health: This has been arranged since the Estimates were submitted.

Mr. KENNEALLY: The additional amount is not great.

The Minister for Health: Very well, I will oblige you and cancel the whole thing.

Mr. KENNEALLY: If the Minister wishes to be obliging he can agree to the request that was made by the deputation from local governing bodies, which asked that the Government should stand the whole of the expenditure.

Mr. SAMPSON: A big fuss is being made over a small matter. The responsibility for the health of the people lies with the local authorities, who should live up to it. The Minister for Health has already made a reduction in the payments made by local authorities.

[Mr. J. H. Smith took the Chair.]

The Minister for Health: I am not at all sure that the Auditor General will agree, and that he will not force them to pay the full amount.

Mr. SAMPSON: This is not the time to reduce the responsibilities that are attached to anyone. I think the Minister was justified in refusing the deputation's request. We do not want local authorities to reduce their vigilance in hygienic matters. They might well accept their reduced responsibilities in the matter of infectious diseases. My first care will always be to protect the fund that is provided for the sick people of the State.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I do not want patients to be annoyed with hospital bills when they cannot possibly meet them; nor do I want local authorities to be forced to contribute to the cost of infectious cases when a tax has been imposed that should cover all such things. I resent the suggestion that local authorities would pay less attention to the health of their communities if they did not make this contribution. The tax is being used only to support a portion of our hospitals, and should include the infectious diseases hospitals.

Mr. PANTON: The Perth hospital is not responsible for the infectious diseases hospital.

The Minister for Health: It is part of that institution.

Mr. PANTON: Only for administration purposes. Under the Health Act the responsibility lies with the local governing bodies. It would be childish to ask every local authority to establish its own hospital for such cases, and consequently a central hospital has been established under the administration of the Perth Hospital Board. It might be believed that there has been a remarkable alteration since the hospital tax was imposed. Actually the situation has undergone no change whatever.

The Minister for Health: Except that you get your money easily.

Mr. PANTON: It is harder than ever to get money out of the department. Any person that the executive of the hospital believe can pay for treatment is compelled to pay. The admission clerk carries out his duties to-day in exactly the same way as he did before. Patients have to sign a declaration as to their means, and that is usually the deciding factor as to whether they shall pay or not. There has been less writing off in the case of the Perth Hospital since the tax was imposed than was the case before. All that it has done is to relieve Consolidated Revenue. It has given no one the

right to hospital treatment. The poorer the people are, the greater is the endeavour they make to meet their hospital commitments, even if it be only at the rate of 6d. a week. The local governing bodies must accept some responsibility. Probably 90 per cent. of the inmates of the Infectious Diseases Hospital are young diphtheria patients. The cleanliness of the person does not enter into the question. The disease is spread by a carrier, who may take it into the cleanest homes. This is not the right way to effect an improvement in that regard. If the local governing bodies are to be relieved of all responsibility, let this be done by amending the Health Act which imposed it upon them. In the circumstances I do not propose to vote for the amendment.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: I hope the suggestion made by the member for Leederville with regard to relieving the local authorities of all responsibility will not be adopted. Until such time as we get to the stage that we can absolutely nationalise public health they are the proper authorities, and the only authorities, that should strike a health rate for the purpose. They have always tried to obtain payment from everybody who goes to an infectious diseases hospital, but I do not know of one local authority that has forced payment from anyone unable to pay. I do not wish to see infectious diseases brought into the general scheme of hospitals at all, and I do not wish to see local authorities relieved of the position of looking after diseases.

Amendment put and negatived.

Item, Venereal Diseases Treatment, upkeep of Clinics, payment for Medical Services, Drugs, etc, £2,258:

Mr. MARSHALL: The Act controlling this disease seems to be honoured more in the breach than in the observance. I should like to know the number of cases that have been reported and whether the number is increasing or decreasing, also whether there have been any prosecutions. Members are aware that it is only those people who are in lowly circumstances who are mostly the victims who attend the clinics. Those who can afford to pay for medical attention will go to a doctor and in such cases I have no doubt records are

not kept. Has any action been taken under the Act in such circumstances? We know also that anyone while undergoing treatment could still spread the disease amongst those in indigent circumstances, and that in turn the latter would visit the hospital to obtain free treatment. If the Act were strictly enforced there would not be the same need for treatment.

The Minister for Health: The Act provides for free treatment.

Mr. MARSHALL: Even if a sufferer goes to a private doctor and is unable to pay, the doctor can collect his fee from the Government, and I have no doubt that a portion of the amount we are now dealing with is absorbed by the payment of medical practitioners' fees for the treatment of the disease. Unless we take drastic action we shall find ourselves having to provide a bigger amount. Apart from that it is a serious matter to permit the disease to spread, especially when we have an Act in force under which we can control it. The Act when introduced was accepted as a drastic piece of legislation, but so far as we know very few prosecutions have taken place.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Unfortunately as the population grows so does the number of cases of this disease increase. We are not letting up at all on it. At the Perth Hospital we recently appointed a full-time medical officer to treat these cases. I know that sometimes the staff at the hospital work until the late hours of the night. With regard to the information the hon. member desires, it will be difficult to obtain it because of the secrecy that has to be observed. Any case that comes before the court is dealt with in camera. The Commissioner of Health himself is bound to secrecy and I do not know whether he is obliged to give the Minister any information.

Mr. Marshall: He need not disclose the identity of the individual, but he can give you the number of cases.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: The State still goes on paying and we give every encouragement to those who require treatment to report themselves to the clinics. We do not hesitate to prosecute where prosecution is justified. It is true that a considerable part of this Vote is paid to medical men, but we limit the fees.

Mr. Marshall: What is the limit?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Between 5s and 7s 6d., but it all depends on the treatment. Certain treatments are more costly than others. Recently I had occasion to ask for further information regarding claims made by country doctors. The charge against the public revenue in respect of these cases seems to be exorbitant. The member for Leederville (Mr. Panton) who is actively associated with the Perth Hospital is aware that recently we were asked to provide funds to pay for the services of an additional doctor so that the clinic might be kept open late at night. Regarding female patients, they are treated by a woman doctor, and I understand that it is sometimes midnight or 1 o'clock in the morning before she has finished her work at the clinic. I assure the hon. member that everything possible is being done. We have no means whereby we can prevent the spread of the disease. We could do that only by keeping the infected people within compounds. But a person who goes about deliberately spreading the disease must surely have something wrong with his brain. We do everything possible to keep the disease in check. There was a time when we were paid a subsidy by the Commonwealth for the treatment of infected persons arriving at the port. I regret to say that the Commonwealth cancelled that agreement without consulting us. However, we are still carrying on the good work. I appreciate the hon. member's interest in the matter. It is a very serious thing in the life of the community. The Commissioner of Health and those associated with the hospitals are doing their best to eradicate the disease. A while ago I discussed with the Commissioner the possibility of providing in the city prophylactic depots where people could treat themselves. I do not know whether that would be a wise course, and so far I have not been able to get the Commissioner to agree to the suggestion. I think there is commonsense in the method adopted in the army, and that at suitable places we might be able to get those who engage in promiscuous intercourse to go along and get treatment. No one realises more than I do the grave responsibility for this dread disease.

Mr. PANTON: I think the Minister will have to give the matter great consideration

in the near future. The Federal Government were paying a certain amount, and they reduced it, not by 20 per cent. but by 100 per cent. I think I am safe in saying that the disease is not increasing, but the treatment is so excellent that it has brought more patients to the clinic. The trouble is that the treatment has been given by honoraries.

The Minister for Health: We are paying two doctors.

Mr. PANTON: The Perth Hospital has been advertising for a fortnight for an honorary, and cannot get one. Doctors are not prepared to work from 7.30 p.m. to midnight or 1 a.m. on those cases. The trouble is that owing to the large number of cases one doctor has to handle, it is impossible to give the requisite treatment. The Minister will shortly be asked to consider appointing a permanent medical officer.

The Minister for Health: We have not refused anything that the Perth Hospital has put up so far.

Mr. PANTON: Not every medical officer cares to treat the disease, and it is essential to have a full-time specialist. Until we get one, we cannot make much progress. I appreciate the work of the honoraries who have worked for so many hours for a remuneration that was a mere bagatelle. They cannot afford to continue the work for long, even if they be particularly interested in the scientific phase of it, because they have other work to do. I should like to say a word to relieve the mind of the member for Murchison. From information I have gleaned—we discussed the matter at the hospital only to-day—the number of cases is not increasing, but the number now attending the hospital has increased because of the excellent treatment given during the last few months. Probably patients have come from further afield where they have been receiving treatment from quacks.

Mr. Marshall: You would have to know the number treated by outside practitioners to ascertain whether the cases are increasing or decreasing.

Mr. PANTON: I do not think many cases in the metropolitan area are being treated by practitioners outside the hospital. One medical officer told me that the doctors did not attempt to treat such cases, but sent them to the clinic. In the country there would be a greater number treated by outside doctors. I think that for every one

treated privately by a doctor, there are scores treated at the hospital clinic as out-patients. I hope the Minister will consider appointing a full-time specialist.

The Minister for Health: We have never refused the Perth Hospital anything in the past.

Vote put and passed.

Department of the Attorney General (Hon. T. A. L. Davy, Minister).

Vote—Attorney General, £65,561:

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. T. A. L. Davy—West Perth) [8.52]: There is really nothing new in the Estimates to report to the Committee. I should like to call attention to the fact that although the Estimates show a decrease of £3,774, that is really a book entry. Portion of the decrease is to be found in Items 53 to 55, "magistracy." Members will remember that we passed a Stipendiary Magistrates Act under which most of the magistrates in this State became payable under a special Act. That is the principal variation, and it is only a book entry. The Estimates otherwise are more or less the same as last year's. Many of the items are necessarily purely an estimate. On the revenue side, probate is always an estimate of what wealthy people are likely to die. The way in which the Under Secretary manages in some years to increase the amount he expects to get with considerable accuracy is rather uncanny.

Mr. Kennelly: He keeps a good eye on the possibilities.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: He does. I shall be pleased to answer any queries raised by members.

MR. SLEEMAN (Fremantle) [8.54]: The Electoral Department is undertaking certain activities, but it seems to me they are being confined to certain areas. Will the Attorney General explain the basis on which the officials are working? They have been making a canvass of the South Fremantle electorate, trying to find out if all the people eligible are on the rolls, and whether the rolls should be purged. From South Fremantle they jumped over the Fremantle electorate to North-East Fremantle, and started canvassing

there. I cannot understand why they should be showing a preference for certain electorates instead of taking them, as it were, in a face and making a clean sweep of the lot. There might be some explanation for such action in the country, but I cannot see why, in the metropolitan area, they should canvass certain electorates and pass over others. Another matter is the Arbitration Court. Some time ago when speaking on the Supply Bill, I raised certain questions to which the Attorney General promised to reply in due course. A serious statement was made by the President of the Arbitration Court, and the Attorney General has had quite a long time to give a reply. So far he has not done so. The three final paragraphs of the president's statement, as reported in the "Daily News," were—

The court gave instructions to the registrar in a matter deemed by it to be of the utmost importance in the discharge of its functions.

The court stated its reasons at length and instructed the registrar to convey them to the Government.

The Government refuse to allow the necessary facilities to carry out the court's instructions.

That was a serious statement, and I should like to know whether the Attorney General has a reply ready, and if not, how long we shall have to wait for it. We do not want it to be said that the Government are interfering with the functions of the court. I notice that one of the newspaper headings read, "Difficult to do justice." We do not want to make it difficult for the court to do justice.

MR. MARSHALL (Murchison) [8.57]: There are some matters I feel obliged to refer to. One is the matter last mentioned by the member for Fremantle—Mr. President Dwyer's attack on the restrictions imposed on the Arbitration Court by the Full Court. I admit that the matter is a complicated one, but I protest against any interference with the Arbitration Court by any Government or by any other court. We have stood for compulsory arbitration for many years, and it has given satisfaction, more or less, to both sides. There have been times when either side has disputed the decisions of the court and even revolted against them, but on main principles the court has given satis-

faction, and it has remained for the present Government to be the first Government in 30 years to attempt to interfere with the court's activities or restrict its activities, as stated by the president. If Governments are going to interfere with the Arbitration Court, we may as well throw it overboard. If the present Government are going to interfere with the court to suit their fraternity, I suggest that a Government representing the opposite side might as reasonably interfere to suit their supporters. There will be trouble if Governments are going to restrict a court that has been constitutionally established. If one Government interferes to suit its whims, another Government will have an excuse for doing likewise. If we are to descend to that level with the Arbitration Court, we might as well toss it overboard and return to the survival of the fittest. However, the Arbitration Court, bad as it may be, still is better than open industrial warfare. But the Government's tactics are the best food for communism. A journal not adhering to communism comes out with such headlines as I have quoted, and the article is used as propaganda by those hungry for revolt. Thousands are won over to communism by such an article. Parliament intended that employers should apply for a reduction of wages 20 per cent. below the basic rate.

The Attorney General: Nothing of the sort. Do not mis-state.

Mr MARSHALL: Parliament authorised reductions below the basic wage, at all events. If I were the Attorney General I would not give further publicity to the fact of belonging to an Administration which sanctioned such a proceeding.

The Attorney General: Do not over-state the case.

Mr. MARSHALL: The Attorney General has repeatedly over-stated cases. The Government's tactics have destroyed the confidence still felt in the Arbitration Court by a number of people. The Government should not interfere with either the Arbitration Court or any other court. I enter my protest against such conduct. The movement to which I have the honour to belong stands for compulsory arbitration, but I cannot advocate compulsory arbitration when such tactics are used. As regards the electoral system, rolls are not kept up to date. The last roll published is about two years old.

Really there should be annual electoral rolls, brought up to date at the close of each year; but perhaps the Government ought not to go to that expense at this period. The Attorney General should, however, make it obligatory upon the Electoral Department to issue up-to-date rolls on each 31st December preceding the general election for the Assembly. This would enable a member to canvass his electorate and know exactly where he stood. At present there are rolls and supplementary rolls.

Members: There are no supplementary rolls now.

Mr. MARSHALL: That makes the position worse than ever, because we have no idea at all where we are. At Wiluna today, notwithstanding the addition and the elimination of names, I could add from 600 to 800 names to the roll within a couple of weeks. Two hundred names have been added to the Legislative Council roll, notwithstanding the fact that at Wiluna accommodation is lacking for about 200 married couples. The true position of the rolls should easily be understood. A general election will take place next March or April, and I shall go to Wiluna in the early part of 1933 without having the slightest idea of the number of people put on the roll there. The same thing applies throughout the goldfields. Hundreds of men and women have migrated into Wiluna, Nannine, Tuckanarra and similar centres. The newcomers are mostly prospectors, goldseekers, and miners. A man tells me he is on the roll, and I find he is not on the State roll but on the Federal roll. Hence my suggestion that an up-to-date roll should be issued on the 31st December. It has to be remembered that there are Federal rolls, Legislative Assembly rolls, Legislative Council rolls, and municipal rolls; and people, having been placed on one roll, believe themselves to be qualified to vote for both State and Federal candidates. Most persons, being on one roll, believe themselves to be on all the rolls. The present position is nothing short of an electoral hash-up. With regard to the Licenses Reduction Board, I notice on the Estimates an amount recoverable by the compensation fund, which to-day stands at some £1,750. That amount must come from Consolidated Revenue if the fund has been depleted, as appears to be the case. In reply to a question I asked the Attorney General some time ago, I was informed that the compensation fund had been nearly exhausted. As

a result the taxpayer is called upon to supply the money needed to keep the Licenses Reduction Board in existence. While the liquor trade was being cleaned up, the board did good work—and at no expense to the taxpayers, apart from those engaged in the trade or patronising the trade. There are many men and women who believe that only the board can administer our licensing legislation, because, it is said, the board have effected such a vast improvement in the appearance and the condition of licensed premises. Had the present Act existed in days of yore and had the administration remained as it was then, the standard of our hotels would not be far behind what it is to-day. The bad condition of the liquor trade was due to an obsolete Act of Parliament, and the administrators of that Act did not possess the powers of the Licenses Reduction Board. If the board were abolished and the old system reverted to, a large amount would be saved to the taxpayer without detriment to the liquor trade or the community. It is doubtful whether the taxpayer should be asked to fork out £760 for the board this year; and his contribution must increase as the compensation fund becomes more and more depleted. Departmental officers could do all that is necessary. They did it when the trade was much busier than it is to-day. Let the Attorney General adopt both my suggestions—incur increased expenditure by the issue of electoral rolls on the 31st December preceding a general election, and decrease expenditure by abolishing the Licenses Reduction Board. In remote districts the board's work is done by wardens, subject to the board; but the members of the board seldom visit those districts, mainly on account of the heavy travelling expenses involved. Finally, I am sorry that I found it necessary to speak as I have done regarding the Arbitration Court. What I referred to is wrong in principle, and I felt I was under an obligation to deal with that phase.

MR. PANTON (Leederville) [9.16]: I would like the Attorney General to inform us what the Electoral Department intend to do regarding the large number of men who are drafted into the country from time to time under the present sustenance scheme. Hundreds of men have gone from the Leederville electorate to country areas on sus-

tenance work, and, after being away for a month or more, they are sent back to cut out a week or a fortnight. If they are away for more than a month they are liable to have their names struck off the roll. The Attorney General interjected that the Government should not be expected to put people on the rolls.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: But they should not be expected to strike them off, as the officials have been doing.

MR. PANTON: The hon. member took the words out of my mouth. About 1,680 names have been struck off the roll for Leederville and about as many put on, while there have been about 800 alterations. What is the position regarding the hundreds of men who are away on sustenance work? Some of them, on their return from a country district, may later be sent to another part of the State and, in such circumstances, it may be quite impossible for their names to remain on the rolls. In my opinion, their homes, where their wives and families reside should be regarded as sufficient for enrolment purposes and their names should be retained on the roll accordingly. I know of a number of notifications that have been received from the Electoral Department requiring persons to give reasons why their names should not be struck off the roll. The men concerned have been absent and their wives did not know what to do, with the result that the men were disfranchised. The Minister should inform the Committee as to the intention of the department. In view of the circumstances I have outlined, some definite policy should be announced so that we may know where we stand. It is a matter of importance, not only to those who may have to fight an election later on, but to the persons directly concerned.

HON. A. McCALLUM (South Fremantle) [9.20]: The Estimates of which the Attorney General is in charge do not call for much discussion because his departments are not great revenue producers.

The Attorney General: That is not quite correct.

Hon. J. C. Willecock: The Minister's departments cover probates, liquor licenses and many other revenue-producing activities.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: I would like to know what the Government's intentions are

regarding the preparation of the electoral rolls. From the Minister's interjection we take it that he does not regard it as a function of the Government to place the names of people on the roll, but evidently the departmental officials regard it as their function to strike names off the rolls. Electoral officers have been in Fremantle from time to time recently, and have not gone from house to house.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: They did the same thing on the goldfields about four months ago.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: The officials seem to go just where they please. They may miss a whole street or may visit houses on one side of a street only. They may visit half a dozen houses and leave the others alone. If they find people who are not entitled to be enrolled, but whose names appear on the rolls, they strike those names off. If they find people who are entitled to be enrolled, but are not enrolled, the officials merely leave a card, and no further action is taken departmentally. We all realise how careless the majority of people are with regard to enrolment. Although the law places the responsibility upon the individual, we know that the duty is not carried out effectively, principally because of the confusion that exists owing to the number of rolls that have to be attended to. The Commonwealth Government have the necessary machinery to check enrolments and the State is not so fortunately circumstanced. The Commonwealth authorities can carry out the work through the postal officials without any additional expense. The State has not got that machinery. The Labour Government tried two or three times to arrive at an arrangement with the Federal Government to have joint electoral rolls. Until something is done in that direction, there will always be dissatisfaction. We should aim at securing perfect rolls. We should see to it that every person who is entitled to be enrolled shall have his name recorded.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: And we should see that the names of those entitled to vote are left on the rolls.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: I would prefer to see 100 names appearing on the rolls of persons not entitled to vote rather than that one person entitled to exercise the

franchise should have his name struck off the roll.

Mr. Parker: Provided the others did not vote.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: There is no harm in allowing the names of such people to remain on the roll so long as those persons do not vote.

The Attorney General: Yes, so long as everyone is honest.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: I do not know that there have been many instances of people having voted when they were not entitled to do so.

Mr. Parker: But other people may vote for them.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: There has not been an election fought during the last 30 years that I have not actively participated in, and I do not know of one instance where that has occurred. I doubt if such an instance has occurred. We often hear these cheap sneers and accusations, but I have not known of one instance.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: Half a dozen people voted twice.

The Attorney General: In one instance an individual voted six times.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: Where is the proof of that?

The Attorney General: As the gentleman concerned was prosecuted, there was no doubt about the proof.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: I myself was accused of voting twice, but the mistake was made by a tally clerk who crossed off the name of a person, which was the same as my own. Because of that, I was accused of having voted twice, although I was not near that particular polling place, and I was spoken to about it by the then Attorney General.

Mr. Kenneally: They must have known you would not have been so enthusiastic!

Hon. A. McCALLUM: There are very few instances of people having recorded votes when not entitled to do so.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: The penalties are sufficiently heavy to deter them from doing so.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: I do not believe there is any truth in the accusations that are made from time to time. We should have an up-to-date roll, but of what earthly use is the work that is being car-

ried out by the electoral officials in their haphazard canvassing to-day?

Mr. Parker: Do they not furnish notices before names are struck off?

Hon. A. McCALLUM: Notices are sent to the last known address of the elector, but the electors themselves may be in another part of the State. There are men engaged upon seasonal occupations and travel to Wyndham or to the agricultural areas. Many people engage in prospecting or leave the city to engage in shearing. When those men return to the city they repair to their homes, but when they leave to take work in the country, they do not expect electoral cards to follow them from place to place. Some people seem to have an absolute mania for striking names off electoral rolls. What is the object? Why deprive people of the right to vote? Does someone fear that the voice of the people may be expressed at the ballot box? Is that what is behind it? The Labour Party will not rely upon the work of the electoral officers; we will do the canvass for ourselves and do it properly.

Mr. Parker: And do you send in every card you get?

Hon. A. McCALLUM: If the electoral officials are supposed to go from door to door to carry out the canvass, why do they not do the job properly and see that everyone is enrolled who is entitled to vote? Would it take much longer for the electoral officer to see that the electoral cards are filled in so that he can take them back to the department?

Mr. Parker: What if the person concerned is out?

Hon. A. McCALLUM: He will be home sometime.

Mr. Parker: You would not expect the electoral officer to wait until he returned?

Hon. A. McCALLUM: I would expect the officer to go back later on and get the electoral card.

Hon. J. C. Willecock: And he should intimate that the person will be prosecuted if he is not enrolled.

Mr. Parker: You do not believe the electoral officer goes once, but you want him to go twice.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: I am willing that he should go several times. I want the electoral rolls to be a true record of those entitled to vote.

Mr. Parker: Is not that what is being done?

Hon. A. McCALLUM: That is my point. It is not being done. The department makes no pretence at doing it. We shall never get an up-to-date roll until we have joint rolls, State and Commonwealth, for there will then be a continual check kept on the roll, which the State cannot do without considerable expense. We have had no supplementary rolls issued, and so if one wishes to keep a check on the roll he has to go to the department for the necessary information. I hope the Attorney General will let us know what is intended in regard to the preparation of the roll, and what is the object of the spasmodic canvass that is being carried out. The member for Murchison (Mr. Marshall) again raised the question of the Licensing Court. I differ from him on that subject, and I do not want the Attorney General to think the hon. member has expressed my views. The member for Murchison thinks the old system the better, but as one who sat on the licensing bench for a considerable period I say it was not comparable to the present system, which is a long way ahead of what was previously in force. The Licensing Court have done very good work, and there is better control of licensed premises now than ever before. Of course some mistakes have been made by the court, but I am not aware of any outstanding errors of which they have been guilty. They are immune from all petty local feeling and so are free to administer the Act on a State-wide basis, which is far preferable to the old system.

Mr. Marshall: Do you not think the existing Act is a great improvement on the old one?

Hon. A. McCALLUM: Yes.

Mr. Marshall: Well that accounts for the whole of the difference.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: No. Previously the licensing law was administered by a magistrate who was friendly with everybody in his own little community, and so was incapable of giving sound impartial decisions. I do not think much fault can be found with the administration of the Act.

MR. KENNEALLY (East Perth) [9.35]: I am not concerned as to the attitude of the Government regarding the roll. We are approaching the time when election organisations, Labour and others, will become active. So if the Government would but make

their attitude clear it might avoid a lot of duplications. The main roll possibly will close about the end of the year, and the supplementary roll will be issued later.

The Attorney General: It will close when the writ is issued.

Mr. KENNEALLY: That is the supplementary roll. If canvassers have to operate on a roll two or three years old it means greatly increased work, much of which will be of no avail because, unknown to those canvassers, many applications for inclusion in the roll are lying in the office of the department. So we shall have large numbers of duplicate applications, with the result that eventually the roll will carry many names that ought not to be on it. Now is the time for the Government to give us some information as to what they propose. The canvassing by Government agents in progress to-day is of no use from the point of view of getting a clean roll. In these abnormal times numbers of people are temporarily out of their proper electorates. For instance, the Minister has announced that 1,200 men are to be brought out of the South-West. It may be only a coincidence, but had it occurred when we were on the Government side we would have been charged with stuffing the rolls, with moving those people from one electorate to another in order to get them where we wanted them on the roll. Some system of placing people on the roll should be adopted by the Government now, so that those people who have been struck off the roll because they were temporarily absent from their electorates may be able to get on the roll again. The Attorney General should give some attention to the attitude of the Government towards the Arbitration Court. The definite statement has been made by the President of the Arbitration Court that there has been interference by the Government with the functions of the court. The statement made by the president has been brought directly under the notice of the Attorney General, who has promised to give a reply to it. I do not know whether the Minister has been struck dumb in the meantime, but I imagine he still has the use of his speaking faculties.

Mr. Parker: The Standing Orders provide that one speech at a time shall be made.

Mr. Marshall: You might remember that when other members are speaking.

Mr. KENNEALLY: I suppose the hon. member thinks he has carried that out during the session.

Mr. Parker: I speak when I have something to talk about.

Mr. KENNEALLY: The position is really a serious one. The Attorney General probably realises how important it is, seeing that he promised to reply to the remarks of the president. We are entitled to get that reply. A former leader of the Country Party declared that Parliament should direct the Arbitration Court. Is it the intention of the Government to adopt that principle? In the absence of a reply from the Attorney General it seems to me that the initial move towards this end has already been made. I hope Parliament will not attempt anything of the kind. That is not our function; nor is it the function of the Government. The tribunal in question should be untrammelled by any outside influence whatsoever. To some extent that principle has already been departed from.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. T. A. L. Davy—West Perth—in reply) [9.47]: Reference has been made to the activities of the Electoral Department. I do not agree with what has been said on that subject. I will tell members what I think is the job of the department. Some members consider it is the duty of the Government through the department to take the elector by the hand, lead him along, guide his pen while he signs the application form, and then put his name on the roll. If a citizen is worthy of the vote given to him, it is his duty to enrol himself.

Mr. Wansbrough: But someone else strikes him off.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: He cannot be struck off by someone else. He can only be struck off by the department, which would have no right to do that without warning. I admit that sometimes the notification sent out goes astray, but in the main people are not struck off who ought not to be struck off.

Hon. J. C. Willecock: You would not think that in these times, when so many men are travelling about the country looking for work, it was an opportune occasion for cleansing the roll.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The time for that is always opportune.

Hon. J. C. Willecock: Men may be struck off the roll without knowing anything about it.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Surely the hon. member would not permit a man to be put on the roll who was not entitled to be there.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: A man may spend three or four weeks in different places, and thus be struck off.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Protection is afforded to the nomad, the man whose home is in a certain place but who may have to earn his living elsewhere. There is a definite obligation on the citizen to see that he qualifies himself to enjoy the rights of citizenship.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: He is more interested in getting a job than he is in getting on the roll. He does not worry about anything else.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I would not shed any tears for the man who could get on the roll, but neglected to do so. Members may think we should have compulsory voting as well as compulsory enrolment. Surely there is an obligation on the individual citizen to enrol himself.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: I am surprised at the number of people I have to assist to get on the roll. It is astounding to see the supposed intelligentia that are not on the roll.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Why should we worry about them? It costs a man nothing to get on the roll. If he will not enrol himself, he is not worthy to exercise the vote. If he does not care enough about getting the vote, he does not care enough about using his voice in the affairs of the country to make his vote worth while securing. It ought to be the duty of a man, and the law says it is his duty to put himself on the roll. The department never has pretended to produce a roll of 100 per cent. efficiency, nor has it ever gone through the process of canvassing to put people on the roll, as canvassers do.

Hon. A. McCallum: Yes, it has.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Not before the last election.

Hon. A. McCallum: It has done it repeatedly.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I know that I put 1,000 people on the roll in the West Perth electorate.

The Minister for Railways: It has not been done for 15 years.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: It has been done in various centres.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Before the last elections, the Electoral Department had done their job in West Perth, and when they finished, my canvassers put on the roll another 1,000 electors. The department cleanses the rolls by putting people off who appear to have no right to be on it. They do not put names on the roll.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: Everyone on the Federal roll was given a card to go on the State roll.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The member for East Perth says it is not sufficient to leave a card for an elector who is entitled to be enrolled, but that the card should be called for and the person watched while he fills it in. It is not the job of the Government to make people sign cards.

Hon. A. McCallum: What is the good of the job being done by the department now?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: It is of considerable value.

Hon. A. McCallum: What is the job?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: To put people off the roll who ought not to be on it.

Hon. A. McCallum: To get them off the roll. That is the rule. We will see to it that you do not have your way there.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: It is not my way.

Hon. A. McCallum: It is your way. They are your instructions.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I have not made any alteration in the procedure.

Hon. A. McCallum: You said it was valuable work to get people off the roll. That is uppermost in your mind.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: It is proper to put them off the roll if they should not be on it.

Hon. A. McCallum: Because they are away from their homes for a few weeks, you have them put off.

The Minister for Railways: The Act provides that they shall be put off.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I have effected no change in the policy of the Electoral Department.

Hon. A. McCallum: It is a change of policy, a complete change.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I have given no instructions of the sort to the Chief Electoral Officer.

Hon. A. McCallum: It is a complete change.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I say it is not. No instruction as to any change of policy has been given by me. Exactly the same thing was done three years ago before I took office.

Mr. Marshall: Do you think it is the job of the department to provide facilities for enrolment?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Yes.

Mr. Marshall: Then why is the roll two years old?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: If a person wants to enrol, he fills in a yellow card and signs it, puts it in, and gets on the roll.

Mr. Marshall: But he does not know two years after whether he is on the roll.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The next question is as to when the print of the roll is to be issued. The roll is a manuscript document which goes on continuously. At any given moment, the roll is there. The question is whether we can go to the expense of printing copies of the roll. I understand the officials are getting ready to do it now, and in the course of the next week or two I will make an announcement in the Press on the subject. The printed roll ought to be available before the end of the year to enable members and prospective members to undertake a proper canvass. The next point is in regard to men leaving their homes on relief work. They can well come within the nomad provisions of the Act. I will also make an announcement upon that point. When a man's home is in a particular place and he goes away from it for a month or more, he ought not to lose his right to vote for that electorate. The next question raised was the alleged interference by the Government with the Arbitration Court. This is a matter I desire to deal with carefully because, after all, the President of the Arbitration Court is a highly important person for whom I have the utmost respect and his position is such that it would be highly inadvisable for an argument to occur between himself and myself, or between himself and anybody else. I will tell the House just what did take place, and I feel sure the Committee will acquit me and the Government of any question of interference with the

court. The Arbitration Court is the creature of a statute passed by Parliament, a statute which gave the court certain defined powers, and a jurisdiction measured by the four corners of the Act. Whenever such a court as that is brought into existence, there must be some other body to determine whether it is stepping outside its Act, in the same way as the local court, the police court, or any court of a limited jurisdiction. The Arbitration Court is a court of limited jurisdiction and so the Full Court of Western Australia has the right, and a necessary right, to tell it if it goes outside its jurisdiction.

Mr. Marshall: There is one court in this State against the decision of which you cannot go to the Full Court.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Which court is that?

Mr. Marshall: The Licensing Court.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: You are entirely wrong. The Licensing Court, on numerous occasions, has been told by the Full Court that it exceeded its jurisdiction. About two years ago a writ of prohibition was issued out of the Full Court directing the Licensing Court to refrain from taking a certain attitude. In the same way the Full Court can tell the Arbitration Court when the Arbitration Court attempts to exercise jurisdiction outside the limits of its Act. Rightly or wrongly, I am not concerned with that point. The Full Court did tell the Arbitration Court that it stepped outside its jurisdiction, and it forbade the Arbitration Court to proceed in a certain way. The Arbitration Court then asked the Government to appeal to the High Court on its—the Arbitration Court's—behalf. The request was passed on to the Crown Law advisers, and they were asked whether it was competent for the Arbitration Court itself to appeal to the High Court against the mandamus, or writ of prohibition, issued by the Full Court against it. The advice of the Crown Law officers was that it was not competent for the Arbitration Court to do so, that there were two parties to the dispute, and that if either of the parties chose to move the High Court to overrule the decision of the Full Court, that would be all right: but the advice was that the Arbitration Court itself was not a real party to the argument, and therefore it was not competent for it to appeal to the

High Court against the decision of the Full Court. I advised the Government to act upon the advice tendered by the Crown Law officers and informed the Arbitration Court that in the opinion of the Crown Law Department it was not a case where it was competent for the Arbitration Court to appeal. If any member has any doubt on the subject, the file dealing with the matter can be laid on the Table of the House. The file contains the opinion expressed by Mr. Walker and the argument that followed is open for perusal. I remind hon. members also that if it were right for the Arbitration Court to appeal to the High Court against a decision of the Full Court, it would also be right, if the Arbitration Court lost the appeal, for that court to request to be permitted to appeal to the Privy Council. Indeed, if the Arbitration Court succeeded in its appeal before the High Court, then the Full Court could approach me and ask to be permitted to appeal to the Privy Council. With the greatest possible respect to the President of the Arbitration Court, there would then be created a ridiculous situation if we allowed a subordinate court to insist upon permission being given to appeal against an order made by a superior Court. The Arbitration Court has its very definite functions; it is in exactly the same position as, say, the local court. Now and again local court magistrates attempt to exceed the powers conferred on them by statute. The Full Court steps in and says, "You must not do that." If the Arbitration Court had the right of appeal, why should not the local court also have the right of appeal against a decision of the Full Court? The member for Carnarvon will remember a case when the local court magistrate at Carnarvon stepped outside his jurisdiction, and the Full Court was moved to forbid him to exceed that jurisdiction. Why should not that local court magistrate have complained that the Government had interfered with him? If he said, "I am not satisfied with the decision given by the Full Court; I want to appeal to the High Court," would it be right to say that if the Government had refused to accede to the magistrate's request, there was interference on the part of the Government with the Carnarvon local court? I do not want to carry the matter any further. Naturally, I regret that there has been any suggestion of interference with the Ar-

bitration Court. There was no question whatever of interference. Simply on the advice of the Crown Law officers I declined to permit the launching of an appeal to the High Court against the decision of the Full Court.

Mr. Kenneally: And thereby you limited the functions given by Parliament to the Arbitration Court.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Not at all. The Full Court said that the Arbitration Court had exceeded its jurisdiction. The Full Court was invoked to give that decision by one of the parties.

Mr. Kenneally: It gave its decision before it was invoked.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I am not concerned about that.

Mr. Kenneally: Of course not, because it knocks your argument down. The Full Court stepped out of its way to give the decision without being asked.

Mr. Parker: It could not.

Mr. Kenneally: But it did. The hon. member would know if he had the qualifications to know.

Mr. Parker: I do not know it.

Mr. Kenneally: Because you have not the qualifications.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: In the case out of which arose the complaint there were two parties to the dispute before the Arbitration Court.

Mr. Kenneally: And the court in giving its decision set out all that, and gave its decision on something that had not been submitted to it.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: There were two parties to the dispute before the Arbitration Court. The dispute was decided in a certain way and one of the parties went to the Full Court and asked for a mandamus to forbid the Arbitration Court proceeding on the lines it had set out. That is correct, is it not?

Mr. Kenneally: Yes.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The Full Court granted the application. There were still two parties. The second party could then have appealed to the High Court against the decision of the Full Court, but it did not choose to do so. Then the Arbitration Court comes along and asks the Government to make the appeal. (The request, as I have already said, was referred to the Crown Law Department, and the

Government acted on the advice of the officers of that department that it was not competent for the Arbitration Court to make that appeal. It is unjust to say that there was any interference on the part of the Government. Those are the points that I think were raised by hon. members. On the subject of the Licensing Court and the point raised by the member for South Fremantle, there may be a difference of opinion as to what should be the exact constitution of the court. I think most people have an intimate knowledge of the working of the Licensing Act. It is essential that there should be one licensing authority for the whole State, or at any rate for the greater part of the State. If we are going to leave it to different magistrates to administer the Licensing Act, apart from the evil the hon. member mentioned, there is the possibility of local influence becoming manifest. Every time we pass an Act we should consider whether what applies in Perth, Kalgoorlie or Fremantle will also apply, say, to the Far North. Somebody wanted a gallon license in a place 300 miles south of Wyndham and it was necessary either for the licensing bench to go there to hear the application, or to have the application heard down here, which would have been grossly unjust to those who might have had objections to raise against the license being granted. I have nothing more to say on the general discussion.

Item, Magistrates, £1,294 :

Mr. PIESSE: Has the Attorney General considered the question of providing for the magistrate of the Albany district to pay more frequent visits to certain centres? I shall not attempt to criticise the action of the Resident Magistrate, who is held in high esteem. I do not know the work he is performing; he has a very large district, but it is some months since he visited Kataning, and quite a lot of work has fallen on local justices. They have endeavoured to do their best, but there were some cases on which local justices should not have been asked to adjudicate. There has been an increase in the number of defences to prosecutions under the Traffic Act, and it is difficult to get justices to take those cases. More frequent visits by the magistrate to deal with the more important cases would be appreciated.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I will look into the matter raised by the hon. member.

Item, Arbitration Court, £1,976 :

Hon. A. McCALLUM: I do not think the Attorney General fully stated the case. It may have been all right within strict legal limits, but it does not fully cover the ground, nor does it cover the cases in question. It was the intention of Parliament that the Arbitration Court should be supreme in all industrial matters. Parliament set it out in the clearest possible language. There is no doubt that members of the Full Court are determined to have their position made superior to that of the Arbitration Court. That was demonstrated by the statements of some of the judges. One of them entered into a political argument and spoke about equality of sacrifice. He dealt not with an interpretation of the law, but why a decision regarding one baker should be made a common rule to apply to every baker from Wyndham to Esperance. It was not a question of law at all. It was a political speech from the bench of the Full Court and was given undoubtedly to enforce his own political ideas—

Mr. Marshall: A very good partisan.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: —and without any consideration as to law. I do not think any member will deny that Parliament intended the Arbitration Court to be unchallenged in the field of industrial regulation. It was to be free from all control. The Full Court was appealed to and that court went out of its way to give an opinion on a point that was not argued. The member for Nedlands (Hon. N. Keenan) who appeared in the case, put up to the Government that the point was not argued.

The Attorney General: To the Government?

Hon. A. McCALLUM: Yes, to the Crown Law Department. He argued the case on one point and the decision was given on another point that had not been mentioned. If ever there was an exhibition of bias—

The Attorney General: That was another case altogether.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: Two decisions were given in the one case. When the Arbitration Court took no notice of the judgment of the Full Court, there was a second

appeal to the Full Court, but the decision, of course, had already been given.

Mr. Kenneally: The invitation given was accepted.

Hon. A. McCALIUM: I understand that arrangements have been made to report progress.

Progress reported.

AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have received from the Auditor General, in pursuance of Section 53 of the Audit Act, 1904, a copy of the Treasurer's statement of the Public Accounts for the financial year ended the 30th June, 1931, together with his report, which I shall lay on the Table of the House.

BILLS (2)—RETURNED FROM THE COUNCIL.

- 1, Land Tax and Income Tax.
 - 2, Mortgagees' Rights Restriction Act Continuance.
- Without amendment.

BILL—PEARLING ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. C. G. Latham—York) [10.32] in moving the second reading said: This is a small Bill. It contains two principles, one to restrict the output from the pearling areas, and the other to limit the area for which licenses will be granted. Those who have followed the pearling industry in this State will know that owing to world conditions there is a very limited market for pearl shell. The Government have not been content with just getting information that has been available from those engaged in the industry, but have been in communication with the Agent General, who has worked extensively to inquire into the possibilities of the market in London and the supply of shell to those markets. I regret to say that the information received from the Agent General has led us to believe that it would be in the interests of those engaged in pearling in the North to restrict the output for a time. The London market is over-supplied with shell, and there is grave danger of a collapse in prices. We have not been content even

with that, but through the Commonwealth Government we have approached His Majesty's Embassy at New York with a view to ascertaining the market conditions there. We find that there is an over supply of shell in that market also. The outlook for the pearling industry in the North is therefore very serious. An attempt to limit the output has been made during the last two years, but it has not been altogether satisfactory. This has been done by power taken by the Minister to endorse ship divers' and divers' tenders licenses, and thus restrict the operations under such licenses to specified pearl shell areas, or portions of specified pearl shell areas. There are three parts of Australia where mother-of-pearl shell is obtained. The principal fishing places are Broome, Darwin and Thursday Island. By a Commonwealth ordinance a limited output is provided for Darwin, and by arrangement with the Queensland Government a limited output is provided for Thursday Island. There has, therefore, been an honourable understanding between those fishing under the Queensland Act, those fishing under the Commonwealth Act, and those fishing under the Western Australian Act, to limit the output. Although the output was limited last year, it exceeded the quantity agreed upon. For the year 1931 the majority of Broome pearlers, co-operating with those of Thursday Island, agreed to restrict their output. Each centre was to produce 350 tons, a total of 700 tons, under contract to Gerdau & Co. of New York. For the current year, 1932, the agreed quota under contract to that firm, is 400 tons each from Broome and Thursday Island, a total of 800. Messrs. Gerdau & Co. also agreed to purchase all shell up to 400 tons at a price of £180 per ton. Unfortunately we were not able to restrict the output last year, and in consequence there was an excessive output. In addition the Darwin pearlers were permitted to get 225 tons. Pearling at Darwin is controlled by Commonwealth ordinance and by the Minister for Home Affairs. The original quota fixed for 1932 was 175 tons. Representations have since been made, and this has been increased by 50 tons, making a total of 225 tons. In view of the unsaleable stocks and the danger of a market collapse, the Minister has been reluctant to agree to the increase. The price of pearl shell on

the market is said to be £185 a ton. There are 89 licensed pearling ships fishing out of Broome; 71 are controlled by persons fishing under contract, and 18 are controlled by persons outside the contract. Up to the end of August last the Broome fleet had fished and landed 363 tons of shell. Of this, 288 tons were produced by ships controlled by pearlers under contract, and the balance of 75 tons was produced by pearlers outside the contract. Under favourable working weather conditions, the 400 tons quota is certain to be fished by the end of this month, practically two months before the close of the season. From the information before us and from that received from the Embassy at New York, it seems certain there will be a collapse in the price of shell. Pearl shell to-day is about the only lucrative industry in the North-West, outside a little gold mining. Most of the pearlers have agreed that this is the right move to make. Members representing the North-West will be able to confirm all that I have said.

Mr. Angelo: Will this affect the smaller shell at Shark Bay?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No. There is no limit in the case of that shell, which is of inferior quality and does not come into the contract. It is proposed under the Act, and I understand there will be some objection to this, to limit the area over which licenses may be issued. It is a matter of opinion whether we are justified in doing that. There are three or four places along the coast where mother-of-pearl fishing is engaged in. The most important of these are Broome, Hedland, Cossack and Onslow. It is proposed to limit each boat to a certain quantity of shell. I think this limit is six tons per boat. It is not intended to increase the number of licenses to any extent. The House will agree that in the interests of the industry and those engaged in it some restriction could be placed on the output. An ordinance has been drawn to limit the output at Darwin, and there is a limit at Thursday Island. In view of the fact that Australia produces 80 per cent. of the world's pearl shell supplies it would seem to be advisable to agree to the limitations proposed in this Bill for Western Australia. The two principles in the Bill are to limit the output, and limit the area over which fishing may be engaged upon. The

main feature is to limit the output. The object is to maintain a price as nearly as possible equal to £185 a ton. Owing to the urgency of the question it is desirable that this Bill should be put through as quickly as possible, so that the Minister may control the number of licenses issued. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Coverley, debate adjourned.

BILL—GOVERNMENT FERRIES.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. J. Scaddan—Maylands) [4.41] in moving the second reading said: Recently this House agreed to remove from the provisions of the State Trading Concerns Act the State Ferries, in order to enable them to become a part of the transport system and be operated under the control of the Commissioner of Railways, as are the railways and tramways. This Bill merely makes the necessary legal provision enabling the handing-over of the ferries, together with assets at capital cost, to the Commissioner of Railways, who will be charged with the working of the ferries. In actual fact, the Commissioner has been operating them for the last two years under the conditions set out in the Bill. Therefore it is only necessary for me to say that the Bill provides that to the operation of the ferries by the Commissioner shall apply the same conditions as apply to the operation of the tramways by that officer. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. A. McCallum, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.43 p.m.